

Sociology of Intellectuals: A Global Perspective

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Purpose of the Course

Straddling the roles of prophets, critics, political activists and scientists, intellectuals defy clear categorization. They often portray themselves as “free floating” and independent from universities, political parties and state power. Yet, the reality often falls short of the ideal—intellectuals worldwide have not always lived up to the autonomous self-image and often face a number of dilemmas. In this course, we will venture into the complexity of intellectual life.

This course is intended as a survey of sociological studies of intellectuals from a global and comparative perspective. Five fundamental questions will be addressed in this course: (1) Who are the intellectuals? (2) Do intellectuals constitute a class? (3) What role do/should intellectuals play in the social order? (4) What happens when intellectuals meet politics? (5) What accounts for one’s intellectual pursuit and political orientation? Upon completion of the course, you are expected to grasp the major sociological literature on intellectuals and design your own inquiry into a topic related to the field.

Rules of the Road

1. We start and end class on time.
2. Turn off your cell phone or set it to silent.
3. Check your CU email account regularly.
4. Always bring the reading materials to class.

Texts

1. Pierre Bourdieu. 1988. *Homo Academicus*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
2. Lewis A. Coser. 1970. *Men of Ideas: A Sociologist's View*. New York: Free Press.
3. George Konrád and Iván Szelényi. 1979. *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
4. Charles Kurzman. 2008. *Democracy Denied, 1905–1915: Intellectuals and the Fate of Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
5. Mark Leonard. 2008. *What Does China Think?* New York: PublicAffairs.

Throughout this course, we will read other articles and book chapters, which are available through the course Web page.

Requirements

Class participation and active learning are vital to the success in this course. Participation includes attending class regularly, and doing the readings and assignments prior to class. You are expected to keep up with the readings, to think critically at all times, to participate in group-discussions, and to ask and answer questions. Class discussion is encouraged.

There will be **10 quizzes**. The quizzes will be based on the readings of each meeting. You need to turn in a **research paper or proposal**, with the length of around 8–10 typed, double-spaced pages (excluding references, which are required, however), by the end of this semester.

Components of your grade

Class discussions	20%
Quizzes	40%
Research paper or proposal	40%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A = 93–100	A- = 90–92.9	
B+ = 87–89.9	B = 83–86.9	B- = 80–82.9
C+ = 77–79.9	C = 73–76.9	C- = 70–72.9
D+ = 67–69.9	D = 63–66.9	D- = 60–62.9
F = Below 60		

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

THEME 1: LOCATING THE INTELLECTUALS

Class 1: Introduction

Class 2: Defining the Intellectuals

Lewis A. Coser. 1970. *Men of Ideas: A Sociologist's View*. New York: Free Press. Pp. 3–132.

Zygmunt Bauman. 1992. "Love in Adversity: On the State and the Intellectuals, and the State of the Intellectuals." *Thesis Eleven* 31:81–104.

Study Questions:

- Do "intellectuals" have different meanings and indications in different societies and in different historical periods?
- From what aspects have sociologists sought to define intellectuals?
- Why does Bauman say that any attempt to define intellectuals is a matter of self-definition?

THEME 2: INTELLECTUALS IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

Class 3: Societal locations

Lewis A. Coser. 1970. *Men of Ideas: A Sociologist's View*. New York: Free Press. Pp. 247–362.

Study Question:

- What different societal locations do intellectuals occupy in the two contrasting perspectives described by Coser?

Class 4: Cultural capital

Pierre Bourdieu. 1988. *Homo Academicus*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Study Question:

- In Bourdieu's study, in what sense are different types of capital related to the stratification of intellectuals in contemporary France?

THEME 3: INTELLECTUALS IN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES

Class 5: Intellectuals and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe

Gil Eyal. 2000. "Anti-Politics and the Spirit of Capitalism: Dissidents, Monetarists and the Czech Transition to Capitalism." *Theory and Society* 29:49–92.

The Economist. 2008 (August 9th–15th). "Speaking Truth to Power: Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Example—and the Heirs Who Failed Him" (p. 9) and "The Hand That Feeds Them" (pp. 24–26).

Study Question:

- What different visions of the society did the intellectuals have in Eyal's article?

Class 6: Intellectuals in China

Mark Leonard. 2008. *What Does China Think?* New York: PublicAffairs.

Study Question:

- *What major groups of intellectuals in contemporary China does Leonard describe?*

THEME 4: NEW CLASS THEORIES I

Class 7: Rise of the New Class?

Daniel Bell. 1991. "The New Class: A Muddled Concept." Pp. 144–164 in *The Winding Passage: Sociological Essays and Journeys*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Irving Kristol. 1978. *Two Cheers for Capitalism*. New York: Basic. (Selections)

Study Question:

- *Why is the New Class a muddled concept to Bell?*

Class 8: A flawed universal class?

Alvin W. Gouldner. 1978. "The New Class Project, I: A Frame of Reference, Theses, Conjectures, Arguments, and an Historical Perspective on the Role of Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in the International Class Contest of the Modern Era." *Theory and Society* 6:153–203.

Alvin W. Gouldner. 1978. "The New Class Project, II: A Frame of Reference, Theses, Conjectures, Arguments, and an Historical Perspective on the Role of Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in the International Class Contest of the Modern Era." *Theory and Society* 6:343–389.

Study Question:

- *Why does Gouldner see the New Class as a "flawed universal class"?*

THEME 5: NEW CLASS THEORIES II

Class 9: Free floating? Organic?

Karl Mannheim. 1936. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. London, UK: Kegan Paul. Pp. 153–164.

Antonio Gramsci. 2000. "Intellectuals and Education." Pp. 300–322 in *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–1935*, edited by D. Forgacs. New York: New York University Press.

Iván Szelényi and Bill Martin. 1988. "The Three Waves of New Class Theories." *Theory and Society* 17:645–667.

Study Questions:

- *What does Mannheim mean by "free-floating" intellectuals?*
- *Why does Gramsci say that every class has its own intellectuals?*

Class 10: Class power?

George Konrád and Iván Szelényi. 1979. *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*. New York:

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Study Question:

- According to Konrád and Szelényi, what sets intellectuals apart from other classes?

THEME 6: THE DEATH OF THE INTELLECTUALS?

Class 11: The university wrecking intellectuals?

Julien Benda. 1928. *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. New York: William Morrow. Pp. 3–29.

Russell Jacoby. 1987. *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic. Pp. 3–53.

Study Questions:

- Would Benda agree with Jacoby or Bloom?
- Why does Jacoby say that the university is wrecking intellectuals?

Class 12: Intellectuals wrecking the university?

Allan Bloom. 1987. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Pp. 313–382.

Richard A. Posner. 2003. *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1–82.

Study Questions:

- Why is Bloom concerned about the university being wrecked by (some) intellectuals? What intellectuals does he refer to?
- Why is Posner concerned about intellectuals going to the public?

THEME 7: INTELLECTUALS AND POLITICS

Class 13: Intellectuals and democratization

Charles Kurzman. 2008. *Democracy Denied, 1905–1915: Intellectuals and the Fate of Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Study Question:

- According to Kurzman, what collective agent was most directly responsible for the wave of democratization in the early twentieth century?

Class 14: Intellectuals and the power

Václav Havel. 1978. "The Power of the Powerless."

http://www.vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=clanky&val=72_aj_clanky.html&typ=HTML.

Said, Edward W. 1994. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York: Pantheon. Pp. 85–102.

Edward Shils. 1972. "The Intellectuals and the Power: Some Perspectives for Comparative Analysis." Pp.3–22 in *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Study Questions:

- According to Havel, what is the power of the powerless? What is his vision of

- intellectuals' political engagement?*
- According to Said, what is intellectuals' role in the society?
 - What historical traditions in forming the relations of intellectuals to authority does Shils identify?

THEME 8: INTELLECTUAL CHANGE

Class 15: Networks

Randall Collins. 1998. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1–79.

Study Questions:

- In Collins's theory, what is the role of network structure in shaping intellectual change? How does he account for intellectual change using his theory of interaction ritual chains?

Class 16: Intellectual field

Randall Collins. 1998. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 80–133.

Pierre Bourdieu. 1969. "Intellectual Field and Creative Project." *Social Science Information* 8:89–119.

Study Questions:

- What does Bourdieu mean by the intellectual field?
- Do Collins's and Bourdieu's theories have anything in common? What differentiates them?

THEME 9: INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Class 17: "Succeed" and "fail"

Michèle Lamont. 1987. "How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida." *American Journal of Sociology* 93:584–622.

Neil McLaughlin. 1998. "How to Become a Forgotten Intellectual: Intellectual Movements and the Rise and Fall of Erich Fromm." *Sociological Forum* 13:215–246.

Study Questions:

- According to Lamont, how did Derrida, along with the literary critics, reframe his theory?
- In Camic's article, what is the difference between the "content-fit model" and the "reputational model?"
- Why did Derrida "succeed" while Fromm "fail"?

Class 18: Self-concept

Charles Camic. 1992. "Reputation and Predecessor Selection: Parsons and the Institutionalists." *American Sociological Review* 57:421–445.

Neil Gross. 2002. "Becoming a Pragmatist Philosopher: Status, Self-Concept, and Intellectual

Choice." *American Sociological Review* 67:52–76.

Study Questions:

- In Camic's article, what is the difference between the "content-fit model" and the "reputational model"?
- How does Gross's account of intellectual pursuit differ from that of Bourdieu's and of Collins's?

THEME 10: INTELLECTUALS AND PROFESSIONS

Class 19: Embeddedness

Marion Fourcade-Gourinchas. 2001. "Politics, Institutional Structures, and the Rise of Economics: A Comparative Study." *Theory and Society* 30:397–447.

Study Question:

- What does Fourcade-Gourinchas mean by "the embeddedness of knowledge in social structures"?

Class 20: Performativity

Donald MacKenzie. 2006. *An Engine, Not a Camera: How Financial Models Shape Markets*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp. 1–67, 119–177.

Study Question:

- What does MacKenzie mean by the "performativity of economics"?

THEME 11: FORMATION OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Class 21: Intellectual taste

Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 99–317.

Study Question:

- For Bourdieu, what is the key in the formation of intellectuals' political orientations?

Class 22: Political orientation

Robert J. Brym. 1988. "Structural Location and Ideological Divergence: Jewish Marxist Intellectuals in Turn-of-the-Century Russia." Pp. 359–379 in *Social Structures: A Network Approach*, edited by B. Wellman and S. D. Berkowitz. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Robert Nozick. 1986. "Why Do Intellectuals Oppose Capitalism?" In *The Future of Private Enterprise*, edited by C. E. Aronoff and J. L. Ward. Atlanta: Business Pub. Division, College of Business Administration, Georgia State University.

Jerome Karabel. 1996. "Towards a Theory of Intellectuals and Politics." *Theory and Society* 25:205–233.

Study Questions:

- Is Brym's study of structural locations of intellectuals in line with Bourdieu's analysis?

- *Are you satisfied with Nozick's analysis?*
- *Is there anything missing in Karabel's propositions on the genesis of intellectuals' political ideology?*

THEME 12: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS & COURSE WRAP-UP