

Syllabus Revisions and Presentation Guidelines

The following represent the changes to the syllabus we've agreed upon given the small size of our class.

Discussion Questions: Each week for which there's readings assigned, you should write up brief responses to the discussion questions I'll distribute. These responses should be prepared prior to the class in which we're going to discuss those elements of the readings, as they will guide your contribution to the discussions we'll have. The full set of responses will be due in the class session after the week for which the questions are assigned (so week 2's responses will be due in the Tuesday of week 3). These responses should be typewritten.

Presentation/Discussion Leadership: On the reading schedule that's below, you'll find that certain class sessions are designated as "presentation" sessions, sessions that will be dedicated to discussing part of our overall theme for the course. There will be two sessions for each author we're reading this semester, one devoted to discussing structure and agency in that author's works, the other to discussing their conception of power.

As the attached guidelines show, these presentations, which should be about 15 minutes in length, should not be merely exegetical; that is, you should not simply summarize or restate the material everyone has read. Presume we've all read it, and focus your efforts on identifying structure, agency, and power in their readings and the places from which you're deriving those ideas. Think of these presentations as mini-papers – you should have a thesis, development of that thesis, and evidence for your thesis. You'll be asked to submit a written outline of your presentation, including the thesis, the evidence, and how you're using this evidence to develop your thesis. That outline will be due on the day of your presentation. You need to ensure that you are able to attend the class session you're scheduled to present in as well as the other presentation sessions, as you'll be evaluating everyone else's presentations. Only dire emergencies will be excused absences for your presentation.

Grade Breakdown:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| First Paper: | 10% |
| Second Paper: | 15% |
| Third Paper: | 20% |
| Final Paper: | 30% |
| Discussion Questions: | 5% |
| Presentation and Outline: | 5% |
| Journals: | 5% |
| Class Participation: | 10% |

Presentation Schedule:

Th Feb 7: (Reading: Weber, pp.102-125) Structure and Agency in Weber

T Feb 12: (Paper prep session) Power in the Protestant Ethic

T Mar 5: (Reading: Durkheim, pp.149-186) Structure and Agency in Durkheim

Th Mar 7: (Reading: Durkheim, pp.187-224) Power in Durkheim's Theory of Society

T Apr 9: (Reading: Marx, pp.520-542, 556-576) Structure and Agency in Marx

Th Apr 11: (Paper prep session) Power in Marx's Theory of Capitalism and Revolution

T Apr 30: (Reading: Mills, pp.269-362) Structure and Agency in Mills

Th May 2: (Closure session) Power in Mills' Power Elite

Presentation Guidelines:

Length, Format, and Style

Your presentation should be approximately 15 minutes long, though somewhat shorter and somewhat longer presentations are most certainly acceptable. You should not simply read from a prepared paper – that's boring for all of us, most especially you. Instead, come prepared with an outline, notes, a list of quotations to which you want to refer, and the like. If you want, feel free to distribute an outline of your talk, either in class or before the session by e-mail (address lists will be provided). Be conversational; the presentation, after all, is designed to spark further discussion on the reading materials and on the talk you give in class.

Content

The seminar presentation is not supposed to be merely exegetical; that is, you're not supposed to come in and give a detailed summary of the readings for the week. **Assume that everyone has read the materials** and go on from there. You can provide a brief, integrative summary of the readings, but don't take much more than a couple of minutes to do this.

Your presentation is meant to do three things: to spark the conversation we have the remainder of the evening; to highlight what *you* think are important issues or themes that are raised in the text; and to help you and the group synthesize the materials in preparation for the two course papers. Discussion questions will be provided each week to cover the assigned materials and to give you a set of signposts for getting through the material. Everyone will have dealt with these questions, so you don't want to just give your answers to them. **Instead, talk about what you found most interesting, challenging, intriguing, or insightful.** Give us *your* ideas about the material, and be prepared to explain them, defend them, etc.

In general, you should think of your presentation as a mini-lecture, a conference presentation, or an oral presentation of a short paper. Present your findings in a clear, coherent, thematic manner; make some kind of argument about what you've found; give supporting evidence (i.e., page references and/or quotations, when relevant) for your findings; and all will be right with the world.

Evaluation Criteria

Your presentation will be evaluated on the following criteria: breadth of knowledge of the material; your ability to thematically analyze the materials and present key issues in a synthetic form; the success of your presentation in sparking discussion among your fellow classmates; and the cogency and clarity of your presentation. Your absence on your scheduled presentation date is not acceptable; please do your best to attend every session (especially when you're scheduled to present), and let me know as early as you possibly can if you'll be unable to attend your presentation session so we can make alternate arrangements for you and the class.

Audience Response

Class members should ensure their attendance at every session. You should pay careful attention to the presentation given, looking for key points for discussion and/or debate. Use the discussion questions as a way of preparing for the discussion, and bring your own findings to the table. Above all, please be courteous and collegial in your reception of each presentation, and engage the presenter's ideas and understandings of the materials so that we all have a good, enjoyable time discussing these important works.

Submissions

On the day of your presentation, you need to turn in to me a copy of your outline, which should show your thesis, your evidence for that thesis (i.e., page numbers and quotations), and how you're putting it all together. This outline must be typed, and full quotes need to appear on the outline.

Evaluation

There will be two evaluations given – mine of the outline you submit, and the class' evaluation of your presentation. Each person in the class will be asked to anonymously give you a grade and feedback on your presentation, including ways to improve future presentations you'll have elsewhere. Part of that evaluation will include the extent to which your presentation sparked discussion during the class, so be sure to take this into account when you work up the presentation. My evaluation will follow the criteria listed in the course syllabus for papers, though they will obviously be less fully developed than your papers will be.

Student evaluation forms will be available on the course web site: <http://www.millersville.edu/~schaffer/courses/s2002/soc401s2002>. Please be sure to print one out before each session.