San José State University
Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
Spring 2017


General Class Information:

Instructor: Dr. William Armaline
Office Location: DMH 216
Telephone: (408) 294-2935
Email: william.armaline@sjsu.edu (preferred contact)
Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Class Days/Time: Wednesdays 6:00-8:45 p.m.
Classroom: DMH 162

Prerequisites:
Students must be enrolled in a graduate program at SJSU (must be a graduate student).

Course Catalog Description:
Analysis of a current issue in sociology which is not covered by other graduate seminars. Content differs each semester. Repeatable once with advisor consent when content changes.

Instructor Course Description:
This course offers an unflinching look at some of the greatest challenges and opportunities human beings have ever faced. It will be provocative, interesting, and exceedingly relevant. We will engage in study, reflection, and analysis for the purposes of seeking and developing solutions rather than allowing ourselves to be intimidated or paralyzed by the enormity of problems like nuclear war or climate change. We will make sure to deliberately focus on the wide array of solutions available to us as local/global communities, and the agency each of us has to participate. We will encourage, hope, innovation, and critical reflection in our work together.
Specifically, this course will facilitate an informed exploration of the following questions:

How might we think about defining or realizing human rights ("the human rights enterprise") given certain overlapping threats to human survival?

How can our local and global communities assess and address our most pressing human rights challenges, manifested as threats to civilization if not the species? How can we view these challenges as opportunities to further the interests of human rights, social justice, and the general improvement of the human condition?

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- (CLO1) Explain the basics of human rights and international law.
- (CLO2) Describe several current questions/tensions/controversies facing contemporary human rights scholars and activists in the U.S., particularly those of the greatest scale (threats to species survival).
- (CLO3) Demonstrate an ability to connect theory to action in formulating a proposed contribution to human rights praxis in the U.S.
- (CLO4) Pursue a piece of scholarship relevant to the human rights enterprise and overlapping threats to human survival.

**Required Texts:**


Other Required Readings and Materials:
All assigned readings beyond the required texts above will be provided by the instructor via email (PDF files). Should you have any problems obtaining reading materials throughout the course, please email the instructor for assistance.

Suggested, Related Readings and Resources for Further Reference and Research:
Human Rights Documents and Reporting (International Law):

Library Liaison:
For help with library resources and library research (including the use of databases and online research materials—such as journal search engines), students are strongly encouraged to contact the Sociology Subject Librarian: Kathryn Blackmer Reyes, Kathryn.BlackmerReyes@SJSU.edu.

Classroom Protocol:
1. This course depends on participation and interaction. Students are expected to be on time to class out of respect for your colleagues and instructor.
2. All classroom participants are expected to foster an environment that encourages participation, rather than silencing others (be respectful to one another, do not insult or intimidate others, and so forth).
3. Students are expected to complete all readings and assignments by the dates indicated on the syllabus.
4. Students are responsible for any and all notes and materials missed in their absence.
5. Cell phone, PDA, and Laptop/Internet use will not be tolerated during class time unless they are part of class activities or necessary to field an emergency.

Adding and Dropping:
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, and so forth. [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/)

Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.
Assignments and Grading Policy:

Readings
Students are expected to complete readings by the class session indicated on the course schedule. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings such that class time is not wasted, and we can engage the material together.

Classroom Activities and Discussion:
Though not graded per se, this course requires a great deal of classroom discussion and classroom activity. Part of the graduate experience is to address and critique scholarship with instructors as peers—this can only be done in interactive settings. Discussions and classroom activities are designed to help students successfully achieve all learning objectives and to develop students’ graded assignments.

Human Rights Research Proposal:

Description and Purpose: Students will propose a research project to investigate a human rights related research question or set of research questions. Students should theoretically think of this as the front end to a scholarly article or brief thesis. Proposals should be approximately 20 pages in length (double spaced, 12 point font, APA or ASA format) including an introduction, a brief literature/theoretical review, and methods section. Proposals should also explain how the research contributes to human rights praxis in the U.S. (SLO 2, 3, 4)

Grading: These assignments will be graded on a 30-point scale and count for 60% of the course grade.

Weekly Response Papers:

Description and Purpose: Students will submit a 3-page response paper each week to summarize and reflect upon ongoing readings. Each response paper should (a) summarize the reading, defining all key concepts; (b) analyze the reading (How does it help us make sense of “x”?); (c) critique the reading, presenting strengths and limitations. Response papers should also follow a standard format (typed, double spaced, 12-point font, APA/ASA format). At the end of each response paper students should include 2-3 discussion questions from the readings. (SLO 1, 2)
Grading: These assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale
and will count for 40% of the course grade.

Grading Scale
Final grades will be calculated as a percentage on a typical “100 point scale”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98-100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-77</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>64-67</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-63</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>F</td>
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University Policies:

Academic Integrity:
Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at:
http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities
requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

**Student Technology Resources:**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**Learning Assistance Resource Center:**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

**SJSU Writing Center:**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. The Writing Center is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

**Peer Mentor Center:**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop–in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/).
Course Schedule

SOCI 223: Seminar in Sociological Issues: *Human Rights and Overlapping Threats to Human Survival*

Spring 2017

Note: The following course schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Introduction to course and explanation of syllabus, define basic framework of “overlapping threats,” and discuss writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2.   | 2/8   | **The Human Rights Enterprise**, state theory, and the critical sociology of human rights  
*Read Armaline/Glasberg/Purkayastha Chaps 1-3* |
| 3.   | 2/15  | The Human Rights Enterprise and Human Rights Praxis  
*Read Armaline/Glasberg/Purkayastha Chaps 4-End* |
| 4.   | 2/22  | **Political Economic Threats**  
*Students present research/data on wealth and power disparities, their connection, and their implications* |
| 5.   | 3/1   | Wealth, power, and rule  
*Read Chomsky Chaps 1-8  
**Final Paper/Research Proposal Topics Due** |
| 6.   | 3/8   | Wealth, power, and rule  
*Read Chomsky Chaps 9-End* |
| 7.   | 3/15  | **Threat of War and Repression**  
*Students present research/data on current state of military and police state repression (U.S. and international community)* |
| 8.   | 3/22  | The Nuclear Threat. Original argument by Noam Chomsky in *Hegemony or Survival?*  
*Read excerpt, Hegemony or Survival [PDF]* |
| 9.   | 3/29  | SPRING RECESS (NO CLASS) |
| 10.  | 4/5   | Overlapping threats…. War, repression, poverty, and environmental crises  
*Read Parenti Parts I and II* |
| 11.  | 4/12  | War, repression, and environmental crises continued  
*Read Parenti Parts III and IV  
**Final Paper/Research Proposal Annotated Outline Due** |
| 12.  | 4/19  | **Environmental Threats**  
*Students present on current proposed solutions to our greatest environmental challenges.* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 13.   | 4/26   | Overlapping threats… Climate and political economy  
*Read Klein Part I* |
| 14.   | 5/3    | Climate and political economy continued  
*Read Klein Part II* |
| 15.   | 5/10   | Climate and political economy continued  
*Read Klein Part III* |
| 16.   |        | Final Papers Due to Instructor (hard copy) by 5:00 p.m.  
Friday May 19th |
|       |        | **Final Exam**  
N/A  |