**Week 1: History of Sociology; Sociological Imagination**

**STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS**

The course starts with an overview of history of sociology as a discipline. It summarizes what constitutes a sociological perspective and how it is different from other disciplines. The readings also cover such concepts as sociological imagination and social facts.

1. Where did sociology originate? Who were its first thinkers and what topics did they consider in their writings?
2. Who coined the term sociology? When was it introduced? What was the foundational idea behind the term?
3. What is positivism? What are the limits of the positivist approach to studying societies?
4. What was Harriet Martineau’s contribution to sociology as a discipline?
5. Why did Karl Marx reject positivism? What alternative perspectives to how societies operate did Marx introduce?
6. How was Georg Simmel different from both positivism and Marx’s approach?
7. What are social facts? According to Emile Durkheim, why do we need to study social facts?
8. What is the difference between quantitative and qualitative branches in sociology?
9. What is the goal of sociology according to Max Weber? What did he mean when arguing for an anti-positivist approach in sociology?
10. What is the idea behind public sociology?

**General discussion questions:**

* + - 1. Based on the second reading, what makes sociology different from other disciplines? How does it help understand individual life events such as decision to go to college, marriage, unemployment and/or successful career?
      2. Based on both readings, how does the spread of digital technologies is impacting people’s social lives? Can you think of examples of how social media is impacting your perceptions of particular events in your life?