

HPSC0007

Investigating the Sociology and Politics of Science

Course Syllabus

2022-23 session | Prof Charlotte Sleigh | c.sleigh@ucl.ac.uk

Course Information

In this module we will read and discuss some of the foundational work in the classical and post-classical discipline of sociology, with particular attention to the ways in which this has informed research within Science and Technology Studies. At the same time, we will situate and critique classical sociology within modernist and colonialist projects, and look at emerging post-sociological, decolonial/queer frameworks for understanding science and technology in society.

Basic course information

Course website:	See moodle
Moodle Web site:	https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=28011
Assessment:	2 individual essays (1000 and 2000 words, further details below)
Timetable:	See timetable
Prerequisites:	none
Required texts:	See below
Course tutor(s):	Prof Charlotte Sleigh
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Office location:	22 Gordon Square, room 2.1

Schedule

Topic	Topic	Date
1	Introduction + Durkheim	12 January
2	Marx	19 January
3	Weber	26 January
4	Dubois	2 February
5	Foucault	9 February
	Reading week	
6	Decolonising 1	23 February
7	Decolonising 2	2 March
8	Biopolitics	9 March
9	Queer	16 March
10	Care	23 March

Assessments

Summary

	Description	Deadline	Word limit	Deadline for Feedback
1	Essay on relevance of one classical or post-classical account of sociology for STS	20 February; 5 pm.	1000 words	As advised in class
2	Essay on relevance of one decolonized account of sociology for STS	21 March; 5 pm.	2000 words	As advised in class

For extensions see regulation [http:// www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/coursework-extensions](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/coursework-extensions)).

On presentation, referencing and submission guidelines see STS student handbook. Note that whatever citation method you use, you MUST cite the relevant page number(s) for the point you are citing. Both assessments must be submitted via the 'Turnitin' function on the module's Moodle page. At our weekly meetings there will be ample opportunity to discuss ideas for each assessment.

Essay 1: Explain the relevance of one classical or post-classical account of sociology for STS. (1000 words)

The first part (**explain**) is straightforward: summarizing a key area theory as expressed by a sociologist or sociologists covered in the first half of term. This will take a few perspectives to do well. The second part of the assignment (**relevance**) requires that you look for traces of this way of thinking in STS scholarship. What topics has it suggested for research? What perspectives or methods of study has it inspired? We have covered this in class; you are additionally encouraged to consult the Handbook in Science Studies and Handbook in the Sociology of Science and Technology (4th ed; a relevant chapter is suggested for most topics). You can also describe topics that you have covered in other modules (just reference the class/es informally, e.g. 'HPSC0008, lecture on risk, 12/11/22'). Remember the key concepts of positivism, structuralism, society, progress, values, etc. Finally, good essays are likely to evaluate whether this influence has been helpful or whether it requires critique.

The assignment assesses the student's ability to

- understand concepts from classical (first half of the module) or post-classical (second half) sociology;
- recognize how this concept/concepts underpins an area of STS scholarship;
- present an essay as a curated conversation between scholarly sources

In pursuit of aim (3), you may ONLY use sources listed on Moodle or mentioned in class.

Essay 2: Has sociology passed its 'use-by' date? Discuss the challenge that decolonial or recent biopolitical or queer or care-full STS brings to one classical or post-classical topic. (2000 words)

This assessment requires you to discuss the nature of the relevant challenge to classical and even post-classical sociology covered in the first half of term. In what ways does recent sociology and STS cause us to rethink the practice and even the foundations of classical sociology? The programme of decolonization is likely to require some discussion even if your essay concerns one of the other approaches. Ideally you should map one of the decolonized topics from the second part of term back onto one topic from the first half of term. You could also discuss earlier vs. recent approaches to a classic STS topic such as gender or bodies. Comparing the earlier and most recent editions of the Handbook in STS might be instructive. Again, you are encouraged to draw in topics covered in other modules.

The assignment assesses the student's ability to

- understand decolonial and other radical challenges to the framework of classical sociology
- recognize how this challenge is changing STS
- present an essay as a curated conversation between scholarly sources

In pursuit of aim (3), you may ONLY use sources listed on Moodle or mentioned in class.

Aims & Objectives

Aims:

The aim of this module is to introduce students to sociologically foundational literatures for science and technology studies (STS). The first half of the module, broadly, covers classical theorists, while the second part of the module deconstructs their frameworks from decolonial, queer and care-full perspectives. We consider how recent and contemporary STS topics are informed by both classical and decolonialized theory.

Objectives:

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- Identify and explain key concepts in classical and post-classical sociology;
- Understand how STS has developed theoretically through engagement with classical and post-classical sociology;
- Understand the critical challenge brought to key classical sociological concepts by decolonial, queer and care-full approaches;
- Understand at least one example of how STS has integrated the challenge of critique
- Create relevant and critical bibliographies in the sociology of science;
- Present their work effectively in written formats;
- Apply the knowledge gained to interrogate the imprint of power and domination in our daily lives.

Reading list

Note that the list on Moodle will evolve as we mention additional texts in class

General reference works:

The module is an overview of themes and problems in sociology and political science, to aid students in understanding some of the concepts, I suggest the following three reference texts.

Appadurai, Arjun (1996) *Modernity at Large*. University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 1. "Here and Now". Critique of classical framework.

Bhambra, Gurminder K., and John Holmwood. Colonialism and modern social theory. John Wiley & Sons, 2021. Chapters on Marx, Weber, Durkheim and DuBois specifically critique our topics from the first half of the term and are therefore invaluable for essay 2.

Bruce, Steve, *Sociology: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2018). Both a summary of the classical framework and an attempt to determine its continued relevance in decolonized scholarship.

Calhoun, Craig (2002) *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Connell, R. W. (1997) "Why Is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102(6):

1511-1557.

- Giddens, Anthony and Sutton, Philip W. (2017) *Essential Concepts in Sociology*. London: Polity.
- Heywood, Andrew (2015) *Key concepts in politics and international relations*. London: Palgrave.
- Miller, Clark A et al. *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. 4th edition. The MIT Press, 2016. Chapter/s from this are cited virtually every week as examples of how STS has built on classical and post-classical sociology.
- Shapin, Steven. *Never pure: Historical studies of science as if it was produced by people with bodies, situated in time, space, culture, and society, and struggling for credibility and authority*. JHU Press, 2010. Chapter 'Science and the modern world' questions the connection between science and the period of 'modernity' that birthed, and is described by, sociology.

NOTE: The readings on each week/session are separated into two kinds. The texts marked with an asterisk (*) MUST be read before class since they will be part of a class activity. All other readings are either complementary to the lecture component of the weekly meeting and/or suggested readings for the assignments.

Session 1 – Intro + Durkheim

- *Hanley, Lynsey, 'The Art of Habit', 20:00 15/10/2022, BBC Radio 4, 60 mins.
<https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/3BFEF8E4?bcast=137643240>
A history of sociology in the UK.
- Allen, Kieran, and Brian O'Boyle. "Durkheim Declassified." *Durkheim: A Critical Introduction*, Pluto Press, 2017, pp. 1–11. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1v2xvw6.4>.
- Carls, Paul, 'Emile Durkheim', Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <https://iep.utm.edu/emile-durkheim/>
- Emirbayer, M. (2004). Introduction — Emile Durkheim: Sociologist of Modernity. In Emile Durkheim (eds M. Emirbayer and I.J. Cohen). <https://doi-org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/10.1002/9780470756133.ch1>
- Parsons, Talcott (1964) "Evolutionary Universals in Society" *American Sociological Review* 29 (3): 339-357 (primary source)

Session 2 – Marx

- * Singer, Peter, *Marx: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2018), chapters 5 (The first Marxism) and 9 (Communism and Revolution) – more of the book if you can manage it
- In Our Time 'Marx' (BBC, 2005) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9jg>
- Sheehan, Helena. "Marxism, science and science studies: from Marx and Engels to Covid19 and COP26." *Monthly Review* 74.1 (2022): 35-48.
- Young, Robert M. "Marxism and the History of Science." *Companion to the history of modern science*. Routledge, 2006. 77-86.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1986) "Forms of Capital" English version published in J.G. Richardson's *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, pp. 241–258. – look up also the idea of 'science capital'
- MIT handbook – chapter on critical theory (22)
- Gideon Freudenthal, Peter McLaughlin (eds). *The social and economic roots of the Scientific*

Revolution : texts by Boris Hessen and Henryk Grossmann (Springer, 2009)
Historic texts from STS: Bernal, Science at the crossroads, ...

Session 3 – Weber

- * Poggi, G. (2006) *Weber: A short introduction*, Polity, pp. 36-58
- In Our Time 'Weber's The Protestant Ethic' (BBC, 2014) bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03yqj31
- Weber, Max (1978). *Max Weber: Selections in Translation* (W. Runciman, Ed.; E. Matthews, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3, on power, relates directly to a lot of STS and its interest in the power-base of science (primary source).
- Weber, Max (2004) *The vocation lectures*. edited by David Owen and Tracy B. Strong. Indianapolis : Hackett, chapter "Science as a Vocation." (primary source)
- Yaqoob, W. (2014). The Archimedean point: Science and technology in the thought of Hannah Arendt, 1951–1963. *Journal of European Studies*, 44(3), 199–224. See esp. section 'Science, totalitarianism, labour'.
- Merton, Robert K. (1938) "Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England." *Osiris* 4 :414-470, chapters IV and V.
- Shapin, Steven. *Never pure: Historical studies of science as if it was produced by people with bodies, situated in time, space, culture, and society, and struggling for credibility and authority*. JHU Press, 2010. Goes with Weber, 'science as a vocation'
- MIT handbook – chapters on democracy (9) infrastructure (18) and The Social and Epistemic Organization of Scientific Work (25)
- Barak, O. (2013). *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt*. University of California Press. Provides a counter-story to the imposition of 'rational' bureaucracy.

Session 4 – Du Bois

- * Itzigsohn, José, and Karida L. Brown. *The Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois: Racialized Modernity and the Global Color Line*, NYU Press, 2020, chapter "Du Bois's Urban and Community Research Program." pp. 97–129. Note that the chapter 'Racial and Colonial Capitalism' is a more radically decolonial reading and would be appropriate for the second essay.
- Earl Wright, II, Aldon D Morris, 'Introduction to the Special Issue: The Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois', *Social Problems*, Volume 68, Issue 2, May 2021, Pages 203–206 – and other articles in this special issue
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
- Bell, Derrick (2018). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. Hachette UK: chapter "6. The Rules of Racial Standing."
- Collins, Patricia Hill (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge. Part I. The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought, pp. 1-48.
- Davis, Angela (2019[1981]). *Women, Race, and Class*. London: Penguin Classics: chapters "5 The meaning of emancipation according to black women" and "6. Education and Liberation: Black Women's Perspectives."
- hook, bell (1981) *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Chapter "5 Black Women and Feminism"
- MIT handbook – chapter Race and Science in the Twenty-first Century (12)

Session 5 – Foucault

* Gutting, Gary (2019) *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2019). Chapters 'Crime and Punishment' and 'Modern Sex'

BBC Radio 4 (2013). Thinking Allowed: Special Episode on Michel Foucault
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b038hg73>

Bunton, Robin, and Alan Petersen (2002). *Foucault, health and medicine*. Routledge.

Foucault, Michel (1990) *The Care of Self. History of Sexuality, volume 3*. London: Penguin. Part Four "The Body"

Foucault, Michel (1991) *Discipline and Punish*. London: Penguin. Chapter "Panopticism."

Foucault, Michel (2003) *The Birth of the Clinic*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 9. "The Visible Invisible."

Rose, Nikolas (1999) *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. Free Association Books. Chapters "9. The Expertise of Management" and "10. The Production of Self."

Session 6 – decolonising 1

* Davies, William, 'Destination unknown', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 44 No. 11 · 9 June 2022

Bhambra, Gurminder K., and John Holmwood. *Colonialism and modern social theory*. John Wiley & Sons, 2021 – Introduction

MIT handbook – chapter Feminism, Postcolonialism, Technoscience (14)

Session 7 – decolonising 2

* TallBear, Kim, 'The Vanishing Indian Speaks Back: Race, Genomics, and Indigenous Rights' (2021), <https://youtu.be/dvCv3GPiys0>

* Shotwell, Alexis, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* (U Minnesota Press, 2017), pp. 23-54 (esp sections 'classification and colonialism' and 'decolonial memory')

Law, John, and Wen-yuan Lin. "Provincializing STS: Postcoloniality, symmetry, and method." *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 11.2 (2017): 211-227.

Christian Kerschner, Petra Wächter, Linda Nierling, Melf-Hinrich Ehlers (eds), *Technology and Degrowth: Journal of Cleaner Production* Volume 197, Part 2, Pages 1619-1886 (1 October 2018) – read introduction and any other article – I suggest the one by Pansera and Owen.

MIT handbook – chapter STS for Development (23)

Session 8 – Biopolitics (and geontopower)

* Jana Baró González. "The ArchAndroid: Cyborg Consciousness." *Reflexiones críticas sobre ficción especulativa* (2017): 6-15

Haraway, Donna (1991[2013]) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. New York: Routledge, chapter "8. A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and the Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." Many online versions available.

* Wikipedia article 'A Cyborg Manifesto' is actually a really good primer on the original essay.

Haraway, D., Grebowicz, M., Merrick, H. (2013). *Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Donna Haraway*. United States: Columbia University Press. (ch. 2) – relevant also for 'Queer'

Povinelli, Elizabeth A., Mathew Coleman, and Kathryn Yusoff. "An interview with Elizabeth Povinelli: Geontopower, biopolitics and the Anthropocene." *Theory, Culture & Society* 34.2-3 (2017): 169-185.

MIT handbook – chapter Sex, Gender and Sexuality in Biomedicine (13)

Session 9 – Queer

- * Hofstätter, Birgit. "Queer STS: An Introduction." *Proceedings of the 11th Annual IAS-STS Conference on Critical Issues in Science and Technology Studies*, 7th-8th May. 2012.
 - * Hofstätter, Birgit, and Anita Thaler. "Irritating, Intervening, Interacting: Doing Queer Science and Technology Studies." *Queer-Feminist Science & Technology Studies Forum*. Vol. 1. No. 1. 2016.
 - Molldrem, Stephen, and Mitali Thakor. "Genealogies and futures of queer sts: Issues in theory, method, and institutionalization." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 3.1 (2017): 1-15.
 - Leboiron, Max, "What is a Feminist Lab?" (2019), <https://youtu.be/OpzkZeYLPcC>
 - Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge Classics. Chapter 1 "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire."
 - Lorde, Audre (2012). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Crossing Press: "The Uses of Anger: Women responding to Racism" 117-128.
 - Namaste, Ki (1994) "The Politics of Inside/Out: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism, and a Sociological Approach to Sexuality" *Sociological Theory*, 12(2): 220-231
 - Young, Iris Marion (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 5 "The scaling of bodies and the politics of difference" and chapter 6 "Social movements and the politics of difference."
 - Sedgwick, E. K., & Frank, A. (2003). *Touching feeling: Affect, pedagogy, performativity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Chapter "2. Around the Performative: Periperformative Vicinities in Nineteenth-Century Narrative."
- MIT handbook – chapter Sex, Gender and Sexuality in Biomedicine (13)

Session 10 – Care

- * Martin, Aryn, et al. "The Politics of Care in Technoscience." *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 45, no. 5, 2015, pp. 625–41. – and articles in this special issue
 - de La Bellacasa, Maria Puig. "Matters of care in technoscience: Assembling neglected things." *Social studies of science* 41.1 (2011): 85-106.
 - Woodhouse, Edward, et al. "Science studies and activism: Possibilities and problems for reconstructivist agendas." *Social studies of science* 32.2 (2002): 297-319.
 - Taylor, Peter J., and Karin Patzke. "From Radical Science to STS." *Science as Culture* 30.1 (2021): 1-10. – and autobiographies in this special issue
 - Liboiron, Max. "Care and solidarity are conditions for interventionist research." *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society* 2 (2016): 67-72.
- MIT handbook – chapter STS and social movements (10)
Catalyst journal is in general useful.

Additional Resources:

UCL Study Skills pages: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/transition/study-skills-resources>
UCL Research Ethics: <http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk>
UCL Library electronic resources: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/eresources.shtml>

UCL Plagiarism Guidelines: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism>
UCL Guide to References, Citations and Avoiding Plagiarism:
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/training/guides/webguides/refscitesplag>
Using Moodle: <https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/ELearningStudentSupport/Moodle>