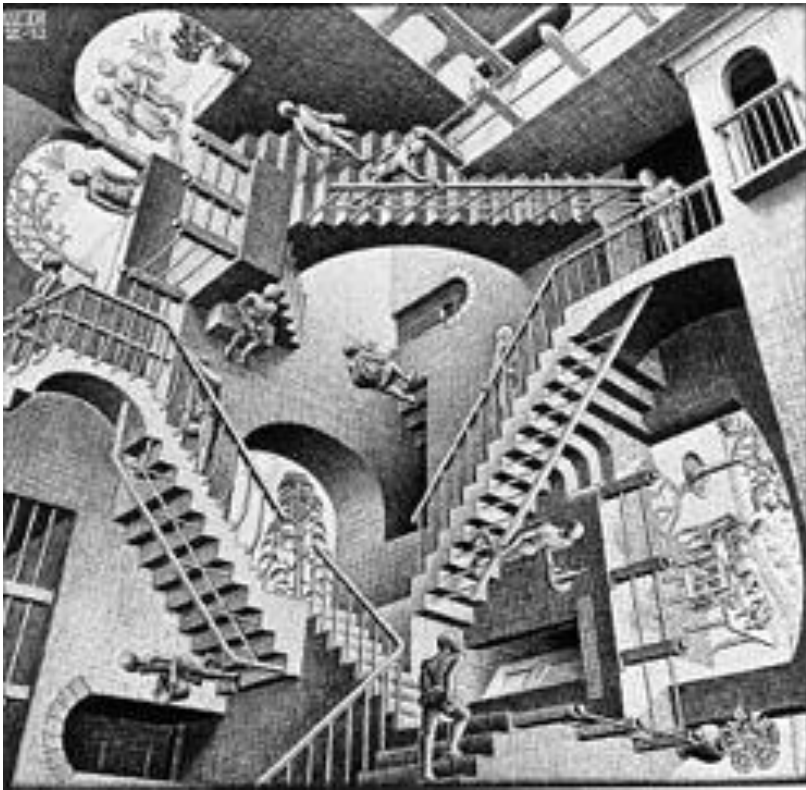


# Unit 1 – Perspectives



## Objective 1

Explain the development of sociology as a social science.

## Objective 2

Compare the theoretical perspectives of functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism used to explain social phenomena.

# ***How is knowledge derived?***

**Epistemology** is the study of knowledge, rational and empirical

- **Rational** = reason, logic, and calculation (ex. philosophy, math)
- **Empirical** = skilled observation and experiment (ex. natural and social sciences)

*What about beliefs and opinions derived from tradition, personal experience, wisdom, etc.?*

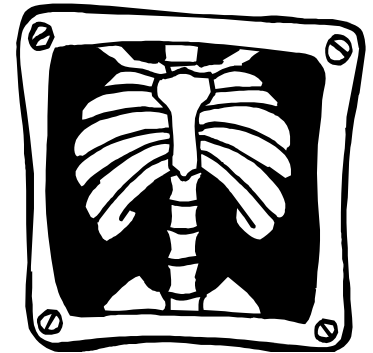
# Social Sciences

- **History** – past events and changes over time
- **Economics** – production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services
- **Political Science** – theories, organization, and administration of government
- **Anthropology** –beliefs and traits of cultures
- **Psychology** – mental and emotional development and functioning of the individual
- **Sociology** – social structures, or patterned interactions, of people in social relationships

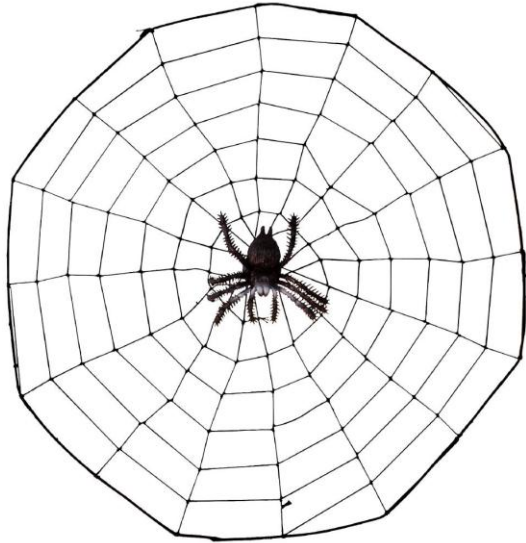
1. *What impact do poll results have on voter opinion?*
2. *How does brain chemistry affect an individual's mood?*
3. *What was the diet of the ancient Greeks?*
4. *How has the abundance of oil in developing countries affected their lifestyles?*
5. *Who were the most influential people in the establishment of the Underground Railroad?*
6. *How does occupation affect social standing in a community?*

# The Field of Sociology

- Developed in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe – *why?*  
So most early sociologists came from economics backgrounds
- Some tried to solve social problems through political reform or revolution – *who?*
- Others promoted ideas like Social Darwinism to preserve the status quo – *when did this theory lose support in the U.S.?*
- Has become less “prescriptive” and more “descriptive”, focusing on research than can be used to inform policy – *why?*



# Levels

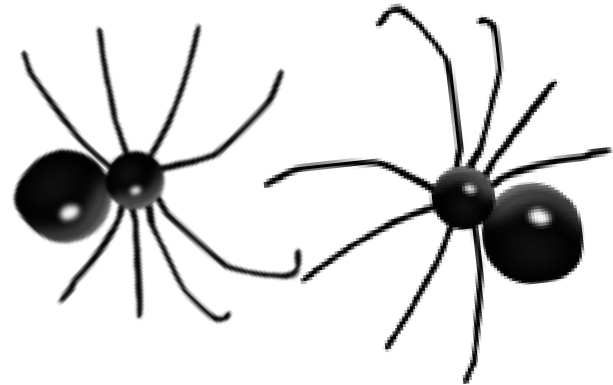


## MACRO

- Broad in scope: overall patterns in whole societies or institutions
- Core of sociology

## MICRO

- Narrow in scope: patterns of behavior between smaller groups of people
- Social psychology



# Methods

## QUANTITATIVE

- Focus on directly observable or measurable features of society
- Test hypotheses using statistical analysis of data taken from large samples



## QUALITATIVE

- Consider more complex explanations, motivations
- Ex. in-depth interviews, case studies, observation

# Perspectives

Perspective influences the focus of study, as well as interpretation of findings

- **Interactionist** – socialization, roles, communication, small groups, interaction
- **Functionalist** – division of labor, social institutions, stability and consensus
- **Conflict** – inequality and problems resulting from competition over scarce resources



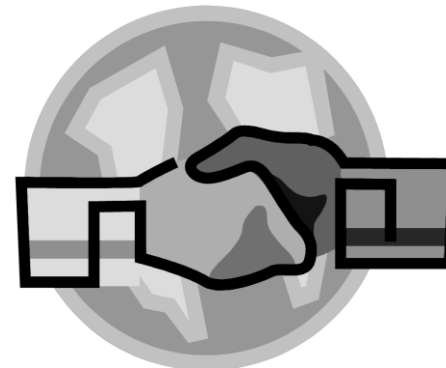


## FUNCTIONALIST

- Early radical example:  
Social Darwinism
- Usually more conservative,  
laissez-faire
- Competition/Inequality:
  - *Manifest function?*
  - *Latent function?*
  - *Change?*

## CONFLICT

- Early radical example:  
Marxism
- Usually more liberal,  
progressive
- Competition/Inequality:
  - *Haves?*
  - *Have-nots?*
  - *Change?*



# Founding Fathers

	Max Weber	Emile Durkheim	Karl Marx
Level: <i>Micro or Macro?</i>	Rationalization, religion	Division of labor, solidarity	Social class, capitalism
Method: <i>Quantitative or Qualitative?</i>	Historical, case study (Protestant Ethic & Spirit of Capitalism)	Statistical analysis (Suicide)	Historical (Communist Manifesto)
Major sociological concept	Verstehen = trying to understand the meaning of action from the actor's point of view	Social facts = realities external to individuals, whole is greater than the sum of the parts	Historical materialism = all society's institutions are based on its economic system
Perspective: <i>Interactionist, Functionalist, or Conflict?</i>	"All knowledge of cultural reality, as may be seen, is always knowledge from particular points of view."	"Societies cannot exist if there are only individuals...the individual is dominated by a moral reality greater than himself..."	"The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, Unite!"

# Reading Discussions

- *The Sociological Imagination*

- “A quality of mind that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on the world and of what may be happening within themselves.”

*Examples – his, mine, yours?*

- *Sociology as an Individual Pastime*

- “The fascination of sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives.”

*Examples – what Sociology is, what it is not?*

- *What “Everyone Knows”*

- “Sociologists go out and do the legwork for the powerful, the curious, the thoughtful, and the needy. Speculation, myth, ideology, and intuition are poor substitutes for knowledge...”

*Examples – what everyone knows, what Sociologists know?*