

# European Sociology and Contemporary Societies

Prof. Dr. Klaus Müller

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Time Slot:	Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m.
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	45
ECTS Credits:	6

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## Course Description

Sociology provides concepts and theories to describe, analyse and explain the emergence, crises, and transformations of modern societies. Classical sociologists like Marx, Weber, Durkheim observed how the rise of capitalism, the modern state, science, and new secular ideologies brought about a new form of society. Political conflicts and social struggles were part of the 'great transformations' which characterized the 20th century. Present-day sociologists from Michel Foucault to Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens are concerned with new challenges: mass surveillance, urban and environmental decay, mass migration, and the populist erosion of democracy.

The aim of the course will be to portray prominent sociologists and apply their ideas to the challenges of our time.

## Student Profile

Should be in their fourth semester of college/university education or beyond.

## Assignments and Grading

Midterm Exam: 300 Points

Final Exam: 300 Points

Attendance, presentation, and participation: 200 Points

Independent Project Report: 200 Points

Completion of the Midterm Exam as well as the Final Exam is needed for a grade.

Participants are expected to **read the assigned literature** in advance of the sessions and to **contribute to the discussions**.

**Presentations** (15 to 20 minutes): students prepare for a specific session (starting with session 2). The presentations (which should come with **short outlines of 1-2 pages**) should sketch the main theses of the specified readings, identify different opinions on the topic under discussion, raise questions and/or articulate problems of understanding. **Personal statements** are especially welcome. Connections to earlier sessions should be pointed out.

**Independent Project reports** (4-5 pages): Observations of social life, habits, and manners during the stay in Berlin or travels across Europe; perceived differences from your own society.

**Topics for the Independent Project report** (additional proposals possible):

1. Coffee House Cultures. Comparative sociological observations
2. Varieties of Europe. Impressions and comparisons during travels and excursions
3. Dangerous places in Berlin. Perception of crime and other challenges

FUB Grade	Points of 1,000
1.0	980-1,000
1.3	950-979
1.7	900-949
2.0	850-899
2.3	800-849
2.7	750-799
3.0	700-749
3.3	650-699
3.7	600-649
4.0	500-599
5.0	< 500

## Attendance

Attendance in class is mandatory. We also expect you to be punctual out of respect to both your instructor and your fellow students. If you cannot attend class because you are ill, please report sick to the FU-BEST office ([info@fubest.fu-berlin.de](mailto:info@fubest.fu-berlin.de)) and to your instructor by e-mail before class.

Absences are **excused** in case of **illness**; however, for the fifth sick day and every other sick day after that (consecutive or cumulative, counted not per individual course but for the program overall), you will need to turn in a doctor's notice ("Attest" in German) to the FU-BEST office in order for them to count as excused, too.

If you miss an exam due to an excused absence, your instructor and the FU-BEST team will arrange a make-up exam for you; you may also be entitled to a term paper deadline extension. If you, however, do not fulfill all course requirements needed for a grade by the (later) date determined by the program, passing the course is no longer possible.

Please also note that if you miss more than half of a course's sessions (even if due to excused absence), passing the course is no longer possible.

Personal travel and visits by relatives or friends are **not** accepted as reasons for absence (i.e., absences for these reasons always count as unexcused).

Regarding **unexcused** absences, please note the following:

- Any unexcused absence has consequences for at least the participation portion of the grade.
- Two unexcused absences lead to a formal warning and a lowering of the course grade by a fraction.
- Three unexcused absences will result in an "F" (5.0) on the transcript.

An absence for more than half of a particular day's session will be considered an absence for that day.

## Literature

Digitized readings posted on the online learning platform Blackboard.

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## Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Readings, etc.
Session 1	<p><b>Introduction: Sociology. Traditions and Topics.</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turner, Bryan S.: <i>The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, Introduction.</li> <li>• Giddens, Anthony &amp; Sutton, Philip 2021: <i>Sociology</i>, 9th ed.: Polity Press, Chapter 1.</li> </ul>
Session 2	<p><b>Topic: The Making of Modern Globalization: Creating the World Market</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marx, Karl &amp; Engels, Friedrich: "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), in McLellan, David ed.: <i>Karl Marx. Selected Writings</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 245-255.</li> <li>• Hobsbawm, Eric 1975: <i>The Age of Capital</i>, London: Abacus, pp. 64-87.</li> </ul>
Session 3	<p><b>Topic: World Religion and the Rise of Modern Capitalism. Religion in Post-secular Societies?</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weber, Max 1920: The Viewpoint of Sociology of World Religions (original: 'Vorbemerkung'), in <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>, London 1979: Routledge, pp. xxix-xlii.</li> <li>• Giddens, Anthony 1971: <i>Capitalism &amp; Modern Social Theory</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 124-132.</li> <li>• Giddens, Anthony &amp; Sutton, Philip 2021: <i>Sociology</i>, 9th ed.: Polity Press, Chapter 18.</li> </ul>
Session 4	<p><b>Topic: Surveillance, Discipline &amp; Power</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foucault, Michel 1975: <i>Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison</i>, NY: Vintage Books, pp. 195-228.</li> <li>• Zuboff, Shoshona 2021: The Coup We Are Not Talking About, <i>New York Times</i>, January 29, 2021.</li> </ul>
Session 5	<p><b>Topic: Mass Immigration: The Transformation of European Societies?</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collier, Paul 2013: <i>Exodus. How Migration is Changing Our World</i>. Oxford University Press, Chapter 1 &amp; 2.</li> <li>• Giddens, Anthony &amp; Sutton, Philip 2021: <i>Sociology</i>, 9th ed.: Polity Press, Chapter 8.</li> </ul>
Session 6	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
Session 7	<p><b>Topic: Urbanisation, Urban Transformations and Urban Decline</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giddens, Anthony &amp; Sutton, Philip 2021: <i>Sociology</i>, 9th ed.: Polity Press, Chapter 13.</li> <li>• Bourdieu, Pierre et al.: <i>The Weight of the World. Social Suffering in Contemporary Society</i>. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 123-129.</li> </ul>

<b>Session 8 &amp; 9</b>	<b>Excursion (Double Session): Migration, Urban Transformations and Urban Decline</b>  <p>Learning objectives: The walking tour in Kreuzberg visits some places of the old squatter scene, spaces of the alternative underground, and of former and ongoing migrant struggles. The week's readings (incl. current newspaper articles) provide context to better understand some of these contestations and, more generally, the challenges of/for urban transformations in a dynamic metropolis.</p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hockenos, Paul 2017: <i>Berlin calling. A story of anarchy, music, the wall, and the birth of the new Berlin</i>. New Press (selected chapters).</li> </ul>
<b>Session 10</b>	<b>Topic: Nature and Society. Resource Exploitation, Pollution, and Climate Change</b>  <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giddens, Anthony &amp; Sutton, Philip 2021: <i>Sociology</i>, 9th ed.: Polity Press, Chapter 5.</li> <li>Hill, Alice &amp; Martinez-Diaz 2020: Adapt or Perish. Preparing for the Inescapable Effects of Climate Change, <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 2020, Vol. 99, NO 1, pp. 107-117.</li> </ul>
<b>Session 11</b>	<b>Topic: Marx and Weber Today: Global Power Shift and Global Crisis</b>  <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huntington, Samuel 1996: The West: Unique, Not Universal, in <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, Nov/Dec. 1996, pp. 28-46.</li> <li>Ikenberry, G. John 2004: Three Worlds. The West, East and South and the Competition to Shape Global Order, in <i>International Affairs</i>, Vol.100, No 1, pp. 121–138.</li> </ul>
<b>Session 12</b>	<b>Topic: Global Populism and the Return of Nationalism</b>  <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judis, John B. 2018: <i>The Nationalist Revival. Trade, Immigration, and the Revolt Against Globalization</i>, NY: Columbia University Press, Introduction &amp; Chapter 1.</li> </ul>
<b>Session 13</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>