

Introduction to Theories of Sociology and Communication

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Part One: The Basics of Sociology **Spring 2025**

1. Classic Theory (1): Emile Durkheim **April 10**

Durkheim's work establishes the foundation of sociology as a discipline, emphasizing the importance of social facts, the division of labor's role in societal cohesion, and positivism as methodology.

- *The Division of Labor in Society (1893)*
- *The Rules of Sociological Method (1895)*
- *Suicide: A Study in Sociology (1897)*

2. Classic Theory (2): Max Weber **April 17**

Weber's theories focus on the role of religion and economics in shaping society, introducing the concept of the "Protestant Ethic" and the importance of interpretative understanding of social behavior.

- *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905)*
- *The Methodology of Social Sciences (1904)*

3. Classic Theory (3): Karl Marx **April 24**

Marx's critical analysis of capitalism and historical materialism provides a framework for understanding the economic forces that shape society and the concept of class struggle.

- *The German Ideology (1845)*
- *Capital: Volume I (1867)*

4. The Chicago School **May 8**

This approach emphasizes empirical research and the importance of the urban environment in shaping human behavior, contributing significantly to the development of sociology in the United States.

- Robert E. Park: *The Immigrant Press and Its Control (1922)*,
- *The City (1925)*
- William F. Whyte: *Street Corner Society (1943)*
- Gaye Tuchman: *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality (1978)*

5. Frankfurt School: Critical Theory **May 15**

The Frankfurt School introduces a critical perspective on culture and mass communication, analyzing the ways in which culture industry and advanced industrial society manipulate and control the masses.

- Theodor W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer: *Dialectic of Enlightenment (1947)*
- Walter Benjamin: *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1936)*

6. Contemporary Theory (1): Erving Goffman **May 22**

Goffman's work explores the concept of self-presentation in everyday interactions, highlighting the performative aspects of social life and the significance of symbolic

interactionism.

- *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959)*

7. Contemporary Theory (2): Michel Foucault June 5

Foucault's theories delve into the relationships between power, knowledge, and social institutions, examining how discourses shape perceptions of madness, medicine, and sexuality.

- *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception (1963)*
- *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (1964)*
- *The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969)*
- *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction (1976)*

8. Contemporary Theory (3): Pierre Bourdieu June 19

Bourdieu introduces concepts such as cultural capital and habitus, focusing on how social and cultural hierarchies are maintained and the dynamics of taste and distinction.

- *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (1984)*

9. Contemporary Theory (4): John Urry June 26

This covers the contributions of John Urry to contemporary social theory, focusing on his analyses of mobility.

- *The Tourist Gaze (2002)*
- *Mobilities (2007)*

Part Two: The Basics of Communication Studies

10. The Beginning: Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz July 3

Their work on the two-step flow of communication and personal influence marks the beginning of understanding media effects beyond direct impacts, emphasizing the role of opinion leaders.

- *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications (1955)*
- Elihu Katz: *The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on an Hypothesis (1957, article)*

11. The Uses and Gratifications Studies July 10

This research shifts the focus from what media does to people to what people do with media, highlighting the active role of audiences in selecting and interpreting media content.

- Blumler, J.G., & Katz, E. (Eds.): *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research (1974)*

12. Cultural Studies: Encoding and Decoding July 17

Stuart Hall's model of encoding and decoding offers a critical approach to media studies, focusing on how media messages are produced, disseminated, and interpreted within different cultural contexts.

- *Stuart Hall: Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse (1973, article)*

13. Audience Ethnography

Morley's work represents a significant contribution to understanding how television is

experienced within the family setting, focusing on the intersection of media consumption with cultural and social dynamics.

- Ien Ang: *Watching Dallas (1985)*
- David Morley: *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure (1986)*

14. Global Cultural Flows

Arjun Appadurai's work on global cultural flows examines the complexities of cultural exchanges in a globalized world, emphasizing the impact of media and migration in shaping cultural dynamics and identity.

- Arjun Appadurai: *Modernity at Large (1996)*

15. Affect and Media

Exploration of how affect and emotions significantly influence media consumption, production, and the social interactions surrounding them.

- Sara Ahmed: *The Cultural Politics of Emotion (2004)*
- Brian Massumi: *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation (2002)*