

# Class Theory Table

	Class as status	Class as power	Class as discourse	Class as culture
<b>Sources</b>	<b>Max Weber</b>	<b>Karl Marx &amp; Frederick Engels</b>	<b>Poststructuralist theories</b>	<b>Raymond Williams, Basil Bernstein</b>
<b>Focus of analysis</b>	Multiple aspects of individual life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Lifestyle</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Associations</li> </ul>	Economic role and relationships - owners have the power and means to exploit workers in order to generate a profit; workers are compelled to sell their labor in order to survive	Representations  Language  Popular narratives & discourse	Family and neighborhood   Attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences
<b>View of Conflict</b>	Conflict is present but not central - class as differentiation	Conflict is inherent and central - class relations give us, for the most part, opposing interests	Conflict is present but not central - discourse reflects class conflicts, conflict is worked out through discourse, and discourse may limit or shape how conflict works	Conflict is present but not central - much attention to conflicts based in attitudes or behaviors; conflict is acted out through behavior and affiliations
<b>Possibility of changing one's class</b>	Yes, through education, job changes, and changes in behavior	Yes, by changing one's position in the economic system, but this is rare	Focus isn't on what class one belongs to; more on analyzing how class is represented in the culture	Partially, similar to ethnicity - people can change class position, but the culture in which one grew up influences one's patterns of thought and behavior throughout life
<b>How many classes are there, and how sharply are they divided?</b>	Multiple variations of upper, middle, working, and lower; some models suggest variegations between these - upper-middle, lower-working, etc. - and scholars vary in how clearly they think these categories are differentiated	Three, very clearly separated: owners, workers, petit bourgeois (small business owners, professionals)	Multiple with very fluid boundaries - sees class categories as defined by and through discourse, but different ideas exist about whether these categories exist before or as a result of discourse	Tends to focus on working and middle class and defines their differences in terms of attitudes, behaviors, and experiences

**Source:** Center for Working Class Studies, Youngstown State University  
<http://cwcs.yosu.edu/teaching/teaching-class/theory-table>  
 Revised slightly by the instructor for this course.