

SOCIOLOGY 572(01) Power and Coercion

Course Syllabus

Fall 2007
Time: Th 4:10-6:50 PM
Location: Lucy Stone, A140

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Sociology Department, Room A352.
Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston

Purpose

This course examines how social power is distributed and, more importantly, how imbalances of power are maintained through ideology and social control. The course blends theoretical discussions of power, ideology, and coercion with grounded analyses of social control dynamics within particular social institutions and specific spatio-temporal contexts (mostly contemporary United States). The “tools of domination” given emphasis in the course are mass communication (i.e., propaganda and ideology), surveillance technology, and direct coercion (e.g. criminalization/criminal justice), with passing attention to more mundane methods like informal sanctions, socialization, persuasion, and classification. This broad frame will permit (comparative) focus not only on the various dimensions of social control (e.g. coercive/non-coercive, formal/informal, inclusive/exclusive) but also on the relationships among them. We will also explore the cultural, structural, technological, political, and ideological forces that have transformed social control in late modernity, as well as the nature and consequences of these transformations (e.g., economic and racial inequality, repression, and resistance). Topics, which I see as particularly illuminative of present-day power relations that receive special attention in the course include surveillance technologies and modes of resistance, ideology in mass communication and school curricula, the medicalization of deviance, the criminalization of school discipline, mass incarceration, and the so-called wars on drugs and terrorism.

Required Readings

One book is required in this course. It should be available at the Livingston College Book Store.

Power: A Radical View. 2005. by Steven Lukes (2nd Ed).

Other readings, unless otherwise noted, will be available on electronic reserve through Rutgers library (requires Adobe Acrobat reader). I may add readings and other materials to Sakai during the semester. When an abundance of reading material is assigned, I will try to convey to you which readings or portions of readings are most important. I will try

to provide a few discussion questions in advance of the sessions on particular readings. My intent is not to overwhelm you with readings but rather to provide many resources for your papers and to supply a variety of perspectives to inform and enrich responses to discussion questions.

Course Format

This course will be taught in a seminar format. As a seminar, the course emphasizes discussion and writing. To encourage independence of thought, students are assigned a primary role in leading class discussion and determining the specific foci of their papers. I will also provide short lectures on the material as necessary.

Course Grade

Your grade for the course will be apportioned in the following manner:

Participation:	30%
Commentaries:	30%
Final Paper:	40%

Participation. Thirty percent of your grade will be based on the quantity and quality of your classroom participation. Absences from class without a valid excuse count against your participation grade. I encourage students who have not done the applicable reading to let others respond to questions first. This helps keep class discussion pertinent and flowing. Classroom participation that detracts from focused, intellectual discourse and an open, congenial classroom atmosphere will not improve your grade. You will sign up for or be assigned a session in which you will be that session's designated "go-to" person, especially for the tougher questions. You should be prepared to both answer and ask discussion questions on that day. If you have a phobia about talking in class, please see me. We may agree upon a way to make up some of the lost points such as submitting additional commentaries (see below) or written responses to discussion questions. All students will be asked to give a short presentation about their final papers on the last day of class (December 6), which will count toward your participation grade.

Writing Assignments

The course has one major writing assignment and several small ones. The small assignments are an attempt to advance your thought process and enhance classroom discussion rather than ends in themselves. Beginning September 13 and excluding November 15, I ask that, you, prior to class, record and submit by e-mail some reflections on the reading for that week in the equivalent of one to two double spaced pages. Whereas my grading criteria for a typical paper include organization and style, I am interested only in the depth of coherent and rational thought that you are giving to the readings, both individually and comparatively. I personally do some of my clearest and deepest thinking in e-mails to friends and colleagues, and ethnographers often keep journals. Such styles of writing are perfectly acceptable and you should choose whatever

format is quickest and most comfortable for you. In these papers, I especially encourage you to ask critical questions of the readings and to integrate prior readings, considering, as Paul Mclean puts it, “how one author might interrogate another.” You may also use these commentaries as a vehicle to test out, extend, and refine ideas for your final paper. References to recommended readings are also well received. You may submit up to ten commentaries, but your grade will be based only on the top five. You are required to write a commentary based on the session with the guest speaker on November 15th.

You are also required to write a final paper, 20-25 double-spaced pages long, which requires research and critical analysis. All papers will be judged on the depth and breadth of analysis, the quality of the writing, the sufficient and proper integration of course materials, and additional considerations specified later. Papers should reflect an understanding of both course readings and issues and topics raised in class discussion. Please discuss your choice of paper topic with me by e-mail or in person by November 20th. You are welcome to request feedback on paper outlines or summaries. However, I will not read and comment on rough drafts of papers.

I strongly prefer that you submit your papers through E-mail. It saves paper, and I hand-write far fewer comments because of my poor handwriting. It is your responsibility to make sure that your papers transmit properly, on time, and without viruses or macros.

Clear violations of academic integrity will be forwarded to the Graduate Chair (or to the appropriate Dean if you are an undergraduate). For more information on the University’s uniform policies and procedures concerning academic integrity violations please see <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

Late assignments will be deducted an additional half grade (a six-point penalty on a 100 point scale) for each additional day late beginning *immediately* after the time the assignment is due. Whenever possible, no-penalty extensions should be requested and approved in advance. If an extended illness or family situation prevents you from attending class and completing your assignments on time, you must receive a new paper due date, so your paper can be evaluated properly and fairly.

Communications

E-mails. Though I encourage e-mail communication, please do not expect an immediate reply. I also try to check my office answering machine at least once every two days. Please first ask a classmate for information that I provided in a class that you missed.

List-serve. A course list-serve will automatically send messages to your official e-mail address on records with Rutgers University. I do not have the ability to set the e-mail address at which you will receive messages. The main purpose of the list-serve is for me to send you discussion questions as well as updates and reminders. Occasionally I may post items to the list-serve that are relevant to a pending assignment. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail regularly. As a rule, I plan to always give at least 2 days notice for any changes I make to the readings, papers etc., and to also make any

important announcements in class. To contact the whole class, send a message to powerandcoercion_fa07@rams.rutgers.edu.

Discussion Topics and Required Readings

Please do the reading corresponding to a class in advance of that class.

Week 1. Introduction to Course, Social Control, and Power (Sept. 6)

Lukes, 2005, Introduction and Chapter 1.

Recommended Readings:

Hayward, Clarissa, *De-facing Power*

Whitt, Book Review of *Power: A Radical View*.

Week 2. Radical and Post-modern Views on Power (Sept. 13)

Lukes, 2005, Ch. 2 and 3.

Recommended Readings: Same as Week 1.

Week 3. Political Economy, Race, and the Resurgence of Coercive Control (Sept. 20)

Young, "From Inclusive to Exclusive Society"

Wacquant, "Deadly Symbiosis"

Recommended Readings:

Garland, "Social Change and Social Order in Late Modernity"

Bauman, "Social Issues of Law and Order"

Week 4. State Coercion and Community Social Control (Sept. 27)

Meares and Kahan, "Law and (Norms of) Order in the Inner City."

Roberts, Dorothy, "Social and Moral Cost of Mass Incarceration in African American Communities"

Recommended Readings:

Garfinkel, "Condition of Successful Status Degradation Ceremonies"

Lynch and Sabol, "Prison Use and Social Control"

Week 5. Ideology (Oct. 4)

Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture*, Chapter 1 (except) and Chapter 2

Recommended Reading:

Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", in *Lenin and Philosophy*

Week 6. Propaganda and Legitimation—Media Power in Practice (Oct. 11).

Herman and Chomsky, Chapter 1 and 2

Hirschfield, "Legitimizing Official Violence"

Altheide and Grimes, "War Programming: The Propaganda Project and the Iraq War"

Mazzarella and Pecora, "Girls in Crisis: Newspaper Coverage of Adolescent Girls"

Recommended Reading:

Castells, "Communication, Power and Counter-Power"

Beckett, "Setting the Public Agenda", in *Making Crime Pay*

Week 7. Education, Ideology, and Power (Oct. 18)

Selected chapters from Michael Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum*

Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*, Chapters 3 and 4.

Recommended Reading:

Wrigley, Book Review of *Ideology and Curriculum*

Week 8. More on Power in Education (Oct. 25)

More selected Chapters from Michael Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum*

Kingston, "Resistance Theory: How Marxists Interpret Student Life."

Recommended Reading:

Abbate-Vaughn, "Ideology in an Urban Teacher Professional Community"

McCormick, "Disguising and Asserting Identities in an Urban School"

Smith, "Marginalized Youth, Delinquency, and Education"

Week 9. Power and Surveillance (Nov. 1)

Garland, "Punishment and the Technologies of Power"

Garland, Garland, "Beyond the Power Perspective"

Lyon, "Surveillant Sorting in the City" in *Surveillance Society*

Week 10. Diffusing and Resisting Surveillance Technologies (Nov. 8)

Hier, et al., "Supplementing the Panoptic Paradigm"
 Lyon, "Why Where You Are Matters"
 Eubanks, "Technologies of Citizenship: Surveillance...in the Welfare System"
 Koskela, "The Other Side of Surveillance: Webcams, Power, and Agency"

Recommended Readings:

Coleman, "Reclaiming the Streets: Closed Circuit Television, Neoliberalism.."

Week 11. Surveillance Technologies: An Insider Perspective (Nov. 15).

Guest Speaker. No readings.

Week 12. The Interpenetration and Criminalization of Control Institutions (Nov. 20). (Mandatory Commentary on Week 11 Session Due; Paper Topics Chosen).

Hirschfield, "Preparing for Prison? The Criminalization of School Discipline in the USA"
 Simon, J, *Governing Through Crime*, Chapters 6 and 7.

Recommended Reading:

Jenness, "Explaining Criminalization: Demography...Globalization and Modernization"

Week 13. Cross-contextual perspective on social control (Nov. 29).

Conrad, "Medicalization and Social Control"
 Liska, "Modeling the Relationships Between Macro Forms of Social Control"

Recommended Reading:

Ballard and Elston, "Medicalisation: A Multi-Dimensional Concept"
 Sutton, "Political Economy of Madness: The Expansion of the Asylum..."

Week 14. Resistance, Repression, and Student Presentations (Dec. 6).

Tilly, "Domination, Resistance, Compliance... Discourse"
 Earl, "Tanks, Tear Gas and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression,"

Recommended Reading:

Parenti, "Fear as Institution: 9/11 and Surveillance Triumphant"

Final Papers are tentatively due on December 15th.