Disciplines of Social Sciences

- **Psychology** analyzes human behavior.
- **Anthropology** is the study of human cultures.

Disciplines of Social Sciences

- **Economics** studies the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.
- **Political Science** is the study of politics.

Question

- What do the following people have in common?
  - Dan Akroyd (actor; comedian)
  - Debra Winger (actress)
  - Saul Bellow (novelist; Nobel Prize recipient)
  - Joe Theissman (NFL quarterback)
  - Rev. Jesse Jackson
  - Robin Williams (comedian; actor)
  - Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - Ronald Reagan

Answer

- They were all sociology majors.

Jobs in Sociology

- **Criminal Justice** as probation officers, parole officers, etc.
- **Social Services** serve people in need (youth or elderly)

Chapter 1

An Invitation to Sociology
What Is Sociology?
- **Sociology** studies human behavior
- It assumes a group, rather than an individual, perspective
- Sociologists look for the patterns in social relationships
- Individuals can benefit by using their sociological imaginations to look at events in their personal lives.

The Nature of Sociology
- **Perspective** is a particular point of view
- We all see what is happening around us through our own perspectives – our own point of view

What is unique about sociology?
- Sociology has its own perspective – the **sociological perspective**
  - This is a view that looks at behavior of groups not individuals

The Importance of Patterns
- In society you will inevitably find patterned relationships
- **Social Structure** = the patterned interaction of people in social relationships

How do group behavior and individual behavior differ?
- Emile Durkheim ▶ you should define something by the sum of its parts
Why do people conform?
1. Members of a group think, feel and behave in similar ways
2. Conformity occurs because members value the group’s ways
3. Conform when personal preferences are not that of the group

Acquiring the Sociological Imagination
• The sociological perspective enables us to develop a sociological imagination
• C. Wright Mills ▶ sociological imagination
  • ability to see the link between society and self

What is gained by using our sociological imagination?
• Understand effects of events
• Awareness permits to learn and get a fuller understanding of the events
• Questions common interpretations of human social behavior

The Origins of Sociology

French Revolution
• France’s class system changed dramatically
  • Aristocrats lost their money and status
  • Peasants (who had been at the bottom of the social ladder) rose to more powerful and influential positions
• Power in the hands of the people not the Church
• This impacted all of Europe, not just France

Industrial Revolution
• Europe was changing
• Masses of people moved to the cities…
  • Why?
  • What did they find when they go there?
• Industrial Revolution challenged the traditional order of life
  • Politically
  • Socially
How did sociology begin?

- Two other factors also led to the development of sociology
  1. Travel
  2. Success of Natural Sciences

Success in natural sciences

- Newton’s laws explained the movement of everything visible in the universe (from planets to buildings)
- It seemed logical to discover the laws underlying social phenomena

What were August Comte’s major ideas?

- Social dynamics
  - The study of social change
- Positive Philosophy
  - Intellectual discipline progresses only to the degree that it is grounded in facts and experience
  - Meaning? It rests on information about which one can make reasonably positive statements

Karl Marx

- Bourgeoisie
  - Class owning the means for producing wealth
- Capitalist
  - Person who owns or controls the means for producing wealth
- Proletariat
  - Working class; those who labor for the bourgeoisie
- Class conflict
  - The ongoing struggle between the owners and the workers
Emile Durkheim
What holds society together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanical Solidarity</th>
<th>Organic Solidarity</th>
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| Preindustrial Societies  
  - widespread consensus of values and beliefs  
  - strong social pressures to conform  
  - dependence on tradition and family | Industrialized Societies  
  - people interdependent on one another because of highly specialized jobs  
  - makes members of society dependent on one another for goods and services |

Max Weber
- **Verstehen**  
  Understanding social behavior by putting yourself in the place of others
- **Rationalization**  
  The mindset emphasizing knowledge, reason and planning

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What were Harriet Martineau’s contributions?
- Poor health
- Economic failure
- Translation of Comte’s work
- *Society in America*
  - Believed that women lacked economic power which kept them dependent on men

Why did Herbert Spencer oppose social reform?
- Self taught
- Jack of trades
- Society → Human body
- **Social Darwinism**  
  Thought that evolutionary social change led to progress

Why should we remember Jane Addams?
- Founded **Hull House** in Chicago
  - Here immigrants, the sick, the poor and the aged could find refuge and help
  - Focused on the problems caused by the imbalance of power among the social classes

What were the contributions of W.E.B. DuBois?
- Active in the Pan-African movement
- Meaning he was concerned for the rights of all African descendants no matter where they lived
Troubles and Issues

- **Troubles** are private problems in an individual's life.
- **Issues** affect large numbers of people.

Issues shape the context within which troubles arise

Theoretical Perspectives

The Role of Theoretical Perspectives

- Perception is the way the brain interprets an image of event
- Have you ever shared a different perception of an event from a friend?
Do you see a vase or two faces?

What is a theoretical perspective?
- **Theoretical perspective** (a set of assumptions accepted as true)
- Three overarching perspectives
  - Functionalism
  - Conflict Theory
  - Symbolic Interactionism

Functionalism
- Functionalism = approach that emphasizes the contributions made by each part of society
- How does functionalism explain social change?

Functionalism and Conflict
- Revolution or absorption?
- Do all functions have a positive effect?
  - Latent functions = unintended & unrecognized
  - Manifest functions = intended & recognized
  - Dysfunctions = negative consequences of an aspect of society
- How does functionalism view values?
**Conflict Perspective**

- **Conflict perspective** = approach emphasizing the role of conflict, competition and constraint within a society
- What is the role of conflict and constrains?
  - **Power** = the ability to control the behavior of others
- How does the conflict perspective explain social change?
- Which perspective is better?

**Symbolic Interactionism**

- **Symbolic Interactionism** = approach that focuses on the interactions among people based on mutually understood symbols
- What is the significance of symbolic interactionism?
  - **Symbol** = anything that stands for something else and has an agreed-upon meaning attached to it

**Symbolic Interactionism**

- Charles Horton Cooley & George Herbert Mead
  - Groups only exist because their members influence each other’s behavior

**Symbolic Interactionism**

- What are the basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism?
  - Herbert Blumer
    - We learn the meaning of symbols from observing the behavior of others
    - Once we learn the meaning we base our interactions on them
    - We use the meaning to imagine how others will respond
  - Erving Goffman \( \rightarrow \) **dramaturgy** = approach that depicts human interaction as theatrical performances