

# A Science of Society I

BSU103

Semester 1

Credit Hours 03

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce students to the study of the modern society, state, law, knowledge and selfhood. While retaining a focus on Pakistani state and society, students will encounter theoretical concepts and methods from numerous social science disciplines, including economics, politics, anthropology, psychology and sociology, and learn to think theoretically by drawing on examples and case studies from our own social context. Students will be introduced to the works of prominent social theorists from both western and non-western contexts. Instruction will include the use of written texts, audio-visual aids and field visits.

## II. OVERALL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Cultivation of critical thinking, the ability to ask questions, engage in reasoned debate and tolerance of opposing points of view Nurturing of oral and written skills, as well as creative and innovative traits more generally.

## III. ASSESSMENT:

Following is the assessment criteria:

Formative Assessments (25%) and summative assessments (75%) will both be employed. Formative assessments include a two page, take-home fortnightly review of compulsory class readings (10%); group debates (10%); and overall class participation (5%). Summative assessments include a mid-term examination to be conducted in the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the semester (25%); and a final examination at the end of the course (50%).

## IV. CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:

It is expected that all assignments represent original work not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course. Cheating, plagiarism, or any other violations of the honour code will be dealt with seriously.

### 1. Module 1: Society

- 1.1 Social Science and Modernity
- 1.2 Major social phenomena in the modern world that we seek to explain: class, gender, ethnicity, caste, and nation.
- 1.3 How do various social science/humanities explain societal structures (socialization) and human behavior (choices & action)?

### 2. Module 2: State

- 2.1 The Modern State and Colonialism
- 2.2 Nations as Constructed Entities
- 2.3 Theorizing state in Pakistan and beyond

### 3. Module 3: Economy

- 3.1 Defining 'the economy'. What exactly is the modern economy? We explore how economists have answered this question.
- 3.2 Economic Sociology - putting the social back into the economic. We look at how sociologists have studied the economy and contrast this with what we learned from the week before
- 3.3 The Informal Economy. The term 'informal' is often used to describe much of Pakistan's economy. We discover what scholars mean by the formal/informal distinction, how informal economies function, and how they might be expected to evolve over time

### 4. Module 4: Self

- 4.1 Understanding Structure and Agency
- 4.2 Ideology and Subjectivity
- 4.3 Who Counts as a 'Self'? Liberalism and the Problem of Non-Persons

## 5. History/Knowledge

- 5.1 On Knowledge/Power
- 5.2 Colonial Histories and their Present
- 5.3 Alternative Ways of Knowing

### Compulsory Readings:

1. Elliott, A. (2009) *Contemporary Social Theory*. New York: Routledge, 3-16.
2. Qadeer, M. (2006) *Pakistan - Social and Cultural Transformation in a Muslim Nation*. London; New York: Routledge, 1-18 (Chapter 1).
3. Systems of Stratification | Boundless Sociology (no date). Available at: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/systems-of-stratification/> (Accessed: 29 May 2021).
4. Gazdar, H., 2007. Class, caste or race: veils over social oppression in Pakistan. *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp.86-88.
5. Barth, F., 1967. On the study of social change. *American anthropologist*, 69(6), pp.661-669.
6. Bhambra, G.K., 2011. Talking among themselves? Weberian and Marxist historical sociologies as dialogues without 'others'. *Millennium*, 39(3), pp.667-681.
7. Jalal, A. (ed.) (1995) 'The colonial legacy in India and Pakistan', in *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Contemporary South Asia), pp. 9–28.
8. Government and the State | Boundless Sociology (no date). Available at: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/government-and-the-state/> (Accessed: 29 May 2021).
9. Alavi, H. (1989) 'Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24(27), pp. 1527–1534.
10. Anderson, B. R. O. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso. 37-46 (Chapter 3)
11. Zaidi, S. A. (2015) *Issues in Pakistan's Economy: A Political Economy Perspective*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 26
12. Scott, J. C. (1999) *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1-8 (Chapter 1).
13. Hunt, E.K., 2002, *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*, M.E.Sharpe, New York, Chapter 1, pp. 3-8 [Very brief section introducing modern economic thinking on capitalism].
14. Raworth, K., 2017, *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*, Penguin Random House, London, pp. 31-43. [This excerpt introduces students to the central place that GDP growth has in the discipline of economics and provides an important critical perspective on this]
15. Smelser, N.J. and Swedburg, R., *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, Chapter 1 'Introducing Economic Sociology', Princeton University Press, Princeton. [Good overview of sociological thought on the economy with brief introductions to major Western classical thinkers followed by contemporary scholars].
16. Basile, E. and Harriss-White, B, 2010, 'Introduction', *International Review of Sociology*, 20: 3, pp.463-470 [This reading focuses on the Indian economy but the analysis is highly relevant for understanding Pakistan].
17. Howarth, David. (2013), *Poststructuralism and After: Structure, Agency and Power*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. Chapters 4, 5 and 7.
18. Elaine M. Power (1999) *An Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu's Key Theoretical Concepts*, *Journal for the Study of Food and Society*, 3:1, 48-52.
19. Eagleton, Terry (1991), *what is Ideology?* London: Verso Books. Introduction and Chapter 1.
20. Losurdo, Domenico (2011), *Liberalism: A Counter-History*, London: Verso. CV. Chapters 1, 2 and 10.

21. O'Connell Davidson, J. (2013), *Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom*, Basingstoke: Palgrave. Chapters 1 and 7.
22. Foucault, Michel. (1980), *POWER/KNOWLEDGE: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (Ed. Colin Gordon), New York: Pantheon. Chapters 6 and 10.
23. Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books. Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9.