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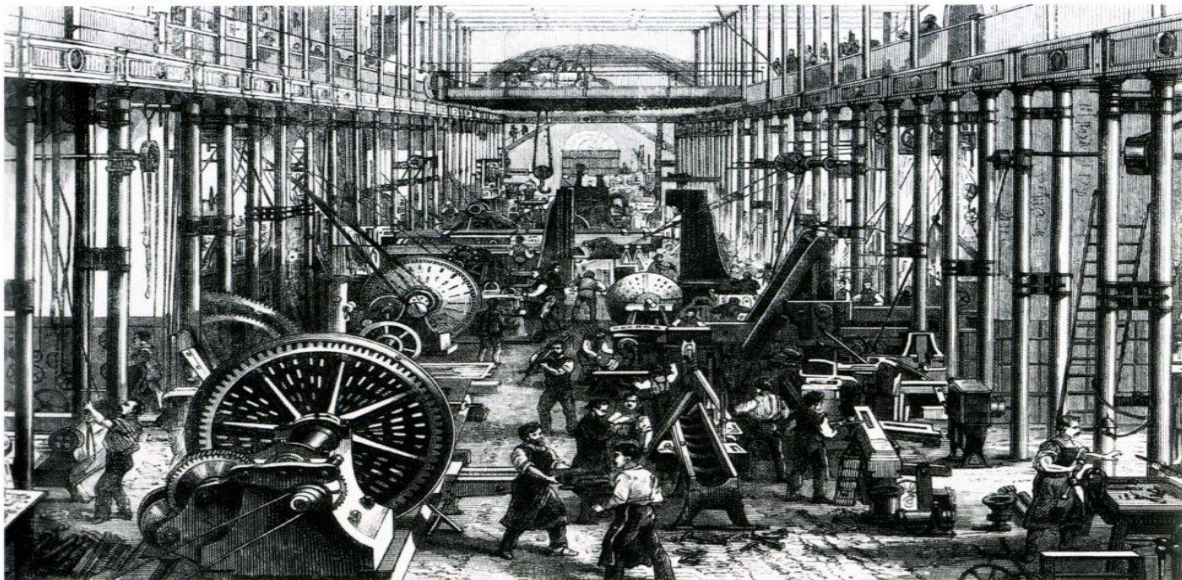
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INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY 2

TERM 3 MODULE, 2025

INDUSTRY, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY



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INTRODUCTION

Industry, Economy and Society introduces you to the key debates, concepts, and historical transformations that shape the field of economic sociology. Rather than taking the economy as a self-evident or technical domain, the module approaches economic life as deeply embedded in social relations, cultural norms, institutional power, and historical change. It invites you to question what we often take for granted: What is the economy? How is it organised? Who benefits from its structures, and who bears its costs? And how have societies imagined, built, and contested economic systems across time and place?

The module is structured around a central intellectual concern: the relationship between capitalism, society, and the state. Capitalism is not simply an economic system of production and exchange, but a historically specific mode of organising life—one that reconfigures work, value, nature, and human relations. The module begins by tracing the emergence of capitalism from earlier social orders, situating its rise within processes of colonialism, dispossession, and global expansion. We examine how classical political economists and sociologists—such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim—grappled with the transformations of their time, offering competing frameworks for understanding markets, modernity, labour, and inequality.

From these theoretical foundations, the module turns to the concrete organisation of industrial society: how work is structured, how production is managed, and how labour responds to systems of control. We explore the evolution of factories, management ideologies, workplace struggles, and technological change. Here, economic sociology offers key insights into the daily experience of work and the broader dynamics of power and resistance in the workplace.

A major focus of the module is the development and dominance of neoclassical economics as the mainstream framework for understanding economic life. We critically examine its central assumptions—rational actors, efficient markets, equilibrium—and contrast them with the insights of economic sociology, which emphasises that markets are shaped by social institutions, cultural norms, and unequal power relations. In this module, you will be introduced to the idea that the economy is not a neutral, universal mechanism, but a socially constructed field of contestation.

The module also brings global theories into dialogue with the specific history and political economy of South Africa. South Africa's trajectory of colonialism, racial capitalism, segregation, apartheid, and democratic transition presents a powerful case study for interrogating how economic systems are racialised, how states are formed, and how resistance emerges. Through a close examination of debates such as the 'Colonialism of a Special Type' thesis and criticisms of it, alongside analyses of post-apartheid inequality and state power, you learn how to apply theoretical tools to a historically and geographically specific context.

MODULE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the module, you will have developed a foundational grasp of key traditions in political economy and sociology, a critical understanding of capitalism's historical and contemporary dynamics, and an ability to analyse economic processes as embedded in—and shaped by—social structures, political power, and cultural meaning. The module provides an essential platform for further study in economic sociology, development studies, political economy, and the sociology of work, and equips you with the conceptual tools to engage with the economic questions that define our world. This module is one of the foundational modules for your Industrial and Economic Sociology major. It is conceptually challenging, but also exciting and invigorating intellectually. The literature is at times dense in its content and difficult to decipher. For this reason, you are strongly urged to attend **ALL lectures**, as your failure to do so will negatively affect your understanding of the theorists, theories and debates that are covered in this module.

By the end of the module, you should be able to:

1. Understand the historical development of capitalism and its social consequences.
2. Distinguish between major schools of thought in political economy, classical sociology, and economic sociology.
3. Critically assess the organisation of industrial work and labour relations in different historical contexts.
4. Identify key critiques of neoclassical economics and explain how economic sociology reframes economic life.
5. Apply sociological concepts and theories to the study of capitalism in South Africa, including its racial and colonial foundations.
6. Analyse the formation and transformation of the South African state and working class through a historical-sociological lens.
7. Engage critically with contemporary issues such as precarious work, financialisation, neoliberalism, and post-apartheid inequality.

MODULE CONTENT

Section 1: The Rise of Capitalism – Political Economy and Classical Sociology

This section lays the theoretical and historical groundwork for the module by tracing the emergence of capitalism as both an economic system and a broader social formation. Rather than seeing capitalism as a natural or inevitable outcome of human development, we examine its origins in specific historical transformations—such as the decline of feudalism, the expansion of colonial empires, and the violent processes of dispossession known as “primitive accumulation.”

Furthermore, we explore how early thinkers in political economy like Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx grappled with the dynamics of value, labour, and accumulation, while classical sociologists such as Max Weber and Emile Durkheim reflected on the profound social changes that capitalism unleashed. This section highlights how capitalism not only transformed economies but also reshaped social hierarchies, political institutions, and moral values. The enduring tensions between freedom and domination, growth and inequality, rationality and alienation are introduced here, providing conceptual anchors for the rest of the module.

Lectures:

1. Capitalism in History — From Feudalism to Global Expansion
 - Examines debates on the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Explores uneven development and the global expansion of capitalism through colonialism and primitive accumulation.
2. The Classical Political Economy Tradition — Smith, Ricardo, and Marx
 - Introduces key figures in classical political economy, focusing on labour, value, and accumulation. Smith's moral philosophy, Ricardo's distribution theory, and Marx's critique of political economy are discussed.
3. Classical Sociology — Weber, Durkheim, and Marx on Society and Modernity
 - Focuses on how classical sociologists analysed the social consequences of capitalism. Weber's rationalisation, Durkheim's division of labour, and Marx's historical materialism are compared.
4. Critical Themes — Class, State, Ideology, and Contradictions of Capitalism
 - Draws out themes that will recur in the module: the role of the state, the nature of class conflict, ideology and legitimation, and the contradictions within capitalism.

Section 2: Industry and Society – Technocratic Management and Industrial Sociology

This section examines how capitalism came to organise production through industrial systems, shaping not only how goods are made but how people live, work, and relate to one another. It traces the rise of industrial management practices from the early factory system to the development of scientific management and Taylorism, where labour was fragmented and time was strictly disciplined. We investigate how the ideology of efficiency under Fordism gave rise to bureaucratic forms of control that justified managerial hierarchies and standardised work. At the same time, we draw from Economic Sociology and workplace ethnographies to examine the agency of workers—how they resisted, negotiated, or adapted to these regimes. The section also addresses contemporary transformations, such as automation, deindustrialisation, and the emergence of precarious work, questioning what the “future of work” looks like in an era of technological change and economic uncertainty. This section not only considers the technical evolution of production but also its human and social consequences.

Lectures:

5. Foundations of Industrial Organisation — From the Factory to Taylorism
 - Explores how the factory system and scientific management shaped the labour process and managerial authority.
6. Fordism, Bureaucracy, and the Ideology of Efficiency
 - Examines Fordist production and the rise of bureaucratic management. Considers how ideology justified hierarchies and standardisation.
7. Labour Relations, Worker Agency, and Industrial Sociology
 - Introduces industrial sociology and workplace ethnographies. Discusses how workers resist, adapt to, or negotiate workplace control.
8. Industry in Transition — Deindustrialisation, Automation, and the Future of Work
 - Analyses shifts in work due to deindustrialisation and automation. Considers new forms of work and the politics of precarity.

Section 3: Economy and Society – Neoclassical Economics and Economic Sociology

This section examines the foundational and contrasting perspectives of neoclassical economics and economic sociology to deepen our understanding of economic life. Beginning with neoclassical economics, we explore its core assumptions of rational individualism, utility maximization, and market equilibrium as a mathematically modelled system. We then introduce economic sociology's critical response, emphasizing markets as socially embedded institutions shaped by culture, norms, power, and networks. Further lectures investigate how economic processes are intertwined with power, inequality, and identity, revealing the political and social dimensions of economic exchange. The section concludes by applying both approaches to contemporary issues, including finance, labour precarity, and digital economies, highlighting the ongoing need for pluralistic frameworks that capture the complex realities shaping markets and economic behaviour today.

Lectures:

9. The Logic of Markets — Foundations of Neoclassical Economics
 - Introduces neoclassical economics, focusing on rational individualism, utility maximisation, marginal analysis, and market equilibrium as key foundations.
10. Economy as Society — Foundations of Economic Sociology
 - Explores economic sociology's view of markets as socially embedded, shaped by institutions, norms, networks, and power relations.
11. Power, Inequality, and Identity in Economic Life
 - Explores how race, gender, and class shape economic outcomes. Analyses how power operates in economic institutions.
12. Contemporary Debates — Finance, Labour, and Digital Economies
 - Engages with current issues: financialisation, gig work, and platform capitalism. Raises questions about regulation and social protection.

Section 4: Controversies over the Character of South African Society

This section delves into a foundational debate within South African sociology: how best to characterise the nature of South African capitalism and the apartheid social formation. Was apartheid a racial state with its own internal logic, or was it primarily a form of racialised capitalism serving capitalist interests? We explore competing frameworks that have shaped scholarly and political understandings of South African society—including the racial capitalism thesis, the Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) thesis developed by the South African Communist Party, and alternative approaches rooted in Black Consciousness, nationalism, and postcolonial critique. These debates are not merely academic; they shape how we understand the persistence of inequality, the legacies of apartheid, and the character of the democratic transition. By engaging these perspectives, you gain insight into how global theories of capitalism and colonialism must be reinterpreted in light of local histories and struggles. This section provides essential tools for analysing contemporary South Africa through a historically grounded lens.

Lectures:

13. Foundations and Historical Context — Racial Capitalism, Segregation, and Apartheid
 - Reviews historical materialist accounts of racial capitalism and the development of segregation and apartheid.
14. The Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) Thesis
 - Explores the CST thesis developed by the South African Communist Party.
15. Alternative Frameworks — Black Consciousness, Nationalism, and Postcolonial Critique
 - Examines other frameworks for understanding South Africa's political economy, including Steve Biko and global postcolonial thought.
16. Contemporary Debates and Legacies — Post-Apartheid Inequality, Decolonisation, and State Character
 - Analyses the persistence of inequality and debates over the post-apartheid state, democracy, and decolonisation.

Section 5: State Formation and Ideology in South Africa

This section investigates the formation and evolution of the South African state, not as a neutral apparatus of governance, but as a contested site of power, ideology, and resistance. We begin with the colonial state and its use of coercion and racial bureaucracy to control land and labour, laying the foundation for the apartheid regime. We then examine how ideologies—such as racial supremacy, Christian nationalism, and developmentalism—legitimated state policies and justified domination. At the same time, resistance movements developed counter-ideologies and alternative visions of social order. The section then turns to the negotiated transition to democracy in the 1990s, examining both its achievements and its limitations. In the post-apartheid era, the state faces new crises of legitimacy, shaped by austerity, corruption, popular protest, and

demands for deeper transformation. This section enables you to understand the state as both a product of history and a potential instrument for social change, shaped by ongoing struggles over authority, redistribution, and justice.

Lectures:

17. Foundations of State Power: Colonial Conquest and the Racial State
 - Analyses early state formation in South Africa and the development of racial bureaucracies and coercive rule.
18. Ideologies of Rule and Resistance: Apartheid, Nationalism, and Radical Thought
 - Investigates how apartheid ideology was constructed and resisted. Examines how various movements framed resistance ideologically.
19. Transition and Transformation: Negotiated Settlement and Post-Apartheid State-Building
 - Explores the transition to democracy, the compromises made, and the architecture of the post-apartheid state.
20. Crisis and Contestation: Neoliberalism, Popular Protest, and the Future of the State
 - Discusses current crises of legitimacy, austerity, and popular resistance. Considers the changing relationship between state and society.

Section 6: Work, Working-Class Movements and Struggles in South Africa

This section explores the history and sociology of work in South Africa, focusing on the formation of the working class, the dynamics of labour exploitation, and the struggles for dignity, rights, and transformation. Beginning with colonial labour regimes—such as migrant labour systems and racialised job reservation—it traces how South Africa’s industrial workforce was forged through systems of control, segregation, and resistance. We examine key moments of working-class mobilisation, including the rise of trade unions, mass strikes, and the central role of labour in the anti-apartheid movement. The section also considers how race, gender, and identity shape workplace experiences and worker consciousness. In the contemporary period, new challenges—such as informalisation, unemployment, and the rise of gig work—complicate old forms of solidarity and raise questions about the future of worker organising. Drawing on historical and ethnographic studies, this section equips you to understand the shifting terrain of labour politics in South Africa and beyond.

Lectures:

21. Historical Foundations of Work and Labour in South Africa
 - Surveys the development of migrant labour, racial divisions of labour, and early worker organisation.
22. Rise of Working-Class Movements and Struggles
 - Focuses on key moments in working-class mobilisation, the role of trade unions, and the anti-apartheid labour movement.

23. Workplace Culture and Social Relations: Gender, Race, and Identity

- Investigates how identity shapes workplace relations and labour struggles. Draws on workplace ethnographies.

24. Contemporary Challenges and New Struggles in the 21st Century

- Analyses informalisation, precarity, and the gig economy. Considers new worker movements and possibilities for solidarity.

ASSESSMENT

The lectures for the module will be held on Mondays 5th period, Wednesdays 2nd period, Thursdays 3rd period, and Fridays 4th period in the Arts Major Theatre. The 7th and 8th periods on Fridays will be used for tests and possibly class discussions. For this module, you will be expected to write two tests. The first test will take place on Friday, July 25 (in 7th and 8th periods). The second test will take place on Friday, August 15 (in 7th and 8th periods). The year-mark component for the module is based on the two tests. The module will be examined as well during a two-hour written examination at the end of the second semester. The examination counts for 60% of the module mark, and the year-mark component for 40% of the module mark.

Please consult the Sociology Handbook for an outline of the University's policy on plagiarism, guidelines on the formatting and writing of assignments, the departmental rules regarding citations and references, and the criteria for assessing written work. A copy of the Assignment Cover Sheet, which must accompany all assignments submitted to the Department, is also available in the Handbook.

CONSULTATIONS

For consultation purposes, please email me (k.helliker@ru.ac.za) to set up a meeting.

MODULE READINGS

There are no compulsory texts assigned for this module. Rather, for each section, specific readings are listed. *It is imperative that you do reading throughout the duration of this module.* Ongoing reading will enable you to make the content of the module your own. Needless to say, *lecture notes are completely insufficient for purposes of exams.* Lectures are designed simply to give you a bare skeleton for the theories, themes, and debates, and to assist you in grasping the rich conceptual discussions found in the literature.

Section 1: The Rise of Capitalism – Political Economy and Classical Sociology

Bottomore, T. (ed.) (1991). *A Dictionary of Marxist thought*. (second edition). pp. 191-196. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Dowd, D. (2000). *Capitalism and its economics: A critical history*. London: Pluto Press. [Chapter 1]

Fulcher, J. (2004). *Capitalism: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Chapters 1–3]

Hyman, R. (2006). Marxist thought and the analysis of work. In: M. Korchynski, R. Hodson & P.K. Edwards (eds.) *Social theory at work*, pp. 26–55. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lincoln, J. & D. Guillot. (2006). A Durkheimian view of organisational culture. In: M. Korchynski, R. Hodson & P.K. Edwards (eds.) *Social theory at work*, pp. 56–87. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Royce, E. (2015). *Classical social theory and modern society: Marx, Durkheim, Weber*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. [Chapters 2–4]

Sewell, G. & Barker, J. (2006). Max Weber and the irony of bureaucracy. In: M. Korchynski, R. Hodson & P.K. Edwards (eds.) *Social theory at work*, pp. 88–120. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Section 2: Industry and Society – Technocratic Management and Industrial Sociology

Baritz, L. (2005). The servants of power. In: C. Grey & H. Willmott (eds.) *Critical management studies: A reader*, pp. 29–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, R.K. (1967). Approaches to workplace behaviour. In: S.R. Parker, R.K. Brown, J. Child & M.A. Smith (eds.) *The sociology of industry* (fourth edition), pp. 79–92. London: Unwin Hyman.

Carey, A. (1967). The Hawthorne studies: A radical criticism. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 (3), pp. 403–416.

Hassard, J.S. (2012). Rethinking the Hawthorne studies: The Western Electric research in its social, political and historical context. *Human Relations*, Vol. 65 (11), pp. 1431–1461.

Shepard, J.M. (1971). On Alex Carey's radical criticism of the Hawthorne studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 14 (1), pp. 23–32.

Thompson, P. & D. McHugh. (2002). *Work organisations: A critical introduction* (third edition). Basingstoke: Palgrave. [Chapters 2, 4].

Watson, T.J. (2008). *Sociology, work and industry* (fifth edition). London: Routledge. [Chapters 1–2].

Section 3: Economy and Society – Neoclassical Economics and Economic Sociology

Block, F. (1991). Contradictions of self-regulating markets. In: M. Mendell & D. Salée (eds.) *The legacy of Karl Polanyi: Market, state and society at the end of the twentieth century*, pp. 86–106. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Dale, G. (2011). Lineages of embeddedness: On the antecedents and successors of a Polanyian concept. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 70 (2), pp. 306–339.

Finlayson, A.C., T.A. Lyson, A. Pleasant, K.A. Schafft, & R.J. Torres (2005). The “invisible hand”: Neoclassical economics and the ordering of society. *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 31 (4), pp. 515–536.

Krier, D. (1999). Assessing the new synthesis of economics and sociology: Promising themes for contemporary analysts of economic life. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 58 (4), pp. 669–696.

Krippner, G.R. (2001). The elusive market: Embeddedness and the paradigm of economic sociology. *Theory and Society*, Vol. 30 (6), pp. 775–810.

Rowlinson, M. (1997). *Organisations and institutions: Perspectives in economics and sociology*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press. [Chapter 3].

Smelser, N.J. & R. Swedberg. (2005). Introducing economic sociology. In: N.J. Smelser & R. Swedberg (eds.) *The handbook of economic sociology* (second edition), pp. 3–25. New York: Russell Sage.

Section 4: “Colonialism of a Special Type?” – Controversies over the Character of South African Society

Alexander, P. (2007). History, internationalism and intellectuals: The case of Harold Wolpe. *Transformation*, 63, pp. 109-126.

Bozzoli, B. & P. Delius. (1990). Radical history and South African society. *Radical History Review*, 46/47, pp. 13-45.

Cronin, A. & A.M. Mashilo. (2017). Decentring the question of race: Critical reflections on Colonialism of a Special Type. In: E. Webster & K. Pampillas (eds.) *The unresolved national question in South Africa: Left thinking under Apartheid*, pp. 20-41. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Social Review. (1984). 'Internal colonialism: A faded concept.' *Social Review*, 26/27, pp. 14-24.

South African Communist Party (SACP). ([1962] 1981). The road to South African freedom. In: B. Bunting (ed.) *South African Communists speak: Documents from the history of the South African Communist Party, 1915-1980*, pp. 284-320. London: Inkululeko Publishers.

Wolpe, H. (1975). The theory of internal Colonisation: The South African case. Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 5.

Yudelman, D. (1975). Industrialisation, race relations and change in South Africa: An ideological and academic debate. *African Affairs*, Vol. 74 (294), pp. 82-96.

Section 5: State Formation and Ideology in South Africa

Chipkin, I. & S. Meny-Gibert. (2012). Why the past matters: Studying public administration in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 46 (1), pp. 102-112.

Higot, R.A. (1983). *Political development theory: The contemporary debate*. London: Routledge. [Chapter 3].

Hyslop, J. (2005). Political corruption, before and after Apartheid. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol. 31 (4), pp. 773-789.

Moll, T. (1991). Did the apartheid economy "fail"? *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 17 (2), pp. 271-291.

Posel, D. (1983). Rethinking the "race-class debate" in South African historiography. *Social Dynamics*, Vol. 9 (1), pp. 50-66.

Seekings, J. (2009). The rise and fall of the Weberian analysis of class in South Africa between 1949 and the early 1970s. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 35 (4), pp. 865-881.

Section 6: Work, Working-Class Movements and Struggles in South Africa

Byrne, S., N. Ulrich & L. van der Walt. (2017). Red, black and gold: FOSATU, South African “workerism,” “syndicalism” and the nation. In: E. Webster & K. Pampillas (eds.) *The unresolved national question in South Africa: Left thinking under Apartheid*, pp. 254-273. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Makhoba, M. (1984). *The sun shall rise for the workers – Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebenzi: The story of Mandlenkosi Makhoba*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press in association with the Federation of South African Trade Unions.

Nzimande, B.N. (1986). Managers and the new middle class. *Transformation*, 1, 39-62.

Seidman, G. (1998). Oppositional identities in Brazil and South Africa: Unions and the transition to democracy. In: R. Greenstein (ed.) *Comparative perspectives on South Africa*, pp. 243-259. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan.

Webster, E. (1985). Work, worker organisation and labour market segmentation in South African foundries. *Labour, Capital and Society*, Vol. 18 (2), pp. 344-371.

Webster, E. (1995). Taking labour seriously: Sociology and labour in South Africa. In: A. van der Merwe (ed.) *Industrial Sociology: A South African perspective*, pp. 1-27. Johannesburg: Lexicon.