

Fairhaven 203-A: Social Relationships and Responsibilities

Syllabus: Winter 2008

Dr. Larry Estrada

Course Rationale

This section will explore the process of social identity formation in the United States through the lens of modern social theory. The goal of the class is to explore multiple perspectives on the formation of the state, individual rights within society, equality as well as the roles and responsibilities of individuals within their respective communities. The focus of the class will concern itself with the roots and application of Western ideals of freedom and equity that arguably form the basis for the United States' liberal democracy.

The seminar will outline the origins of the enlightenment and the basis for "natural" rights and freedoms in conjunction with the derived roles of society and government. We will then examine how the universalist ideals of the liberal enlightenment have implicitly or explicitly excluded those without property, people of color, and women. We will also define what the "social compact" has meant in different periods of American history, and the relationship of various groups to this compact. Can liberal democracy really provide equal citizenship for workers, women, and people of color? How have the movements of socialism, reconstruction, decolonization, ethnic identity and feminism tried to reformulate and transform the social order?

Texts:

Selected Readings on John Locke and Adam Smith

C. Lemert, 3rd ed., Social Theory: The Multicultural & Classic Readings.
(Jackson, TN: Perseus Books, 2004)

R. D'Angelo & H. Douglas, 6th ed., Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Race & Ethnicity (NY: Mc Graw Hill, 2008)

Recommended Reading:

Zinn, H. People's History of the United States: 1492-Present, (NY: Harper Collins, 2003)

Requirements for Credit and Criteria for Evaluation:

Credit will be granted for regular attendance, evidence of preparation, satisfactory completion of two written perspective papers in addition to a group term project and class group presentation. Criteria for evaluation include informed and active engagement in class discussions; informative, relevant group presentation and a term project paper that illustrates a sound grasp of social theory and critical paradigms.

What is social theory?

Jan. 9 Introduction to the Class-Course Objectives/Class Exercise
Video: "Athens: The Dawn of Democracy"

Jan. 14-16

Video: Continuation of "Dawn of Democracy". Discussion of video. Lecture and Discussion on the Roots of Western philosophical, political and pedagogical formation. Questions to be asked during the film:

What are the reasons and factors for the development of democracy during the Athenian era? How did democracy attempt to resolve issues and problems in its early formation? Who did democratic idealism in Athens include and exclude and for what reason? Why did democracy ultimately prove unwieldy or impractical within Ancient Athens?

Reading assignment: from Lemert
Introduction," pp. 1 - 27
Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the
Master's House," pp. 440-443
Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea," pp. 494-496
West, "Cultural Politics of Difference" pp. 505-515

The Equilibrium Model of Society

Jan. 21-23

January 21st Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no class session)

The basis of Anglo-American individualism and the pursuit of prosperity.

Reading assignment: All handouts will be available on "Blackboard" and outside Dr. Estrada's Office
Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (1651- excerpts)
John Locke, Second Treatise of Government (1689/1764-excerpts)
Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations (1776 -excerpts)
Discussion of "Model" and dissenting voices.

Video: "The Age of Enlightenment"

The Conflict Model of Society

Chomsky and Zinn will be particularly useful in this section of the class and as resource material for your group presentations/papers.

Jan 28-30

Models for Societal Maintenance and Equity

Class debate on the merits and drawbacks of Capitalist and Marxist Ideology

Reading assignment: From Lemert: pp. 29-41, pp. 49-58, pp. 60-65 (Marx); pp. 70-72 (Durkheim);
pp. 99-110 (Weber); pp.125-126, 142 - 156 (Freud), & 157-162 (James)
D' Angelo and Douglas: pp.2-30
Wollstonecraft "Vindication of the Rights of Women" "Blackboard"

Video: "Formation of Violence & Racism within American Society"

**Handing in of first reaction/perspective paper on Jan. 30th
Titles and Rough Outline of Group Term Project Papers are due
on January 30th as well.*

Jan. 28th the last hour will be used for work on the group term project paper.

February 4-6

Discussion of Race & Gender Classifications within Europeanized and "American" Societies.

Reading assignment: from Lemert: pp. 162 - 168 (DuBois); pp. 168 - 174 (Gilman); pp. 178 - 184
(Cooper)
Stanton, "Seneca Falls Declaration" [handout]
Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I A Woman?" [handout]
from Monk: Issue 3: "Do Industrialization and Capitalism Cause
D'Angelo and Douglas: Issues 3,4,5

Videos: "The Yellow Wallpaper" "W.E.B. DuBois"

Questions for the 21st Century

Questions to Consider

Cultural Pluralism/Balkanization--The Synthesis of the American Character?
The Application of Race and Ethnicity and Feminism to American Social Thought and Policy?

Feb. 11-13

Voices for Change and Transformation.
The role of the media in shaping Public Opinion and Attitudes

Reading Assignment: from Lemert: pp. 243 - 244 (Niebuhr); pp. 244 - 247 (Myrdal); pp. 257- 258 (Woolf); pp. 328-331 (Erikson); pp. 342-344(Cesaire); pp. 352-355 (SDS) pp. 355- 358 (Friedan); 388 - 390 (Smith); pp. 400 - 404 (Chodorow); pp. 358-363 (Fanon)
D'Angelo and Douglas: Issues 2,9,14,15,16

Video: "Color of Fear"

Feb. 18-20

President's Day Feb. 16th/Holiday (no class session)

The Societal Intersections of Ethnic, Gender and Sexual Identities

Reading Assignment: from Lemert: pp. 535 - 574 (Collins,Anzaldua,Weeks,Butler, Allen and Havel) ; Yazzie, "Life Comes From It": Navajo Justice Concepts, "Blackboard"
D'Angelo and Douglas: Issue 13

Video: "Skin Deep"

**Handing in of second reaction/perspective paper on Feb.20th*

Feb. 25-27

Globalization and the Interconnected Corporate Society

Reading Assignment: from Lemert: pp. 609-614 (Harvey); pp.618-623 (Sassen); pp.615-617; pp. 651-645 (Wilson); pp. 659-662 (Connell)

Contemporary points of View/--Immigrant rights/Commodification of Culture

Videos: "Uprooted" & "P.O.V.--Cultural Appropriation/University of Illinois"

March 3-5

Catch Up and Team Work on Group Term Projects
Presentation by Prof. Tanis S'Eiltin on cultural appropriation

March 10-12

Group Term Project Presentations and Class Potluck on the 12th
Handing in of Group Term Project Papers by 10 A.M. March 14th
Papers turned in later than this time will result in an incomplete for the course.

Explanation of assignments:

1. This is a seminar, not a lecture class. Consequently, the quality of education each of you receives will be dependent not only on your own level of preparation/participation but on others' informed participation as well. In other words, each of us has a responsibility to the entire group.

Throughout the quarter the instructor will take controversial and at times ludicrous stances often on important issues. I expect you to do the same - even when you feel you are going against the majority opinion in the class. In fact, at times you will be asked specifically to defend a position you do not hold. My goal is to enable you to take informed positions on important issues and to articulate what you think and why. In the course of the quarter you will be assigned 2-3 reaction/perspective papers (3-4 pages) which will ask you to take a position or frame an opinion.

2. Questions will be distributed in connection with a number of the readings. These questions should be answered as you read and will provide the basis for our discussions.

3. Working in groups of 4, you will be required to write a group term project paper on some aspect of U. S. society that illustrates the nature of the social contract and the problems it poses for individuals and group responsibilities. These papers will be due on March 14th . On March 10 and 12 each group will give an oral report to the class taken from the project paper. Reports will be no longer than 40-45 minutes.

Some suggestions for group topics include but are not limited to:

- A. Conflict Theory & Political Economy within Amer. social movements
- B. The legacy & impact of the Civil Rights Movement

- C. The Balkanization of American Society: real or hyped?
- D. Racial Harassment & Discrimination in the Workplace
- E. Natural Rights or Natural Responsibilities: the American concept of citizenship.
- F. Participatory Democracy: its ramifications for a just society.
- G. Moving towards a feminist society: repercussions & outcomes
- H. Violence & poverty in American: an outcome of genes or social engineering?
- I. Loss of Individual Liberty or Security for the Majority: Precautions For Thwarting Terrorism
- J. Immigration the Basis for Inclusivity or Exclusivity within American Society?

The process for the Group Project will be as follows:

- A. Choose a group of no more than 4 individuals who wish to develop the oral presentation & position paper on a mutually agreed upon topic.
- B. Define the Problem or Question - hand in names of Group members and the title or idea or problem to be explored. (By Jan. 28)
- C. Establish main points & arguments to be projected to the class.
- D. Delegate individual or group responsibility.
- E. Develop a group presentation approach (e.g. slides, charts, video excerpts, role play situations, etc) I encourage you to involve the rest of the class in part of your presentation.
- F. Turn in Group Project Paper March 14 and deliver Oral Presentations March 10-12.

Other guidelines: Try to draw specifically on some part of our readings and make clear how your topic represents a concrete example of (theoretical, historical, analytical material we've read (or seen in videos). Papers and presentations should involve primary and secondary research and include history of the situation studied; resolution, if any, of the issues involved; assumptions about society and human nature implicit or explicit in the philosophies of those cited in your paper.

Oral presentations will be evaluated on style of presentation, organization, visual effects and visual aids, ability to draw class into the material, clarity of ideas and subject matter, quality of research and documentation, and relationship to material and content of this class.

Papers may (and probably will) include materials (research, bibliographic, etc.) that are not included in the oral presentation. They will be evaluated on the above plus style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Papers will be written by four people but must be cohesive, not four separate papers joined by one title. Sloppy and otherwise unacceptable papers must be done over before credit will be given.

Papers must be no less than 20-25 pages, typewritten, double spaced with one-inch margins. APA or Chicago citation methods preferred

NOTE REGARDING ATTENDANCE: Credit for this class is partially dependent on your informed participation in class discussions. This is one of your primary responsibilities as a student at Fairhaven. If you are not present, you cannot participate. Furthermore, the quality of my evaluation of you is partially dependent on your ability to understand and interpret the readings, some of which may be difficult. For most of you, that understanding will be considerably enhanced through the class discussions.

As a result, anyone absent more than twice during the quarter will probably not receive credit. Exceptions will be made in emergencies or documented sickness, of course.

*Course and Faculty Evaluations are due no later than
Wednesday March 12