

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

POLS 105 – Winter 2017

**Instructor:** Ass. Prof. Fabio Vicini (fvicini@29mayis.edu.tr)

**Class Time:** Tuesday 14:00–16:00; Thursday 12:00–13:00

**Location:** U211

**Course Description:** This is an introduction to major sociological concepts, theories and authors through an investigation of diverse sociological aspects of human life including society, social stratification, socialization, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, urbanization, new social movements and religion in a global world. In the first part of the course we will investigate the birth of sociology as a discipline by framing it within the radical changes brought by modernity (here intended as capitalist forms of production, modern state formations and related understandings of the individual and society). Beside main founding sociologists, also alternative genealogies of sociological thought will be illustrated (Tarde and Ibn Khaldun). The second part of the course will explore the influence of social, economic and political forces in shaping individual and collective identities in the contemporary world. The weight of social structures in the determination of inequality and difference is illustrated in the third part, while in the fourth and final section the impact of internal migration processes, urbanization, religion and new sociopolitical challenges in a global society is approached.

## **Goals of the course:**

- provide students with a solid knowledge of foundational debates in sociology
- make students understand the impact of external social forces on people and the interplay between these forces and people's biographies
- instill students with a sense of cultural relativism and of social differences that can help them to look at individuals and society under a new light
- offer a global perspective on local phenomena in order to illustrate the existence of both similarities and differences in the experience of social, economic and political forces around the world
- foster students' acquisition of a sociological perspective that will allow them to better understand and evaluate social transformations and related policies in their own community, nation and the world

**Course Website:** “Schoolology” website (<https://www.schoolology.com/>) is the place to find this syllabus and the readings that are not in the textbook, the slides of the lessons and announcements about the class. I welcome your constructive feedback about how well it works for you and how we might make better use of it.

**Textbook:** Macionis, John J. and Ken Plummer. 2012. *Sociology: A Global Introduction*. 5th Edition. Oxford: Prentice Hall. Second hand copies of the book are available at bookstores through the Internet. Both the [4th](#) and the [5th edition](#) of the book are fine. For any other information regarding the book, please contact me by e-mail. All other readings can be downloaded from the **course website**.

### **Other Useful Books and Links:**

– Giddens, Anthony, Philip W. Sutton. 2014. *Essential Concepts in Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

– [http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction\\_to\\_Sociology](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology)

**Class Format:** Weekly lessons are divided in two parts: the first two hours (L1) consist of frontal lesson in which the lecturer will introduce students to the main topics, whereas the third hour of each week (L2) is generally dedicated to in-class discussion of one paper or one particular topic. Students are expected to have completed the reading of the chapters and of the *discussion readings* before each class so that they can follow the lesson and take part in the discussion section in an effective way. I highly suggest you to read each book chapter before the lecture because this will help you to follow the class better and, moreover, to space your work along the semester.

This means that you will have to read around 40 pages per week. At the beginning it will be difficult, but in any case it is better than to have to read around 400 pages in the last week before the midterm and final exams. So be prepared!

Also note that the lessons, the papers you will have to read and the class discussion are intended to supplement the reading, **not substitute for it**. Following the lesson and making pertinent questions is the best way to gain an understanding of what is written in the book and hence of preparing for the exams. For this reason I highly suggest you not to waste your time in class by messaging with your classmates and friends and I invite you to take notes. Taking notes is the best way of keeping your attention high and of sedimenting the main and most important ideas and concepts (that I will ask in the exam!) in your mind. If you have not experience in taking notes, you can give a look at [this link](#).

**Attendance and active participation during the classes:** Your participation in class shows me that you are keeping up with the program regularly and that you are assimilating the main topics and issues. Hence it will inevitably affect your final grade. For this reason I suggest you to be an active participant of the class. This means to make an effort to ask and answer questions, contribute to the discussion, make comments based on the readings. Of course, participating also means listening to other people and be prepared to the fact that some comments may make you feel uncomfortable in so far as they challenge what you believe or true to be right. Do not worry, this is absolutely normal and the enriching part of it! So enjoy the discussion by commenting in a polite and correct way, without interrupting, showing respect for your colleagues' view by speaking at the due time and not misrepresenting his/her argument. Finally, try to use the concepts we have learned in class and support your ideas with logics and arguments, and sticking to the discussed topic.

**Assignments:** You will have to write **four** short written assignments of around **500 words**. Each of them will be evaluated 10% of the total grade each (40% in total). You will deliver them to me by e-mail by midnight of the Monday before the lesson AND in hard-copy the following day in class. Preparing a 500-word paper serves to motivate you to read critically the assigned readings and to

prepare you to be able to discuss them with other students in class. Moreover, it will gradually improve your analytic and writing skills, something you will absolutely need in the course of your studies!

Note that taken together the reflection papers will affect 40% of your final mark for the course. Attendance to classes for which a reflection paper is required will be strictly monitored and even in the case you cannot attend that class you will be requested to submit the reflection paper at the next class.

If you deliver your reflection paper late of two days this will be counted as affecting only 6% rather than 10% of your final grade. So if you cannot come to one of these classes for any reason send me the reflection paper to my e-mail. Instead if you do not deliver one reflection paper you will automatically have assigned a “0” grade that will affect your final grade for the 10%. Any attempt at not attending classes for which reflection papers and discussion have been fixed will be noted and will have consequences on your final grade. **If you do not bring three reflection papers over the term, you will not be allowed to pass the course regardless of your other marks.**

**Reflection papers:** Reflection papers are brief reviews of the readings. You should not merely summarize what has been said in the readings, but also analyze them critically in your own words. In these short papers you have to illustrate: a) the basic argument of the paper b) its sociological relevance (by using sociological terms we learned) and c) a critical comment based on other readings or on your original thought: what does the paper make you think of?

Additional questions for each reflection paper may be provided in class the second lesson (L2) of the week before the deadline for the submission of the assignment.

**Plagiarism:** Istanbul 29 Mayıs University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses. Plagiarism occurs when you copy or summarize someone else's work without clear and accurate acknowledgement of what you have borrowed and from where. When you submit work, whether an essay, a short piece of writing, a project or a dissertation, you are claiming to be its author. This means that the work consists of your own ideas and is written in your own words, except where you specifically indicate other sources.

Students must not claim others' (including other students': no copying is allowed!) work as their own. Doing so is a form of cheating. In addition, students must make every effort to avoid plagiarism arising out of defects in note-taking, attribution of sources and presentation of work. Ensure that all submitted work uses a proper referencing style (see “Style, Translation and Transliteration Guides” below). Ignorance of the requirements for proper referencing and attribution does not constitute a defense against an accusation of plagiarism.

Any concerns about proper referencing must be brought to the attention of the lecturer before the work is submitted. Allegations of plagiarism are initially dealt with by a panel convened by the Board of Examiners of the degree program concerned, and conducted in accordance with Istanbul 29 Mayıs University regulations. In extreme cases, plagiarism may be classed as a dishonest practice. Proven cases of plagiarism will form part of a student's record.

**NOTE: For a guide on plagiarism see one of these two documents: 1 and 2. In case in this course a student is caught with plagiarism this automatically translates into a “0” for that particular assignment plus other possible penalties according to the gravity of the attempt. In case of repeated plagiarism the student will be assigned with a “0” in the final grade.**

**Attendance Policy:** The nature of this course requires attendance, active participation and involvement in the class. In line with the regulations of Istanbul 29 Mayıs university **attendance is mandatory** and you are entitled to maximum **four** absences with no penalties in your grade. If you experience an unforeseeable problem (extended illness, death, injury), please inform the head of department and perhaps, with proper verification, I can grant an additional absence.

**Assignments and Grading:** The composition of the final grade is as follows:

Midterm Exam: 20%

Four Written Assignments: 40% (10% each)

Final Exam: 40%

### **Grading Scale**

AA	4.00	90-100
BA	3.50	85-89
BB	3.00	80-84
CB	2.50	75-79
CC	2.00	70-74
DC	1.50	65-69
DD	1.00	60-64
FD	0.50	50-59
FF	0.00	0-49

### **Style, Translation and Transliteration Guides**

Chicago Manual Style: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

IJMES: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displaySpecialPage?pageId=5680>

## Weekly Schedule

### **PART I: FOUNDATIONS**

#### **20/09 (W1): Introduction**

L1) Course Overview: What is Society? What is Sociology? The Sociological Perspective

#### L2) **22/09: Opening of the Academic Year**

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 1.

*\*Suggested extra-readings:* Bauman Zygmunt, Tim May. 2001. "Introduction: The Discipline of Sociology." In *Thinking Sociologically*. 2Nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell. (13 Pp.)

#### **27-29/09 (W2): Main Traditions of Inquiry**

L1) The 3 Classical Approaches (Durkheim, Weber and Marx);

#### L2) In-class discussion

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 2.

– *Discussion Paper:* Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 58, No. 3. (Jun., 1956), pp. 503-507.

#### **4-6/10 (W3): Modernity, Change and Society**

L1) Capitalism, Karl Marx

L2) "Rationalization" and Bureaucratization: Max Weber

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 4.

*\*Suggested extra-readings:* Weber, Max. 2007. "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism [1904-5]." In Calhoun, Craig, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, and Indermohan Virk (eds.). *Classical Sociological Theory*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Pp. 228-246.

*\*Suggested Movie:* "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFIFIG22Y9E>

### **DEADLINE 10/10**

**\*\*\* First Written Assignment due for Monday 10 October \*\*\***

Ritzer, George. "The McDonaldization of Society."

#### **11-13/10 (W4): Alternative Genealogies and Trajectories:**

L1) Durkheim VS Gabriel Tarde

L2) Ibn Khaldun

- Szakolczai, Arpad and Bjørn Thomassen. 2011. “Gabriel Tarde as Political Anthropologist.” *International Political Anthropology*, Vol.4(1):41-59.
- al-Attas, Syed Farid. 2007. “The Historical Sociology of Muslim Societies: Khaldunian Applications.” *International Sociology*, Vol. 22(3):267-288.

Additional useful readings:

Little, Daniel. “[Gabriel Tarde's rediscovery](#)” & [Ibn Khaldun](#)

## **PART II: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL**

### **18-20/10 (W5): Cultures/Subcultures**

L1) Culture/s and Cultural Studies;

L2) [In-class Test](#)

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 5.

### **25-26/10 (W6): Individuals/Societies**

L1) The Social Construction of the Individual

L2) Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 7

– [Rites of Passage](#)

### **DEADLINE 31/10**

**\*\*\* Second Written Assignment due for Monday 31 October\*\*\***

Watch and comment the movie L’Enfant Sauvage (The Wild Child) (1970, Director: Francois Truffaut)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbJR0fmejQ4&list=PLj-PP3DRXrHJruwM-vTFKhzCgqzgyiiHK>

### **1-3/11 (W7) Gender and the Body**

L1) Sex and Becoming Gendered

L2) [In-class discussion](#)

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 12.

– [Discussion Paper](#): Hartmann, Douglas. “The Sanctity of Sunday Football: Why men love sports”

**\*\*\* 7-13/11: MIDTERM EXAMS \*\*\***

### **PART III: DIFFERENCE** (*with case studies*)

#### **15-17/11 (W8): Social Stratification:**

L1) Systems of Social Stratification

L2) [Documentary Screening](#)

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 8

– *Documentary Screening and Discussion*: “[Al Jazeera World: Cover Story](#)” (by Ayşe Toprak) on Women, Islam and new social classes in Turkey

\**Suggested documentary*: “[Poverty INC](#)” (by Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker) Center for New American Media.

#### **DEADLINE 21/11**

**\*\*\*Third Written Assignment due for Monday 21 November \*\*\***

Deniz Genç and Merve Özdemirkıran, “Local perceptions on Syrian migration to Turkey”

#### **22-24/11 (W9): Race and Ethnicity**

L1) The Social Significance of Race, Ethnicity and Discrimination

L2) [In-class discussion](#): the Perception of Syrian refugees in Turkey

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 11.

– *Discussion paper (same paper for the Written Assignment)*: Deniz Genç and Merve Özdemirkıran, “Local perceptions on Syrian migration to Turkey: A case study of Istanbul neighborhoods” in *Turkish Migration Conference 2015. Selected Proceedings* (Şeker Güven et al. eds)

\**Suggested Documentary*: “True Colors – Racial Discrimination in Everyday Life” (Primetime Live, Nov. 26, 1992; 18 minutes)

#### **29/11-01/12 (W10): Social Class and Work in a Neoliberal Era:**

L1) Social Class, Inequality and Poverty

L2) New forms of work

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 10 (The “Death of class” debate excluded).

– Macionis and Plummer, chap. 15 ([Only Pp. 473-488](#))

## **PART IV: SOCIAL CHANGE IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY**

### **6-8/12 (W11) Populations, Cities**

- L1) Demographic Expansion and Urbanization
- L2) [Documentary Screening](#) (to be determined)
- Macionis and Plummer, chap. 24.

### **13-15/12 (W12) Power, Governance and Social Movements**

- L1) Power, Resistance and New Social Movements
- L2) [Documentary Screening](#) (to be determined)
- Macionis and Plummer, chap. 16

### **DEADLINE 27/12**

#### **\*\*\*Fourth Written Assignment due for Sunday 27 December \*\*\***

Compare Chomsky and Said's perspectives. Where do they resemble, in what do they differ?

### **20-22/12 (W13): Religions in a Global World**

- L1) Forms and Organizations of “Religion”
- L2) [In-class discussion](#) of Chomsky and Said’s papers
- Macionis and Plummer, chap. 19.
- *Discussion Articles*:
- a) Chomsky Noam, “[Clash of Civilizations?](#)”
- b) Said, Edward, “[The Clash of Ignorance.](#)”

*\*Suggested extra-readings:* Mandeville, Peter. 2009. “How Do Religious Beliefs Affect Politics.” In *Global Politics. A New Introduction*, Jenny Edkins, Maja Zehfuss (eds.).

### **26-31/12 (W14): Concluding Remarks**