

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

(SOCI1001A, Friday 9:30AM - 11:15AM, YIA LT6)

Department of Sociology

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Overview:

‘Sociology teaches us that what we regard as natural, inevitable, good, or true may not be such. And that the “givens” of our lives – genetic or biological – are strongly influenced by historical and social forces. Understanding the subtle and yet complex and profound ways in which our individual lives reflect the contexts of our social experience is basic to the sociological outlook’ (Giddens et al., 2003:4).

‘Every individual life, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of his history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove. The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise’ (Mills, 1959:6).

‘Sociology...is bound to sap the foundations on which rest the popular beliefs in ‘necessity’ and the ‘naturalness’ of things, actions, trends and processes. It unmasks the irrationalities that have contributed to their composition and continuation. It reveals the contingencies behind the ostensible rules and norms, and the alternatives crowded around the allegedly sole possibility’ (Bauman, 2014:29)

What is Sociology as an academic discipline? What does it teach us as human beings, social actors, and citizens? What is the calling and vocation of a sociologist? In what ways are sociological training relevant to how we think, perceive, and take up different roles in society? These are big questions, and this course tries to answer them.

The course has four major objectives. It introduces students to:

1. the history of the discipline, its major questions, theoretical perspectives, concepts and research methods;
2. the major components of social structures and how they interact with each other;
3. the major dimensions of social inequalities that sociologists have examined; and,
4. the theories and dynamics of social changes sociologists have proposed.

Expected Learning Outcome (what students should have learned after taking this course):

1. Overview of sociology as a discipline;
2. Basic understanding of important sociological concepts and theories;
3. Basic understanding of sociological research method;
4. Thinking critically;
5. Reflection on one's values and ways of life (biography), and how these are linked with broader social contexts (history).
6. Reflection on individuals' responsibilities and their roles in constructing a more just world.

Grade Descriptor

A

Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.

A-

Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.

B

Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

C

Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.

D

Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.

F

Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirement.

Textbooks:

Giddens, Anthony & Philip W Sutton (8th edition). 2017. *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.
(A hard copy of the text book is being reserved at CUHK library. You may also order more advance editions of the book online or buy a copy at the university bookstore.)

Berger, Peter. 1963. *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. Garden City: Doubleday.

(A hard copy of this book is being reserved at the CUHK Library. You could also find E-copies of the book at CUHK library. This text book is also available at CUHK book store, or you could order it online).

Research suggests that reading printed rather than digital versions of books facilitates more deep-reading, reflection, and critical analysis (for more details see <https://newrepublic.com/article/135326/digital-reading-no-substitute-print>), if personal finance allows, I recommend students to read print rather than digital versions of the reading materials.

Lecture Schedule

1. Overview (10/9)

Giddens etc. Chapter 1 (pp.3-9, starting from beginning to ‘Theories and Theoretical Perspectives’)

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1959. Chapter 1. (pp. 3-11)

Berger: Chapter 1

2. Founders of Sociology and Debunking (17/9)

Giddens etc. Chapter. 1 (pp.11-30, starting from ‘Founders of Sociology...end of chapter 1’);

Berger: Chapter .2

Optional readings:

Marx, K., & Engels, F. 1848. “Manifesto of the communist party.” (From *The Communist Manifesto*.) Pp. 249–258 in *Readings for Sociology* (Edited by Garth Massey, 6th edition).

Weber, M. 1904/05. “The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.” (From *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit Of Capitalism*.) Pp. 411–418 in *Readings for Sociology* (Edited by Garth Massey, 6th edition).

Durkheim, E. 1895. “What make sociology different?” (From *The Rules of Sociological Method*.) Pp. 19–26 in *Readings for Sociology* (Edited by Garth Massey, 6th edition).

3. Culture and Society (24/9)

Giddens etc. Chapter 4.

Sassen, Saskia. 2000. The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier. *American Studies*, 41 (2/3):79-95.

4. Sociological Theories: Social Structure and Social Control (8/10)
Giddens etc. Chapter 3.

Berger, Peter. 1963. Invitation to Sociology. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc. Chapter.4 pp. 66-78.

Optional reading:

Marx, K., & Engels, F. 1848. "Manifesto of the communist party." (From *The Communist Manifesto.*) Pp.249-258 in *Readings for Sociology* (Edited by Garth Massey, 6th edition).

5. Sociological Theories: Social Role, Socialization, and Identity (15/10)
Giddens etc. Chapter 3 (pp. 78-86, starting from 'Emile Durkheim: The social level of reality...Ethnomethodology') and chapter 9 (pp. 334-340, starting from 'The Social Self and Socialization...Gender Role in Children's Fiction').

Weinreich, Helen. 1978. Sex-Role Socialization. In Jane Chetwynd and Oonagh Hartnett (eds.) *The Sex Role System*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Pp. 18-27.

Messener, M. 1990. Boyhood, Organized Sports and the Construction of Masculinities. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol 18 (4): 416-444.

6. Sociological Theories: Self and Agency, Conflict and Power (22/10)
Giddens etc. Chapter 3 pp. 92-107, starting from 'The transformation of societies -and sociology...end of chapter'.

Berger, Peter. Invitation to Sociology. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc. Chapter 6 (starting from p. 125, 'Let us return to the point in our argument...').

Goffman, Erving. 1967. On Face Work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Reflections* vol. 4 (3): 7-13.

7. Sociological Methods (29/10)
Giddens etc. Chapter 2

Social Institutions

8. Family, Marriage and Intimate Relationships (5/11)
Giddens etc. Chapter 10

Choi, Susanne YP., & Peng, Yinni. 2016. *Masculine Compromise: Migration, Family and Gender in China*. Oakland: University of California Press. Chapter 3.

9. Polity and Economy (12/11)

Giddens etc. Chapter 7.

Choi, SYP. 2018. Masculinity and Precarity: Migrant Taxi Drivers in China. *Work, Employment and Society*. 32 (3): 493-508.

Social Inequalities

10. Class Inequalities (19/11)

Giddens etc.,: Chapters 12

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. The forms of capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. John G. Richardson, ed. 241-258. New York: Greenwood Press.

(Pp.243-248)

11. Race and Gender Inequalities (26/11)

Giddens etc.,: Chapters 15 and Chapters 16

12. Social Movement (3/12)

Giddens etc.,: Chapter 21 (pp. 936-949, starting from ‘Social Movements and Social Change...end of this chapter’)

Snow, D.A., Soule, Sarah A., Kriesi, Hanspeter. 2008. Mapping the Terrain. In David A Snow, Sarah A Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.). *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Oxford: Blackwell. Pp. 3-16.

Language requirements: all lectures and tutorials will be conducted in English, but students can write their assignments and answer their exam papers in either English or Chinese.

Writing assignment - All students are required to write a short paper that carries a weight of 35%.

Students could choose ONE from the following two options:

1. Discuss how social structure and social institution have shaped individuals' lives. Sociologist such as Durkheim argue that social facts are 'external, coercive, and collective' and they shape our expectations and pattern our actions. What does this mean? Use your own experiences of living in Hong Kong society or your observations of what happens in Hong Kong to discuss how social institutions and social norms in this particular society have patterned, shaped and controlled the ways people expect and act. You may substantiate your arguments by using evidence from past relevant research, statistics, or interview people of interest to your discussion area. You also need to reflect on the strengths and pitfalls of such a sociological perspective.
2. Reflect how individuals, while shaped by social structure, could still shape/change such structures both collectively and individually. Sociologists such as Erving Goffman and researchers on social movement propose theoretical perspectives that emphasize the agency and the possibility of resistance, non-conformity, strategic avoidance, manipulation etc. of social actors. Use your own experiences, concepts and theories that you have learned in this class, and your observations etc. to discuss the merits of these theoretical perspectives

and how they resonate with the statement that ‘society defines us, but is in turn defined by us’ (Berger 1963: 129).

Students can write their papers in either English (1000-2000 words) or Chinese (1500-3000 words). The paper is due by **27th October 2021 (5pm)**.

All assignments are required to be **submitted to VeriGuide**, the plagiarism detection software of our university. **Students have to hand in their assignments online with the VeriGuide receipt to the tutors before 5pm on the due date.**

* Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

Final Exam - The final exam will cover all readings and lecture materials introduced. The structure of the final exam will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The exact date of the final exam will be announced by the RES in due course.

Grades

Final grades will be comprised of the scores of the final exam, the individual paper, and participation and presentation in tutorials according to the following breakdown:

- Final exam 50%
- Paper 35%
- Attendance and participation in tutorials 15%

Participation in class will serve as BONUS POINTS for the course, which would be administered at the instructor’s discretion. Participation would be assessed by students’ willingness to ask and answer questions verbally, and the quality of such questions/answers.

Tutorials (15%) - All students are required to attend tutorials. They are set up to help students to deepen their understanding of Sociology through presentations and discussions, and to consult their tutors about their assignments. Students of each tutorial class are divided into four groups, each group consisting of 3-4 people. The presentation should last for around 30 minutes. Each group is required to present two assigned readings, which are listed below:

Tutorial 2:

Sassen, Saskia. 2000. The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier. *American Studies*, 41 (2/3):79-95.

Chiu, Stephen WK. & Lui, Tai Lok. 2004. Testing the Global City-Social Polarization Thesis: Hong Kong Since 1990. *Urban Studies*, vol. 41 (10): 1863-1888.

Tutorial 3:

Marx, K., & Engels, F. 1848. "Manifesto of the communist party." (From *The Communist Manifesto*.) Pp. 249–258 in *Readings for Sociology* (Edited by Garth Massey, 6th edition).

Davis, Kingsley. & Moore, Wilbert E. 1944. Some Principles of Stratification. *American Sociological Review*, vol. 10 (2): 242-249.

Tutorial 4:

Berger, Peter. *Invitation to Sociology*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc. Chapter 6 (starting from p. 125, 'Let us return to the point in our argument...)

Goffman, Erving. 1967. On Face Work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Reflections* vol. 4 (3): 7-13.

Tutorial 5:

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. The forms of capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. John G. Richardson, ed. 241-258. New York: Greenwood Press. (Pp.243-248)

Coleman, James. 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94:S95-120.