SSBT 540: Theories of Groups, Organizations, Communities and Social Class

Course Description

The course provides a foundation of knowledge about the theory, development, and behavior of groups, organizations, communities and social class. It begins with discussions about the concept of CULTURE, and then examines how the cultures of groups, organizations, communities, and social classes are responsible for most observable verbal and non-verbal human behavior in these social units. The course emphasizes the application and integration of theoretical perspectives on social behavior in all human groups of various sizes. The first course (SSBT 440) in the human development sequence focuses on personality development in various environments. This second course (SSBT 540) deals with how culture develops and serves to influence human behavior in interpersonal, intra-group, inter-group, and larger settings.

Course Objectives

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Understand how cultural blueprints emerge in groups, organizations, communities, and social classes and how that blueprint influences human behavior in these settings.

2. Develop an understanding of human behavior in small groups, organizations, communities and social classes through specific theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

3. Assess small groups, organizations, communities and social classes in terms of their structures, functions, socialization and social control activities, and adaptation to change;

4. Explore ways in which small groups, formal organizations, communities and social classes promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving optimal health and well-being;

5. Evaluate the responsiveness of small groups, formal organizations, communities and social classes to cultural and lifestyle diversity, and how such responsiveness may result in racism, ethnocentrism, gender related inequalities, ageism, disabilities, and oppression due to sexual preferences;
6. Understand ethical issues and social work values related to the interplay of individuals, small groups, formal organizations, communities, and social classes.

7. Examine social and community development from a local to a global context for social work practice.

Books (basic):


Books (supplemental):


Methods to Attain Objectives

Course content is covered through reading, listening, thinking, and discussing social work practice in groups, organizations, communities and social classes. Class sessions will be devoted to focused discussions which flow from assigned readings and supplemental materials presented in class. Students are expected to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate in class discussions. In addition, the class will include some small group experiential learning, video tapes to generate discussion, and guest speakers who work in agency and community-based settings. Attendance at all class sessions is required and students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Assignments and Grading

Course requirements consist of 1) Class Attendance and Participation; 2) Midterm Paper; 3) Final Paper

Course requirements, due dates, and their contribution to the final grade are summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper: Group Culture (mid-term)</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussions about group culture (not graded)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper: Community or Organizational culture (final)</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussions about community culture (not graded)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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In an effort to be consistent with the grading system used by the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, this course will be assigned using the following 10 point scale.

A = Excellent
B = Good
C = Fair
F = Fail
Assignments:

Mid-Term Paper: Development of Culture in Groups:

Paper Due: (5 March 2002)

Percentage of Course Grade: 40%

Each student will submit a paper not exceeding 10 pages of content, plus bibliography in APA style. The paper should review how a group culture emerges in the group in the movie, “ALIVE.”

Specifically, the paper should focus on:

- Changes in the perception of artifacts (food, money, distribution of resources, etc.)
- Development of norms and values in the group (social control, division of labor, interpersonal relations, hierarchy or stratification, etc.)
- Assumptions about life, being, becoming, and goals to pursue in human life.

The student may follow the Schein template for this work.

Final Paper: Culture of a community, or an organization

Paper due: (23 April 2002)

Percentage of Course Grade: 40%

Each student will be required to (1) become familiar with Systems Theory, Conflict Theories, and Theories of Empowerment (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4 in Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda); and (2) apply one of these theories to one local community, or a local organization, in addition to applying the Schein template (applied to a group during the mid-term). It is important that special attention be paid to the matter of social class composition of the community (or organization) studied, and how class-biased is that community or organization

Paper not to exceed 15 pages.

ALL PAPERS MUST BE DONE IN APA (4th Edn) FORMAT.

Suggested Structure of the Course

UNIT 1: The Structure and Content of Culture in Groups. 4 sessions -- Presentation of major theories of culture, and the influence of culture on human behavior

Class 1 Course Introduction

Introduction and Course Overview

Lecture: The cultural organization of life

**Recommended readings**


**Class 2**

**Rules, relationships, symbols, and socialization**

**Required Readings**


**Class 3**

**Interaction and Order**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended readings**


**Class 4**

**Culture in Group Structure – Phases of Group Development**

**Recommended readings**

Queralt, M. Chapter 7: Human behavior in small groups (pp. 307-341). *(On Reserve)*


**Class 5**

**Film Exemplar**

Film – Alive (1987).

**Class 6**

**Discussion – Development of group culture**
UNIT 2: COMMUNITIES - Definitions of community, the global community, models and theories of social development, interventions with communities

Class 7  Community - Theories

Required Readings


Class 8  Community - Group Discussions

Required readings


Class 9  Community (Part I) -- Classic Sociological Studies

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 10  Definitions of Community (Part II) – Modern Sociological Studies

Required Readings

All of the following articles are to be found in:


Martinez-Brawley, Emilia, Community. (Pp. 539-548).
Recommended Readings


Class 11  Interventions with Communities

The following articles is to be found in:


UNIT 3: CULTURE IN LARGE GROUPS/ORGANIZATIONS – Theories, models, values and ethics, structure, leadership, power and authority, interorganizational collaboration

Class 12  Power and Authority in Large Groups

Required Readings

Handouts from Etzioni, French and Raven and Raven

Class 13  Structure of Organizations: A Journey from General systems

Recommended Readings

Class 14  Social Class and Diversity

Recommended Readings


Class 15  Conclusions and Discussions

Final Paper due