#4 - Origins

1. Lecture:
2. Activity: Discussion (20 min)

Since ancient times, people have been fascinated by the relationship between individuals and the societies to which they belong. Many topics studied in modern sociology were also studied by ancient philosophers in their desire to describe an ideal society, including theories of social conflict, economics, social cohesion, and power.

People have been thinking like sociologists long before sociology became a separate academic discipline: Plato and Aristotle (382-322 BC), Confucius (581-479 BC), Khaldun (1332-1406), and Voltaire (1694-1778) all set the stage for modern sociology.

But it was until the great changes of the Industrial Revolution in Europe that sociology became its own discipline.

#1 Industrial Revolution Crash Course Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCpqN7GmLYk

Explain what was going on in society.

#2

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western Europe was rocked by technical, economic, and social changes that forever changed the social order.

The dramatic social changes of the Industrial Revolution (mid-1700s to mid-1800s) helped spark the development of the social sciences, as early sociological thinkers struggled with the vast implications of economic, social, and political revolutions.

All the major figures in the early years of sociology thought about the “great transformation” from simple, preliterate societies to massive, complex, industrial societies.

#2 Next we’ll move on to some of the key figures

#Auguste Comte

* The French philosopher, Auguste Comte, coined the term sociology, which he saw as the scientific study of human behavior and society.
* believed that social scientists could study society using the same scientific methods utilized in natural sciences
* French society at the time was experiencing changes stemming from industrialization and urbanization that some people believed would lead to chaos and massive disorder. Comte tried to understand how societies construct order out of what appears to be chaos.
* He was a strong advocate of social planning and believed that scientific knowledge could be used to improve people’s lives.

# Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)

* first to translate Comte’s writing from French to English and thereby introduced sociology to English-speaking scholars
* credited with the first systematic methodological international comparisons of social institutions in two of her most famous sociological works: Society in America (1837) and Retrospect of Western Travel (1838).
* Martineau is known for expanding the scope of sociological research to include neglected institutions, neglected members such as women, and neglected issues like marriage, children, race relations, and domestic and religious life.

It is important to recognize that the early theorists—Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber—were products of their own histories. Who they were affected how they viewed the world and what they defined as a problem to be studied.

Although in one way or another they all studied inequality, stratification, and the distribution of power in society, they neglected to study women and racial minorities.

# Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)

a French social psychologist and philosopher.

He established sociology as a scientific discipline by developing methodological principles that guide research in *Rules of the Sociological Method* (1895).

-concerned about developing a methodology, a set of principles to guide their research

-he coined the term social facts, which were aspects of social life that shape individual actions. He believed we should analyze these social facts as rigorously as objects or natural events.

* Q: How do societies hold together? A. Solidarity

-Society was like an organism, with specialized parts that work together as an integrated whole - This social cohesion he called organic solidarity.

* Q: How do societies exert control over people’s actions? A: Social Constraints  
  Durkheim was also interested in how society exerts control over people’s actions. This social control is what Durkheim called social constraints. Social constraints can become weak in times of rapid social change, which can lead to another one of Durheim’s terms, anomie. anomie (where individuals feel that their lives lack meaning), this may lead people to commit suicide.

Durkheim’s study of suicide examined the anomie that comes when social constraints break down during periods of rapid social change.

Durkheim asks us to think of social solidarity and stability as something special to be explained.

# Karl Marx (1818–1883)

Karl Marx, a German economic, political, and social theorist.

In his materialist conception of history, Marx saw economics as the driving force for social change and the source of conflict in society.

According to Marx, capitalism creates conflict because the rich exploit the poor and the poor seek ways to overcome that exploitation.

For Marx, this conflict brought on by the exploitation of the poor by the rich under capitalism will bring social change.

As we will see elsewhere in the textbook, Marx continues to influence broad theoretical perspectives in sociology that treat conflict, not order, as a normal feature of society.

* At the time he was developing his theories, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism led to great disparities in wealth between the owners of the factories and workers. Capitalism, an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of goods and the means to produce them, grew in many nations.
* Marx predicted that inequalities of capitalism would become so extreme that workers would eventually revolt.
* This would lead to the collapse of capitalism, which would be replaced by communism. Marx believed that communism was a more equitable system than capitalism.
* While his economic predictions may not have come true in the time frame he predicted, Marx’s idea that social conflict leads to change in society is still one of the major theories used in modern sociology.

# Max Weber (1864–1920)

Max Weber, a German sociologist, philosopher, jurist, and political economist whose ideas profoundly influenced social theory and social research.

Like Marx, Max Weber was also interested in capitalism. But Weber saw values and ideas, not economics, as the impetus for social change.

He studied the role religion played in the development of capitalism.

In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904), Weber argued that certain aspects of Christian beliefs and practices influenced the development of capitalism.

Weber also observed that social, economic, and cultural life was becoming organized according to principles of efficiency, which he called the rationalization of society.

Out of rationalization came a new form of organization, the bureaucracy. Weber’s study of bureaucracy continues to play an important role in sociology.

# William Edward Burghardt “W. E. B.” Du Bois (1868–1963)

W.E.B. Du Bois is a critical figure in the development of sociology. He made lasting and profound contributions to the social sciences by pioneering several sociological methodologies. For many years though, these efforts were largely ignored and omitted from history.

W. E. B. Du Bois was the first African American to graduate from Harvard University.

He was critical of Marx for having ignored the importance of race in an understanding of social inequality.

Du Bois argued that race, or “the color line,” continued long past slavery was abolished to be an important determinant of social stratification in the United States.

Du Bois connected race to social and economic stratification. As an advocate of social reform, Du Bois was one of the founding members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Du Bois has been an extremely influential thinker, and the current Black Lives Matter movement shows some of his ideas.

# Activity

* Opioid Crisis

https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/3/23/14987892/opioid-heroin-epidemic-charts

Divide the class into several groups, with each group representing a major theorist: Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, or Du Bois.

opiod crisis, student loan debt crisis, bullying, unemployment, gun violence