

SYLLABUS | Fall 2021

## Classical Social Theory: Canon, History, and Application

*Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University*

Instructor: Jeffrey Weng

Class time: Tuesdays 9:10 AM to 12:10 PM

Office hours: By appointment

Contact: [jeffrey.weng@berkeley.edu](mailto:jeffrey.weng@berkeley.edu)

### Course Description

What is social theory? What makes classical theory “classical”? Does historical context matter for understanding theory? And what is the utility of theory, classical or otherwise, to sociology now? This course tackles these and other questions as it critically surveys the canon as we know it today. We examine how the canon was constructed, the historical context of the texts within the canon, some dissenting voices, and some contemporary applications of classical theory.

### Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be based on in-class participation and three essay assignments.

#### *Participation (25%)*

Participation grades will be based on an assessment each student’s completion of the reading assignments. This assessment will be conducted as follows: the reading each week will be divided into several discrete parts. One student will be chosen at random during each class session to lead a discussion for each part. Leading discussion will consist of summarizing the reading as the student understands it. (This need not be a perfect understanding—the student merely needs to demonstrate that they attempted the reading.) The instructor will then help the student coordinate the ensuing discussion.

#### *Essays (25% × 3 = 75%)*

Essays should be composed in English and are due in the fifth, tenth, and fifteenth week’s class meetings of the semester. No other readings will be due on those days. Students will bring to class one hard copy of their essays. Students will then exchange essays and engage in peer reviews of two of their classmates’ essays. Students will be graded on their effort in these peer reviews.

### Required Texts

All texts will be posted in digital form on NTU COOL. Texts are primarily in English translation (from the original French and German), although suggested Chinese translations are noted below (where available). Discussions will be based on the English versions. Students may feel free to choose which language they feel most comfortable in which to read, but key terms should be learned in English.

## LIST OF BOOKS

(Articles are listed separately in the “Schedule of Classes” below.)

### *Primary Texts*

- Durkheim, Émile. (1893) 1984. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by W. D. Halls. New York: Free Press.
- Marx, Karl. (1852) 1963. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York: International Publishers.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. New York: Norton.
- Smith, Adam. (1776) 1904. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by Edwin Cannan. 2 vols. London: Methuen & Co.
- Weber, Max. (1904) 1930. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner.
- Weber, Max. (1921) 2019. *Economy and Society: A New Translation*. Translated by Keith Tribe. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Weber, Max. (1910–1914) (1968) 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weber, Max. (1919) 2015. *Weber’s Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations on Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification*, edited by Dagmar Waters and Tony Waters. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

### *Secondary Texts*

- Craig, Gordon Alexander. 1978. *Germany, 1866–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- von Mises, Ludwig. 1951. *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rublack, Ulrika. 2017. *Reformation Europe*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sperber, Jonathan. 2005. *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Weitz, Eric D. 2007. *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## Schedule of Classes

### SEPTEMBER

#### 28th (Class meeting 1) Marx and the Revolutions of 1848

Sperber, Jonathan. 2005. *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Chapter 1, “Society and Social Conflict in Europe during the 1840s,” pp. 5–55.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. New York: Norton.

- “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1848), pp. 469–500.

【馬克思，〈共產黨宣言〉】

## OCTOBER

### 5th (2) Marx on class struggle

Sperber, *European Revolutions*.

- “Chapter 5: Polarization and Confrontation,” pp. 208–57.

Marx, Karl. (1852) 1963. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York: International Publishers.

【馬克思，(1995)〈路易波拿巴的霧月十八〉，出自中共中央馬恩列斯著作編譯局編譯，〈馬克思恩格斯選集〉第一卷，北京：人民出版社，頁 579-689】

### 12th (3) Marx on capital and capitalism

*The Marx-Engels Reader*

- “Wage Labour and Capital” (1849), pp. 203–217.
- *Capital* (1867)
  - Chapter I, “Commodities,” pp. 302–329.
  - Chapter IV, “The General Formula for Capital,” pp. 329–336.
  - Part VIII, “The So-Called Primitive Accumulation,” pp. 431–438.

Lee, Ching Kwan. 2014. “The Spectre of Global China.” *New Left Review* 89: 29–65.

### 19th (4) Does historical context matter?

Strauss, Leo. 1959. “Political Philosophy and History.” In *What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*, University of Chicago Press ed, 56–77. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Skinner, Quentin. 1998. *Liberty before Liberalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### 26th (5) Essay 1

Are Marx’s responses to the issues of his own time still relevant? In an essay of no more than 2,000 words, respond to the preceding question, making sure to use evidence from the assigned readings.

## NOVEMBER

### 2nd (6) Weber and culture

Rublack, Ulinka. 2017. In *Reformation Europe*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Prologue, “Prophecy,” pp. 1–19.

Weber, Max. (1904) 1930. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner.

【韋伯 (2005), 《新教倫理與資本主義精神》康樂、簡惠美譯。桂林: 廣西師範大學出版社】

- “Author’s Introduction,” pp. 13–31.
- Chapter I, “Religious Affiliation and Social Stratification,” pp. 35–46.
- Chapter II, “The Spirit of Capitalism,” pp. 47–78.
- Chapter V, “Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism,” pp. 155–183.

Swidler, Ann. 1986. “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.” *American Sociological Review* 51 (2): 273–86.

## 9th (7) Weber’s basic concepts

Craig, Gordon Alexander. 1978. *Germany, 1866–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Chapter VI, “Religion, Education, and the Arts,” Section III [Universities], pp. 192–198

### *i. Class, Status, Party*

Weber, Max. (1921) 2019. *Economy and Society: A New Translation*. Translated by Keith Tribe. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Chapter 4, “Social Ranks and Social Classes,” pp. 448–457.

Weber, Max. (1910–1914) 2010. “The Distribution of Power within the Community: Classes, *Stände*, Parties.” Translated by Tony Waters, Dagmar Waters, Elisabeth Hahnke, Maren Lippke, Eva Ludwig-Glück, Daniel Mai, Nina Ritzi-Messner, Christina Veldhoen, and Lucas Fasnacht. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10 (2): 137–52.

### *ii. Bureaucracy*

Weber, Max. (1910–1914) 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Chapter XI, “Bureaucracy,” pp. 956–1005.

### *iii. Legitimacy*

Weber, Max. (1921) 2019. *Economy and Society: A New Translation*. Translated by Keith Tribe. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Chapter 3, “Types of Rule,” pp. 336–389.

【韋伯 (1993) 《支配社會學》, 康樂、簡惠美譯。桂林: 廣西師範大學出版社】

16th (8) Weber on the state

Weitz, Eric D. 2007. *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Chapter 1, “A Troubled Beginning,” pp. 7–40.

Weber, Max. (1919) 2015. “Politics as a Vocation.” In *Weber’s Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations on Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification*, edited by Dagmar Waters and Tony Waters, 129–98. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

【韋伯 (2004) 《學術與政治》，錢永祥等譯，桂林：廣西師範大學出版社】

Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2020. *China’s Gilded Age: The Paradox of Economic Boom and Vast Corruption*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Chapter 4, “Profit-Sharing, Chinese-Style,” pp. 85–118.

23rd (9) What is theory?

Stinchcombe, Arthur L. 1982. “Should Sociologists Forget Their Mothers and Fathers?” *The American Sociologist* 17: 2–11.

Abend, Gabriel. 2008. “The Meaning of “Theory.”” *Sociological Theory* 26(2):173–99.

30th (10) Essay 2

Drawing on all of the preceding readings, but with an emphasis on those from weeks 6 to 9, answer the following question: Given that theory is always a response to the times, what should we ask theory to do today?

DECEMBER

7th (11) Durkheim and his antecedents

Smith, Adam. (1776) 1904. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by Edwin Cannan. Vol. 1. London: Methuen & Co.

【亞當·史密斯 (Smith, Adam) [1776] (2000), 《國富論》，李華夏、謝宗林合譯。台北市：先覺。】

- “Introduction and Plan of the Work,” pp. 1–4
- Chapter 1, “Of the Division of Labour,” pp. 5–14
- Chapter 2, “Of the Principle which Gives Occasion to the Division of Labour,” pp. 15–18
- Chapter 3, “That the Division of Labour is Limited by the Extent of the Market,” pp. 19–23

Durkheim, Émile. (1893) 1984. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by W. D. Halls. New York: Free Press.

【涂爾幹 (Durkheim, Emile) (2000) 《社會分工論》，渠東譯。北京：三聯。】

- Introduction, pp. 1–8
- Book I, Chapter I, “The Method of Determining This Function,” pp. 11–30

**14th (12) Durkheim and his context**

Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Chapter 29, “Cultures and Civilization,” pp. 485–496.

*Division of Labor*, Book I

- Chapter II, “Mechanical Solidarity, or Solidarity by Similarities,” pp. 31–67
- Chapter III, “Solidarity Arising from the Division of Labour, or Organic Solidarity,” pp. 68–87

**21st (13) Durkheim and anti-sociology**

*Division of Labor*

- Book I, Chapter VII, “Organic Solidarity and Contractual Solidarity,” pp. 149–175
- Book II, Chapter II, “The Causes,” pp. 200–225

von Mises, Ludwig. 1951. *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Part III, Section I, Chapter II, “Society,” pp. 289–313

**28th (14) Where does the canon come from?**

Connell, R. W. 1997. “Why Is Classical Theory Classical?” *American Journal of Sociology* 102(6):1511–57.

Go, Julian. 2020. “Race, Empire, and Epistemic Exclusion: Or the Structures of Sociological Thought.” *Sociological Theory* 38(2):79–100.

**JANUARY**

**4th (15) Essay 3**

Drawing from the readings from the entire semester, but with an emphasis on those from weeks 11 to 14, discuss how the canon both strengthens and weakens sociological inquiry. (Maximum 2,000 words.)