

Fairhaven 204: Society and the Individual

Syllabus: Fall 1999

Dr. Larry Estrada

Texts

Daniel Quinn, Ishmael. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Velma Wallis, Two Old Women. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993.

Gloria Anzaldua, Borderlands-La Frontera/The New Mestiza. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999.

Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents. New York: W.W. Norton, 1961.

Lucy R. Lippard, The Lure of the Local. New York: The New Press, 1997.

Richard C. Monk, Ed., Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Race & Ethnicity.

Reader of collected works that we will pass out in class, referred to below as "reader." Instructors may also periodically hand out readings or poetry that are germane to course content and or discussions.

What is social theory?

Sept 23 Introduction to class and class exercise. Review of syllabus.

Week I The Self and the Function of Self Interest within Society

Sept 28 - How do we listen to ourselves and others? Read "The Varieties of (Not) Listening" by Stephen Carter and "Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures," by Charles Lemert (handouts). Hand in answers to questions attached to syllabus about self and society. Discussion of readings and your reflections.

How do societies and selves relate to the natural world?

Sept 30 - Readings to be passed out on Sept 28. Also read Ch. 7, "On and Off the Map" in Lippard, Lure of the Local. In-class video on the Wilderness Act.

Week II

Oct 5 - Read Ishmael. In-class discussion of clashing cultural views of the natural world and its "purposes" in relation to societies.

Oct 7 - Read Adam Smith excerpt, Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons", and Cushman, "Why the Self is Empty, all in your reader. In-class video on greed. Be prepared to compare and contrast these two readings as well as bring them to the discussion of the video.

Week III

Oct 12 - Field trip - location to be confirmed. We will be gone from 10-3, so plan to bring your lunch. Read Lippard, Lure of the Local, "Traces," pages 124-130 and review Egan, ...

The Equilibrium/Conflict Models of Society

Oct. 14 - Read Hobbes selection and Robert Yazzie, "Navajo Justice Concepts" in your reader. We will reserve one hour of class time to meet as a group to choose term projects.

Week IV Indigenous Land Stewardship and Connection to Place

October 18 - Field Trip! Suquamish Tribal Center and Fisheries Complex. We will be gone all day, so plan accordingly. Read Lippard, Lure of the Local, "Out of Place," pages 61-74. De Loria handout "Indians Today, The Real and the Unreal"

Oct 19 One-hour library session at Wilson Library, main campus. Plan to bring your lunch so we can discuss more on term projects and resource use. Afternoon class time will be available to work on

projects.

Oct. 21 - Northwest Indian College, Lummi Reservation field trip. Read Issue 10 and Issue 18 in Monk. Draft outline of questions and methodology of the group project must be turned in.

Week V Aggression within the Equilibrium/Conflict Models of Society

Oct. 26 - Read Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents and the Locke section from your reader.

Oct. 28 - Read "The Myth of the Beast Within" from your reader and Issue 11 from Monk. Discussion of readings in relation to the video excerpts from "Violence in America" and "Manufacturing Consent" shown in class. Written progress report on the final project due.

Week VI Constructs of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Society

November 2 - Read Gould, "The Geometer of Race," (handout) and other handouts, and Monk, Issue 5 for discussion. Discussion of readings and Video "The Compton Report/Race and I.Q."

November 4 - Read selection of Wollstonecraft from your reader as well as readings to be announced. Discussion of gender issues in societies. Written progress report on the final project due. Two Old Women, Gigi Berardi

Week VII The Borders of Culture and Identity

November 9 - Read Anzaldua, Borderlands, pages 1-120 and Monk, Issue 14. (Samantha Tretheway)

November 11 - Read Anzaldua, Borderlands, 124-225. Discussion. Written progress report on the final project due.

Week VIII

Nov. 16 - Field trip to migrant labor camps in Mount Vernon. We will be gone from 10-3 so plan accordingly.

Nov. 18 - Summary and tying together of themes of the class. Reading to be announced. Written progress report on the final project due.

Nov 23 - Hand in group position papers. We will be available during class time to meet with groups to talk about presentation of group projects.

Nov. 25 - Thanksgiving

Nov. 30 and Dec 2 - Teaching modules based on position papers.

Questions for September 28

Please answer in one or two typewritten pages (or more if you wish). The questions are very broad, and may lead you to more questions rather than to any conclusions. We want to give you the opportunity to listen to yourself and your classmates before we listen to other thinkers.

1. What is the nature of the self? What are people like, most fundamentally. Take one of three basic issues -- aggression, self-interest, or greed -- and describe briefly what you think about them as aspects of human nature. Are they givens, part of hard-wired biology in some way? Are they socialized? If they are socialized, what social structures do you think most profoundly influence them? What ideologies, that is, what reigning ideas most strongly influence them?

2. Does the natural world impact and define your self-identity and choices? If so, how?

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 instructors will take controversial and at times ludicrous stances often on important issues. We 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. Our 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 4-5 thought/reflection papers (1-2 pages) which will ask you to take a position, frame an opinion or respond to the instructors' questions. Your first thought/reflection paper is due September 28th.

2. Questions will be distributed in connection with many of the readings. These questions should be answered as you read and will provide the basis for later class and or small group discussions.

3. Working in groups of 3-4, you will be required to write a position paper on some aspect of U. S. society that illustrates the nature of the social contract and the problems it poses for individuals and groups. These papers will be due on Nov. 23. On Dec. 30 and Dec. 2 each group will teach a class session based upon their position paper. Each teaching module or session will be no longer than 50 minutes.

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

- A. Conflict Theory & Political Economy within Amer. social movements
- B. Sustainable Communities: Bioregional interdependence and cooperation
- 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 America: an outcome of genes or social engineering?
- I. The 1974 Boldt decision and Makah whaling rights: Justice realized for indigenous peoples or the rights of minorities superceding the majority.
- J. Economic Development and the Environment: compatibility or perennial conflict
- K. Western individualism a prescription for freedom or the demise of communal societies.
- L. The role of the media in shaping opinions and consumptive patterns.

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 teaching module & position paper on a mutually agreed upon topic.
- B. Define the problem, question and issues - hand in names of Group members and the title, idea or problem to be explored. (By Oct. 21)
- C. Establish main points & arguments to be projected to the class.
- D. Delegate individual or group responsibility.
- E. Develop a class teaching approach (e.g. slides, charts, video excerpts, role play situations, etc.)
We encourage you to involve the rest of the class in at least part of your presentation.
- F. Turn in Position Paper Nov. 23. Deliver teaching modules Nov. 30 and Dec. 2

Other guidelines: Try to draw specifically on some part of our readings and make clear how your topic represents a concrete example of theoretical/analytical/historical material we've read (or seen in videos). Reports should 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 involved in the situations.

Teaching modules 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 teaching module. 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 15-20 pages, typewritten, double spaced with one-inch margins. All papers should employ APA or MLA citation methods.

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 our 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, of course.

*Evaluations are due no later than
Monday, December 6