

Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University - New Delhi

Ideology, Social Science and the Theoretical Domain

Optional for MPhil/PhD

Total Credits: 04

Objective of the Course

Social sciences as indicated through a plethora of works cannot be read in isolation from the historical contexts within which they emerge. For some scholars social theory becomes a contested field where politics of times is reflected. In a similar vein of arguments it becomes relevant to reflect why would a Parsonian framework or the notion of post-industrial society, for instance, would emerge during the Post-World War II situation. Similar questions would emerge concerning any other social theory. The debate on social theory and how to make sense of it led some scholars to make a distinction between two different ways of looking at the question of theory building in the context of ideologies. They pointed that while “the positivist believes that objective scientific inquiry will yield knowledge of society in the same way that it yields knowledge of nature” the “theorist of ideology charges that the positivist is under an illusion” because the knowledge of society gets influenced by the dominant social group. Historically, we have witnessed that the theoretical domain, which appears as a reflection of the experience, has been a battlefield where the challenges have not only by posed by assertion of the diverse social groups on the margin such as the emergence of a Dalit challenge to the whole orientation of Indian sociology itself but schools of thought have emerged challenging the existing body of knowledge and its orientation such as the subaltern school or feminism. This course would make an effort to introduce students to the significance of ideology and historical contexts in making of theories or producing particular forms of knowledge.

1. Contextualising the Theoretical Domain: This section will engage students with one of the significant debates concerning Enlightenment and positivism. In the same context it will look at the history of social science and some of the efforts to characterize it.

Suggested Readings (selected chapters)

Adorno, Theodor W., et.al. (1977) *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Heinemann: London (selected chapters)

Alexander, Jeffrey C. (1995) *Fin de Siècle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction, and the Problem of Reason*, Verso: London (selected chapters)

Eagleton, Terry (2003) *After Theory*, Basic Books: New York (selected chapters)

Foucault, Michel (1984) 'What is Enlightenment ?' in Rabinow, P. (ed) *The Foucault Reader*, Pantheon Books: New York, pp. 32-502

Kant, Immanuel (undated) 'What Is Enlightenment?', available at <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html> (Accessed Jan 12, 2010)

May, Tim and Powell, Jason (2008, 2nd ed.) *Situating Social Theory*, Open University Press: London (selected chapters)

MacIntyre, Alasdair (April, 1973) 'Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Special Issue on Revolution and Social Change, pp. 321-342

Rosenberg, Alexander (2008) *Philosophy of Social Science*, Westview Press: Boulder (selected chapters)

Wagner, Peter (2001) *A History and Theory of the Social Sciences: Not all that is Solid Melts into Air*, Sage Publications: London (selected chapters)

Winch, Peter (1990, 2nd edition) *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, Routledge: London (selected chapters)

2. Society and Theory-The Linkages: This section looks at the linkages between the society and theory and explores how intellectuals are products of their socioeconomic contexts. And therefore the knowledge produced itself becomes part of the whole process. It also introduces the emergence of alternatives because scholars felt that there has been a disjunct between the societal dynamics and knowledge produced.

Alcoff, Linda and Potter, Elizabeth (eds., 1993) *Feminist Epistemologies*, Routledge: New York and London (selected chapters)

Gramsci, Antonio (2004) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Orient Longman: Chennai (selected chapters)

Guha, Ranajit (2012, edited by Partha Chatterjee) *The Small Voice of History*, Permanent Black: New Delhi (selected chapters)

Habermas, Jurgen (2004) *Theory and Practice*, Polity Press: Oxford and Cambridge (selected chapters)

Horkheimer, Max (2002) *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, Continuum: New York (selected chapters)

Sarkar, Sumit (2010) 'The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies', in Ludden, David (ed.) *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*, Permanent Black: New Delhi

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1998) *In Other Worlds*, Routledge: New York and Oxon

Tuana, Nancy and Morgen, Sandra (eds., 2001) *Engendering Rationalities*, State University of New York Press: New York (selected chapters)

3. Ideology in social science: This section looks at the role of ideology in the shaping of social sciences and how the theoretical domain becomes an ideological domain as well.

Burawoy, Michael (2007) 'Open the Social Sciences: To whom and for what', *Portuguese Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. No.6, No.3

Eagleton, Terry (1991) *Ideology*, Verso: London ('Introduction')

Jameson, Frederic (1989) *The Ideologies of Theory: Essay 1971-1986, Volume I: Situations of Theory*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis (selected chapters)

Jameson, Frederic (2009) *The Cultural Turn, Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*, Verso: London (selected chapters)

Meszaros, Istevan (2013) *Ideology, Social Sciences and Philosophy*, Aakar Books: New Delhi (selected chapters)

Wallerstein, I. et. al (1996) *Open the Social Sciences: Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences*, Stanford University Press: Stanford

4. Social Science and its orientations: This section looks at the way social sciences and sociology in particular as a discipline is shaped in particular kind of larger socioeconomic and political environs. It also makes an effort to dwell upon on how scholars have indicated at biases, orientations and prejudices within disciplines.

Chatterjee, Partha (Aug. 31 - Sep. 6, 2002) 'Institutional Context of Social Science Research in South Asia', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 35

Chaudhuri, Maitrayee (2010) 'The Concept of Gender: Its Travels and Travails' in Chaudhuri, Maitrayee (ed.) *Sociology in India: Intellectual and Institutional Practices*, Rawat Publications: New Delhi and Jaipur

Guru, Gopal (Dec. 14-20, 2002) 'How Egalitarian Are the Social Sciences in India?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 50

Hachhethu, Krishna (Aug. 31 - Sep. 6, 2002) 'Social Sciences Research in Nepal', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 35

Kumar, Vivek (2010) 'Teaching Caste and the Hindu Social Order: Dalits in Indian Sociology' in Chaudhuri, Maitrayee (ed.) *Sociology in India: Intellectual and Institutional Practices*, Rawat Publications: New Delhi and Jaipur

Zaidi, S. Akbar (Aug. 31 - Sep. 6, 2002) 'Dismal State of Social Sciences in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 35