What are the basic forms of human sociality? Humans are unique in cooperating extensively with non-kin, in the variety and generativity of their cooperation, and in their dependence on cooperation. Underlying the complexity and diversity of human cooperation, are there a limited set of ways of cooperating?

From their beginning, anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and allied social sciences have aimed to characterize the basic forms of sociality. Initially, this was partly motivated by the need to understand the rapid changes occurring in the West during the Industrial Revolution, along with the differences and similarities between the West and the rest of the world. This course provides an overview of the history of the conceptualization of the bases, nature, and basic forms of social coordination.

This course is appropriate for all highly motivated social science, psychology, history, and philosophy students. Readings consist of original works by the leading theorists, comprising the foundations of all social science. The concepts we will explore are exciting in their fundamentality, but quite challenging. So this is a demanding course, but the insights it offers are proportionate to the difficulties. You are not likely to get everything the readings have to offer by reading them just once. Attending each lecture is essential to understanding the concepts and the relations among them, but you may find that you don’t get everything presented in a lecture until you listen again to its podcast. Study groups are beneficial and highly recommended; there is no better way to learn something than by trying to explain it to others, responding to questions, and precisely formulating your own questions.

You will get much more out of the lectures by doing the indicated reading before the lecture, and then you will get more out of the readings by rereading them after the respective lectures.

Each week, students will write a roughly 700 – 1000 word comment on the readings. An elegant, apposite, substantive title is an effective place to start. The heading must contain your name and the date. The purpose of these essays is for you to dig deep into the concepts, take possession of them, and use them as tools to think with.

Reading comments are due on paper at the beginning of class every Tuesday (except the first day of class). Please come a bit early to turn in your paper before class starts.
Lectures begin promptly at 12:30 and late papers will not be accepted. The last reading comment is due by 3:00pm Tuesday, March 19 in the Anthropology Main Office, 341 Haines.

Spellcheck and carefully proofread your essay. Diction matters: use every word precisely and accurately. Exposition matters: careless rhetoric reflects sloppy thinking, confuses and distracts the reader, and undermines the reader's confidence in the ideas. (If English is not your native language or you want to improve your writing, write your essay early and make an appointment with the Writing Center to go over each essay – or at least have it checked by a good writer.)

There will be no exams. Final grades will be based on the mean of the ten reading comments. There will be no extra credit or make-up work. There is no curve, so you are not competing with your peers; everyone can get an A. So think together, helping each other out.

However, your essays must be your own original, individual writing. It is plagiarism to use any text written by anyone else without fully citing the source. Any plagiarism will result in a zero for the essay and referral to the Dean for disciplinary action.

The first readings are in a reader available at the Ackerman ASUCLA BookZone textbook section, or from the BookZone as a PDF. The required book is Fiske, Structures of Social Life. (I recommend the 1993 revised edition, which contains an added epilogue, but you may use the 1991 first edition. It is available on paper, Kindle, and Nook.) One copy of the reader and one copy of the book are on two-hour reserve in Powell.

Calendar

Tuesday 8 January: Introduction, and Marx
(no reading for the first class, but read Maine before Thursday’s class)

Thursday 10 January: Maine

Due Tuesday: What can law tell us about the structure of a society? Use Maine’s inferences about status law versus contract law to explore this question, reflecting on the inferences he makes from types of laws to social structures.

Tuesday 15 January: Tönnies – Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

Thursday 17 January: Durkheim – mechanical solidarity

Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Maines’ use of two types of law (status vs. contract) to
identify two forms of society with Durkheim’s use of two types of law (repressive vs. restitutive) to identify two forms of solidarity in a society.

Tuesday 22 January: What does Gemeinschaft or mechanical solidarity look like? The Moose of Burkina Faso.

Thursday 24 January: Where is Mechanical Solidarity in Contemporary Society? Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Tönnies’ concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft with Durkheim’s concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity.

Tuesday 29 January: Weber – Tradition, Bureaucracy, and Charisma

Thursday 31 January: Weber – Organizations and their Legitimating Ideologies Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Weber’s concept of charismatic organization and legitimation with his concept of traditional organization and legitimation.

Tuesday 5 February: Legitimacy Beyond Authority; Piaget’s Theory of Moral Reasoning

Thursday 5 February: Flannery – Bands, Tribes, Chieftainships, and States Due Tuesday: Social systems are based on moral systems that legitimate them. What kind(s) of morality is/are the basis for bands?

Tuesday 12 February: Hofstede – The Dimensions of Culture

Thursday 14 February: Singelis, Triandis, et al – Individualism and Collectivism Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Hofstede’s concept of Individualism—Collectivism with either Durkheim’s or Tönnies’ theories of social organization. (Choose either Durkheim or Tönnies; don’t write about both.)

Tuesday 19 February: Triandis – Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism

Thursday 21 February: Markus and Kitayama – Independent and Interdependent Selves
Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Triandis’s concepts of individualism and collectivism with Markus and Kitayama’s concepts of independence and interdependence.

Tuesday 26 February: Coase – The Market and the Firm

Thursday 28 February: Ouchi – The Market, the Firm, and the Clan

Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Coase’s concept of the firm and the conditions under which it arises with Ouchi’s concept of bureaucracy and the conditions under which it arises. In comparing and contrasting their concepts, consider what Ouchi’s concept of clans adds to our understanding of firms and bureaucracies.

Tuesday March 5: Fiske, Preface to Part I & Chapters 1–3; attend carefully to Table 1

Thursday March 7: Fiske, Preface to Part II, Chapters 4–6, and Coda

Due Tuesday: Compare and contrast Fiske’s theory of equality matching with two of the most similar concepts of theorists we have read.

Tuesday March 12: Fiske, Preface to Part III, Chapters 7–9, Preface to Part IV, & Chapter 10

Thursday March 14: Fiske, Preface to Part V, & Chapters 16–17

Due Tuesday by 3:00pm in the Anthropology Main Office, 341 Haines: Fiske conceptualizes relational models rooted in the mind, yet a ‘relationship’ (in his technical sense) is a property of a system of coordination, not of a person as such. How do these aspects of relational models theory, together, enable relational models theory to explain aspects of human sociality that previous theories could not explain?