

Open Faculty of Economic and Social Politics



OPES1330 Sociology : social structures and social change

[30h] 5 credits

Teacher(s): Jean Nizet, Marie Verhoeven, Bernadette Wynants
Language: French
Level: First cycle

Aims

At the end of this course, students will be able :

- to establish a clear distinction between an analytical sociological approach, a normative evaluation and expertise.
- to integrate the main components of sociological analysis (theoretical building, epistemological breaking from common sense and official categories, replacing social structures in their historical context, distinguishing between micro, meso and macro-level analysis#);
- to understand the classical paradigms in sociology (functionalism, structuralism, marxism, rational choice theories#) and their analytical and ideological foundations; and to understand the main debates in contemporary sociology (constructivism, interactionism, structuration theories, #);
- to link the analysis of social structure to the analysis of (individual and collective) social agency ;
- to establish a link between theoretical concepts and social processes experienced in current life.

Main themes

In order to reach these goals, the course will focus on the presentation and discussion of at least two paradigms, which will be used heuristically to analyse some relevant contemporary social issues. The paradigms could for example be mobilised in order to analyse

- social classes, social status, assets, social fields and their changing processes;
- culture, cultural models and symbolical systems, and their changing processes;
- social control, power relationship and social movement;
- socialisation processes, individuation process (identity building), contemporary individualisation process;
- "la question sociale" (the social issue ?) and its contemporary dynamics of change.

This course will provide the basics to others, to which it will therefore be connected :

- sociology of organisations" (power and legitimacy issues);
- "psychological and social bases of inequalities and discrimination" (individual and collective psychosocial effects of inequality)
- " sociology of cultural inequalities" (symbolical and cultural inequality as a specific issue) ;
- social actors : mobilisation and demobilisation" (collective agency and social change).