

University of Hawai'i at Manoa
Sociology 441
Social Structure & the Individual

-Fall 2015-
TR 9:00-10:15a, BUSAD E203

Instructor: Angel Camacho – M.A., Sociology; M.A., Criminal Justice

Email: angelcam@hawaii.edu

Office: Saunders Hall 213

Office hours: MW 1:30-2:30p

Course Description:

This course will address issues in the area of “social structure and the individual” by exploring microsocial processes within macrosocial structures to assess the outcomes of individual actions (House & Mortimer, 1990). Utilizing the sociological imagination we will explore individual motivation for actions and how the social structure influences individual and collective decisions. Moreover, we will apply a critical lens to the debate over “Structure vs. Agency.” Readings and lectures will focus on issues within social psychology, political and social structures, organizations and institutions, and social movements.

Course Objective:

The overall objective of this course is to understand the link between individual lives (agency) and larger social forces (structure). Can we really exercise free-will? Or do societal structures constrain us more than we realize? And assuming that we can find answers to such questions, what will we do with this information? Implicit in the quest to comprehend the link between structure and agency, I think, is the desire for positive social change. As a trained critical sociologist, I am not content with simply understanding the philosophical underpinnings of ‘I’ and ‘we’ and how ‘I’ and ‘we’ interact. I seek social justice and equality in my work, teaching, and behavior. And I suspect that some of you do as well. Thus, the other major objective of this course is an attempt to apply this acquired knowledge to collective action that will affect positive social change.

Note: During the semester you will have the opportunity to volunteer with a community service or social movement organization. By the end of the term, it is my hope that you will experience and internalize collective goals, deepen your understanding of meaningful work, and see the value in voluntary work that explores solutions to real social problems.

Textbook (s):

No Textbooks: All readings will be available on Lulima or handed out in class.

Requirements:

1. Attendance: 20%

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class period. We will meet a total of 31 times throughout the semester. Thus, attendance grades will be calculated by taking the number of times you have attended class and dividing it by 31. *Excused absences will be at the discretion of the instructor. Be sure to keep and show the instructor any proof of doctor's visits, car troubles, flight itineraries, etc.*

2. Weekly Reflections: 20%

Throughout the semester you will complete ten (10) reflections on the *both* the readings **and** concepts covered in class for the week. Reflections should show me that you have read and critically thought about the material. At the end of your reflections, you must pose a question for class discussion (questions such as, "What's the point of the article(s)?" are unacceptable). Reflections should be 1-2 pages in length, typed, double space, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. They will be graded on a 3-point scale (low satisfactory, medium satisfactory, high satisfactory). All reflections must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date (see class schedule below).

3. Pop Quizzes: 10%

Throughout the semester, five (5) pop quizzes will be administered on unannounced days and times. The purpose of these quizzes is to determine whether or not you are keeping up with the required readings. *Make-up quizzes will only be allowed for excused absences, which will be at the discretion of the instructor.*

4. Discussion Leader: 20%

Each student will be required to present one (1) article/chapter to the class during the semester. To facilitate this, you must create a Power Point presentation, Prezi presentation, or produce a hard-copy outline to pass out to each student in class. You should plan for your presentation to last roughly 15-20 minutes. It is highly recommended that the presenting student utilize multi-media (videos, images, audio, etc.) and outside sources where necessary. The more creative, the better!

5. Research Project: 30%

There is no final exam in this course. Instead, you will have the option to turn in a final research paper (see alternative option below). This project will be graded for *completeness*, integration of course literature with fieldwork, and organization. You must interview **four** people for this paper. Here are the major components of the final project:

(continued on next page)

- a. Interview Preparation: 5%
In preparation for the field component of the class (interviews), you are required to submit potential interview questions and a list of potential subjects (at least 4 people) to me in class on **9/24/15**. I understand that some of you may not have taken a Research Methods course, so I will set aside some time in class to go over the basics. But for now, I want you to consider what kind of questions would paint a thorough picture of one's overall perception of their own free will and structural constraints. What kind of follow-up questions can get to the heart of what she/he is trying to communicate? How will you ask questions in order to remain a "neutral observer," etc.?
- b. Introduction: 5%
The introduction section to any research paper sets the stage for the entire project. This section should address why you are doing this research, what you researched, how you researched it, and some preliminary findings.
- c. Literature Review: 5%
This section should address what other authors/researchers are saying about structure and agency. Some of the literature will support your findings, while some will not—this is okay and should be discussed in your Results/Findings section. You must use at least **three** peer-reviewed articles (peer-reviewed articles from the syllabus as well as any chapter in the textbook are acceptable) and at least **one** additional reference for your project. References should be listed properly (ASA Guidelines) in your bibliography section.
- d. Methods: 5%
This section should detail how you collected your (qualitative) data. Interviews: face-to-face, phone, email, etc.? What was your sampling method (to be covered in class)? Who did you interview? What was their race/ethnicity, gender, political affiliations, occupation, immigrant status, age range, educational level, etc.?
- e. Results/Findings: 5%
This section should **thoroughly** detail the results of your research. Were there any common answers to specific questions? What were they? Were some common answers only shared by a similar demographic? What does the existing literature say about these common themes? Be sure to include specific quotes from your research subjects (it is highly recommended that you voice record your interviews).
- f. Discussion/Conclusion: 5%
Your Discussion/Conclusion section should reiterate why you did this research, what your findings were, and how your results did or did not match up with the existing literature. Additionally, you should identify some of the shortcomings of your research project and recommendations for further research. This portion of your project will be of special importance in your final grade as it should illustrate your scholarly growth throughout the semester.

***Optional: Service Learning Program**

You have the option to participate in the Service Learning Program at UH for the semester. If you chose to do so you will **NOT** have to turn in a Research Project. There are important differences in this option, however. You will be required to fulfill 20 hours of volunteer service throughout the semester and turn in a short reflection paper. Benefits include experience in your field of work, strengthening your resume, and receiving **automatic credit for 30% of your overall grade in the course**. For more information visit: <http://servicelearning.socialsciences.hawaii.edu/index.html>

***NOTE:** Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted, therefore, if you cannot make it to class for any reason, be sure to email me your assignment by the start time of class on the due date reflected on the class schedule.

Grading Scale:

100—90% = A+ — A-
89—80% = B+ — B-
79—70% = C+ — C-
69—60% = D+ — D-
59—0% = F

Academic Dishonesty:

Any form of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an automatic zero (0) for the assignment in question. Not understanding plagiarism will not be an acceptable excuse. Please familiarize yourself with the UHM guidelines and penalties for academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. A useful resource can be found here:

http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/table_of_contents.php

Expectations:

As with any learning experience, your level of engagement will determine what you get out of this course. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity by actively participating in class, keeping up with the assigned readings, and reflecting on your own experiences. And, ask questions! If there is anything that you do not understand or that you are having trouble with, please ask for help. I want to make sure that you are learning the material and learning how to think about the material in a sociological manner.

Throughout the course, some of the topics will be sensitive, so I expect that we approach these classes with respect. While each person is entitled to an opinion, it is crucial that our discussions remain respectful. In other words, ***always engage in debates about ideas, never engage in personal attacks***. I reserve the right to ask a student to leave the class if their comments are disrespectful or inappropriate in any way.

Cell phones need to be off or on silent AND **put away** during class. When you are in class be “in-class” and not somewhere else. Please do not work on assignments from other classes while in my class. Lastly, **BE ON TIME!** Again, I reserve the right to ask students who are being disrespectful to leave the class.

Communications:

E-mail is a good way to reach me. Monday through Friday I generally respond within 24 hours. If you e-mail me after 5pm on Friday, I may not respond until Monday morning. Sometimes questions and concerns come up that are best discussed in person. If it turns out you have such questions or concerns, we'll find a time to meet—either during office hours or at another mutually convenient time. Lastly, I would like to avoid receiving e-mails with questions that can be answered with a close reading of the syllabus.

Facing Challenges?

If you have things going on in your life which will affect your ability to do your best, then let me know as soon as possible—don't wait! You may not be responsible for your circumstances, but you are responsible for letting me know you need help or support.

Disabilities

Please notify me if you have any particular needs. UHM strives to maintain a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access classes, programs, services and other campus activities. If you need any assistance please contact the KOKUA Program at 808.956.7511 or you can visit their website at:

<http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>

Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. If I make changes, I will send out an email informing you of the amendment. ***It is your responsibility to check your email for announcements, updates, and general class correspondence.*** My goal is to keep pace with the class schedule, but throughout the semester there may be times when we explore topics that require more or less time than I have scheduled for them. We should feel free to explore these issues fully without the anxiety of having to keep strictly to the schedule.

SOC 441 Tentative Class Schedule

My goal is to keep pace with the class schedule, but throughout the semester there may be times when we explore topics that require more or less time than I have scheduled for them. We should feel free to explore these issues fully without the anxiety of having to keep strictly to the schedule.

*Note: All readings should be completed **prior** to the date reflected on the class schedule.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	8/25	Introductions	N/A
	8/27	3 Theoretical Approaches to Sociology	N/A
2	9/1	What makes you an "individual"?	N/A
	9/3	The Looking-Glass Self	Yeung & Martin. "The Looking Glass Self: An Empirical Test and Elaboration" and Gecas & Schwalbe. "Beyond the Looking-Glass Self: Social Structure and Efficacy-Based Self-Esteem" (Reflection 1 Due)
3	9/8	Structure/Agency	N/A
	9/10		Sherman Tan. "Understanding the 'Structure' and 'Agency' Debate in the Social Sciences" in <i>Habitus Vol. 1, The Forum</i> , pp. 37-48
4	9/15		Sharon Hays. "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture"
	9/17		Allan Johnson – "The Forest, the Trees, and the One Thing" in <i>The Forest and the Trees (1997)</i> , pp. 7-35 (Reflection 2 Due)
5	9/22		Kenneth Westhues – "Mobbing and the Virginia Tech Massacre" http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~kwesthues/vtmassacre.htm
	9/24	Why are you pursuing a degree?	(Interview Preparation Due)

6	9/29	Ideology	Reiman & Leighton. "What is Ideology?" in <i>The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison</i> (2013), pp. 192-198
	10/1		Michael Parenti. "The Plutocratic Culture: Institutions, Values, and Ideologies" in <i>Race, Class, and Gender in the United States</i> (2014), pp. 611-616 (Reflection 3 Due)
7	10/6	The Structure of Capitalism	Marx and Engels. "Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" in <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> , pp. 1-12 only and C. Wright Mills. "The Power Elite" in <i>Understanding Society</i> (2012), pp. 464-468
	10/8		Colvin & Pauly. "A Critique of Criminology: Toward an Integrated Structural-Marxist Theory of Delinquency Production," <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , pp. 513-551 (Reflection 4 Due)
8	10/13	The Economic & Ideological Structure of Neoliberalism	Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo Garcia. "What is 'Neo-Liberalism'?" http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=376 and Robert Pollin. "It's Not the Party—It's the Policies," <i>The Nation</i> , pp. 23-24
	10/15		Frank Castro. "Democrats & Republicans: A Political Cartel," <i>Medium</i> , https://medium.com/@AmericaWakie/democrats-republicans-a-political-cartel-americanawakiewakie-cbd9070eaa72 (Reflection 5 Due)
9	10/20		Naomi Klein. "The Discarded Factory" in <i>No Logo</i> , pp. 195-229
	10/22		Michael Apple. "Consuming the Other: Whiteness, Education, and Cheap French Fries" in <i>Off White: Readings on Race, Power, and Society</i> , pp. 121-128 (Reflection 6 Due)

10	10/27		<p>Sut Jhally. "Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse" in <i>Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (2014)</i>, pp. 603-610 and</p> <p>Turner & Alexander. "Limits to Growth Was Right: New Research Shows We're Nearing Collapse," <i>The Guardian</i>, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/02/limits-to-growth-was-right-new-research-shows-were-nearing-collapse?CMP=fb_gu</p>
	10/29		<p>Paul Verhaeghe. "Has Neoliberalism Turned Us All Into Psychopaths?" <i>Alternet</i>, http://www.alternet.org/economy/has-neoliberalism-turned-us-all-psychopaths</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Reflection 7 Due)</p>
11	11/3	Group Behavior, Peer Pressure, Bystanders, Norms	<p>Lambert et al. "Pluralistic Ignorance and Hooking Up," <i>Journal of Sex Research</i>, pp. 129-132</p>
	11/5		<p>Philip Zimbardo. "Revisiting the Stanford Prison Experiment: A Lesson in the Power of Situation," <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i> and</p> <p>Stephanie Chen. "Gang Rape Raises Questions About Bystanders' Role," <i>CNN</i>, http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/10/28/california.gang.rape.bystander/</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Reflection 8 Due)</p>
12	11/10	Solutions to Social Problems... Successful Social Movements	<p>Eitzen & Stewart. "Social Movements and Democracy," pp. 1-8 and</p> <p>David S. Meyer. "How Social Movements Matter," pp. 9-15</p>
	11/12		<p>Howard Zinn. "The Problem is Civil Disobedience," pp. 16-22 and</p> <p>Taylor Branch. "The Sit-In Movement," pp. 27-31</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Reflection 9 Due)</p>

13	11/17		Ricky Baldwin. "Tomato Pickers Win Big at Taco Bell," pp. 101-104 and Amy Joyce. "Pressuring Wal-Mart..." pp. 105-108
	11/19		Brian Halwell. "The Rise of Food Democracy," pp. 113-116 and Kelly Hearn. "Not a Drop to Drink: Bolivians Protest Policies of the World Bank," pp. 117-119
14	11/24		Relative Poverty, Absolute Poverty and Social Exclusion: http://www.poverty.org.uk/summary/social%20exclusion.shtml and Vandana Shiva. "How to End Poverty..." pp. 123-126
	11/26	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving	
15	12/1	Social Change	Subcommandante Marcos. "The Fourth World War Has Begun," in <i>The Zapatista Reader</i> , pp. 270-284
	12/3		David DeGraw. "The Coming Revolution: Evolutionary Leap or Descent Into Chaos and Violence?" <i>Alternet</i> , http://www.alternet.org/economy/coming-revolution-evolutionary-leap-or-descent-chaos-and-violence?paging=off (Reflection 10 Due)
16	12/8		Paul Loeb. "The Impossible Will Take a Little While," pp. 147-153 and Matthew Rothschild. "Demand the Impossible" in <i>Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (2014)</i> , pp. 689-691
	12/10		Andrea Ayvazian. "Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression: The Role of Allies as Agents of Change" in <i>Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (2014)</i> , pp. 672-678 (RESEARCH PROJECT DUE)