

Sociology 124
Classics of Sociology
Fall 2005
Tuesday, Thursday 11-12.15

Professor Vujačić
Office: King 305a
Office Hours:
Tues. 12.15-1.45; Th.1-2.30

Classics of Sociology

Modern sociology was born in the context of transition from traditional to modern societies in the West. This dramatic transformation opened a whole new series of social problems which have defined the modern era. We will explore the ways in which some of the most important founding figures of sociology explained the contrast between traditional and modern societies, and the mechanism of transition from one to the other. More specifically, we will focus on problems related to the rise of modern capitalism, such as class conflict, the moral consequences of the growth of the division of labor, individualism, and the disintegration of community. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to analyze their personal experiences as well as problems of contemporary society in terms of sociological concepts.

The course is divided into three parts.

The first section of the course (weeks 1-7) is an introduction to the sociological way of thinking. We will analyze the relationship between the individual and society and define basic sociological categories (understanding, ego, super-ego, socialization, social role, reference groups, social stratification, status group, manifest and latent functions). We will dwell at length on the various kinds of constraints which society places on individual behavior, and then, in order to give a little (but not too much) substance to the idea of human freedom, we will look at how individuals manipulate their social environment in order to achieve their goals (Goffman).

In the second part of the course (weeks 8-10), we will explore the basic features of traditional society. We will pay special attention to the process of social exchange, the nature of social hierarchies, and the distribution of social roles in pre-modern societies. Once we have identified the basic principles of traditional societies, we will read a Marxist historical account of the demise of feudalism and the rise of capitalism.

In the third part of the course (weeks 10-13), we will look at two alternative accounts of the rise of modern society, those of Marx and Durkheim. In the process, we will analyze such sociological problems as the sources of social conflict, the advent of capitalism and class conflict, the sources of social cohesion, the role of different types of sanctions in maintaining social order, the growth of the division of labor, and the rise of individualism.

Course Requirements: There will be two short essays (4-5 pages), two quizzes, and a final exam. The quizzes will be in class (half hour), and will consist of short definitions (identifying 5-6 sociological concepts in one or several sentences and/or paragraphs). The final exam will consist of short definitions (similar to quiz pattern) plus 2 broader questions based on the reading.

Grading

Essays: 20% (each essay) x 2 = 40%

2 quizzes: 10% (each quiz) x 2 = 20%

Final exam: 30%

Attendance/Participation: 10%

Part One: Sociological Concepts and the Study of Society

Week One (September 5-12). The Sociological Way of Thinking

Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology. A Humanistic Perspective*, 1-65.

Week Two (September 12-19). The Sociological Way of Thinking (continued)

Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, pp.66-122.

Week Three (September 19-26). Instincts, the Individual, and Society

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (entire).

Week Four (September 26-October 3). Social Roles, Social Control, and Reference Groups

George Herbert Mead, "The Self," in Anselm Strauss, ed., *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology*, pp.199-246.

Ralf Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus* in his *Essays in the Theory of Society*, pp.19-58.

Week Five (October 3-10). Social Stratification, Classes, and Status Groups

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," and Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Principles of Stratification. A Critical Analysis," in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Class, Status, Power*, 47-62.

Max Weber, "Class, Status, and Party," in Hans Gerth and C.Wright Mills, *From Max Weber*, pp.180-195.

Week Six (October 10-17) Society as Drama, Rebellion, and Disenchantment

First quiz (Tuesday, October 11, half hour in class)

Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 122-176.

Week Seven (October 17-21) Role-Management and Performance in Everyday Life

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pp.1-105; 141-166; 208-255.

Fall Break (October 22-30)

Part Two: Traditional Society and the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism

Week Eight (October 31-November 7). Traditional Society Defined

First essay due (Thursday, November 3)

Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, Vol.1, pp.145-162; 219-230.

Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*, 11-33.

Week Nine (November 7-14). Social Reciprocity and Exchange in Traditional Society

Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*

Week Ten (November 14-21) The Birth of Modern Capitalism

Viewing of *The Godfather, Part I*.

Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, *Man=s Wordly Goods*, pp.3-203.

Part Three. Alternative Explanations of Modern Society: Marx and Durkheim

Week Eleven (November 22; Thanksgiving break) Karl Marx: Class Conflict and Modern Capitalism

Karl Marx, “Marx on the History of His Opinions” in Robert Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp.3-7.

Second Essay Due (Tuesday, November 22)

Week Twelve (November 28-December 5). Karl Marx: Class Conflict and Modern Capitalism (continued).

Karl Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital" and "The Communist Manifesto," in Tucker, pp. 203-218, 469-501.

Week Thirteen (December 5-11) Emile Durkheim: The Division of Labor

Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp.xxv-xxx (preface to the first edition); 11-100.

Second quiz (Tuesday, December 6, half hour in class)

Week Fourteen: (December 11-15) Durkheim: Organic Solidarity and the Problems of Modern Society

Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp.101-199; xxi-lix (preface to the second edition).

Final Exam as Scheduled.