

## **Social Sciences 4: Social Perspectives and Social Action**

Spring 2014

Section A: MWF 8:30-9:50

Section B: MWF 10:00-11:20

TBD Classroom

Instructor: Adam Kotsko (a.kotsko@shimer.edu)

### **Course Introduction**

This final course in the Social Sciences sequence examines the conceptual framework and methodology of the various disciplines of the social sciences. We turn from the examination of the structural and empirical makeup of social and political reality to the modes of inquiry that have been employed in the works read in the previous social sciences courses. All the questions from the earlier courses in the Social Sciences sequence are reexamined in light of what kinds of questions they are, and which answers to such questions can claim scientific validity. This course addresses the question of whether society can be studied scientifically, and if so how, as well as related questions such as whether objectivity is possible and whether emancipation from ideology is attainable.

### **Course Goals**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to do the following:

#### *Communications/Collaboration/Ethics*

- Present ideas succinctly and fluently in writing and speech.
- Engage in clear, collaborative, well-informed dialogue.
- Assert one's own and solicit and restate effectively others' perspectives on course topics.
- Integrate one's own and others' perspectives toward new insights into course materials.
- Discuss controversial issues in a manner that shows respect for both the author and fellow class members.

#### *Knowledge/Application*

- Demonstrate understanding of how historical, social, economic, and political forces shape social theory, and apply that understanding to social and political issues.
- Define and accurately use key concepts of the social sciences, such as ideology, objectivity, subjectivity, and social construction.

#### *Knowledge/Critical Thinking*

- Describe and assess the complex differences between different types of social-scientific theories (such as modern/postmodern) and methods (such as quantitative/qualitative).
- Point out and/or reconstruct assumptions that underlie various social and political theories and methods.

#### *Knowledge/Application/Critical Thinking*

- Critically assess the uses and limitations of theories and methods in the social sciences for research, explanation, and practical application to social problems.

## Assessment Methods

Class participation: 50%  
Two papers: 50% (25% each)

Discussion assumes conscientious preparation for, and prompt attendance at each class. Bring questions to class, and come ready to listen to others and share your ideas with one another in a respectful, attentive, and caring way.

More than four absences may be grounds for failing the class. If possible, please let me know in advance if you are going to miss class.

Your papers are to be on topics of your choosing based on the texts read in class. The first paper must discuss at least one text from the first half of the course, the second paper, at least one text from the second half of the course. I urge you to discuss topics with me beforehand, though this is not a requirement. I am available to review drafts if they are submitted to me at least ten days before the paper is due. Completed papers that are *submitted on time* may be rewritten, and the improved grade will be the one recorded for the assignment. Papers submitted on time may be rewritten more than once. If you turn in a paper past the due date you lose the opportunity to rewrite it. No work will be accepted after the last day of classes.

Papers must be between 1800 and 2400 words (approximately 6-8 double-spaced pages). You may, but need not, refer to contemporary scholarship from outside the course readings. All quotations and paraphrases, from course readings and outside sources alike, must be cited appropriately; please refer to *Writing With Sources* for clarification on this point. Plagiarism may lead to failure of the assignment or the course, and repeated offenses can lead to expulsion.

***All written work must be submitted via e-mail*** by the deadline stated in the class schedule below. If you submit a printed copy on time, your paper will count as being on time, but you must submit an e-mail copy as soon as possible—I will not grade or respond to any printed work. All papers should be submitted in ***a format compatible with Microsoft Word or Libre Office*** (.doc, .docx, .rtf., or .odt); please **do not** submit papers in Pages or PDF format.

## Required Course Textbooks

Berger and Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*  
Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*  
Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*  
Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*  
Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*  
Keller & Longino, *Feminism & Science*  
Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*  
Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*  
Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*  
Runciman, *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*

Additional readings will be included in a course packet.

## Tentative Course Schedule and Readings

Note: Readings from the packet are marked as follows: (\*\*).

Wednesday	January 14	Durkheim, <i>Rules of Sociological Method</i> , Preface through Chapter II
Friday	January 16	Durkheim, <i>Rules of Sociological Method</i> , Chapters III and IV
Monday	January 19	<b>Martin Luther King Day—NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday	January 21	Durkheim, <i>Rules of Sociological Method</i> , Chapter V through Conclusion
Friday	January 23	<i>Max Weber: Selections</i> , “The Nature of Social Action”
Monday	January 26	<i>Max Weber: Selections</i> , “The Concept of Following a Rule” and “Politics as a Vocation”
Wednesday	January 28	<i>Max Weber: Selections</i> , “Value-Judgments in Social Science”
Friday	January 30	Mannheim, <i>Ideology and Utopia</i> , Chapter I
Monday	February 2	Mannheim, <i>Ideology and Utopia</i> , Chapter II, pp. 55-83
Wednesday	February 4	Mannheim, <i>Ideology and Utopia</i> , Chapter II, pp. 84-108
Friday	February 6	Mannheim, <i>Ideology and Utopia</i> , Chapter V
Monday	February 9	Berger and Luckman, <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> , Preface, Introduction and Part I
Wednesday	February 11	Berger and Luckman, <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> , Part II
Friday	February 13	Berger and Luckman, <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> , Part III
Monday	February 16	Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”
Wednesday	February 18	Geertz, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man” and “The Growth of Culture and the Evolution of Mind”
Friday	February 20	<b>Dean’s Break—NO CLASS</b>
Monday	February 23	<b>Paper #1 due via e-mail by class time—NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday	February 25	Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”
Friday	February 27	Rabinow, <i>Foucault Reader</i> , “The Body of the Condemned” and “Docile Bodies”
Monday	March 2	Rabinow, <i>Foucault Reader</i> , “The Means of Correct Training”
Wednesday	March 4	Rabinow, <i>Foucault Reader</i> , “Panopticism,” “Complete and Austere Institutions,” “Illegalities and Delinquency,” and “The Carceral”

Friday	March 6	Foucault, <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Part One; Part Two, Chapter 1
Monday	March 9	Foucault, <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Part Two, Chapter 2; Part Three
Wednesday	March 11	Foucault, <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Part Four, Chapters 1-3
Friday	March 13	Foucault, <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Part Four, Chapter 4; Part Five
Monday	March 16	<b>Spring Break—NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday	March 18	<b>Spring Break—NO CLASS</b>
Friday	March 20	<b>Spring Break—NO CLASS</b>
Monday	March 23	Keynes and Hayek (**)
Wednesday	March 25	Friedman (**)
Friday	March 27	Galbreath and Sen (**)
Monday	March 30	<i>Feminism and Science</i> : Smith, “Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology”; Fox Keller, “Feminism and Science”
Wednesday	April 1	<i>Feminism and Science</i> : Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology...”; Haraway, “Situated Knowledges”
Friday	April 3	<i>Feminism and Science</i> : Lloyd, “Reason, Science and the Domination of Matter”; Longino, “Subjects, Power, Knowledge”
Monday	April 6	Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , Preface, Chapter 1
Wednesday	April 8	Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , Chapter 2
Friday	April 10	Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , Chapter 3
Monday	April 13	Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , Chapter 4
Wednesday	April 15	Milgram, <i>Obedience to Authority</i> , Chapters 1-5
Friday	April 17	Milgram, <i>Obedience to Authority</i> , Chapters 6-9
Monday	April 20	Milgram, <i>Obedience to Authority</i> , Chapter 10-12
Wednesday	April 22	Milgram, <i>Obedience to Authority</i> , Chapter 13 through Appendix 1; Milgram, “Subject Reaction” (**); Haney and Zimbardo, “A Study of Prisoners and Guards in Simulated Prison” (**)
Friday	April 24	<b>NO CLASS.</b> <b>All written work due by the Absolute Deadline.</b>