

SOCIOLOGY 475: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Anna Paretskaya

Lectures:

Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00–2:15 PM, Ingraham Hall, Room B10 (section 005)
Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00–5:15 PM, Chamberlin Hall, Room 2241 (section 003)

Office Hours:

Monday, 12:30–1:30 PM, <https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/e71f3e6527914fd2bb2ef8ec23319bd5>
Thursday, 11:30 AM–12:30 PM, <https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/d65dd12a2d5d4703b5461430aa514a66>
or by appointment

Email: aparetskaya@wisc.edu

Course description: Classical theory; Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and other important classical theorists and schools of thought. Gateway to advanced courses in sociology.

Credits: 3

This class meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the fall/spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of classroom for every class period.

Requisites: Completion of introductory Sociology course (SOC/C&E SOC 140, SOC 181, SOC/C&E SOC 210, or SOC/C&E SOC 211)

Course Designation: Breadth – Social Science; Level – Advanced; L&S Credit – Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Instruction mode: Classroom instruction

Course overview

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the work of four thinkers foundational to the discipline of sociology: Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. Even though these scholars wrote in response to social changes and conflicts of the nineteenth-century Europe (and, to a lesser extent, the United States), their general concerns revolved around issues that still matter to us today: capitalism as a form of social order, the interplay between democracy and bureaucracy, the role of religion in the face of the rise of scientific thought, and the concept of the individual, to give just a few examples. Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, and Weber were among the first thinkers to try to explain the nature of society in a scientific way. Many contemporary debates in sociology build on—or at the very least are informed by—the ideas, concepts, methods, and approaches of these theorists. For those who study sociology, not being familiar with their work is like not knowing your grandparents. The course will focus on the themes of freedom, revolutions, inequality, rationality, individuality, and solidarity, as well as modernity as the overarching theme. In addition to contextualizing these works in social changes of the times when they were produced, we will think about their contemporary significance.

Departmental learning objectives

Beyond the specific substantive content we cover in this class, I have designed it to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

- *Critically think about society and social processes.* Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the “why” and “how” of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
- *Critically evaluate published research.* Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research.
- *Communicate skillfully.* Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- *See things from a global and historical perspective.* Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences across space and time. They understand the ways events and processes in one place and time are linked to those happening in other places and times.

Requirements and expectations

Readings

This course involves intensive reading of primary sources rather than textbooks. On average, you will be reading close to 100 pages per week. If you are unable or unwilling to do this much reading, you should drop the course right now (or check out other sections of this class where reading assignments might be not as heavy). My expectation is that you allocate considerable amount of your study time to reading and thinking about the texts—and do so ahead of each class. Many of the texts (or parts of them) will be very difficult to grasp on only one read, so you are encouraged to read them several times. Hence, budget at least twice as much time as you normally would to read the same number of pages in a textbook or a book of fiction. You are not required to memorize everything, but I expect you to identify and develop a fair understanding of key ideas and themes. You can use the reading quizzes for guidance. Since we will be very frequently consulting with texts in class, please bring the relevant readings to class with you.

Attendance and participation

Attendance is mandatory, but three absences are allowed over the course of the semester; any more absences, or repeatedly coming late and/or leaving early, will result in a lower attendance/participation grade. I will note attendance every day. The class format will be a combination of lecture and discussion with proportion of each varying from day to day depending on the material covered in class. Because the readings are so difficult, I will spend a good amount of time lecturing to explicate and explain them. But at the same time, I cannot emphasize enough that the more you ask questions, make comments, and critically assess the readings and ideas, the more you will learn. Once again, the readings in this class will be quite complex and the issues they cover even more complex, therefore if you don't understand what's going on in the text (or lecture for that matter), in all probability you are not the only one in the classroom. Thus, don't hesitate to raise your hand and demand clarification!

Reading quizzes

Throughout the semester you must complete (on Canvas) twelve quizzes on twelve different reading assignments. You have to do three quizzes per each author we read (Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, Weber), but otherwise you can choose which of the quizzes to take. Each quiz will ask you to provide short answers (a few sentences/a brief paragraph) to questions about the reading for that class session. In addition, you are asked to quote or cite a specific passage from the reading to support each of your answers. The quizzes are open-book but they must be your own original work; you may not copy or plagiarize your answers. Each quiz is due by 12:30 PM on the day we will discuss the reading; late quizzes will not be accepted. You will receive full or partial credit (for incomplete or inadequate work) for each quiz that you complete, and I might provide some comments. However, be aware that sometimes there is no “right” answer to questions on these quizzes. I will compile everyone’s quiz answers and share them with the entire class in preparation for take-home exams.

Exams

The two take-home exams—the first one will cover Tocqueville and Marx, and the second will be on Durkheim and Weber—will consist of two essay questions each, and you will have about a week to work on them. The second exam will also include an essay on the contemporary relevance of classical works of sociology. Late work is accepted at my discretion; under no circumstances will extensions be given post factum, i.e. after due date passes. You cannot get a passing grade for the class without turning in both complete exams.

Final grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Attendance	5 points	Ongoing
Participation	5 points	Ongoing
Twelve quizzes	3 points each (36 points)	Ongoing
Midterm take-home exam	20 points	October 19
Final take-home exam	34 points	December 15

Undergraduate students taking the course for honors and graduate students will have somewhat different assignments, and their final grade will be calculated based on the following:

Participation	10 points	Ongoing
Twelve quizzes	2 points each (24 points)	Ongoing
Two take-home exams	18 points each (36 points)	October 19, December 15
Final paper (12–15 pages)	30 points	December 23

The grading scale for the course is as follows: A = 94–100, AB = 89–93.99, B = 84–88.99, BC = 79–83.99, C = 70–78.99, D = 60–69.99, F = below 60.

Office hours and email

I hold regular office hours and will also be happy to see you by appointment at other times if you cannot make the office hours. Given the difficulty of the material covered in class you are encouraged to take advantage of consultations with me. You are also welcome to bring up any issues relevant to the class to my attention.

You also can use email to communicate with me. I will try to respond to messages promptly, but you should always allow 24 hours (and up to 48 during weekends) for my replies. Therefore, do

not wait till the last minute with a pressing question or an important concern! Emails should be limited to questions of clarification that can be answered in a sentence or two. For anything requiring a detailed response or a back-and-forth dialogue, please attend my office hours. However, I'd like to encourage you to email me specific questions about the readings the day before class, so that I can incorporate/address them during the lecture.

Peer communication

For some types of questions (like due dates or how to use the course website) or to obtain notes for a missed class it is often best to check with a peer first. (And I am always happy to step in if fellow students can't answer your questions.) Please exchange contact information (below) with two students sitting near you on the first day of class.

Name	Email	Phone

Required texts

Many texts that we read in this class have been published many times and in different translations. I do not object if you use a different edition of the text, but I strongly urge you not to use a different translation. Keep in mind that page selections of the course readings were made from the specific editions listed below, and if you are using a different edition (even if it's by the same translator) consult with me to make sure you are reading the correct pages.

In addition to the books, there are a few more required readings posted on the course's website on Canvas as pdf files. If there is a problem with any of the readings in the store, library reserve, or Canvas, please let me know immediately.

Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. Vol. 1 and 2. Trans. Henry Reeve. New York: Random House, 1972. (The 1990 Vintage Books edition.) **ISBN 978-0679728252** and **ISBN 978-0679728269**

Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Second ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1978. **ISBN 978-0393090406**

Emile Durkheim. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Ed. George Simpson. Trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. New York: The Free Press, 1997. **ISBN 978-0684836324**

Emile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Trans. Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press, 1995. **ISBN 978-0029079379**

Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Talcott Parsons. New York: Routledge, 1930. **ISBN 978-0415254069**

Pandemic-related students' rules, rights & responsibilities

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to

prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

Please familiarize yourselves and comply with the **UW-MADISON BADGER PLEDGE** (<https://smartrestart.wisc.edu/badgerpledge/>).

Face coverings

Everybody is **required to wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings** while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space. Face coverings must be worn correctly (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

Quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Academic honesty

I consider plagiarism and cheating more generally to be very serious offenses; academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, how to avoid it, and how the university handles it, consult the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>).

University's Writing Center also has a lot of helpful information regarding plagiarism, in particular in *The Writer's Handbook* (<https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quoting/sources/>). You are expected to be familiar with these guidelines before you submit any written work in this course; lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. Any instance of misconduct will be dealt with strictly according to university policy.

All submitted assignments (including quiz answers) will be run through Turnitin.com to check for originality.

Electronics

I do not allow audio or video recording of lectures without my written permission. Under no circumstances can students post audio or video recordings on the internet. The use of computers, tablets, or phones is not permitted in class, except to consult the readings (if using electronic versions) and take notes (although I recommend taking notes by hand, as research show it is better for processing and retaining complex information). In short, I insist you refrain from using your electronics in class for anything other than note taking or consulting with readings—it is distracting to you, your classmates, and me. Make sure your phones are **on silent** (not vibrate) and **put away**.

Special considerations

Students who require special accommodations due to disabilities, religious observances, or participation in athletic events need to let me know about them as early as possible, preferably before the end of the second full week of the semester.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights

The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the department chair (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu or in person in 8128 Sewell Social Sciences Building).

I reserve the right to make any changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary over the course of the semester.

Class Schedule

INTRODUCTION

September 3 – Introduction to the course

September 8 – The rise of modernity and the emergence of social theory

Anthony Giddens, “Introduction,” *Politics, Sociology and Social Theory: Encounters with Classical and Contemporary Social Thought* (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

Robert A. Nisbet, “The Two Revolutions,” *The Sociological Tradition* (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (1805–1859)

September 10 – Equality and liberty

(please read in this order)

Democracy in America, Vol. I, Author’s Introduction (pp. 3–16)

Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book III, ch. 5 (pp. 177–185)

Democracy in America, Vol. I, ch. 3–4 (pp. 46–58)

Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book II, ch. 1 (pp. 94–97)

September 15 – Critique of democracy I: apathy, class conflict, “new aristocracy”

Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book II, ch. 2–8 (pp. 98–124), ch. 10–11 (pp. 128–133), ch. 13–14 (pp. 136–142), ch. 19–20 (pp. 154–161), Book III, ch. 7 (pp. 189–191)

September 17 – Critique of democracy II: democratic despotism

(please read in this order)

Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book IV, ch. 1–6 (pp. 287–321)

Democracy in America, Vol. I, ch. 5 (pp. 59–68, 85–97)

September 22 – “Habits of the heart” and the inequality of the sexes

Democracy in America, Vol. I, ch. 17 (pp. 288, 299–307, 319–323)

Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book I, ch. 5 (pp. 20–28); Book III, ch. 9–12 (pp. 198–214)

September 24 – Race and American democracy

Democracy in America, Vol. I, ch. 18 (pp. 331–336, 356–381)

Recommended: *Democracy in America*, remainder of Vol. I, ch. 18

KARL MARX (1818–1883)

September 29 – Early writings: critiques of religion and private property

In *The Marx-Engels Reader* (please read in this order)

“Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction” (first six paragraphs only, pp. 53–54, end with “...does not revolve about himself.”)

“On the Jewish Question” (pp. 26–46)

“Estranged Labour” (pp. 70–80, end with “...and consequence of this relation.”)

October 1 – Materialist theory of history

(please read in this order)

“The German Ideology” (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

“Marx on the History of His Opinions” (pp. 3–6) in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

“The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

October 6 – Revolutionary program and political writings I

“The Manifesto of the Communist Party” (pp. 469–500) in *The Marx-Engels Reader* (skim Part III [491–499]; read the rest closely)

October 8 – Critique of capitalism

Capital, pp. 302–308, 329–343, 350–358 (start with “Let us now return to our would-be capitalist,” end with “The trick has at last succeeded”), 376–384, 417–419, 436–438 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

October 13 – Revolutionary program and political writings II

“The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte” (please read in this order)

Chapter I (pp. 594–603) in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

Chapter IV (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

Chapter VII (pp. 603–617) in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

Exam on Tocqueville and Marx distributed

October 15 – No readings, extra office hours (during class time); work on the exam

EMILE DURKHEIM (1858–1917)

October 19 by 6:00 PM – First exam (on Tocqueville and Marx) is due

October 20 – Functions and consequences of the division of labor

The Division of Labor in Society, pp. 1–7, 24–29, 38–44, 60–64, 68–72, 83–86, 101–106, 118–123, 291–294, 301–308, 310–316 (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

October 22 – The social logic of suicide I: social integration

Suicide, pp. 35–39, 46–52, 152–170, 197–216

October 27 – The social logic of suicide II: social integration and social regulation

Suicide, pp. 217–234, 241–258, 276 (footnote 25), 326–338

October 29 – Religion and social solidarity I

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, pp. 1–2, 8–44, 190–193, 207–241, 340–344

November 3 – Religion and social solidarity II

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, pp. 141–149, 418–448

MAX WEBER (1864–1920)

November 5 – The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism I

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Author’s Introduction (pp. xxviii–xlii), ch. 2 (pp. 13–38)

November 10 – The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism II

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, ch. 3 (pp. 39–50), ch. 4 (pp. 53–72), ch. 5 (pp. 102–125)

November 12 – Protestant sects in America

“The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism” (pp. 302–322) (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

November 17 – Bureaucracy as rationalization

“Bureaucracy” (pp. 196–216, 221–235, 240–244) (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

November 19 – Modern science as rationalization

“The Scholar’s Work” (pp. 1–42) (PDF FILE ON CANVAS)

November 24 – Review of Tocqueville for the final essay

November 26 – No class: Thanksgiving break

December 1 – Review of Marx for the final essay

December 3 – Review of Durkheim for the final essay

December 8 – Review of Weber for the final essay

Exam on Durkheim and Weber distributed

December 10 – No readings, extra office hours (during class time); work on the exam

December 15 by 6:00 PM – Final exam (on Durkheim and Weber + final essay) is due