

Modernity and Beyond
EP&E 357a/SOCY 350a
Tuesdays, 3.30-5.20
Fall 2006

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Brief description

In this course, we will analyze some of the main transformations that societies worldwide have undergone since the 1970's. The course will do this through a critical examination of the theories of modernity, post-modernity and globalization.

Expanded description

This course aims to analyze the structural transformations that societies are undergoing worldwide from the point of view of sociological theory and political philosophy. The basic institutions of modernity (capitalism, industrialism, nation-state, war and identity) are currently undergoing radical change. Some theorists have even argued that modernity has reached its end. To assess those claims, the course will provide a thorough and wide ranging introduction to the theories of modernity, post-modernity and globalization. The course is organized chronologically and is divided in 3 parts. In the first part, we will study the classic theories of modernization and investigate the interrelated processes of formal rationalization (Weber), commodification (Marx), functional differentiation (Durkheim) and individualization (Simmel). In the second part, we will analyze in more detail the philosophical, sociological and cultural discussions about post-modernism and post-modernity that emerged in the eighties. In the third and last part, we will present an overview on the current debates on globalization. The latter will be investigated as a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon from a multi-disciplinary perspective on all levels.

Class contact

This is a seminar class. There will be two hours of contact every week. In this period there will be an introductory lecture by the convener, a student presentation of the readings, followed by a class discussion of the theme at hand. Students are expected to participate in the class.

The convener will be available for more extended consultation after the class in his office (Allwin Hall, 31 Hillhouse Avenue, Room 213), or in the room where the class is held, or at any other time by appointment.

Assignments

Students will be asked to write one short essay (5 to 10 pages), a more extended final essay (10 to 15 pages), and to make a class presentation of the reading materials so as to initiate the discussion. The first paper will be a take-home exam and will be worth 30%.

Class presentation and participation will be evaluated at 20%, while the final essay will count for the remaining 50%.

Required Readings

The following books are required and can be purchased at Labyrinth.

Giddens, A.: *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber.*

Kumar, K.: *From Postindustrial to Postmodern Society*

Held, D., McGrew, A. and Perraton, J.: *Global Transformations.*

Course reader available at Tyco.

On Reserve

Waters, M. (ed.): *Modernity. Critical Concepts*, 4 volumes.

Syllabus

1. September 12 Introduction: Towards a Critical Sociology of Late Modernity
Overview of the Course and Administrative Issues.

2. September 19 Ways of Reading/Being

We will present a dual reading of the theories of modernity, post-modernity and globalization. These do not only refer to structural transformations that societies have undergone in the last three centuries/decades, but also to the different ways in which intellectuals have defined and reacted to social change and social pathologies

Crook, S., Pakulski, J. and Waters, M.: *Postmodernization. Change in Advanced Society*, pp. 1-46.

Alexander, J.C.: "Modern, Anti, Post, and Neo: How Intellectuals Explain Our Time", *The Meanings of Social Life*, pp. 193-228.

Part I: Modernity and Modernization

3. September 26 Alienation and Commodification (K. Marx)

The processes of modernization will be investigated by means of analysis of some classic texts by the founding fathers of sociology. We will start the study of modernization with an analysis of Marx's early writings on the alienation of labor that marks the advent of capitalism.

Marx, K.: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 63-77, 106-119, 132-169.

4. October 3 Rationalization and Disenchantment (M. Weber)

This continues the analysis of the classics, with a focus on Max Weber's analysis of the

rationalization in all spheres of life and an evaluation of his diagnosis of modernity in terms of loss of freedom and meaning.

Weber, M.: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 28-42 (“Author’s Introduction”), 102-125 (“Ascetism and the Spirit of Capitalism”).

Weber, M.: “Science as a Vocation”, pp. 129-156 in Gerth, H. and Mills, C.W.: *From Max Weber*, pp. 129-156.

5. October 10 Functional Differentiation and Anomie (E. Durkheim)

This continues the analysis of the classics, with a focus on Emile Durkheim’s analyses of the division of labor, organic solidarity and the cult of the individual.

Durkheim, E.: *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. 126-175, 328-341.

Durkheim, E.: “Individualism and the Intellectuals”, pp. 43-57 in *On Morality and Society*.

6. October 17 Depersonalization and Individualization (G. Simmel)

This concludes the analysis of the classics, with a focus on Georg Simmel’s analysis of commodification, rationalization and individualization in the market society and the metropolis.

Simmel, G.: *Philosophy of Money*, pp. 283-303.

Simmel, G.: “The Intersection of Social Spheres”, pp 95-110 in Lawrence, P.: *Georg Simmel. Sociologist and European*.

Simmel, G.: “The Metropolis and Mental Life”, pp. 174-185 in Frisby, D. and Featherstone, M. (eds.): *Simmel on Culture*.

Part II. Postmodernism and Late Capitalism

7. October 24 Modernization Theory and its Critics

From now on, we will investigate the structural and cultural transformations that societies worldwide have undergone in the last thirty years. We start our investigation with an analysis of Parsons’s modernization theory and contrast them with neo-Marxist and post-colonial critiques that have emerged in the center and the periphery.

Parsons, T.: “Evolutionary Universals in Society” in *On Institutions and Social Evolution*, pp. 296-326.

Horkheimer and Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. xiv-xix and 1-34.

Taylor, C.: “Two Theories of Modernity”, pp. 172-197 in Gaonkar, P. (ed.): *Alternative Modernities*.

8. October 31 Post-modernism(s)

We continue our investigation of social and cultural change with a critical analysis of post-modernism, the fad the eighties. We will discuss its appearance in the arts and the humanities (post-modernism and cultural studies), in philosophy (post-structuralism and deconstruction) and in the social sciences (late and post-modernity).

Baudrillard, J.: "Dropping out of History", pp. 120-129 in Genosko, G. (ed.): *The Uncollected Baudrillard*.

Calhoun, C.: "Postmodernism as Pseudohistory", pp. 97-131 in *Critical Social Theory*.

Ray, L. and Sayer, A.: "Introduction", pp. 1-24 in *Culture and Economy after the Cultural Turn*.

9. November 7 Post-Fordism, or the neo-liberal revolution

We continue our reflection on postmodernity with an investigation of the changes in the relations of production that mark the neo-liberal revolution of the eighties. The key concepts are flexible specialization, regimes of regulation and accumulation, post-Fordism.

Hall, S.: "The Meaning of New Times", pp. 223-237 in Morley, D. and Chen, K. (eds.): *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*.

Boltanski, L.: "The Left after May 1968 and the Longing for Total Revolution", *Thesis Eleven*, 69, 2002, pp. 1-20.

Wacquant, L.: "The Return of the Repressed. Urban Violence, 'Race' and Dualization in Three Advanced Societies", pp. 1-16 (@ <http://sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty/wacquant/>)

November 14 – No Class – Frédéric Vandenberghe in Brazil

November 21 – No Class - Thanksgiving Recess

10 – November 28 Postindustrialism, or the cyber revolution

This time we'll look at the changes in the mode of production and analyze the impact of the computer on economy, culture, society and identity. The key concepts are: post-industrialism, the information society, the network society.

Castells, M.: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*.

"Prologue: The Net and Self", pp. 1-28 in Vol. 1: *The Rise of the Network Society*.

"Conclusion: Making Sense of Our World", pp. 335-360 in Vol. 3: *End of Millenium*.

Part III: Globalizations

11. December 5 What is Globalization?

In the nineties the debate about post-modernity was followed up by a debate about globalization. Global studies emerged as a new interdisciplinary that analyzes globalization in all its dimensions (economic, political, cultural) and at all levels (international, transnational, regional and local).

Mc Grew, A.: *A Global Society?*, pp. 466-503 in Hall, S., Held, D. and McGrew, A.: *Modernity and its Futures*.

12 –December 12 Culture in the Global Age

We continue our investigation of globalization with an analysis of the impact of

deterritorialized transnational flows of people, goods, ideas and images on culture and exclusion. Moving into cultural anthropology, cultural and postcolonial studies, diaspora and migration studies, we will study the emergence of world culture/s.

Pieterse, J.N.: "Globalization as Hybridization", pp. 45-68 in Featherstone, M., Lash, S. and Robertson, R., eds.: *Global Modernities*.

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J.: "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference", pp. 33-51 in Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (eds.): *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*.

13 – December 13 (?) Conclusion: A Cosmopolitan Agenda for the 21st Century

This session concludes the course with an analysis of global governance, cosmopolitanism and anti-systemic social movements.

Held, D.: *The Global Covenant*, pp. x-xv, 55-70, 94-116.

Beck, U.: *Power in the Global Age*, pp. 43-50, 92-97, 166-170, 236-239.

Hardt, M. and Negri, T.: *Multitude. War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, pp. 51-62, 79-95, 341-358.

Bibliography

This indicative bibliography, to be used for research purposes, is divided in three parts

I. Modernity

Alexander, J.C.: *Theoretical Logic in Sociology*, 4 vols.

Bauman, Z.: *Modernity and the Holocaust*

Benhabib, S.: *Critique, Norm and Utopia*

Berman, M.: *All that is solid melts into air*.

Brubaker, R.: *The Limits of Rationality*

Escobar, A.: *Encountering Development*

Frisby, D.: *Fragments of Modernity. Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin*

Gerth, H. and Mills, C.W.: *From Max Weber*

Giddens, A.: *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*

Hall, S. et al., eds.: *Modernity. An Introduction to Society*.

Habermas, J.: *Theory of Communicative Action*

Löwith, K.: *Karl Marx and Max Weber*

Lukes, S.: *Emile Durkheim. His Life and Work*

Nisbet, R.: *The Sociological Tradition*

Ollman, B.: *Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*

Parsons, T.: *The Structure of Social Action*

Parsons, T.: *The Evolution of Societies*.

Polanyi, K.: *The Great Transformation*

Postone, M.: *Time, Labour and Social Domination*

Ritzer, G.: *The McDonaldization of Society*

Schluchter, W.: *Rationalism, Religion, and Domination : a Weberian perspective*

Wallerstein, E.: *The Modern World System, Vol.1*.

II. Post-Modernity

- Beck, U., Giddens, A. and Lash, S.: *Reflexive Modernization*.
Bell, D.: *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*
Bertens, H.: *The Idea of Postmodernism*.
Boltanski, L. and Chiapello, E.: *The New Spirit of Capitalism*
Calhoun, C.: *Critical Social Theory. Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference*.
Connor, S.: *Postmodern Culture*
Crook, S., Pakulski, J. and Waters, M.: *Postmodernization. Change in Advanced Societies*.
Harvey, D.: *The Condition of Postmodernity*
Jameson, F.: *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*
Lash, S. and Urry, J.: *Economies of Signs and Space*.
Lyotard, JF: *The Postmodern Condition*
Marcus, G. and Fisher, M.: *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*.
Offe, C.: *Disorganized Capitalism. Contemporary Transformations of Work and Politics*.
Soja, E.: *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*
Wagner, P.: *A Sociology of Modernity. Liberty and Discipline*.

III. Globalization

- Appadurai, A.: *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*.
Beck, U.: *World Risk Society*
Benhabib, S.: *The Claims of Culture. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*.
Brecher, J. et al.: *Globalization from below*
Castells, M.: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, 3 vols. Daedalus, 2000 Multiple Modernities. 129, 1, winter*.
M. Featherstone, M., Lash, S. and Robertson, R., eds.: *Global Modernities*.
Giddens, A.: *The Consequences of Modernity*.
Hannerz, U.: *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*.
Held, D.: *Democracy and the Global Order. From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*.
Huntington, S.: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*
Jameson, F. and Miyoshi, M. (eds.): *The Cultures of Globalization*
Kaldor, M.: *New and Old Wars. Organized Violence in a Global Era*.
Negri, A. and Hardt, M.: *Empire*.
Ong, A.: *Flexible Citizenship*.
Rosaldo, R.: *The Anthropology of Globalization*.
Sassen, S.: *Globalization and its Discontents. Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*
Therborn, G.: *European Modernity and Beyond. The Trajectory of European Societies 1945-2000*.
Tomlinson, J.: *Globalization and Culture*
Waters, M.: *Globalization*