Modern Sociological Theory
7,5 ECTS credits

1. Decision
The Syllabus is approved by the board of the Department of Sociology at Stockholm University 2009-12-17.

2. General information
The course consists of 7,5 ECTS credits and is at the advanced level.

3. Course code
SO7020

4. Entrance qualifications
A Bachelor’s degree or 90 ECTS credits in Sociology

5. Course contents
The aim of this course is to give an overview of modern sociological theory and a deeper understanding of some modern sociological theorists and perspectives. With ”modern sociological theory” is understood the period after the decline of functionalism around 1960 and until today. To the most prominent theoretical sociologists in the latter half of the 20th century belong Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Erving Goffman and Jürgen Habermas. The list is made up of male sociologists and reflects the male dominance we have seen in sociology until recently. Among the more significant developments in modern sociological theory has been the rise of feminist perspectives to challenge this male dominance. Other important fields and perspectives in recent sociology are cultural theory, rational choice and structural analysis.

6. Learning outcomes
After accomplishing this course, participants are expected to:

In terms of knowledge and understanding:
• Have knowledge about the principal lines in the development of modern sociological theory.
• Understand the meaning of central concepts and theories in modern sociological theory.
• Be able to identify important similarities and differences between modern sociological theories.
• Know how modern sociology has been shaped by classical sociology.

In terms of accomplishment and competence:

• Be able to account for, and to analyse, the content of central texts by modern sociologists in a clear, well put and well argued manner.
• Be able to use relevant parts of modern sociological theory to analyse social phenomena.

In terms of values and evaluation:

• To be able to critically assess modern sociological theories in terms of their merits and limitations.

7. Instruction

The course is provided at half-time basis over 10 weeks, from January 17 to March 18, 2011. Teaching takes the form of 9 lectures that present the theories and perspectives treated in course and 8 seminars on the texts in the course literature. Participants meet once a week during 9 weeks. The last week of the course is devoted to the take-home examination paper.

8. Examination

Examination is in the form of two assignments. Course members are expected to write (1) abstracts of all articles and book chapters that do not already have an abstract and short summaries of the remaining articles and book chapters, and (2) reviews of the books by Pierre Bourdieu and Peter Hedström. The abstracts should be about 250 words per article and the summaries a little bit longer. The reviews should be 6-8 pages long and contain references to the texts. To pass, students are required to attend lectures and to participate actively in the seminars. The abstracts and summaries should be delivered successively each week and the paper should be handed in at the end of the course on March 22.
The course work and examination is evaluated according to the following degrees:

A = Excellent. To achieve this grade the student must be able to account for the content of the course literature clearly and precisely, critically analyse and compare concepts and theories, argue convincingly for the interpretations and conclusions, and use relevant parts of modern sociological theory in independent analyses of social phenomena.

B = Very good. To achieve this grade the student must be able to account for the content of the course literature clearly and precisely, critically analyse and compare concepts and theories, argue convincingly for interpretations and conclusions, and use relevant parts of modern sociological theory in relatively independent analyses of social phenomena.

C = Good. To achieve this grade the student must be able to account for the content of the course literature fairly clearly and precisely, critically analyse concepts and theories, provide arguments for interpretations and conclusions, and use relevant parts of modern sociological theory in relatively independent analyses of social phenomena.

D = Satisfactory. To achieve this grade the student must be able to give a fairly accurate account of the content of the course literature, analyse concepts and theories, provide arguments for interpretations and conclusions, and use relevant parts of modern sociological theory in analyses of social phenomena.

E = Sufficient. To achieve this grade the student must be able to give a fairly accurate account of the content of the course literature.

Fx = Insufficient. To achieve this grade the student must be able to account for the course literature to some extent.

F= Fail. The student cannot account for the content of the course literature in a way that is at all satisfactory.

E is needed to pass the course. Students with grade Fx or F at an exam are entitled to take another exam as long as the course is provided in order to achieve grade E at least. A student with E is not entitled to another examination to raise his/her degree. Students can request to have examination according to this syllabus up to three semesters after it has stopped to be valid. Students who received grade Fx or F on exams twice from the same examiner can request to be evaluated by another examiner. Such request should be sent to the Director of Studies.
9. Schedule

Monday 21.1  
13-16, F487  
Introduction and Lecture on Structural-Functionalism  
Talcott Parsons och Robert Merton (18, 21, 22).  
Jens Rydgren, Lars Udehn

Thursday 24.1  
13-16, FB610  
Lars Udehn

Tuesday 29.1  
13-16, FB610  
Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas (11, 12, 13, 16).  
Lars Udehn

Tuesday 5.2  
13-16, FB620  
Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu (5, 7, 14).  
Lars Udehn

Tuesday 12.2  
13-16, FB610  
The Cultural Turn (3, 6, 20, 24).  
Jens Rydgren

Tuesday 19.2  
13-16, FB610  
Structural Analysis (1, 10, 19)  
Jens Rydgren

Tuesday 26.2  
12-15, E487  
Rational Choice/Analytical Sociology (4, 8, 9, 17)  
Jens Rydgren

Monday 5.3  
13-16, FB610  
Feminism (to be added later)  
Barbara Hobson

Tuesday 12.3  
13-16, FB610  
Micro-Macro  
Jens Rydgren, Lars Udehn

10. Literature

Obs! There can be minor changes of articles, but not of books, in the list below.


3. Blumer, Herbert (1969) “Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection”. *Sociological Quarterly*, 10, 275-291. We have failed to create a link for this text, but
you can find it in the university library (electronic Journal) and if you seek it in Google Scholars.


In addition to the above literature, there will be some texts added on feminism and the relation between micro and macro.

The books by Bourdieu and Hedström are available at Akademibokhandeln, Frescati. Texts 7, 11, 14, 15, 19 and 22 will be for sale at the introduction. The remaining texts can be downloaded from the internet.

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