

## **SOCIOLOGY**

Degree(s)	: Economics
Type	: Compulsory course unit
Curricular year/semester	: 2nd year / 1st Semester
ECTS / hours per week	: 6 ECTS / 3.5 Hours
Workload per week	: 1Theoretical/Practical x 2Hours + 1Theoretical/Practical x 1.5 Hours
Teacher responsible	: Professor Rafael Jorge Soares Duarte Marques

### **Overview:**

This course provides a short introduction to the sociological endeavour as both an academic/scientific discipline and a perspective through which to view and analyze the social world. During the semester, the students will be exposed to classical and contemporary sociological theories, sociological concepts and basic social sciences vocabulary. The sociological framework will be applied to the study of social groups, organizations, social processes, institutions and common social problems. Sociology will give us tools to demystify taken-for-granted assumptions, clarify social paradoxes, illustrate the uses and misuses of social labels and common speeches. The entire course will be a work-in-progress application of the “sociological imagination” to some of the social issues that dominate the current world.

### **Course Description and Goals:**

In its most basic form, Sociology is the scientific study of human groups, organizations and societies and the patterns of interchange between them. In this course, we will examine the major questions that guide sociological analysis. We will also practice applied sociology by exploring our everyday social worlds and the invisible or taken-for-granted social forces that shape it. Sociologists are concerned with a vast array of topics and they approach the investigation of these topics in numerous ways. This course will introduce you to the field by focusing on several important sociological topics, including socialization, culture, the social construction of knowledge, inequality, race and ethnic relations, poverty, and diversified political and economic issues.

Influential sociological studies have focused on everything from how people try to look their best in face-to-face interactions, to how various inequalities shape identities and social conditions, to how the system of

liberal capitalism came to dominate the world. They have sought answers to various puzzles of social life through creative and sometimes controversial methods - living on the streets, simulating prison conditions on a college campus, collecting questionnaires from thousands of random people in the phonebook, or conducting interviews with their most intimate personal acquaintances.

This course will introduce and draw you into sociological ways of seeing the world, provide you with tools for understanding your own social position and the conditions in which you live. It will introduce you to the field by focusing on several important sociological topics, including socialization, culture, the social construction of knowledge, inequality, race and ethnic relations, poverty, and political sociology.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this course you should have:

- An understanding of the main sociological perspectives;
- An understanding of the most important classical and contemporary sociological theories;
- The ability to apply these perspectives to understand society generally, as well as to understand the causes and consequences of various social problems;
- The ability to critically consider the important role of social interaction in shaping our lives;
- The capacity to develop your "sociological imagination", applying a critical perspective to view various crosscutting social circles (family, school, workplace, hometown, country, etc.) with a greater understanding of individual, group and societal processes.
- The capacity to master the basic conceptual tools of sociological inquiry, including the ability to identify a sociological problem, to pose theoretical questions and engage with current debates, and to learn methods of data collection and presentation.
- The awareness to expand knowledge of specific events, groups, historical periods and economic, political, and social trends, focusing on subject areas that resonate with and expand your own interests.

### **PROGRAM**

**Week 1:** The Sociological Lexicon. Some important Concepts. Sociology as the science of social paradoxes. What is "Sociological Imagination".

**Week 2:** The rise of the sociological endeavour. Reacting against the contractual founding myths. The three revolutions and the shaping of a critical perspective.

**Week 3:** The first sociological generation: Tocqueville, Comte and Marx. Defining a new discipline. Methodological Issues.

**Week 4:** Basic antinomies. The “Gemeinschaft” discussion. Modernization and Anomie. The problems of power and inequality

**Week 5:** The “Turn of the Century Generation”: Social facts and Ideal Types. Durkheim vs. Weber. Causality between statistical regularities and uchronic reconstructions.

**Week 6:** Religion and Society. Historical and functional analysis. Elementary forms and the elective affinities between capitalism and Protestantism.

**Week 7:** The Microsociological turn: Affiliations, conflicts, social circles. Simmel and Modernity. The Tragedy of Culture and the problems of urban life. Prototypical social types.

**Week 8:** Becoming American: The Rise of Sociology in the New World: From Pragmatism to Structural Functionalism. Parsons’ “Big theory” and Merton’s modesty. The Relativization of functional analysis.

**Week 9:** The truth is not out there. The Day to day life and dramaturgy. The Presentation of Self and the Social Construction of Reality. Are Emotions mature for sociological analysis?

**Week 10:** Closing the Gap: Economics seduction and the Rational Choice Paradigm. Coleman’s big picture. What is left to decide?

**Week 11:** “Civilization and Kultur”. Social refinement, mimesis, and distinction. Macro approaches to today’s societies. Risk, Uncertainty, and Globalization.

**Week 12:** The Frankfurt Children: Critical approaches to the study of late capitalism. A new type of Society?

**Week 13:** Thinking Sociologically: 10 Social Problems waiting for 10 sociological answers given by eager students.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Recommended Bibliography:**

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- GIDDENS, Anthony, (1973), *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- GIDDENS, Anthony, (2007), *Introduction to Sociology*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, W.W. Norton.
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