Sociology 706 (Fall 2011)

Cultural Analysis

Prof. Seio Nakajima

Wednesday 12:00-2:30 p.m., KUY 401

Office hours: Wed. 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment
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Course Description:

This seminar has three major goals: (1) to familiarize students with the evolution and the current state of theories in “sociology of culture/cultural sociology” by discussing both classical sociologists (e.g., Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel) and contemporary theorists (e.g., Habermas, Foucault, Bourdieu, British cultural studies, critical theory) (mastering of theory); (2) to consider how theories we learn both inform and draw from actual empirical research conducted in a number of substantive topics (e.g., “Culture, Class, and Status,” “Culture, Economy, Organizations, Occupations and Work”) (mastering of application of theory to empirical research in substantive topics); (3) to prepare a research proposal on a subject of the student’s choosing (mastering of methods and research design).

Notes:

・ Although the formal title of the course is “cultural analysis,” which could broadly include many non-sociology theorists (some of whom we indeed will discuss), the course targets explicitly on contemporary “sociology of culture/cultural sociology,” particularly American interpretations, applications, and developments.
・ We do discuss “theory,” but the emphasis is “putting cultural theories to work” in concrete, empirical research settings. So, we will not talk theories in the abstract, but always deal with “theories in action.” Roughly 30% of time and effort will be spent for achieving goal (1) above, 50% for goal (2), and 20% for goal (3).
・ Students should be aware that this is an extremely reading and discussion-intensive course. Seminar participants are expected to be prepared for every class.
・ In addition to the three major goals above, whenever appropriate, we will discuss miscellaneous technical “know-how” of doing academic research. E.g., how to find relevant academic literature, use of citation software for organizing references, etc. What to discuss each semester largely depends on the needs and interests of the students taking the course.
・ Although each reading is assigned to a weekly topic (e.g., “Culture, Social Structure, and Agency,” “Boundary Processes”), many, if not all, of the readings are relevant to a number of weekly topics. So, when you do the readings, try to bring in what you’ve learned in other weeks to organically connect multiple topic areas to discuss the week’s readings.
・ Because I understand students come from diverse disciplinary background, I do not expect all students to have graduate-level knowledge in sociological theory and methods. I will provide “mini-lectures” on sociology (and other topics) whenever necessary so every student has an equal opportunity to learn from and enjoy this seminar!
・ This seminar counts as an elective course for the International Cultural Studies Graduate Certificate Program.
Required Texts:

- A coursepack of readings (available at Professional Image, 2633 South King St., ph: 973-6599). Marked with * in the reading list.
- Readings available at UH Library Electronic Resources or publicly available on the Internet (students obtain themselves). Marked with @ in the reading list.

Course Requirements:

1) Active participation in seminar discussions.
   Remember the aphorism: “Even to have expressed a false thought boldly and clearly is already to have gained a great deal.” (Ludwig Wittgenstein). So, don’t be shy and speak up!

2) Weekly reading notes.
   Every week you will submit reading notes (approx. 1-2 pages) to Laulima by 11:59 p.m., *Tuesday, on the eve of the class*. The reading notes should be a reaction/critical engagement rather than a simple summary of the readings assigned for the week. You might focus on the questions you want to ask in the class, or point to gaps and conflicts in one or more readings. The purpose of these reading notes is to stimulate class discussion.

3) Being a discussant for two class sessions.
   A discussant will be responsible for leading at least a brief discussion around the points raised in his/her weekly reading notes.

4) A Research proposal.
   A research proposal on a topic of student’s own choosing in consultation with the instructor (approx. 20 double-spaced pages; 30 pages max.) With the instructor’s approval, students may substitute a completed research paper for the research proposal. The following schedule will be in effect (tentative):
   - **October 5**: Short initial proposal (1-2 pages) due at Laulima by 11:59 p.m.
   - **November 16**: A full rough first draft of the research proposal due at Laulima by 11:59 p.m.
   - **December 14**: The final draft due at Laulima by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 1: August 24: Introduction**

No required reading. Get acquainted.

**Week 2: August 31: What Is Culture?**


Discussant (s): No assigned discussant. Discuss together.

**Week 3: September 7: Lineages of Classical Theory**


Discussant (s): 

**Week 4: September 14: Culture, Social Structure, and Agency**


Discussant (s): 

**Week 5: September 21: Culture, Class, and Status**


Discussant (s):
Week 6: September 28: Culture in Interaction


Discussant(s):

Week 7: October 5: Production of Culture

SHORT INITIAL PROPOSAL DUE AT LAULIMA BY 11:59 P.M.


Discussant(s):

Week 8: October 12: Consumption, Reception, and Appropriation of Culture


Discussant(s)
Week 9: October 19: Culture, Economy, Organizations, Occupations and Work


Discussant (s):

Week 10: October 26: Boundary Processes


Discussant (s):

Week 11: November 2: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity


Discussant (s):
 Week 12: November 9: Culture, Gender, Sexuality, and the Body


Discussant(s):

 Week 13: November 16: Politics and Culture

FULL ROUGH FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE AT LAULIMA BY 11:59 P.M.


Discussant(s):

 Week 14: November 23: Religion and Moral Order


Discussant(s)
Week 15: November 30: Knowledge, Science and Technology, and Materiality


Discussant (s):

Week 16: December 7: Modernity, Postmodernity, Globalization, and World Society


Discussant (s):

December 14:

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FINAL DRAFT DUE AT LAULIMA BY 11:59 P.M. (Early submissions welcome.)
Academic Honesty: “Acts of dishonesty, including but not limited to the following:
a. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty.
b. Furnishing false information to any UH official, faculty member, or office.
c. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any UH document, record, or form of identification.
The term ‘cheating’ includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the UH faculty, staff or student (4) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.
The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.”
[E7.208 UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEMWIDE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE, July 2009]

Kokua Statement: “Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lil‘uokalani Center for Student Services.”

eCAFE: “The Department of Sociology is committed to a continual improvement of the quality of its course offerings. To allow for this to occur, your help, as the consumers of these courses is needed. You are there and only you can tell us about your educational experience in your classes. Towards the end of the semester, you will be informed that the eCAFE system is available to you to complete your course evaluation. We encourage you to login to http://www.hawaii.edu/ecafe/ to submit your evaluations.”