

Morality and Public Sphere (SOCn5013)

Course description	<p>This course offers an introduction into sociological theories of morality and the public sphere. Main interest will be the conjunction of both: public morality. We will read texts that offer insights into the emergence of public opinions on moral topics as well as on the autonomy and rationality of moral discourses. At the end of the course, students should be able to analyze public discourses with regard to their moral implications and cultural structure.</p> <p>This year, the course focuses on political and moral responses to the Covid crisis. We will read cultural sociological texts investigating the public discourses, narratives, performances and icons of the pandemic.</p>
Course requirements	Regular attendance and participation, presentation in class or final essay, final paper
ECTS points	10
I	Organizational Meeting
II	Durkheim: Moral Facts, Human Rights and the Dreyfus-Affair
Required Readings	<p>Durkheim, Émile (2010): "The Determination of Moral Facts". In: <i>Sociology and Philosophy</i>. Milton Park: Routledge, pp. 16-31.</p> <p>Durkheim, Émile and Steven Lukes (1969/1898): "Durkheim 'Individualism and the Intellectuals'." <i>Political Studies</i> 17 (1): 19-30.</p>
Presentation	<p>Arendt, Hannah (1968): <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i>. New York: Harcourt Brace World, pp. 89-120.</p> <p>Steven Lukes (1969): "Durkheim "Individualism and the Intellectuals"". In: <i>Political Studies</i> 17(1), 14-19.</p>
III	Habermas: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Civil Society
Required Readings	<p>Habermas, Jürgen (1989): <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 1-26.</p> <p>Habermas, Jürgen (1996): „Civil Society, Public Opinion and Communicative Power“. In: <i>Between Facts and Norms. Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 359-387.</p>
Presentations	<p>Habermas, Jürgen (1989): <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 27-140.</p> <p>Habermas, Jürgen (1989): <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 141-250.</p>
IV	Alexander: Civil Sphere and the Watergate-Affaire
Required Readings	<p>Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2006): <i>The Civil Sphere</i>. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-9, 23-67.</p> <p>Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2003): "Watergate as Democratic Ritual". In: Alexander, Jeffrey C. (ed.), <i>The Meanings of Social Life. A Cultural Sociology</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 155-177.</p>
Presentation	Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2006): <i>The Civil Sphere</i> . Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 69-150.

V	Boltanski & Thévenot: Regimes of Justification
Required Reading	Boltanski, Luc and Laurent Thévenot (1999): "The Sociology of Critical Capacity". In: <i>European Journal of Social Theory</i> 2(3), 359-377.
Presentation	Thévenot, Laurent, Michael Moody & Claudette Lafaye (2000): "Forms of Valuing Nature. Arguments and Modes of Justification in French and American Environmental Disputes". In: Thévenot, Laurent & Michèle Lamont (eds.): <i>Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology. Repertoires of Evaluation in France and the United States</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 229-272.
VI	Adut: Scandal and the Public Sphere
Required Reading	Adut, Ari (2005): "A Theory of Scandal. Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde". In: <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 111(1), 213-248.
Presentation	Adut, Ari (2012): "A Theory of the Public Sphere". In: <i>Sociological Theory</i> 30(4), pp. 238-262.
Reading Week	
VII	Race and Gender in the Public Sphere: The Dolezal-Affair
Required Readings	Brubaker, Rogers (2016): <i>trans. Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettling Identities</i> . Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-68.
Presentation	Meadow, Tey (2017): "Whose Chosenness Counts? The Always-Already Racialized Discourse of Trans – Response to Rogers Brubaker". In: <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 40(8), 1306-1311. Morrissey, Megan Elizabeth (2021): "Under (Y)our skin: Rachel Dolezal and the elasticity of whiteness". In: <i>Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies</i> , 1-17.
VIII	Cultural Sociology, Covid and the Public Sphere: The Case of the UK
Required Readings	Alexander, Jeffrey C. & Philip Smith (2020): "COVID-19 and symbolic action: global pandemic as code, narrative, and cultural performance". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 8(3), 263-269. Morgan, Marcus (2020): "Why Meaning-Making Matters: The Case of the UK Government's COVID-19 Response". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 8(3), 270-323.
Presentation	McCormick, Lisa (2020): "Marking Time in Lockdown. Heroization and Ritualization in the UK during the Coronavirus Pandemic". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 8(3), 324-351.
IX	Narratives in the Public Sphere: Global Warming and the Covid Crisis
Required Readings	Smith, Philip (2012): "Narrating Global Warming". In: Alexander, Jeffrey C., Ronald N. Jacobs & Philip Smith (eds.): <i>The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Sociology</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 745-760. Jaworsky, Bernadette Nadya & Runya Qiaoan (2020): "The Politics of Blaming. The Narrative Battle between China and the US over COVID-19". In: <i>Journal of Chinese Political Science</i> .
Presentation	Jacobs, Ronald N. (1996): "Civil Society and Crisis: Culture, Discourse, and the Rodney King Beating". In: <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 101(5), 1238-1272.

X	Performances in the Public Sphere: Performing Power and Affliction
Required readings	Alexander, Jeffrey (2011): "Performance and the Challenge of Power". In: <i>Performance and Power</i> . Cambridge: Polity, 82-91. Villegas, Celso M. (2020): "Performing Rituals of Affliction. How a Governor's Press Conferences Provided Mediatized Sanctuary in Ohio". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 8(3), 352-383.
Presentation	Rauer, Valentin (2006): "Willy Brandt's Kneefall at the Warsaw Memorial". In: Alexander, Jeffrey C., Bernhard Giesen & Jason L. Mast (eds.): <i>Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 257-282.
XI	Icons in the Public Sphere: The Refugee and the Covid Crisis
Required Readings	Binder, Werner & Bernadette N. Jaworsky (2018): "Refugees as Icons: Culture and Iconic Representation". In: <i>Sociology Compass</i> 12(3). Sonnevend, Julia (2020): "A Virus as an Icon: the 2020 Pandemic in Images". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 8(3), 451-461.
Presentation	Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2010): "Iconic Consciousness. The Material Feeling of Meaning". In: <i>Thesis Eleven</i> 103(1), 10-25. Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2010): "The Celebrity-Icon". In: <i>Cultural Sociology</i> 4(3), 323-336.
XII	Alexander: The Societalization of Social Problems
Required Readings	Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2019): <i>What Makes a Social Crisis? The Societalization of Social Problems</i> . Cambridge; Medford: Polity, 1-38, 73-117.
Presentation	Turner, Victor (1980): "Social Dramas and Stories about Them". In: <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 7(1), 141-168. Lo, Ming-Cheng M. & Hsin-Yi Hsieh (2020): "The "Societalization" of Pandemic Unpreparedness: Lessons from Taiwan's COVID Response". In: <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> 8(3), 384-404.
Requirements for Passing the Course	1. Participation in class – 15% 2. Presentation in class or final essay (due June 10) – 15% 3. Final paper (due August 31) – 70%