

SOC 1120-01: Lecture-01 Notes

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Main Topics

1. Making Sense of Change

- (a) Social change is constant (though it ebbs and flows), and happens in dialogue with our past both as we remember/imagine it ("historical memory") and as it happened.
- (b) Making sense of this change is a challenge for those living in the society in question, and a focus for sociologists who want to understand that society.
- (c) Much of our social and political discourse today is a product of a specific set of historical memories about the 1950s and the 1960s, and reflects deeply held beliefs about America.

2. Three Parables

- (a) Contemporary health trends, which are characterized by significant population health disparities, challenge key elements of this set of historical memories.

3. What is Sociology?

- (a) Sociology is a social science discipline focused on how *groups* (big and small) function.
- (b) Social theory is our way of framing the question that we ask and the assumptions we make about how groups function - it is our way of *making sense of change*.
- (c) Sociology has a particular set of orientations towards how we see the world, how we frame questions, and what we choose to focus on with these questions. This is often generally described as the *sociological imagination* while the specific ways theory informs our questions is called *praxis*.

Key Terms

- health disparity
- historical memory
- praxis

- social science
- sociological imagination
 - individual troubles
 - societal issues
- stroke belt, the
- theory
 - classical theory
 - contemporary theory

Key Figures

- Bourdieu, Pierre
- Collins, Patricia Hill
- Du Bois, W.E.B.
- Durkheim, Émile
- Foucault, Michel
- Gramsci, Antonio
- Marx, Karl
- Weber, Max

Big Questions

1. What is sociology?
2. What is the “sociological imagination”?
3. What role does social theory play in sociology?
4. What is “classical theory”, and who are some of the leading thinkers associated with it?
5. What are some examples of inequalities in population health outcomes?

Extras

Additional links and resources are available at:

<https://slu-soc1120.github.io/docs/lecture-01/>