Soc Sc 400A:
Social Science Research and Perspectives
Bunche 1221A

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9a.m.-12p.m., or by appointment

Course TA: Roey Reichert

Course Objectives

- Learn critical reading and critical writing skills
- Learn to identify different research paradigms and interpretive approaches in the social sciences
- Compare and synthesize diverse theoretical arguments
- Build essential research, methodological, and analytic skills

Course Description

This keystone course introduces students to some key debates in the philosophy of social science research in the 20th and 21st Centuries. The course pedagogy focuses on close readings of theoretical arguments, their claims proposed, and their importance to social science research. Students in this course will explore the ways in which theoretical assumptions and expectations inform the social science questions we ask. Each week students are asked to critically engage the material and provide written responses to that material.

Evaluation
80% Weekly Assignments
20% Class Participation

Requirements:

Weekly Reading: Each week, you are responsible for all of the core readings to be completed BEFORE class discussion (including Week 1). Your reading should be oriented toward annotation and responsive note taking. All of the readings will be available online on our course website.

Weekly Writing: Beginning on Week 3, you are responsible for a weekly writing assignment that consists of the following:

1. Identify 3 different passages from the readings (no specific length for the passage).
2. Articulate the nature of the intervention (its sites, its assumptions, and its ambitions) as well as the social science stakes of the intervention being made.
3. All assignments are to be submitted via TurnItIn.com and a paper copy must be brought to class for your use.

NB: You should aim for about 1500 words (maximum) of writing per week, or 500 words per passage selected.

Students are not expected to write a final paper for this class.

Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance at all sessions is mandatory. Each session counts for 2 participation points. Requests for excused absences must be accompanied by documentation from a medical or other professional. Requests for excused absences due to non-medical emergencies must be presented to the instructor by the end of the first week of classes to receive consideration. Your class participation grade will be based on your preparation for and contribution to our weekly discussions. In addition to being a thoughtful and informed participant, you are expected to be an active listener and to encourage the full participation of everyone in the class.

Academic Integrity

All students must comply with the University’s code of academic integrity, including policies concerning plagiarism. The academic honor code is available for your review at: http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/conduct.htm.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you wish to request an accommodation, please contact the UCLA Center for Accessible Education (CAE) as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall (Ph. 310-825-1501). The CAE website can be found at: www.cae.ucla.edu

Weekly Reading Assignments:

Week:

   Stanley Fish: “Is there a Text in this Class?” from: Is there a Text In this Class?

2. J. Habermas: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere
   (Pages 1-88)

3. Charles Taylor, “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man”

4. Roland Barthes: Mythologies:
   • Myth Today (read this first)
   • The World of Wrestling
   • Soap Powders and Detergents
   • Operation Margarine
   • The New Citroën

5. Louis Althusser: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)
6. Michel Foucault:  
   *Governmentality*  
   *Discipline and Punish*: pages 135-256


8. *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*  
   Seyla Benhabib: “Feminism and Postmodernism”  
   Judith Butler: “Contingent Foundations”  
   Nancy Frazer: “False Antitheses”  
   Kirstie McClure: “The Issue of Foundations” (from *Feminists Theorize the Political*)

9. Edward Said: *Orientalism*, Intro & Chapter 1  
   [http://robertjcyoung.com/Foucault.pdf](http://robertjcyoung.com/Foucault.pdf)