

Introduction to Systems Theory

By Niklas Luhmann

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Niklas Luhmann ranks as one of the most important sociologists and social theorists of the twentieth century. Through his many books he developed a highly original form of systems theory that has been hugely influential in a wide variety of disciplines.

In *Introduction to Systems Theory*, Luhmann explains the key ideas of general and sociological systems theory and supplies a wealth of examples to illustrate his approach. The book offers a wide range of concepts and theorems that can be applied to politics and the economy, religion and science, art and education, organization and the family. Moreover, Luhmann’s ideas address important contemporary issues in such diverse fields as cognitive science, ecology, and the study of social movements.

This book provides all the necessary resources for readers to work through the foundations of systems theory – no other work by Luhmann is as clear and accessible as this. There is also much here that will be of great interest to more advanced scholars and practitioners in sociology and the social sciences.

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Introduction to Systems Theory By Niklas Luhmann Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #493420 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Polity
- Published on: 2012-12-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .90" w x 6.00" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 300 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

'These lectures, published here in English for the first time, show Luhmann at the height of his powers. They offer a unique insight into the engine room of arguably the world's most famous systems theorist. It is indeed a brilliant mind that is at work here; very few other social scientists would be able to perform at such a level. Particularly for students and readers who are not familiar with Luhmann's style of thought, this is an ideal introduction to systems theory by the man himself.'
Andreas Hess, University College Dublin

'Niklas Luhmann is the closest the social sciences have come, in a long time, to an actual thinker. This book is an indispensable introduction to Luhmann’s unique version of systems theory and required reading to all concerned about theoretical sociology. It offers a rare glimpse into the experimental workings of an extraordinary sociological mind at work.'
Stephan Fuchs, University of Virginia

From the Back Cover
Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998) ranks as one of the most important sociologists and social theorists of the 20th century. From 1968 to 1992 he taught at the University of Bielefeld as a professor of sociology. In recent years, Luhmann's systems theory has gained resonance in a wide variety of disciplines.

Introduction to Systems Theory is Luhmann at the height of his powers. He offers precise conceptual analyses and a wealth of examples to clarify the theoretical foundations of general and sociological systems theory. This book is a rich source of ideas that can be applied to a variety of complex questions. It offers a wide range of concepts and theorems that pertain equally to politics and the economy, religion and science, art and education, the family and personal life. Moreover, Luhmann's ideas address important contemporary issues in such diverse fields as cognitive science, ecology, and the study of social movements.

Luhmann's *Introduction to Systems Theory* provides all the necessary resources for students to work through the foundations of systems theory. Along the way, it also shows that it may well be among the most important resources of serious theoretical work in the social sciences today. This is the most accessible of Luhmann's books and it will establish itself as the key text for anyone who wishes to understand systems theory and its uses today.

About the Author
Niklas Luhmann was professor of sociology at the University of Bielefeld.

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