

SOCIOLOGY 572(01) Power and Coercion

Course Syllabus

Spring 2012
Time: Mon 1:10 to 3:50 PM
Location: Davison Hall, #128

Paul Hirschfield, PhD.
Office: Davison Hall, #38
phirschfield@sociology.rutgers.edu
Fax: 732-932-6067

Course web-site: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu/>

Office Hours: Mon. 11:30 to 12:00; Thurs. 1-2:30 or by appointment
Davison Hall, Room 38, 732-932-6489

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 and resistance). Topics that are particularly illuminative of present-day power relations and 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, and mass incarceration.

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 via Sakai (under Resources). 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 provide 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 required to be lead discussant for one class session and to determine the specific focus of their term paper. I will also provide short lectures on the material as necessary.

Course Grade

Your grade for the course will be apportioned (100 point scale) 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 (i.e. lead discussant), 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 (April 30), 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 March 26 I ask that, you, prior to class, record and submit via Sakai some reflections on the reading for that week in the equivalent of two to three double spaced pages. Feel free to focus your commentaries on some of the discussion questions that I distribute. 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 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. Just be careful not to focus your writing too narrowly; it should be clear from the piece that you have done most of the reading for that week. References to recommended readings are also well received. You may submit up to six commentaries, but your grade will be based only on the top three (10 points each).

You are also required to write a final paper, 10-15 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 April 19th. You are welcome to request feedback on paper outlines or summaries. However, I will not read and comment on rough drafts of papers.

Please submit your papers through Sakai. 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. 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 record with Rutgers University. 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_sp12@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 (March 19)

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 (March 26)

Lukes, 2005, Ch. 2 and 3.

Recommended Readings: Same as Week 1.

Week 3. Political Economy, Race, and the Resurgence of Coercive Control (April 2)

Young, Jock “From Inclusive to Exclusive Society”

Wacquant, Loic “Deadly Symbiosis”

Wacquant, Loic “How America Exports its Penal Common Sense”

Recommended Readings:

Garland, David “Social Change and Social Order in Late Modernity”

Bauman, Zygmunt “Social Issues of Law and Order”

Rios, Victor. 2011. *Punished*, Ch. 5 (I may require some short excerpts).

Week 4. Media Power and Resistance (April 9)

Castells, “Communication, Power and Counter-Power”

Beckett, “Setting the Public Agenda”, in *Making Crime Pay*

Arsenault and Castells “Conquering the Minds, Conquering Iraq”

Recommended Reading:

Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture*, Chapter 2 (109-118)

Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological Status Apparatuses”, in *Lenin and Philosophy*

Herman and Chomsky, Chapter 1 and 2
 Hirschfield, "Legitimizing Police Violence"
 Gil de Ziga, Veenstra, Vraga, and Shah "Digital Democracy: Reimagining Pathways to Political Participation"

Week 5. Education, Ideology, and Power (April 16)

Michael Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum* Chapters, 1-3, and 7

Recommended Readings:

Wrigley, Book Review of *Ideology and Curriculum*
 Kingston, "Resistance Theory: How Marxists Interpret Student Life."
 Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*, Chapters 3 and 4.

Week 6. Power, Surveillance, and Resistance (April 23)

Staples, *Everyday Surveillance*, Ch. 2
 Hirschfield, "Schools Surveillance in America: Disparate and Unequal"
 Eubanks, "Technologies of Citizenship: Surveillance...in the Welfare System"
 Weiss, "Scan This"

Recommended Readings:

Garland, "Punishment and the Technologies of Power" (highly recommended)
 Garland, "Beyond the Power Perspective" (highly recommended)
 Lyon, "Surveillant Sorting in the City" in *Surveillance Society*
 Lyon, "Why Where You Are Matters"
 Koskela, "The Other Side of Surveillance: Webcams, Power, and Agency"

Week 7. Cross-contextual perspectives on social control and Student Presentations (April 30).

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

Recommended Reading:

Rios, Victor Chapter 4. "The Coupling of Criminal Justice and Community Institutions"
 Ballard and Elston, "Medicalisation: A Multi-Dimensional Concept"
 Sutton, "Political Economy of Madness: The Expansion of the Asylum..."
 Hirschfield, "Preparing for Prison? The Criminalization of School Discipline in the USA"
 Simon, J, *Governing Through Crime*, Chapters 6 and 7.

Final Papers will be due within a week after the final class (before May 7).