

HPSC0007

Investigating the Sociology and Politics of Science

Course Syllabus

2023-24 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, frameworks for understanding science and technology in society: decolonial, posthuman, queer and care-full.

Basic course information

Course website:	See moodle
Moodle Web site:	https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=28011
Assessment:	1 x 1000 word essay, 1 x 2hr written exam
Timetable:	See timetable
Prerequisites:	none
Required texts:	See below
Course tutor(s):	Prof Charlotte Sleigh
Contact:	c.sleigh@ucl.ac.uk
Web:	http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/staff/sleigh
Office location:	22 Gordon Square, room tbc

Schedule

Topic	Topic	Date
1	Introduction + Durkheim	3 Oct
2	Marx	10 Oct
3	Weber	17 Oct
4	Dubois	24 Oct
5	Foucault	31 Oct
	Reading week	
6	Decolonising 1	14 Nov
7	Decolonising 2	21 Nov
8	Posthuman	28 Nov
9	Queer	5 Dec
10	Care	12 Dec

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, posthuman, 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, posthuman 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.

Assessments

Summary

	Description	Deadline	Word limit
1	Essay: Down the rabbit hole	Weds 15 th November; 5 pm.	1000 words
2	Written exam, 2 hrs in length	tbc	n/a

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. AI may be used in the coursework assessment to improve written English but may NOT be used to generate content or do 'research'. No electronic devices will be permitted in the examination.

Essay: Down the rabbit hole (1000 words)

Instructions on Moodle

Reading list

NOTE: The most up-to-date version of this list is on the library link.

General reference works:

- 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.

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

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).

In Our Time 'Weber's The Protestant Ethic' (BBC, 2014) [bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03yqj31](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03yqj31)

Poggi, G. (2006) *Weber: A short introduction*, Polity, pp. 36-58

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 (emphasis on degrowth)

- Davies, William, 'Destination unknown', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 44 No. 11 · 9 June 2022
- Bhambra, Gurinder K., and John Holmwood. *Colonialism and modern social theory*. John Wiley & Sons, 2021 – Introduction
- Mavhunga, Introduction: *What Do Science, Technology, and Innovation Mean from Africa?* (MIT Press 2017), pp. 1-28
- Bonneuil, Christophe. "Development as experiment: science and state building in late colonial and postcolonial Africa, 1930-1970." *Osiris* 15 (2000): 258-281.
- Hodge, Joseph Morgan. *Triumph of the expert: Agrarian doctrines of development and the legacies of British colonialism*. Ohio University Press, 2007. – choose any chapter.
- MIT handbook – chapter STS for Development (23)

Session 7 – decolonising 2 (emphasis on race)

- 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.
- Okoth, Kevin, 'Resistance from Elsewhere' [Black Marxism]. *London Review of Books*, 7 April 2022, pp. 19-23.
- MIT handbook – chapter Feminism, Postcolonialism, Technoscience (14)

Session 8 – Posthuman

- 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.
- Beth Greenhough, Gail Davies & Sophie Bowlby (2023) Why 'cultures of care'?, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 24:1, 1-10, DOI: [10.1080/14649365.2022.2105938](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2022.2105938)
- Hamington, Maurice, Michael Flower, eds. *Care Ethics in the Age of Precarity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021. (additional reading)
- Abadía-Barrero, César. *Health in Ruins: The Capitalist Destruction of Medical Care at a Colombian Maternity Hospital*. Experimental Futures Series. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022. (additional reading)

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>