

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



POLS1316 The History of Debates in Sociology and Anthropology

[45h+15h exercises] 8 credits

This course is not taught in 2005-2006

Language: French

Level: First cycle

Aims

The general objective of this course is to provide students with the knowledge and conceptual tools they need to deconstruct and rebuild for themselves not social phenomena, but the social theories intended to identify and explain them and direct attempts to regulate, transform and control them. The aim therefore, is to consider the context of genesis of the theories (where do they come from? which societies produce them, which conflicts?), their context of application (to whom or for what are they of use?) and the philosophical preconceptions underpinning them. Although the course does not adopt a uniquely historical approach, it is nevertheless this approach that forms the main thread.

In particular, students should, by the end of the course, have acquired a capacity to:

- give an account of some important theoretical and meta-theoretical controversies within the social sciences
- identify the historical and practical context of the formulation of a theory
- analyse the philosophical and political preconceptions of a particular theorist or school of thought

Main themes

The course tries to avoid presenting the history of these disciplines either as the development of one great theory, or as a succession of unrelated, arbitrary and immeasurable theories. Instead, the course attempts to reconstruct this history around major theoretical issues in social sciences in terms of a series of theoretical dialogues set within specific historical contexts. It will cover subjects characteristic of both the 19th and 20th centuries.

The protagonists in the debates discussed during the course have their philosophical roots in research traditions and their historical roots in societies whose preconceptions and conflicts they share.

Content and teaching methods

The reading of at least a book and classic texts

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Evaluation: The examination takes the form of an essay written in the library (6 hours) in connection with one of the major issues raised during the course.