

# Principles of Sociology

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## Course description

Principles of Sociology is a two-semester course for the second year students designed to prepare students for the external examination of UoL. Throughout first semester, students will deal with questions relating to the nature of sociology; the methods which sociologists use; methodology and the major sociological perspectives. The key aspects in relation to individuals and society are examined through the concepts of role, socialisation and identity. Second semester material builds on and reinforces the knowledge received in the first semester. Two main topics will be covered in second semester are 'Power in society' and 'Globalisation and social change'. The assessment of the students will be by the University of London (UoL) examinations at the end of the fourth semester or by internal examination (ICEF). Principles of Sociology is a supplementary discipline under world standards. It forms the basis of further studies in disciplines such as: economic sociology of popular finance, management, political science, etc. The course is taught in English.

## Prerequisites

Students are supposed to be familiar with Principles of Statistics, Intellectual history of Europe, and English for academic writing.

## Teaching objectives

This course helps students to be critical of the information they receive and encourages them to think logically and consistently. By the end of the unit students will have gained knowledge and learnt some important skills:

- to be critical of any data and theories that they read or hear about and, of course, to be critical of their own work
- to be creative and able to link ideas from this unit and the other disciplines they are studying to create new ways of thinking about social phenomena
- to be challenged. This is not an easy subject and it requires students to think deeply about the materials and be able to deal with more than one way of thinking about the social world.

- to be co-operative and share ideas and materials. It is a good idea to study with other students and friends, and to discuss ideas with them. This is an important skill for the world of work where people are often required to work in teams.

As a result, students must be able to read sociological papers, discuss different sociological topics and their treatment by classical and modern sociologists in a written form of argumentative essays. It is important to learn the basic material, presented in class, and then, enhance this knowledge with applicable examples of the Russian society.

## Teaching methods

In addition to the lectures, there are seminars. Participation in both is obligatory. During the seminars, it is expected that students come prepared to discuss a particular topic. Reading of the required material should be completed before the seminar. Short written assignments will be given on every seminar.

The main purpose of the seminars is the discussion of the reading material. Self study will be the main method of work in this course. Students must conduct one and a half hours of self study per each hour of lecture. Required readings are indicated below. However, student will be expected to read at least one major Russian newspaper (such as Izvestia, Kommersant, Vedomosti, etc) as well as a weekly journal (Itogi, Expert, etc.) and develop their sociological imagination by looking at current social problems.

## Assessment

This syllabus is designed based on the belief that far from being divorced from each other, testing and teaching are closely interrelated. A test is seen as a natural extension of classroom work, providing teacher and student with useful information that can serve as a basis for improvement.

During both semesters, students will be tested 4 times:

- MOCK (November) Exam — 90 min
- Term Exam — 90 min
- MOCK (April) Exam — 45 min
- Final Exam — 180 min

Term — a diagnostic test used to identify students strengths and weaknesses, intended to ascertain what further teaching is necessary.

Final — an achievement/attainment test — designed to show mastery of the syllabus.

### **University of London requirements**

In the end of the second semester, students will take a University of London External Program Exam. University of London graders will grade this exam. In order to pass this exam successfully, students must receive 34% of points. It must be remembered that this course in sociology is considered one of the most difficult, with 40% failure rate worldwide.

### **Higher School of Economics requirements**

For those students who will not take a University of London External Program Exam a Final ICEF Exam will be provided.

## **Grade determination**

Final grade for the Russian curriculum will be composed of three parts:

- University of London External Program Exam or Final ICEF Exam — 50%
- First semester final — 35%
  - 20% — Seminars
  - 30% — MOCK
  - 50% — Term
- Second semester final — 15%
  - 10% — Seminars
  - 90% — MOCK

## **Main reading**

1. Fulcher, J and J. Scott Sociology. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) second edition
2. Giddens, A. Sociology. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) fourth edition
3. Macionis, J. and K. Plummer Sociology: a Global Introduction. (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2005)
4. Cuff, E., W.W. Sharrock and D.W. Francis Perspectives in Sociology. (London: Routledge, 1998) fourth edition
5. Lee, D. and H. Newby The Problem of Sociology. (London: Routledge, 2000)
6. Waters, M. Globalization. (London: Routledge, 2001) second edition

7. Haugaard, M. (ed.) *Power: A Reader*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)
8. Held, D. *Models of Democracy*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987)
9. Dunleavy, P. and B. O’Leary *Theories of the State*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1987)
10. Lukes, S. *Power: A Radical View*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974)

Library contains enough copies of the main textbook (Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology: A Global Introduction*). However, there is a very limited supply of all other books. However, all obligatory and additional readings in your syllabus are available in the ICEF information system <http://mief.hse.ru>

## Internet resources and databases

- Subject guide for the LSE course Principles of Sociology  
[http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current\\_students/programme\\_resources/lse/subject\\_guides/prin\\_soc.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/programme_resources/lse/subject_guides/prin_soc.shtml)
- Reading list for the LSE course Principles of Sociology  
[http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current\\_students/programme\\_resources/lse/lse\\_pdf/read\\_lists\\_08/21\\_principles\\_sociology.pdf](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/programme_resources/lse/lse_pdf/read_lists_08/21_principles_sociology.pdf)
- University of London Exam papers and Examiners reports for the last three years  
[http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current\\_students/programme\\_resources/lse/exams.shtml](http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/current_students/programme_resources/lse/exams.shtml)
- Current course materials in the ICEF information system  
<http://mief.hse.ru>

## Course outline

### Sociological Research and Methodology

#### 1. What this unit is about

What skills students will learn from studying this unit. The structure of the unit. Reading advice and other resources. Hours of study and use of the subject guide. The examination and examination advice.

#### 2. Introduction to sociology

What is Sociology? In what respect sociology is different from other social disciplines? Is sociology a science or a commonsense?

Subject guide, pp. 14–23; Fulcher&Scott Ch. 1; *Sociology: Issues and Debates*, pp. 2–5

### 3. Social and Sociological Problems

What are sociological problems? How the order of social life is possible? How do societies change? How are our lives as individuals shaped by the societies in which we live?

Subject guide pp. 24–39; Macionis&Plummer (M&P) 2d edition (2002), pp. 4–7 or 3d edition (2005) pp. 4–7; *Sociology: Issues and debates*, pp. 2–5

### 4. Socialisation and Identity

What is socialisation? Self and identity: personal and social identities, identities and roles. Theories of socialisation: role-taking (Parsons) versus role-making (Mead) theories. The role of others. Labelling theory.

Subject guide pp. 28–39, Fulcher&Scott, Ch. 4, pp. 121–139; Macionis, J. and K. Plummer (2005), *Sociology: a Global Introduction*. Ch. 7, pp. 156–187

### 5. Key principles of Sociological Research

Key terms. Objective and subjective knowledge. Standardisation. Reliability. Transparency. Validity. Authenticity.

Subject guide pp. 45–50; McNeill P. *Research methods*, pp. 14–15; Bryman, A. *Social Research Methods* pp. 28–33; Wallace, W. *The Logic of science in sociology*, pp. 11–25

### 6. Research designs in Sociology

What is a research design? Concepts and conceptual thinking. Operationalisation and indicators. Descriptive and explanatory research designs. Quantitative and Qualitative.

Subject guide, pp. 50–63; McNeill P. *Research methods*, pp. 24–25; Fulcher&Scott, Ch. 3

### 7. Major research designs I

Surveys: sampling, longitudinal approaches. Research example: Townsend on measuring poverty.

Experimental and evaluative research: causality, independent and dependent variables. Natural experiments in sociological research. Experiments and ethics.

Subject guide, pp. 56–61; Fulcher&Scott, Ch. 3, pp. 78–79; McNeill P. *Research methods*, pp. 17–23; Bryman, A. *Social Research Methods*, pp. 34–48

### 8. Major research designs II

Comparative research. Research examples: Durkheim on suicide rates. Social meanings and suicide (Douglas). The social organisation of suicide (Atkinson).

Ethnography. ‘Verstehen’: to understand the world from the insider’s perspective. Research example: Taylor (1982) on suicidal behaviour.

Subject guide, pp. 61–62; Fulcher&Scott, Ch. 3, pp. 88–90; Bryman, A. Social Research Methods, pp. 53–55

## **9. Research Methods I**

Primary and secondary data. Questionnaires. Interviews: structured and unstructured.

Subject guide pp. 63–74; Marsh, I (ed.) Theory and Practice in Sociology, pp. 48–54; pp. 54–58

## **10. Research Methods II**

Observations: structured and participant.

Marsh, I (ed.) Theory and Practice in Sociology, pp. 41–47; P. McNeill, Research methods, pp. 64–93

## **11. Research Methods III**

Social statistics. Documents.

Selection of methods. Research designs and research methods.

P. McNeill, Research methods, pp. 99–114

## **12. Methodology**

What is methodology? Epistemology. Positivism. Interpretivism. Realism.

Subject guide, pp. 73–90; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 14–17, 24–25; Macionis and Plummer (2005) pp. 44–50.

Bryman, A. Social Research Methods. Part 1; Marsh, I. (ed.) Theory and Practice in Sociology. Chapter 1. pp. 9–25.

## **13. Theories in Sociology**

Origins of Sociology. The Enlightenment. What is a theory. Ontological assumptions.

Subject guide, pp. 93–97; Swingewood A., A short history of sociological thought, 2000, pp. 3–10; Cuff, Sharrock and Francis (1990), Perspectives in Sociology, pp. 1–12

## **14. Marx**

Marx's influences: Georg Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach. A Materialist Social Ontology. Historical Materialism. The Critique of Capitalism. Class as a Social Relation. The State and Politics.

Subject guide, pp. 102–108; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 28–32

## **15. Durkheim**

Biological analogy. Explanation of reality. Scientific methodology. The relationship between the Individual and Society. Functionalist method of explanation. Three Studies of Social Solidarity.

Subject guide, pp. 109–113; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 33–39; Giddens (2001) Chapter 1; Macionis and Plummer (2002: p.84) (2005: p. 92)

**16. Weber**

Action approach in sociology. Social action. Methodological individualism. Objectivity in social sciences. Ideal types. The relationship between religion and economy. The disenchantment of the world and the rationalisation of life.

Subject guide, pp. 113–120; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 39–43; Macionis and Plummer (2002: pp. 80–83) (2005: pp. 88–91)

**17. Structural functionalism and Parsons**

Functional approach in sociology. ‘Functional prerequisites’. ‘Soft’ versus ‘hard’ (normative) versions of structural functionalism. Parsons’ sociology: Social action and social system, moving equilibrium, status roles, social institutions, pattern variables. Merton’s ideas: “middle range theories”, manifest and latent functions: intended and unintended outcomes, positively functional /dysfunctional / non-functional levels of society, structural alternatives.

Subject guide pp. 120–129; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 45–52; Cuff, Sharrock and Francis (1998), *Perspectives in Sociology*, pp. 87–114; Lee and Newby (2000), pp. 238–245

**18. Bringing the individual back in**

Social interactionism, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. Thomas Theorem. Taking the role of the other. The self is a process. Phenomenological approach. Labelling theory. A self-fulfilling prophecy. The Social Construction of Reality. ‘Breaching experiments’. Structure or action? Structuration theories.

Subject guide pp. 129–139; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 52–57, 133–36

**19. Postmodernity and Sociology**

Modernity versus postmodernity. Information Society. Knowledge class. Consumerism. Postmodern sociological theory. The Enlightenment as Modern Project. The reconstruction of the image of natural sciences in postmodern theory. ‘Grand narratives’. Cultural analysis.

Subject guide pp. 139–146; Fulcher&Scott, pp. 65–67, 387–88; or Giddens (2001) pp. 674–75; or Macionis and Plummer (2002 edition) pp. 31–32 and 662–63;

Macionis and Plummer (2005 edition) pp. 33–34, 686–88; Cuff, E., W. Sharrock and D. Francis *Perspectives in Sociology*. (1998) pp. 291–305

**Power in Society****20. Introduction: power, modernity and sociology**

Different understandings of this term. Power as coercion. Power as domination. Power as influence. The problem of ‘power’.

Subject guide, pp. 285–291; Held D. *Democracy: From City-States to a Cosmopolitan Order*, pp. 13–15

## **21. Marxist account of power**

Humanist versus structuralist (or 'scientific') Marxism. Two models of the State. Theorising of transition theory (Lenin, radical democracy). Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The role of intellectuals. The distinction between ideologies and ideology (Althusser).

Subject guide pp. 291–295; Lee and Newby, 2000, pp. 115–136; or Swingewood, *A Short History of Sociological Thought*, 2000, Chapter 2; Held, *Models of democracy*, 1996, pp. 129–136, or Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987 pp. 204–15, pp. 237–43; Lee and Newby, *The Problem of Sociology*, 2000, pp. 161–64

## **22. Weber: power, stratification and domination**

Power versus domination. Legitimacy. Three types of authority. Bureaucracy. Weber's definition of the State.

Subject guide pp. 295–298; Swingewood, *A Short History of Sociological Thought*, 2000, pp. 107–111; Lee, D. and H. Newby (2000) *The Problem of Sociology*, Part 7, pp. 178–182

## **23. The power of elites**

The key ideas of classical elitist theories: Mosca, Pareto, Michels. Neo-elitist theory of C. Wright Mills.

Subject guide, pp. 298–331; Lee, D. and H. Newby (2000) *The Problem of Sociology*, pp. 198–200; Scott, J. (1996) *Stratification and Power: Structures of Class, Status and Command*, pp. 127–157

## **24. The pluralist model of power and its critics**

One, two and three dimensional view of power (Lukes). Power and competing epistemologies. The problem of 'real interests'.

Subject guide, pp. 301–304; Bilton, T. et al. (2002) *Introductory Sociology*, pp. 201–214; Scott, J. (2006) *Pressure and polity formation in Power*, pp. 51–62

## **25. Power to and power over**

Zero-sum conception of power versus variable sum conception of power. Parsons's conception of power: as 'power to'.

Subject guide, pp. 304–305; Haugaard, M. (ed.) (2002) *Power: A Reader*, pp. 67–70

## **26. Foucault view on power**

Modernist vs. non-modernist perspectives on power. Foucault's concept of power. Disciplinary power vs. Sovereign power. The social constitution of actors. Foucault's concept of discourse. Knowledge as a form of power.

Subject guide, pp. 305–306; Haugaard, M. (ed.) (2002) *Power: A Reader*, pp. 181–204; Scott J. *Discipline and expertise in Power: Key Concepts*, Polity Press 2006, pp. 92–109

**27. Theories of the State**

Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State*, Chapter Two; Bob Jessop, (1990) *State Theory: putting capitalist states in their place*, pp. 338–369

**Globalisation and Social Change****28. Global sociology and classical theories of social change**

Sociological theories of social change: Marxist theory, Evolutionary theory, Structural functionalism, Modernisation theory. Convergence theory, Weberian theory, Dependency theory

Subject guide pp. 153–158; Waters, M. *Globalization*, 2001, Routledge, Ch. 2

**29. Understanding globalization**

Defining globalization. Hyperglobalisers, skeptics, transformationalists (Held). Waters, M. *Globalization*, 2001, Routledge, Ch. 1; Hirst, P., Thompson G. *Globalisation in Question*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) Introduction, pp. 1–10

**30. Aspects of globalization**

Globalising technology. Economic globalization. Political globalization. Cultural globalization.

Subject guide Chapter 7, Waters, M. *Globalization*, 2001, Ch. 3–4

**31. Theorising and researching globalization**

World-Systems theory. Global capitalist theory. Global society theory. Global culture theory.

Waters, M. *Globalization*, 2001, Ch. 5–8

**Distribution of hours**

#	Topic	Total hours	Contact hours		Self study
			Lectures	Seminars	
Sociological approach to studying human behavior					
1.	Introduction of sociology	12	4	4	4
2.	Social and sociological problems	10	2	2	4
3.	Socialisation and identity	8	2	2	4
Sociological research methodology					
4.	Key principles of sociological research	8	2	2	4
5.	Research designs in sociology	16	6	6	4

#	Topic	Total hours	Contact hours		Self study
			Lectures	Seminars	
6.	Research methods	16	6	6	4
7.	Three epistemological approaches in sociology	12	4	4	4
Sociological theories					
8.	Ontological assumptions of sociological theories	8	2	2	4
9.	Marx	8	2	2	4
10.	Durkheim	8	2	2	4
11.	Weber	10	2	2	6
12.	Parsons and structural functionalism	10	2	2	6
13.	Bringing individual back in	10	2	2	6
14.	Post-modernism and sociology	10	2	2	6
Power in society					
15.	Introduction: power, modernity and sociology	10	2	2	6
16.	Marxist accounts of power	10	2	2	6
17.	Weber: power, stratification and domination	10	2	2	6
18.	Power of elites	10	2	2	6
19.	The pluralist model of power and its critics	10	2	2	6
20.	Power to and power over	10	2	2	6
21.	Foucault's theory of power	10	2	2	6
22.	Sociological theories of the state	10	2	2	6
Globalisation and social change					
23.	Global sociology and classical theories of social change	14	4	4	6
24.	Understanding globalisation	10	2	2	6
25.	Aspects of globalization	10	2	2	6
26.	Theorising and researching globalisation	14	4	4	6
Total:		270	68	68	134