

History of Science 536
Spring 2005
V. Hilts

Scope:

This course discusses the development of social thought from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until the early twentieth century. This period encompasses the first appearance of the sciences of political economy, anthropology, experimental psychology, and sociology as well as the abortive sciences of social physics, phrenology, and criminal anthropology.

Attention will be given to the main problems facing those who would construct a science of human nature. Why were some attempts more successful than others? How closely could the social sciences imitate the methods of the natural sciences? What extra-scientific biases affected the development of the social sciences? Effort will be made to relate the emergence of the social and behavioral sciences to other aspects of the history of science and to other aspects of general intellectual and social history. Particular emphasis will be given to the variety of methodologies that have been used by social thinkers.

Requirements:

Undergraduate requirements for the course include two hour examinations and one final examination. The undergraduate final examination in History of Science 536 will be a take-home examination that is due in my office on Thursday, May 12. With the approval of the instructor, undergraduate students may write a short paper (10-15 pp.) in lieu of the final examination. Permission to write a paper in lieu of a final examination will only be given to students who receive a grade of B or better on the hour examinations. Papers in lieu of the final examination are also due in my office on Thursday, May 12.

Readings for undergraduates will be assigned from the following works: Carl Becker, Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers; Raymond Fancher, Intelligence Men; Daniel Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics; Thomas Malthus, Essay on Population; George W. Stocking, Jr., Race, Culture, and Evolution. Some additional material will be distributed or made available for copying.

Graduate students will take the hour examinations, but not the final examination. In lieu of the final examination, each graduate student will write one term paper (20-25 pp.), due in my office on Thursday, May 12. This paper may be either a research paper or a literature review and analysis. In special cases, other options are available. The paper should be begun early in the semester in consultation with the instructor. In addition to being responsible for the readings assigned to undergraduates, graduate students will be asked to read sections from the following (or other) works during the course of the semester: Ted Porter, The Rise of Statistical Thinking; George W. Stocking, Jr., Victorian Anthropology; Dorothy Ross, The Origins of American Social Science.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

History of Science 536

Part I: Emergence of The Idea of A Social Science

The first section of the course will examine the emergence of social thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An effort will be made to understand why thinkers of the time became interested in understanding human nature. Among the particular topics covered will be the origins of political economy, the attempt to introduce quantitative ideas into social thought, and the background of the views of Karl Marx. Undergraduate readings for this section will include Carl Becker, Heavenly City of Eighteenth-Century Philosophers, entire, and Thomas Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population, chs. 1-9, 18-19. Additional readings will be distributed in sections or made available for copying. Graduate reading will be assigned in discussion section.

Jan. 19 (Wed.) Introduction: Course Overview

Jan. 21 (Fri.) Discussion: The Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences

Jan. 24 (Mon.) The Scientific Revolution: Search for Certainty about the Natural World

Jan. 26 (Wed.) The Introspective Method: Search for Certainty in the Understanding of Human Nature

Jan. 28 (Fri.) Discussion: Rene Descartes

Jan 31 (Mon.) Conjectural History and the Understanding of Human Nature

Feb. 2 (Wed.) Concepts and Methods of Classical Political Economy.

Feb. 4 (Fri.) Discussion: The enlightenment and social science. Reading: Carl Becker, Heavenly City of Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (entire).

Feb. 7 (Mon.) Thomas Malthus: The Laws of Population.

Feb. 9 (Wed.) Rise of Statistics and Origins of Quantitative Social Thought

Feb. 11 (Fri.) Discussion: Thomas Malthus. Reading: Thomas Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population, chs. 1-9, 18-19

Feb. 14 (Mon.) Auguste Comte: Positivism and the Prospect of Sociology

Feb. 16 (Wed.) Karl Marx as a Social Scientist.

Feb. 18 (Fri.) Discussion: Positivism and Marxism. Readings to be distributed.

Feb. 21 (Mon.) Hour Exam on Part I

Part. II. Biology and the Understanding of Human Nature.

The second section of the course concerns the interrelationship of biological and social thought in the nineteenth century. Particular concern will be given to phrenology, the rise of experimental psychology, and the beginnings of anthropological thinking. A dominating issue will be the impact of evolutionary thought upon the emergence of the social sciences in the nineteenth century. Undergraduate readings will include selections from George W. Stocking, Jr. Race, Culture, and Evolution; Raymond Fancher, Intelligence Men; and Daniel Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics.

Feb. 23 (Wed.) Phrenology: Cerebral Anatomy and Social Reform

Feb. 25 (Fri.) Discussion: Phrenology. Read Raymond Fancher, Intelligence Men, pp. 1-18 and additional readings on phrenology to be distributed.

Feb. 28 (Mon.) The History of the Human Races: Monogenists versus Polygenists

Mar. 2 (Wed.) Views of National Character and the Myth of the Aryan Race

Mar. 4 (Fri.) Discussion: Science and Racism in the 19th Century. Readings to be distributed

Mar. 7 (Mon.) Discovery of Prehistory

Mar. 9 (Wed.) Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Evolutionary Social Thought

Mar. 11 (Fri.) Discussion of Darwinism and "social Darwinism." Read selections to be distributed from Herbert Spencer and from Richard Hofstadter.

Mar. 14 (Mon.) Francis Galton: Evolution, Eugenics and Statistics

Mar. 15 (Wed.) Francis Galton as a psychologist and the mental testing movement

Mar. 18 (Fri.) No section on Friday before spring break. However, students should read Raymond Fancher's Intelligence Men, pp. 19-83 and selections to be distributed by Francis Galton on "hereditary genius."

Spring Recess

Mar. 28 (Mon.) "What causes Crime?"

Mar. 30 (Wed.) Eugenics in Britain and the United States.

Apr. 1 (Fri.) Discussion of Galton and the eugenics movement. Read Daniel Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics, chapters to be assigned.

Apr. 4 (Mon.) Hour Exam on Part II.

Part III: Theories of Culture and Society

The focus of this section will be upon the development of social thought at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The major theme covered in this section will be attempts to understand the interrelationship between individuals and their cultures and societies. Readings will be distributed in class.

Apr. 6 (Wed) Anthropology and the Comparative Method

Apr. 8 (Fri.) No discussion section. Individual consultations with those undergraduate students who are writing papers in lieu of the final exam

Apr. 11 (Mon.) The American Indian: Schoolcraft and Morgan

Apr. 13 (Wed.) Franz Boas and the concept of cultural relativism

Apr. 15 (Fri.) Discussion: Franz Boas. Read George W. Stocking, Jr. Race, Culture, and Evolution, chapters 1, 5, and 9.

Apr. 18 (Mon.) The Emergence of American Sociology

Apr. 20 (Wed.) Durkheim and the Rules of Sociological Method

Apr. 22 (Fri) Discussion of Emil Durkheim. Selections to be distributed

Apr. 25 (Mon.) Max Weber's Concept of Sociology

Apr. 27 (Wed.) The "New Psychology" of Gustav Fechner and William Wundt

Apr. 29 (Fri.) From Experimental Psychology to Behaviorism

May. 2 (Mon.) Sigmund Freud.

May 4 (Wed.) Discussion of Behaviorism and Freud. Selections to be distributed.

May 6 (Fri.) The Social Sciences and Scientism.