

SOC 190 Master Trends of Modern Society
Spring 2017, Tu Th Fr 11:00 – 11:50
Emerson Hall E101

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Hours: Tu Th Fr 12:00 – 12:45

[We can understand] the changes that the world has experienced in the last two and a half centuries with the help of all-encompassing concepts of historical processes [that can be] described as the “izations”: rationalization, industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, democratization, individualization, secularization ... to name a few. Although these processes each follow their own time pattern and are linked to one another in a very complicated way, what they all have in common is that they take place over a very long stretch of time, occur in various forms and intensities on all continents, and unleash a force of change seldom found in earlier, premodern history. The metaconcept of “modernization” attempts to integrate these various processes into a single, all-encompassing development (from *Globalization: A Short History*, by Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson, 2005, pp. 3-4).

Course Description

The transition from premodern to modern society has been analyzed by virtually every major social theorist from the Enlightenment onward. In this first-year seminar, we will examine several key dimensions of this change, focusing on five master trends:

(1) Rationalization. This refers to a highly general historical process that has permeated all aspects of modern life and which broadly speaking involves the gradual displacement of Tradition by Reason;

(2) Individualization. Another very general and pervasive trend, individualization involves the relative decline of familial influence and the corresponding rise of the individual as the primary unit in modern society;

(3) Secularization. This is a complex set of changes in which religion loses some of its cultural authority to define meaning and purpose;

(4) Medicalization. This is the process by which everyday experiences and conditions come to be defined as medical problems requiring treatment;

(5) Globalization. This is an ancient process that has accelerated in the modern era as various kinds of international connections – economic, political, cultural – develop and multiply.

We will examine a wide range of specific topics related to these trends, including McDonalds as a model of bureaucratic organization; due process and democracy as basic human rights; fashion as both self-expression and group conformity; deviant behaviors as medical diseases; your morning cup of coffee as a global supply chain; and terrorism as backlash against globalization and secularization.

Course Materials

All the required readings in this course are accessible online via Emory's Woodruff Library. There is also a Canvas course site where I will post overheads, videos, and other materials that provide background information on the various readings and topics. Instructions for accessing Canvas and the online readings will be provided in class.

Course Requirements

Your total grade in the course will be based on the following:

Attendance	10%
Discussion	30%
<u>Essay Exams</u>	<u>60%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Attendance (10 percent). At the beginning of each class, attendance will be taken by either calling roll or by passing a roll sheet around for you to sign. If you are absent less than four times during the semester, you will receive all 10 points allocated for attendance. Points start being deducted at the fourth absence: If you are absent four times, then 4 points will be deducted from your attendance grade; five absences equals 5 points deducted, and six absences equals 6 points deducted, and so on, up to 10 points. If you arrive late, you are considered absent and should not sign the roll sheet, nor should you sign the roll sheet or answer roll call for other students because doing so would be a violation of Emory's honor code.

Note that you have up to three absences without any deduction. Use these (if you use them at all) for sick days, family emergencies, etc. If you have perfect attendance — zero absences — then not only will you receive all 10 attendance points, you will also receive 2 bonus points added to your overall course grade.

Discussion (30 percent). For every class session, students are expected to complete the assigned readings beforehand and be prepared to discuss them. Students will also take turns serving as discussion leaders, or discussants. Discussants will be responsible for summarizing and critically evaluating the readings on a given day. Each discussant should make his or her presentation roughly **15 minutes** in length. Each student will serve as discussant approximately 3-4 times during the semester. Detailed instructions on "how to be a discussant" are on the next page.

How to Be a Discussant. Keep it informal. No Powerpoints or handouts are necessary or expected. The simpler, the better. You can even deliver your presentation while seated, if you like. There are a few rules, however, concerning the format of your presentation. It should be organized around the following three issues:

- (A) Summarize the reading. What topics are they covering? What are the main points they are making about these topics?

- (B) After summarizing the reading, evaluate it. For example:
 - (1) Is the reading logical and persuasive? Is it well organized and clearly written?

 - (2) What is the tone of the reading? Are the authors neutral, or do they express an opinion about the direction of social change? If opinionated, are they taking a positive or negative view of social change? Provide examples from the reading to illustrate the tone. Do you agree or disagree with their opinions?

 - (3) Were empirical claims made that needed to be supported by evidence? If so, was the evidence sufficient to support their claims?

- (C) Finally, what was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the reading?

Feel free to criticize the readings, but do so constructively, as if you're providing helpful feedback to a fellow scholar or student. In addition, please do not rehash every single specific idea in the reading. Assume that your classmates have already read it themselves, and simply provide a brief and basic summary of the main points. Devote about half your presentation to summarizing (see **Issue A**), and then move on to address **Issue B** and **Issue C** above.

Each discussant will be graded on the organization, insight, and overall quality of his or her verbal presentation (you will not be submitting any written work for your presentation — it is all verbal). Pay careful attention to the time limit of 15 minutes. Practice beforehand so you will know how long it takes, and trim (or add) accordingly. A key part of any successful presentation is hitting all the right marks within the time allotted.

Essay Exams (60 percent). There will be three essay exams, each worth 20 percentage points of your overall grade. "Exam" may be too strong a word for these assignments because they are all take-home and open-book, and you will have at least two weeks to complete each one. Perhaps a more appropriate description would be "take-home

questions that function as a reading guide, drawing your attention to the most important parts of the readings" — but this is not as short and sweet as "essay exams."

Each exam will include between 8-12 essay questions. You will type your answers double-spaced in a normal font (Times New Roman 12-point or Arial 12-point, for instance), with one-inch margins. Most of the questions on any given exam can be answered in about one page, depending on the question.

Given the take-home and open-book nature of these exams, I have very high expectations for the quality of your answers. There should be no obvious errors — no spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammatical mistakes of any kind — and your answers are expected to be clearly written and to-the-point.

For each answer, you should choose your words carefully. Strive for brevity and clarity of expression, and write simply and cleanly — no flowery language please. Think about what you need to write before you start writing. It may help to first draft your answers, then type them up, and don't forget to proofread. If you quote from the readings, use quotation marks and cite the reading and page number, but avoid excessively quoting. Express ideas in your own words as much as possible. You will be using the course readings and Canvas-posted materials to help you answer these essay questions.

A Note on Classroom Environment. Please refrain from chatting with others during class, note passing, entering late, and leaving early. If you know that you will be leaving class early, inform me in advance, sit near the door, and leave as quietly as possible. Cell phones must be turned off in class.

Honor Code Policy. All assignments and attendance checks are to be completed in line with the Honor Code of Emory University. If you are unfamiliar with the code, take time to read it here:

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

By submitting work in this course, you are pledging that your work reflects *academic honesty*, i.e., you have not lied, cheated, plagiarized or done anything to gain unfair academic advantage for yourself or anyone else. Violations of the honor code will be referred to the Honor Council (see Article 1 at above link).

Due Dates and Late Policy. Due dates for the essay exams will be announced in class and specified on the exams. Each day that an exam is late results in the deduction of one full letter grade.

ADSR Statement. If you have a disability-related need for academic adjustments in this course and you are registered with Emory's Office of Access, Disability Services, and Resources (ADSR), please see me as soon as possible to arrange accommodations.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week of 1-9. Historical Backdrop

Tuesday

First day of class on Tuesday, Jan. 10

Thursday

Responding to Chaos: A Brief History of Sociology (chapter 1 in *The Practical Skeptic* by Lisa McIntyre, fourth edition, 2007)

Friday

Disappearing World: Premodern Societies and Their Fate (excerpt from Chapter 3 in *Introduction to Sociology* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, and Richard Appelbaum, fourth edition, 2003)

Week of 1-16. Historical Backdrop (continued)

Tuesday

The Industrial Revolution (chapter 9 in *Human Societies: Introduction to Macrosociology* by Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski, eleventh edition, 2009) *** read pp. 188-204 ***

Thursday

The Industrial Revolution (chapter 9 in *Human Societies...*) *** read pp. 205-214 ***

Friday

Industrial Societies: Ideologies and Politics" (excerpt from chapter 11 in *Human Societies: Introduction to Macrosociology* by Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski, eleventh edition, 2009)

Week of 1-23. Historical Backdrop (continued)

Tuesday

Industrial Societies: Population, the Family, and Leisure (chapter 13 in *Human Societies: Introduction to Macrosociology* by Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski, eleventh edition, 2009)

Sex and the American Car (Claude Fischer, from *Made in America*, 2012)

Thursday

Toward the Conquest of World Poverty (by Steve Chapman, from *Reason*, 2012)

Towards the End of Poverty (from *The Economist*, 2013)

Friday

Material Life: The Horn of Plenty (chapter 2 in *The Capitalist Revolution* by Peter Berger, 1986)

Week of 1-30. Rationalization

Tuesday

The Sociological Debate: Understanding the Modern World (excerpt from chapter 1 in *Introduction to Sociology* by Anthony Giddens and Mitchell Duneier, third edition, 2000)

The Rationalization of Society (excerpt from Chapter 7 in *Down-to-Earth Sociology* by James Henslin, eighth edition, 2007)

Thursday

Weber's Theory of History: The Rationalization of the World (excerpt from chapter 7 in *The Discovery of Society* by Randall Collins and Michael Makowsky, seventh edition, 2005)

Friday

Bureaucracy (excerpt, by Max Weber, reprinted in *The Sociology of Organizations*, edited by Oscar Grusky and George Miller, second edition, 1981)

Why Study Bureaucracy? (chapter 1 in *Bureaucracy in Modern Society* by Peter Blau and Marshall Meyer, second edition, 1971)

Week of 2-6. Rationalization (continued); Individualism

Tuesday

An Introduction to McDonaldization (chapter 1 from *The McDonaldization of Society* by George Ritzer, revised edition, 2004)

Thursday

Individualism and its Discontents (by Wilfred McClay in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 2001)

Of Individualism in Democracies (by Alexis de Tocqueville, reprinted in *Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, edited by Robert Bellah et al., 1988)

Friday

Religious Community and American Individualism (by Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton; excerpt reprinted in *Readings for Sociology*, edited by Garth Massey, sixth edition, 2009)

Community is Not Dead in America (interview with Robert Bellah, *Deutsche Welle*, 2011)

Week of 2-13. Individualism (continued)

Tuesday

Individualism: The Tension Between Me and Us (excerpt from chapter 4 in *Key Ideas in Sociology* by Peter Kivisto, third edition, 2011)

Thursday

Introduction (chapter 1 in *The Human Rights Culture: A Study in History and Context* by Lawrence Friedman, 2011)

Friday

On the Rule of Law; and on Consciousness of Rights (chapter 2 in *The Human Rights Culture: A Study in History and Context* by Lawrence Friedman, 2011)

The Genesis of Human Rights (excerpt from chapter 3 in *The Human Rights Culture: A Study in History and Context* by Lawrence Friedman, 2011)

Week of 2-20. Individualism (continued); Secularization

Tuesday

Fashion (excerpt by Georg Simmel, reprinted in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, edited by Donald Levine, 1971)

Be Different! Just Like Everyone Else (by Luc Sante, in *New York Times Magazine*, 1999)

Thursday

Christianity Remains Dominant Religion in the U.S. (by Frank Newport, Gallup, 2011)

Summary of Key Findings (excerpt from The Pew Research Center's *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*, 2008)

Friday

The World's Major Religions (excerpt from Chapter 17 in *Down-to-Earth Sociology* by James Henslin, eighth edition, 2007)

Week of 2-27. Secularization (continued)

Tuesday

Secularization: The Sociological Debate (excerpt from chapter 17 in *Introduction to Sociology* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, and Richard Appelbaum, fourth edition, 2003)

Thursday

Secularization (by Frank Lechner, in *Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, edited by Hans Hillerbrand, 2003)

Friday

Is Organized Religion Necessary for Society? Tradition, Modernization, Secularization (chapter 9 in *Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective* by Joel Charon, 2010)

Week of 3-6. Spring Break (classes canceled from 3-6 through 3-10)

Week of 3-13. Medicalization

Tuesday

Is Anybody Normal Anymore? (by Margaret Wentz, *Globe and Mail*, 2012)

Adam Lanza: The Medicalization of Evil (by Lindsey Fitzharris, *The Guardian*, 2012)

Thursday

The History of Societal Reactions to Mental Illness (chapter 12 in *A Sociology of Mental Illness* by Mark Tausig, Janet Michello, and Sree Subedi, 1999)

Friday

Children and Medicalization: Delinquency, Hyperactivity, and Child Abuse (chapter 6 in *Deviance and Medicalization* by Peter Conrad and Joseph Schneider, 1992)

Week of 3-20. Medicalization (continued)

Tuesday

The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder (by Alan Schwarz, *New York Times*, 2013)

Thursday

Plastic Makes Perfect: *My Beautiful Mommy*, Cosmetic Surgery, and Medicalization of Motherhood (by Michelle Anne Abate, *Women's Studies*, 2010)

Friday

Measuring Medicalization: Categories, Numbers, and Treatment (chapter 6 in *The Medicalization of Society* by Peter Conrad, 2007)

Week of 3-27. Medicalization (continued); Globalization

Tuesday

The Epidemic in Mental Illness: Clinical Fact or Survey Artifact? (by Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield, *Contexts*, 2006)

Thursday

On Good and Bad Forms of Medicalization (by Erik Parens, *Bioethics*, 2011)

Friday

Globalization: Coming Together (by Nayan Chanda, *Yale Global*, 2002)

Globalization in the Mirror of History/What is Globalization? Flash Presentations Part One and Part Two (by Nayan Chanda, *Yale Global*, 2003)

“Globalization”: Circumnavigating a Term (chapter 1 in *Globalization: A Short History* by Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson, 2005)

Week of 4-3. Globalization (continued)

Tuesday

Coffee Colonizes the World (chapter 1 from *Uncommon Grounds* by Mark Pendergrast, 1999)

Thursday

The Moral Case for Globalization (by Peter Martin, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1997)

The Reversal of Historical Inequality Trends (chapter 2 from *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality* by Glenn Firebaugh, 2003)

Friday

Globalization versus Americanization: Is the World Being Americanized by the Dominance of American Culture? (by Yoichi Shimemura, *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 2002)

In the Age of Krispy Kreme and Burritoville, Fast-Food Chains May Help Preserve Regional Identity (by Jeet Heer and Steve Penfold, *Boston Globe*, 2003)

Week of 4-10. Globalization (continued)

Tuesday

Globalization's Effects on the Environment (by Jo Kwong, *Society*, 2005)

Thursday

Opposing World Culture: Islamism and the Clash of Civilizations (chapter 9 in *World Culture: Origins and Consequences* by Frank Lechner and John Boli, 2005)

Friday

Why Wait for Democracy? (by Larry Diamond, *The Wilson Quarterly*, 2013)

Week of 4-17. More Master Trends?

Tuesday

A History of Violence (by Steven Pinker, *Edge*, 2011)

Thursday

Getting Better All the Time (by Michael Shermer, *The American Scholar*, 2011)

Why Can't We See that We're Living in a Golden Age? (by Johan Norberg, in *The Spectator*)

Friday

Last Day of Class on Friday, April 21 – last set of essays due today

Your Life in Numbers: Explore How Much the World Has Changed since You Were Born (from HumanProgress.org)