



## HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

01.920.422.02, Spring 2015  
Tu-Th 2:50-4:10 pm, Murray Hall 113  
Rutgers University

Professor: József Böröcz  
(<http://borocz.net>)  
office hours: TBA;  
email: jborocz@rutgers.edu

*Πάντα ρεῖ* (*panta rhei*)—“everything flows / changes,” Heroclitus of Ephesos, father of philosophical dialectics, observed a good 25 centuries ago. Not much has changed ever since in that regard ☺.

Societies constantly change, for sure. Sometimes social transformations are so slow / subtle that we barely notice them; at other times change is so rapid / profound that we can hardly keep up. Although, strictly speaking, changing social relations provide the most rewarding raw material for sociology, part of our discipline has, sadly, moved away from discussing change, let alone time and history, resulting in what a German sociologist, Norbert Elias, lamented as sociologists’ “retreat into the present.” To signal their interest in processes of change and issues of integrating at least some historical knowledge in sociological analysis, scholars interested in questions of over-time transformations refer to “their” area as *Historical Sociology*.

This course is a *senior-year seminar* on social change, covering some fascinating ideas in historical sociology. Class conversations will be centered on a variety of materials, ranging from readings to films, and the occasional photographs and music, all addressing various aspects of the ways in which it is possible to capture, depict, describe and understand the past and the present, and the changes that have taken us from the former to the latter. As you will, no doubt, realize at some points during this semester, questions of social change—relating to its speed, directions and moral implications—are

often highly contentious, controversial, and involve issues such as power, fairness, justice, truth and beauty—i.e., things most people care about.

A word of caution: The course takes a *critical* approach to social change—i.e., it desists from both the glorification and the condemnation of any specific history, not even those varieties evolved by European or North American societies. If you find that this contradicts some convictions in your mind, that's a feature of the course, not an error.

As usual, readings are central to our work in the class. In addition, we will also draw on a number of films, since some ideas concerning social change are perhaps best represented via the cinematic medium. The films are not here as simple illustrations, let alone entertainment, they are an integral part of the course. You are required to view them and “read” them as texts, as you would any of the assigned written materials.

In designing this class, I have assumed that

1. you have an interest in finding out about the world (in this case, the relationship of the ‘past’ and the ‘future’ to the ‘present’) as a social process,
2. you have an open and inquisitive mind,
3. you are eager to compare and contrast what you find so that you don't think you have all the final answers. (Who knows, you may even realize that one never does ☺.) And,
4. partly because this is a senior seminar, partly because I am deeply optimistic, I have also assumed that you are familiar with the key ideas of the social sciences (therefore I have not budgeted any time to review them in this course).



This course consists of readings, films and, importantly, in-class-discussions. Your main job is to prepare for the discussions by /1/ reading the assigned texts / watching the films with interest and critically, /2/ relating them to the world as you experience it and other materials of this and other course(s), and /3/ investigating any issues that might arouse your curiosity while doing the above. The success of this course depends almost entirely on the goodwill, interest, effort and openness you are willing to give to it.

Most of the class time is used for discussion. As for the exceptional outbursts of inevitable lectures, they *never repeat or formally review the readings*. You will be asked to contribute to the discussions frequently, and your contributions will be a significant part of your grade. Each class discussion will be introduced / initiated by a member of the class. (We will determine the schedule of that in the first meeting.)

Like most texts in the social sciences, the assigned readings require quite a bit more attention, concentration and imagination of the reader than a tweet. Hence you should

allocate enough time to read and digest what you read. I am almost certain that, at some point, you will feel a need to use online and/or library resources to do follow-up work, to find out things alluded to but not explained fully in the readings. This is part of the normal process of learning, and it is good for you (not to mention: FUN ☺).

I have requested that all the books from which we are reading brief excerpts be held in the Undergraduate Reserve in Alexander Library. They are there for your perusal. I suggest you go there to read / copy / scan them well in advance of the day they are due. I will upload the few items that are not on Reserve—journal articles and the odd online resource—on sakai. (If you are enrolled in the class, you have automatic access to the sakai site of this class: just click on <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>, log in, and click on the tab for this course. You will find the readings under “Resources.” Sakai is a great tool to foster communication among members of the class, and I want very strongly to encourage you to make good use of it.)

**In order to protect the learning environment in the classroom,  
this is a no-computer, no-e-device class.**

This is a **senior-year seminar**. That means that:

- there will be almost no lectures;
- most of class time will involve discussions in various formats;
- you can't participate in the discussions without being there, → class **attendance is mandatory**;
- students are required to form small **groups** and participate in **projects** invented, elaborated and presented by their group,
- here are the guidelines for the **group projects**:
  - deadline for formation of groups (hand in list of names): 1/29
  - deadline for each group to discuss their project with me: 2/19
  - deadline for submitting group project proposal: 2/26
  - the project proposal is a serious document that includes:
    - the title of the project
    - list of students who participate in the group
    - a narrative of 200 to 250 words outlining what you want to study, based on what materials, and what conclusions you expect to reach
  - each group will give a 15-20 minute presentation of their project on one of the “project presentation” days (4/14, 4/16 and 4/21) in class;
  - part of your scores will be based on your group's presentation;
  - the presentations will be followed by discussions;

- **final papers** will be written by *individual* members of the group, based on their group project, as follows:
  - deadline for papers: 4/30, i.e., the last day of classes
  - length: between 3000 and 3500 words
  - submit it in printed form, on paper
  - make sure you include title, text, references, bibliography (and illustrations, if necessary).

### **Midterm:**

The in-class midterm is designed to engage your understanding of the readings and stimulate your creativity. I will most likely ask you to put to use some of the concepts we study, to apply them in some way. I have never used multiple-choice or True/False questions, and it is extremely unlikely that I would begin to do so now.

**Grading** will be a judicious combination of non-curved scores obtained from my honest impressions of your

- attendance (5%),
- lively, mature, concerned and constructive participation in the discussions (25%),
- midterm (25%),
- group presentation (20%)
- final paper (25%).



## Course Schedule

date	Tuesdays	Date	Thursdays
1/20	<b>INTRO:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- class organization / logistics</li> <li>- background</li> <li>- brief illustrations</li> </ul>	1/22	<b>Film-in-class / discussion:</b> <i>Violence via History</i>  “Caravans of Gold,” (dir.: Basil Davidson, BBC & Nigerian TV, 1984, 52 min)
1/27	Discussion: <i>What Is Historical Sociology?</i>  <b>Reading:</b> Abrams: “Introduction: sociology as history.” 1-17.	1/29	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Finding Your Roots</i>
2/3	Discussion: <i>Modernization Theory</i>  <b>Reading:</b> So, “Modernization Theories,” 17-37.	2/5	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i>
2/10	Discussion: <i>Social Change and Its Directions</i>  <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Böröcz, „Social Change with Sticky Features. . .” 161-169.</li> <li>- Fabian, „Taking Stock. . .” 25-35</li> </ul>	2/12	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Bontoc Eulogy</i>
2/17	Discussion: <i>Dependency Theories</i>  <b>Reading:</b> So, “The Dependency Perspective.” 91-109.	2/19	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Goodbye Lenin!</i>
2/24	Discussion: <i>World-Systems Analysis</i>  <b>Reading:</b> So, “The World-System Perspective.” 169-199.	2/26	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Even the Rain</i>

3/3	Discussion: <i>Post-Colonial Perspectives</i>  <b>Readings:</b> - Böröcz & Sarkar: "Colonialism," 229-234. - Said, "Orientalism," 24-27.	3/5	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Lumumba</i>
3/10	Summary / discussion / recap before the midterm	3/12	<b>MIDTERM (in-class)</b>
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
3/24	Discussion: <i>Nationalisms and "Traditions"</i>  <b>Readings:</b> - Anderson, "Introduction," 1-7 - Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" 3-13 - Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions" 1-14.	3/26	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Before the Rain</i>
3/31	Discussion: <i>'Race' and Hybridity</i>  <b>Readings:</b> - Böröcz, "Goodness Is Elsewhere. . ." 110-138. - Brathwaite, "Creolization in Jamaica," 152-154. - Young, "The Cultural Politics of Hybridity," 148-162.	4/2	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Time of the Gypsies</i>
4/7	Discussion: <i>Difference and Memory</i>  <b>Reading:</b> Sarkar, "Difference in Memory," 139-168.	4/9	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Waltz with Bashir</i>
4/14	<b>Group Presentation 1</b>  <b>Group Presentation 2</b>  <b>Discussion</b>	4/16	<b>Group Presentation 3</b>  <b>Group Presentation 4</b>  <b>Discussion</b>

4/21	<b>Group Presentation 5</b>  <b>Discussion</b>	4/23	Discussion: FILM  <b>To be viewed in advance:</b> <i>Man of Marble</i>
4/28	Summary, catching up, tying of loose ends, etc.	4/30	Final papers due

### **Readings:**

Abrams, Philip. 1982. "Introduction: sociology as history." Pp. 1-17 in *Historical Sociology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. "Introduction." Pp. 1-7 in *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Böröcz, József. 1997. "Social Change with Sticky Features and the Failures of Modernizationism." *Innovation*, 10, 2:161-169.

Böröcz, József. 2006. "Goodness Is Elsewhere. The Rule of European Difference." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48, 1: 110-138.

Böröcz, József and Mahua Sarkar. 2012. "Colonialism." *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. Ed. Helmut K. Anheier, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Victor Faessel. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2012. 229-234. *SAGE Reference Online*. Web. 22 Mar. 2012. OR: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. 1995 (1971). "Creolization in Jamaica." Chapter 32, pp. 152-154 in in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds.) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. Second Edition*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, Princeton UP.

Fabian, Johannes. 1983. "Taking Stock: Anthropological Discourse and the Denial of Coevalness." Pp. 25-35 in *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. NYC: Columbia UP.

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1983. "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." Chapter 1, pp. 1-14 in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge UP.

Said, Edward W. 1995 (1978) "Orientalism." Excerpt. Chapter 3, pp. 24-27 in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds.) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. Second Edition*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Sarkar, Mahua. 2006. "Difference in Memory." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48, 1:139-168.

So, Alvin. 1990. *Social Change and Development. Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories*. Newbery Park, CA: Sage.

Young, Robert. 1995. "The Cultural Politics of Hybridity." Chapter 34, pp. 158-164 in in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds.) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. Second Edition*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

### **Films:**

*Beasts of the Southern Wild*, 2012, dir. Benh Zeitlin, 93 min., USA.

*Before the Rain*, 1995, dir. Milcho Manchevski, 112 min., Macedonia / USA.

*Bontoc Euology*, 1995, dir. Marlon Fuentes, 69 min.

*Even the Rain*, 2010, dir. Icíar Bollaín, 103 min., Spain.

*Finding Your Roots*, 2014, produced by Henry Louis Gates jr., 52 min., USA, watch online: <http://video.pbs.org/video/2230372774/>

*Goodbye Lenin!*, 2003, dir. Wolfgang Becker, 121 min., Germany.

*Lumumba*, 2000, dir. Raoul Peck, 112 min.

*Man of Marble*, 1977, dir. Andrzej Wajda, 160 min., Poland.

*Metropolis*, 1927, dir. Fritz Lang, 148 min., Germany.

*Time of the Gypsies*, 1988, dir. Emir Kusturica, 142 min., Yugoslavia.

*Waltz with Bashir*, dir. Ari Folman, 90 min., Israel.

**The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. You may use laptop computers in the classroom, but **USE OF THE INTERNET IN THE CLASSROOM IS PROHIBITED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED BY THE PROFESSOR.** Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, encouraged.**

**If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.**

**The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.**