

The Social World (Spring 2011)

Professor: Shamus Rahman Khan

LECTURE: MW: 2:40-4PM

Office Hours: ???or by appointment; 617 Knox Hall

Teaching Assistants: ???

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to what sociologists study and how they study it. Our aim is to provide an enormously broad introduction to sociology, and even the social sciences more generally. We will read about empires, state formation, the development of economics, crack babies, boarding schools, prisons, becoming a marijuana user, cockfighting, the changing nature of American work, social movements, why people like the music they do, intersexed people, American inequality, how obesity is contagious, how communities are impacted by natural disasters, and lots of things in between. As we move through these readings we will discuss the major theoretical approaches deployed by sociologists, appealing to Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Foucault, and some lesser-known figures. And we will discuss the methodological tools sociologists use to make sense of the social world.

But you will read none of these “classics.” Instead the emphasis is on more contemporary texts. Readings have been selected using two criteria: (1) are they enormously influential pieces of work; and (2) are they interesting? If you are looking for an in depth introduction to a particular topic, this is not the class for you. If you’re happy to learn a little about a whole range of things, you might enjoy this class. There is a lot of reading in this class; you must do the readings to do well in this course. We are sensitive to this and have designed a grading scheme that rewards students for doing the work (effort). If you show up for class, do the reading, and pay attention, you should do very well in this course. Conversely, if you miss class, don’t do the reading, and are distracted, you will not do well. Our hope is that course evaluation centered on steady weekly work will both relieve stress and actually help you learn, remember, and use the concepts introduced in this course.

Evaluations

12 Quizzes: 110 Points

13 Papers: 120 Points

Total: 230 points

Almost every week we will have a quiz on the previous week’s lectures. Each quiz will have five questions; each quiz will be worth 10 points. QUIZZES CAN ONLY BE TAKEN IN CLASS. Questions will be on the major concepts presented in lecture, not the small nit-picky points. There may be one question from the previous week’s readings on each quiz. You can drop one quiz grade.

Almost every week you must turn in a two-to-three page (750 word) response paper to the readings. Each response paper is worth 10 points. Response papers are evaluated simply. When we read them we will ask, “did you do the readings and do you engage with the ideas in the readings?” If you simply want to critically summarize the readings, fine. If you’d prefer to question a central issue, fine. You can relate the readings to one another or treat them as distinct. However, this is one point we a NOT flexible on: you must engage with all the readings. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY LATE RESPONSE PAPERS. You can drop one response paper.

We use this evaluation scheme for three reasons:

1. We take a skills-based approach to learning. We hope that at the end of the class you will

have developed two key skills: (a) how to listen to material, figure out what is important, remember it, and reproduce it; (b) how to read material, identify the core argument, and present it yourself in a clear and concise fashion.

2. It should relieve stress. There are no big exams. No midterms or finals. You just have to chug along, doing regular, steady work. Week-in and week-out you know exactly what you have to do. It's always the same. And if you have a particularly tough week outside of class, you can drop the assignments from that week.
3. You will retain more this way. It's not like cramming for a test and forgetting everything. You will also have a written account of your interpretations of each text. If you take future classes in the social sciences these could prove helpful.

Academic Integrity

(Adapted from Columbia Policy): You must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your papers; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent. Any breach of this intellectual responsibility cannot be tolerated. In this class we will not make a distinction between "minor" and "major" infractions. Any instance of academic dishonesty will be taken extremely seriously. Students failing to meet these responsibilities will fail this course and we will vigorously recommend to the deans that you be asked to leave Columbia.

Required Texts

There are five required texts. All are available for sale at Book Culture. They are:

- *Everything in its Path*, by Kai T. Erickson
- *Economists and Societies*, by Marion Fourcade
- *Killing the Black Body*, by Dorothy Roberts
- *Empire of Difference*, by Karen Barkey
- *Privilege*, by Shamus Khan

We will not read any books until the 5th week of the semester. This will give you plenty of time to assess the class before investing in its texts. Book Culture is located at: 536 West 112th Street (in between Broadway and Amsterdam). You can find the store on-line at: <http://www.bookculture.com>

Reader: For the first five weeks all of our readings will be done out of a reader. The reader is available on-line at www.courseworks.columbia.edu

If you have difficulty affording the texts for this class, please contact me early in the semester.

Social Psychology

Monday January 24:

EITHER (both):

- Goffman, Erving. 1967. "On Face-Work" in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face to Face Behavior* (pp. 5-46)
- Hochschild, Arlie. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85, 3: 551-575

OR:

- Garfinkel, Harold, "Passing and the managed achievement of sex status in an 'intersexed' person" pp. 116-185 in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Wednesday, January 26:

- Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo, 1973, "Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison", *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, 1: 69-97.
- Howard S. Becker, 1953, "Becoming a Marijuana User", *American Journal of Sociology*, 59(3): 235-242.
- Snow and Anderson. 1987. "Identity Work Among the Homeless," *American Journal of Sociology* 92, pp. 1336-1371.
- Paper #1

Sociology of Culture

Monday, January 31:

- Bethany Bryson, "‘Anything But Heavy Metal’: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes," *American Sociological Review*, 61 (1996), pp. 884–899.
- Nicola Beisel and Tamara Kay, "Abortion, Race, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century America" *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69, (Aug., 2004), pp. 498-518
- N.A. Christakis and J.H. Fowler, "The Spread of Obesity in a Large Social Network Over 32 Years," *New England Journal of Medicine* 357(4): 370-379 (July 2007)
- Quiz #1

Wednesday, February 2

- Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies", *American Sociological Review*, 51(1986): 273-86.
- Paper #2

Demography

Monday February 7

- "McFalls, Jr., J.A., 1998. "Population: A Lively Introduction." *Population Bulletin* 53: 3-48
- Michael Hout and Joshua R. Goldstein, 1994, "How 4.5 Million Irish Immigrants Became 40 Million Irish Americans: Demographic and Subjective Aspects of the Ethnic Composition of White Americans," *American Sociological Review* 59(1):64-82
- Quiz #2
- Paper #3

Political Sociology

Wednesday February 9:

- Trotsky, Preface, chapter 8, chapter 11, in *History of the Russian Revolution*
- Philip Gorski, "Calvinism and State-Formation in Early Modern Europe," in, *State/Culture* G. Steinmetz, ed., Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999, pp.147-181.
- Quiz #3

Monday February 14:

- Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone" *Journal of Democracy* 6.1 (1995) 65-78.
- Theda Skocpol, "Unravelling From Above," *The American Prospect* no. 25, 1996: 20-25.
- Paper #4

Social Stratification

Wednesday February 16:

- Jencks, "Does Inequality Matter?" *Daedalus*, Winter 2002, pp. 49-65.
- Claudia Buchmann and Thomas A. DiPrete, 2006, "The Growing Female Advantage in College Completion: The Role of Family Background and Academic Achievement," *American Sociological Review*, 71(4), pp. 515-541.
- Quiz #4

Monday February 21:

- Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology*, 108: 937-975.
- Budig, Michelle, and Paula England. 2001. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." *American Sociological Review*, 66: 204-225.
- Wright and Dwyer, 2003, "The Patterns of Job Expansions in the USA: A Comparison of the 1960s and 1990s", *Socio-Economic Review*, 1:289-325.
- Paper #5

Political Sociology: Empire

Wednesday February 23:

- *Empire of Difference*, Introduction, Chapters 1-3
- Quiz #5

Monday February 28:

- *Empire of Difference*, Chapters 4&5

Wednesday March 2:

- *Empire of Difference*, Chapters 6&7
- Paper #6

Monday March 7:

- *Empire of Difference*, Chapter 8 & Conclusion
- Quiz #6

Wednesday March 9:

- NO CLASS

Demography: Race and Reproduction

Monday March 21:

- *Killing the Black Body*, Introduction and Chapters 1&2
- Paper #7

Wednesday March 23:

- *Killing the Black Body*, Chapters 3-5

- Quiz #7

Monday March 28:

- *Killing the Black Body*, Chapters 6&7
- Paper #8

Stratification: Elite Education

Wednesday March 30:

- *Privilege*, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2
- Quiz #8

Monday April 4:

- *Privilege*, Chapters 3 & 4
- Paper #9

Wednesday April 6:

- *Privilege*, Chapter 5 & Conclusion
- Quiz #9

Social Psychology: Communities and Disaster

Monday April 11:

- *Everything in Its Path*, Prologue through Part 1
- Paper #10

Wednesday April 13:

- *Everything in Its Path*, Part 2
- Quiz #10

Monday April 18:

- *Everything in Its Path*, Part 3 through end
- Paper #11

Stratification: Elite Education

Wednesday April 20:

- *Economists and Societies*: Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-60
- Quiz # 11

Monday April 25:

- *Economists and Societies*: Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 60-184
- Paper #12

Wednesday April 27:

- *Economists and Societies*: Chapter 4 & Conclusion, pp. 185-262
- Quiz #12