Modern Sociological Theory
7,5 ECTS credits

1. Decision
The Syllabus is approved by the board of the Department of Sociology at Stockholm University 2013-12-19.

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 perspectives. With “modern sociological theory” is understood the period after the decline of functionalism around 1960 and until today. Among the important fields and perspectives in recent sociology are cultural theory, rational choice, structural analysis, and organizational theory.

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 21 to March 11, 2014. 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

Tuesday 21.1  
13-16, FB720  
Jens Rydgren

Tuesday 28.1  
Rationality and Action (Boudon 2003; Coleman 1986; Elster 1982)
13-16, FB620  
Jens Rydgren

Tuesday 4.2  
Structural Analysis (Blau 1977; Feld 1981; Giddens 1984; Merton 1976)
13-16, FB720  
Jens Rydgren

Tuesday 11.2  
The Cultural Turn (Blumer 1969; Bourdieu 1984; Swidler 1986; Zerubavel 1996)
13-16, FB720  
Jens Rydgren

Tuesday 18.2  
Organization (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Hannan & Freeman 1977; + One additional paper).
13-16, FB620  
Lotta Stern

Thursday 20.2  
Micro-Sociology (Blumer 1966; Goffman 1961; Schutz 1940)
13-16, FB610  
Magnus Haglunds

Tuesday 25.2  
Power (Foucault 1982; Emerson 1962; + One additional paper).
13-16, FB720  
Lars Udehn

Tuesday 4.3  
Status and Stratification (Literature: TBA)
13-16, FB720  
Martin Hällsten

Tuesday 11.3  
Conclusion: Micro-Macro
13-16, FB720  
Jens Rydgren

10. Literature (TO BE UPDATED)

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


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 the relation between micro and macro. The books by Bourdieu and Hedström are available at Akademibokhandeln, Frescati. The book chapters will be for sale at the introduction. The journal articles can be downloaded from the internet.

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