

Part IIA Paper 5(b)
Modern Societies
Politics, Psychology and Sociology Tripos
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Paper Content

The course introduces students to the discipline of sociology in two parts. In the Michaelmas term students are thoroughly acquainted with core sociological concepts and concerns (e.g. class, bureaucracy, social solidarity, social change). We do this through a critical engagement with the ideas of three central figures in the history of modern sociological thought: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. Towards the end of Michaelmas and throughout Lent, we build on the foundations laid by the classical theorists and develop a systematic analysis of key institutions and aspects of modern societies including the following: The modern state and the rise of nationalism; citizenship and the welfare state; the media and public life; class and inequality; gender and sexual divisions; race and ethnicity. We conclude with a broader reflection on the changing nature of modern societies in our contemporary global age.

Aims and Objectives

The course has three interconnected aims and objectives:

- to introduce students to the systematic study of society and social life
- to introduce students to the central debates concerning the nature of the modern era and its social consequences by exploring a selection of key sociological texts by Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim
- to provide students with a fundamental understanding of the major institutions that comprise, and issues that confront, modern societies

Supplementary Reading List

Abercrombie, 2004. *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.

Alexander, J.C. and K.Thompson. 2008. *A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology; Culture and Society in Transition*. Boulder: Paradigm.

Bourdieu, P. 1993. *Sociology in Question*. London: Sage.

Giddens, A. 2006. *Sociology (5th edition)*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hughes, J.A., W.W. Sharrock, P.J. Martin. 2003. *Understanding Classical Sociology*. London: Sage.

Macionis, J.J. and K.Plummer. 2008. *Sociology (4th edition)*. London: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Matthewman, S. C.West-Matthewman and B.Curtis. 2007. *Being Sociological*. London: Palgrave.

Mills, C. W. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Neubeck, K.J. and D.S.Glasberg. 2005. *Sociology; Diversity, Conflict, and Change*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Outhwaite, W. (ed.) 2003. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Further reading is available for each set of lectures. Please contact the PPSIS for further information.

Mode of Teaching

The paper is taught by lectures (34 over three terms). Supervision is essential for this paper and should be arranged in consultation with a Director of Studies. It is recommended to have six to eight supervisions in total for this paper (including revision supervisions). A list of supervision topics is included in this paper guide and will also be available from the Faculty Office. Students will be expected to supplement the material acquired in lectures through their own reading of the literature recommended by lecturers and supervisors.

Supervision

Supervisions for this paper are organized by Directors of Studies in the Colleges. A list of qualified supervisors is provided by the course coordinator.

Mode of Assessment

There is one three-hour written examination at the end of the year. Candidates must answer three questions from an undivided paper.

Please contact the Faculty of Politics, Psychology, Sociology and International Studies for further information.

<http://www.ppsis.cam.ac.uk/>