

**Graduate School for Social Research**  
**2024 - 2025**  
**SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

### **Course Description**

This course focuses on sociological theory, starting with the classics in late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the most contemporary developments. The course comprises two components, which follow one another during the 2024-2025 academic year. Part I of the course, to take place in Autumn 2024, will cover what is usually considered classical sociological theories. Part II, offered in Spring 2025, focuses on most recent developments in sociological theorizing. Successful completion of the course workloads for Part I and Part II yields a total of 10 ECTS points/credits (5 ECTS points/course component).

Below are the detailed descriptions for **Sociological Theory Part I, *Classical Sociological Theory*** (30 hours, Semester I) including timeline and requirements specific to each of the course's components. Please note that the course includes both online and on-site units (hybrid mode); the online units are **marked in red** in the table below; important deadlines and activities that must be completed by a specified date are **marked in green**.

### **Sociological Theory Part I, *Classical Sociological Theory*** **(30 hours, Semester I)**

Instructor: Marta Bucholc

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Place of on-site meetings: Room 232, Staszic Palace, 72 Nowy Świat, 00-330 Warsaw, Poland.

Link for online meetings: see table below

Times: Indicated in the table below

Office Hours: By appointment for online meetings, please contact me directly.

### **Description of *Classical Sociological Theory* Part I**

*Classical Sociological Theory* Part I provides a systematic overview of the main classical sociological theories. We will reconstruct, examine and challenge the history, the typology, and the main narratives applied in discussing the origins and the impact of classical sociological theory, starting with the very notion of sociological classics. The most important part of the day-to-day course work is reading and discussion, and the most important part of grading is an essay.

### **Objectives**

*Classical Sociological Theory* Part I aims to provide students the key knowledge on thinkers, ideas, concepts, and issues that form the foundation of classical sociological theory from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> until more or less the third quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century. A look at the history of the discipline shows that its most successful empirical studies draw on, expand, or engage with the theoretical themes. We will look at the concepts, themes, and research problems, but we will also address the origins of sociological theorizing, the positionality and the situatedness of sociological classics, the main narratives in history of sociology, as well as the formation of the current view of sociological paradigms whose contemporary developments we will explore in the second part of the course of Sociological Theory.

At the end of Part I, you should:

- Be able to identify the main historical influences on sociological theory;
- Know and correctly identify the names and the key representatives of the main classical theoretical orientations;
- Be able to discuss and criticize the key tenets of the main classical theoretical orientations;
- Have systematic in-depth knowledge of selected classical theoretical orientation;
- Be able to engage in a debate on the limitations of the dominant narratives in history of sociological theory.

In addition to imparting this specialized knowledge, by focusing on discussion, Part I fosters critical thinking and communication skills. By the end of the semester, you should be able to present your understanding of and arguments regarding classical sociological theory in clear, logical fashion.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Classroom participation (25% of grade)

Everyone is expected to participate regularly and to be prepared to meaningfully discuss the readings. Punctual attendance is required. If you have a good reason why you might be late on a regular basis, please notify me as soon as possible. The presentation of your essay and the discussion of a colleague's essay together with the written comments on it counts toward your grade for classroom participation.

### 2. Reading Reactions (25% of grade)

To help focus class discussions, in the first half of the course you will write two short reading reactions (ca. 300-500 words), based on assigned readings in this course. Due dates for the reading reactions are indicated in the table below. We will use your reactions as part of class discussion.

### 3. Essay (50% of grade)

At the end of this course, you will be required to write a short argumentative essay (no more than 2,000 words) engaging with a selected theoretical problem based on a list of no more than three readings. You will be asked to come up with a subject for your essay in November and we will discuss and adjust it as necessary. If you have trouble thinking about a subject, I am here to help. You will submit your essay by a specified date in the third quarter of the semester (note: this will be well before the end of the course, not after the course ends). Subsequently, you will be required to read an essay by one of your colleagues and to provide written feedback on it (no more than 500 words). In the final meetings of the course, you will present your essays and comments in pairs (no more than 10 minutes per pair).

## Grading

Grades will be based: 25% on Class participation, 25% on Reading Reactions; and 50% on the Essay. Total possible points = 100 (corresponding to 100%).

Students receiving more than 90% of possible points receive at least a **5-**, more than 80%, at least a **4-**, more than 70% at least a **3-**, and more than 60% at least a **2**. The corresponding **ECTS grades** are:

A	94-100	5	B+	87-89	4+	C+	77-79	3+	D+	65-69	2+	F	59-0	1
A-	90-93	5-	B	84-86	4	C	74-76	3	D	60-64	2			
			B-	80-83	4-	C-	70-73	3-						

## Readings

Readings for Sociological Theory Part I are available [via the course-specific G-drive](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14OMgX_5QqJ9EDoj_0XTbT3leL1ze5B7v) under this link: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14OMgX\\_5QqJ9EDoj\\_0XTbT3leL1ze5B7v](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14OMgX_5QqJ9EDoj_0XTbT3leL1ze5B7v)

Readings are shared for academic instruction only, and are not to be distributed further. Please consult the Timetable for reading materials assigned to each class period.

## Resources:

Calhoun, C. J. et al. (ed.) (2007). Classical sociological theory. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Lemert, C. (ed.) (2021). Social Theory: The Multicultural, Global, and Classic Readings (7th ed.). Routledge.

Rhea, B. (Ed.). (2015). The Future of the Sociological Classics (RLE Social Theory) (1st ed.). Routledge.

## Policies on Attendance and Late Materials

Attendance is mandatory, and counts toward your Classroom participation and attendance grade. Please notify me in advance if you are unable to attend a given class session. All assignments are to be turned in via email, by the deadlines specified in the table below. I will accept late materials *only if* notified 24 hours prior to the deadline and for a good reason. I will confirm receipt of assignments by email.

<b>Course Outline: Sociological Theory Part I, 2024-2025</b>	
<p><u>Classes 1 &amp; 2</u></p> <p>Thursday, 10 October 2024</p> <p><b>11.00 - 14.00</b></p> <p>ON-LINE</p>	<p><b>The (Broken) Promise of Sociological Theory?</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: Ch.W. Mills, <i>Sociological Imagination</i> (Chapters 1, 2). R. W. Connell (1997). “Why Is Classical Theory Classical?”, <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 102 (6): 1511–1557.</p> <p><a href="https://zoom.us/j/97631269390?pwd=O9rHhXAa4wz96zJ0UO8Jdno1bXp48l.1">https://zoom.us/j/97631269390?pwd=O9rHhXAa4wz96zJ0UO8Jdno1bXp48l.1</a></p>
<p>20 October 2024</p>	<p>Deadline Reading Reaction 1 (submission via e-mail) (based on Charles Wright Mills, <i>Sociological Imagination</i>, Chapter 8).</p>
<p><u>Class 3</u></p> <p>Wednesday, 23 October 2024</p> <p><b>15.00 – 16.30</b></p> <p><u>ONLINE</u></p>	<p><b>The Puzzle of History</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: Ch. Tilly, <i>As Sociology Meets History</i>, New York: Academic Press, 1981, Chapter 1 (Sociology, Meet History)</p> <p>Further readings: G. Steinmetz, “The Historical Sociology of Historical Sociology. Germany and the United States in the twentieth century”, <i>Sociologica, Italian journal of sociology on line</i> 3 (2007), pp. 1-28, doi: 10.2383/25961.</p> <p><a href="https://zoom.us/j/99842293287?pwd=gczp3sXVUSKgVV5TgFpwpTGDl6vEpr.1">https://zoom.us/j/99842293287?pwd=gczp3sXVUSKgVV5TgFpwpTGDl6vEpr.1</a></p>
<p><u>Classes 4 &amp; 5</u></p> <p>Wednesday, 6 November 2024</p> <p><b>11.00 - 14.00</b></p> <p>ON-SITE</p>	<p><b>Sociogenesis of Sociology</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: M. Soyer &amp; P. Gilbert (2012). „Debating the origins of sociology: Ibn Khaldun as a founding father of sociology”, <i>International Journal of Sociological Research</i>, 5(1-2), 13-30. M. Boatca, (2013). “From the Standpoint of Germanism: A Postcolonial Critique of Weber’s Theory of Race and Ethnicity”. <i>Political Power and Social Theory</i> 24: 55-80. Isaksson A (2020) „Classical Sociology Through the Lens of Gendered Experiences”, <i>Frontiers in Sociology</i> 5:532792.</p> <p>Further readings: W. Lepeñies, <i>Between literature and science: The rise of sociology</i>, Cambridge University Press 1988. N. Elias (1984). “On the sociogenesis of sociology”, <i>Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift</i>, 11(1), 14-52. L. Gumplowicz (2022). Ludwik Gumplowicz (1897–1898), Ibn Khaldun: An Arab Sociologist of the 14th Century. <i>Journal of Historical Sociology</i>, 35(3), 320–332.</p>
<p>20 November 2025</p>	<p>Deadline for essay subjects (via e-mail)</p>

<p><u>Classes 6 &amp; 7</u></p> <p>Wednesday, 4 December 2024</p> <p><b>11.00 – 14.00</b></p> <p><u>ONLINE</u></p>	<p><b>Sociology as an Art Form</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: R. Nisbet, <i>Sociology as an Art Form</i>, Oxford University Press 1977 (Introduction, Chapter 1, 6).</p> <p>Notice: Work in small groups in the second part of the meeting.</p> <p><a href="https://zoom.us/j/99147603601?pwd=7XXJd45uKXutgpcgDNlpcfIOGbSKJh.1">https://zoom.us/j/99147603601?pwd=7XXJd45uKXutgpcgDNlpcfIOGbSKJh.1</a></p>
<p>15 December 2024</p>	<p>Deadline Reading Reaction 2 (submission via e-mail) (based on R. Nisbet, <i>Sociology as an Art Form</i>, Chapter 5).</p>
<p><u>Classes 8 &amp; 9</u></p> <p>Wednesday, 18 December 2024</p> <p><b>11.00 - 14.00</b></p> <p>ON-SITE</p>	<p><b>Styles and Paradigms</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: R. Nisbet, <i>Sociology as an Art Form</i>, Oxford University Press 1977 (Chapter 5). C. Geertz (1980). “Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought.” <i>The American Scholar</i> 49 (2): 165–79.</p> <p>Further readings: R. D. Nelson (1992). “The Sociology of Styles of Thought.” <i>The British Journal of Sociology</i> 43 (1): 25–54. Collective, P. (Eds.). (2020). <i>The Art of Writing Social Sciences: Disrupting the Current Politics of Style</i>. <i>Political Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences (PARISS)</i>, 1(1), 9-38.</p>
<p><u>Classes 10 &amp; 11</u></p> <p>Wednesday, 8 January 2025</p> <p><b>11.00 - 14.00</b></p> <p>ON-SITE</p>	<p><b>Challenging the Epistemic Exclusion</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: J. Go (2023) “Thinking against empire: Anticolonial thought as social theory” <i>British Journal of Sociology</i> 74 (3): 279-293. J. Go (2020). “Race, Empire, and Epistemic Exclusion: Or the Structures of Sociological Thought”, <i>Sociological Theory</i> 38(2): 79-100.</p> <p>Further readings: G. K. Bhambra, J. Holmwood (2021). <i>Colonialism and modern social theory</i>. John Wiley &amp; Sons.</p>
<p><u>Classes 12 &amp; 13</u></p> <p>Wednesday, 22 January 2025</p> <p><b>11.00 – 14.00</b></p> <p><u>ONLINE</u></p>	<p><b>Metaphors of Society</b></p> <p>Reading assignment: R. H. Brown, (1976). “Social Theory as Metaphor: On the Logic of Discovery for the Sciences of Conduct.” <i>Theory and Society</i> 3 (2): 169–97. D. N. Levine (1995). “The Organism Metaphor in Sociology.” <i>Social Research</i> 62 (2): 239–65.</p> <p>Further readings: D. Rigney, <i>The metaphorical society: An invitation to social theory</i>. Rowman &amp; Littlefield 2001.</p> <p>Notice: Work in small groups in the second part of the meeting.</p> <p><a href="https://zoom.us/j/95873606340?pwd=QHCD0h0QfwqjavnMRKjobaKHbnpPMs.1">https://zoom.us/j/95873606340?pwd=QHCD0h0QfwqjavnMRKjobaKHbnpPMs.1</a></p>

25 January 2025	Submission of essays (via e-mail)
<u>Classes 14 &amp; 15</u>  Wednesday, 5 February 2025 <b>11.00 - 14.00</b>  ON-SITE	<b>Discussion of Essays</b>  Submission of written comments (to the instructor and to the author of the essay on which you are commenting)