



## **SOCIOLOGY 421**

### **SEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGY: INTERVENTIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

FALL 2013

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY, 7:15-8:35PM

DAVISON HALL, ROOM 122

Course Sakai site: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/909aae1f-73ea-4fc2-bb00-3eb7d2bff84c>

INSTRUCTOR: HANA SHEPHERD

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OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAY 4-6PM, DAVISON HALL ROOM 126

**Course Description:** Everywhere we look, government officials and policy makers, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, philanthropists, business organizations, and social scientists are engaged in deliberate projects to change the behavior of groups and populations. As opposed to attempts to influence individuals to do something once, or initiatives that only incidentally have an impact on behavior, in this class we will examine intentional attempts to change behavior in a sustained or chronic way. These different groups of people attempting to influence behavior often employ very different assumptions about human behavior and why people change their behavior: their attempts are sometimes effective, sometimes ineffective, and sometimes they even backfire with serious consequences. This class will analyze these attempts to change behavior—both current and historical—by looking at the methods used to change behavior with respect to poverty, conflict, education, politics, health, finance, culture and more. We will analyze how these attempts to change behavior draw on coercion and power, incentives and motivations, information and education, social norms, nudges and insights from behavioral economics, or relational approaches. Why do some interventions work better than others? When is success specific to a context and when is it replicable across contexts? We will also discuss when these attempts at behavior change are considered legitimate and when they are considered illegitimate.

At the end of this course, students should come away with:

1. A familiarity with attempts at systematic behavioral change and an ability to recognize them.
2. A familiarity with the types of methods that underpin many behavioral interventions.
3. An understanding of the behavioral science findings that support or contradict using particular methods for behavior change.
4. Most importantly: an ability to critically analyze the assumptions about human and group behavior built into attempts at behavior change.

### **Structure of the Course:**

The materials for the course are drawn from many sources: academic books and articles, newspaper articles and blog posts, videos, and they provide examples and case studies of interventions, and information about the social scientific principles that inform the interventions. We will use these to build a repertoire of examples to use to explore what types of interventions seem to work and under what conditions. We will build a database on examples of other interventions via the Sakai site, so please contribute when you come across them!

All readings are REQUIRED and should be completed before class. I may do some mini-lectures at the beginning of class to provide background, but in general, the class will be run as a discussion seminar, and everyone will be expected to contribute to the discussion. This will be much more difficult, and the class will be far less productive and interesting, if you have not done the reading. All reading material is either available online (links are provided below) or on the Sakai site.

## Requirements and Grading:

**Attendance and Participation (15% of grade):** Attendance and participation are required, mainly because the class will be more productive if everyone regularly contributes. We will be doing in-class activities to spur thinking and discussion, so everyone will be able to contribute.

**Analytic Reading Responses (35% of grade):** Each Wednesday, a brief reading response will be due at 5pm via Sakai. You are required to complete ten of the twelve possible reading responses. You can pick whichever weeks you would like to skip responses. Please keep track of how many you have submitted, as you are responsible for submitting ten.

In the reading responses, you will answer the following set of brief questions for ONE case of an intervention drawn from the Wednesday readings (we will read multiple cases so choose one that you are interested in). The goal of the reading responses is to get you thinking about how to analyze the interventions we read about.

The answers to questions 1-3 can be brief (1-2 sentences). The answers to questions 4-7 should be a brief paragraph.

Reading response questions:

1. Who is attempting to change behavior?
2. What is the behavior (or behaviors) they are trying to change?
3. Among whom are they trying to change the behavior?
4. What assumptions does the intervention make about how peoples' behavior changes?
5. Are these assumption valid based on a) social science research (if available), and b) context-specific knowledge and expertise?
6. What additional information would you want to know about the behavior or case in order to change this behavior?
7. What additional information would you want to know to figure out whether the intervention would or did work (in the sense of changing the intended behavior in the intended way)?

**In-class Writing Assignment (20% of grade):** During the week of October 21, we will pause and take stock of what we've read so far and what we've learned. We will do a review discussion on Monday October 21, and on Wednesday October 23, we will have an in-class writing assignment that will ask you to reflect on the material up to that point. You will answer 2-3 essay questions as part of the assignment.

**Final Assignment (30% of grade):** For the final assignment you will have a choice to either design your own behavioral intervention or to do an in-depth analysis of an existing intervention (real or fictional). I will provide the details of the requirements for both options early in the class, and I'll ask you to decide which option you will pursue by October 25, and what specific behavior or case you will address, in consultation with me, by November 11. The final product for both options can be in the form of an 8-10 page paper, a well-designed and thought-out website, or a Wikipedia entry. The final product will be due December 16.

## Summary of grading:

Attendance and Participation		15%
10 Reading Responses	3.5 each x 10:	35%
In-class writing assignment (Oct. 23)		20%
Final assignment (due Dec. 16)		30%
TOTAL		100%

## Wednesday, September 4 Introduction to the class

### Reading:

- Thaler, Richard H. July 7, 2012. "Watching Behavior Before Writing the Rules." *The New York Times*. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/08/business/behavioral-science-can-help-guide-policy-economic-view.html?\\_r=3&smid=tw-share&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/08/business/behavioral-science-can-help-guide-policy-economic-view.html?_r=3&smid=tw-share&)

## Week of September 9 Interventions, Big and Small

### Reading for Monday September 9:

- Gneezy, Uri and Aldo Rustichini. 2000. "A Fine is a Price." *Journal of Legal Studies* 29: 1-17.
- Anti-homosexuality laws in Uganda: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda\\_Anti-Homosexuality\\_Bill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda_Anti-Homosexuality_Bill)

### Reading for Wednesday September 11:

- Scott, James C. 1999. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 6: "Soviet Collectivization, Capitalist Dreams"
- Cabellero, María Cristina. "Academic turns city into a social experiment: Mayor Mockus of Bogotá and his spectacularly applied theory." <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/03.11/01-mockus.html>

## Week of September 16 Theoretical Perspectives

### Reading for Monday September 16:

- Podgorecki, Adam, J. Alexander, and R. Shields (eds.). *Social Engineering*. Carlton University Press. Introduction (pp. 1-19) and Chapter 1 (selection: pp. 23-42).

### Reading for Wednesday September 18:

- Miller, Dale T. and Deborah A. Prentice. 2013. "Psychological Levers of Behavior Change." In E. Shafir (ed.), *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy* (pp. 301-309). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Merton, Robert K. 1936. "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action." *American Sociological Review* 1: 894-904.

## Week of September 23 Poverty, Individual and Group Interventions

### Reading for Monday September 23:

- Rosenberg, Tina. January 3, 2011. "To Beat Back Poverty, Pay the Poor." *The New York Times*. [http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/03/to-beat-back-poverty-pay-the-poor/?\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/03/to-beat-back-poverty-pay-the-poor/?_r=0)
- Rosenberg, Tina. January 7, 2011. "Helping the World's Poorest, For a Change." *The New York Times*. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/07/helping-the-worlds-poorest-for-a-change/>
- Ozler, Berk. May 13, 2013. "Defining Conditional Cash Transfer Programs, An Unconditional Mess." <http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/defining-conditional-cash-transfer-programs-unconditional-mess>
- Ozler, Berk. May 20, 2013. "Do Conditions Moderate the Effects of Cash Transfer Programs? Preliminary Findings from a Systematic Review." <http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/do-conditions-moderate-effects-cash-transfer-programs-preliminary-findings-systematic-review>

### Reading for Wednesday September 25:

- Charles, Dan. May 3, 2013. "Unraveling The Mystery Of A Rice Revolution." The Salt Blog: NPR. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2013/05/03/180821486/unraveling-the-mystery-of-a-rice-revolution>

- “Evaluating the Long-Term Impact of Anti-Poverty Interventions in Bangladesh.” *International Food Policy Research Institute*, Discussion Paper 01077, March 2011. Selection: pp. 1-12, 17  
<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp01077.pdf>

## **Week of September 30 Poverty, Big Interventions**

### Reading for Monday September 30:

- Wanjala, Bernadette M. and Roldan Muriadian. 2013. “Can Big Push Interventions Take Small-Scale Farmers out of Poverty? Insights from the Sauri Millennium Village in Kenya.” *World Development* 45: 147-160.
- Newby, Tina M. J. June 2010. “The Unintended Consequences of Development Aid- A Brief Overview.” Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier Working Paper.  
[http://www.diis.dk/graphics/publications/wp2010/wp2010-06\\_unintended\\_effects\\_aid\\_web.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/publications/wp2010/wp2010-06_unintended_effects_aid_web.pdf)

### Reading for Wednesday October 2:

- “The Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program Final Impacts Evaluation.” Housing and Urban Development, Executive Summary.

## **Week of October 7 Education**

### Reading for Monday October 7:

- Kobliner, Beth. 2012. “Should you Pay for an A? How to Motivate your Child, Part 1-3.”  
<http://www.mint.com/blog/family/mintfamily-with-beth-kobliner-should-you-pay-for-an-a-how-to-motivate-your-child-part-1/>  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beth-kobliner/pay-for-an-a\\_b\\_1936233.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beth-kobliner/pay-for-an-a_b_1936233.html)  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beth-kobliner/paying-for-grades\\_b\\_1975557.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beth-kobliner/paying-for-grades_b_1975557.html)
- Tyler, Tom R. 2011. *Why People Cooperate: The Role of Social Motivations*. Overview (pp. 1-7) & Chapter 2 (pp. 27-47). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

### Reading for Wednesday October 9:

- Garcia, Julio and Geoffrey L. Cohen. 2013. “A Social Psychological Approach to Educational Intervention.” In E. Shafir (ed.), *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy* (pp. 329-347). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tough, Paul. June 20, 2004. “The Harlem Project.” *The New York Times*.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/20/magazine/the-harlem-project.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

## **Week of October 14 Health**

### Reading for Monday October 14:

- Wansink, Brian. 2013. “Turning Mindless Eating into Healthy Eating.” In E. Shafir (ed.), *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy*. (pp. 310-328). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Selection: pp. 322-328.
- Ringold, Debra Jones. 2002. “Boomerang Effects in Response to Public Health Interventions: Some Unintended Consequences in the Alcoholic Beverage Market.” *Journal of Consumer Policy* 25: 27-63.
- New York City’s Anti-obesity campaign  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/13/opinion/mayor-bloombergs-anti-obesity-campaign.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/02/business/media/campaign-promotes-healthy-eating-habits-in-children.html>  
<http://markbittman.com/alone-soda-tax-lacks-enough-fizz/>

- Nassauer, Sarah. July 30, 2013. "Where Calories are Hiding." *The Wall Street Journal*.  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324809004578635783927655580.html>
- Kotz, Deborah. July 19, 2013. "Study: Menu Calorie Counts Don't Impact Choices, At Least for McDonald's Eaters." *Boston.com*.  
<http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/health/blogs/daily-dose/2013/07/19/study-menu-calorie-counts-don-impact-choices-least-for-mcdonald-eaters/el5nQg8tKDJ8H2FyyaG9TI/blog.html>

### Reading for Wednesday October 16:

- Hay, Robert P. B. 1996. "Lessons from the Canadian Anti-Smoking Campaign." In A. Podgorecki, J. Alexander, and R. Shields (eds.). *Social Engineering*. Pp 131-151. Carlton University Press.
- Moreira, M. T., L. A. Smith, and D. Foxcroft. 2010. "Social Norms Interventions to Reduce Alcohol Misuse in University or College Students." *The Cochrane Library*. Selection: pp. 2-4, 9-11, 28-30.
- Valente, Thomas W., Peggy Gallaher, and Michele Mouttapa. 2004. "Using Social Networks to Understand and Prevent Substance Use: A Transdisciplinary Perspective." *Substance Use and Misuse* 39: 1685-1712. Selections: pp. 1686-1688, 1692-1704.  
[http://www-hsc.usc.edu/~tvalente/Publications/valente\\_et\\_al\\_SUM.pdf](http://www-hsc.usc.edu/~tvalente/Publications/valente_et_al_SUM.pdf)

## **Week of October 21**

### Monday October 21:

- Review and discussion of themes of the class

### Wednesday October 23:

- In-class midpoint writing assessment

## **Week of October 28 Violence and Crime**

### Reading/viewing for Monday October 28:

- Harcourt, Bernard E. 1998. "Reflecting on the Subject: A Critique of the Social Influence Conception of Deterrence, the Broken Windows Theory, and Order-Maintenance Policies." *Michigan Law Review* 97: 291-289. Selections: pp. 291-342.
- View: *The Interrupters*. Film by Steve James and Alex Kotlowitz. 2011  
<http://interrupters.kartemquin.com/about>

### Reading for Wednesday October 30:

- Ball, L., Paluck, E. L., and Fletcher, E. 2012. "Reducing Gender Based Violence." In M. Ryan and N. Branscombe (eds.), *Handbook on Gender and Psychology*. New York: Sage. Selection: pp. 3-30.
- Fabiano, Patricia M., H. Wesley Perkins, Alan Berkowitz, Jeff Linkenbach, and Christopher Stark. 2003. "Engaging Men as Social Justice Allies in Ending Violence Against Women: Evidence for a Social Norms Approach." *Journal of American College Health* 52: 105-112.
- SHARP Program, U.S. Army. [http://www.preventsexualassault.army.mil/leader\\_prevent.cfm](http://www.preventsexualassault.army.mil/leader_prevent.cfm)

## Week of November 4 Money and Finance

### Reading for Monday November 4:

- Thaler, Richard H. and Cass R. Sunstein. 2009. *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Selection: Introduction, pp. 1-14.
- Benartzi, Shlomo, Ehud Peleg and Richard H. Thaler. 2013. "Choice Architecture and Retirement Saving Plans." In E. Shafir (ed.), *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy*. (pp. 245-263). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Selection: pp. 245-252, 261.
- Choose To Save Campaign: Savings Education. PSA Bibliography.  
<http://www.psaresearch.com/Choosetosave.html>
- Shea, Christopher. May 2, 2012. "Nudging Students Into College." *Wall Street Journal Blogs*.  
<http://blogs.wsj.com/ideas-market/2012/05/02/nudging-students-into-college/>

### Reading for Wednesday November 6:

- Varian, Hal. November 22, 2001. "Economic Scene: In a Model for Lending in Developing Nations, A Bangladesh Bank Relies on Peer Pressure for Collateral." *The New York Times*.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/22/business/economic-scene-model-for-lending-developing-nations-bangladesh-bank-relies-peer.html>
- Gugerty, Mary Kay. 2005. "You Can't Saving Alone: Testing Theories of Rotating Savings and Credit Organizations." Mimeo. Evans Schools of Public Affairs, University of Washington.
- Ashraf, Nava, Dean Karlan, and Wesley Yin. 2006. "Tying Odysseus to the Mast: Evidence from a Commitment Savings Product in the Philippines." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 121: 635- 672. Selections: pp. 635-644, skim 645-667, read 668-669.

## Week of November 11 Conflict and Intergroup Conflict

### Reading for Monday November 11:

- Paluck, E. L. and Donald P. Green. 2009. "Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice." *Annual Review of Psychology* 60: 339-67.
- Skim: Seeds of Peace International Camp Program. [http://www.seedsofpeace.org/?page\\_id=16859](http://www.seedsofpeace.org/?page_id=16859)
- Lazarus, Ned. 2001. "Evaluating Peace Education in the Oslo-Intifada Generation: A Long-Term Impact Study of Seeds of Peace 1993-2010. Doctoral Dissertation, International Relations, American University. Selection: pp. 7-10, 15-36.  
[http://aladinrc.wrlc.org/bitstream/handle/1961/11067/Lazarus\\_american\\_0008E\\_10082display.pdf?sequence=1](http://aladinrc.wrlc.org/bitstream/handle/1961/11067/Lazarus_american_0008E_10082display.pdf?sequence=1)

### Reading for Wednesday November 13:

- Bell, Christopher D., Katherine A. Rczynski, and Arthur M. Horne. "Bully Busters Abbreviated: Evaluation of a Group-Based Bully Intervention and Prevention Program." *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice* 14: 257-267.
- Paluck, E.L. and Hana Shepherd. 2012. "The Salience of Social Referents: A field experiment on collective norms and harassment behavior in a school social network." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 103: 899-915.
- Goldstein, Steven. April 24, 2013. "Opinion: A Plan to End the Bullying Crisis at Rutgers University." Nj.com.  
[http://blog.nj.com/njv\\_quest\\_blog/2013/04/opinion\\_a\\_plan\\_to\\_end\\_the\\_bull.html](http://blog.nj.com/njv_quest_blog/2013/04/opinion_a_plan_to_end_the_bull.html)

## Week of November 18 Migration and Movement

### Reading for Monday November 18:

- Scott, James C. 1999. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 7: "Compulsory Villagization in Tanzania: Aesthetics and Miniaturization", pp. 223-261

### Reading for Wednesday November 20:

- Farnsworth, Elizabeth. 2004. Two Views of West Bank Barrier. PBS News Hour.  
[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\\_coverage/middle\\_east/conflict/map\\_westbank.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/middle_east/conflict/map_westbank.html)
- Cornelius, Wayne A. 2004. "Death at the Border: Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of US Immigration Control Policy." *Population and Development Review* 27: 661-685.

## Week of November 25 Culture and Language

### Reading for Monday November 25:

- Lewis, Geoffrey. 2002. *Turkish Language Reforms: A Catastrophic Success*. Selections TBA.
- *Course of Study for the Indian Schools of the United States*. 1901. United States, Superintendent of Indian Schools. Introduction (pp. 5-6), Geography (pp. 130-139), Housekeeping (pp. 148-152), The Outing System (pp. 189-191), Conclusion (p. 275)  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=eTYaAAAAYAAJ&dq=Indian+Schools&pg=PP1-v=onepage&q=Indian+Schools&f=false>

## Week of December 2 Political Behavior

### Reading for Monday December 2:

- Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. 2008. *Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Brookings Institution Press. Selection: Ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-25), Ch. 9 (pp. 120-134), Ch. 10 (pp. 135-144, 155-163)

### Reading for Wednesday December 4:

- Hollyer, James. 2012. "Is it Better to Empower the People or the Authorities? Assessing the Conditional Effects of 'Top-Down' and 'Bottom Up' Anti-Corruption Interventions." *Research in Experimental Economics*. Selection: pp. 1-12 plus the conclusion.
- Changing Norms and corruption, World Bank Case studies for Egypt, Colombia and the United Kingdom  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGOVACC/Resources/EgyptCaseStudy.pdf>  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGOVACC/Resources/ColombiaCaseStudy.pdf>  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGOVACC/Resources/UnitedKingdomCaseStudy.pdf>

## Week of December 9 Evaluation and Ethics

### Reading for Monday December 9:

- Goldstein, Markus. July 30, 2013. "The International Rescue Committee's approach to impact evaluation." Development Impact Blog, World Bank.  
<http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/international-rescue-committees-approach-impact-evaluation>
- Green, Duncan. "Randomized Controlled Trials: Panacea or Mirage?" Oxfam. (Watch video on website and read text.) <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=2478>



- Roodman, David. March 3, 2009. "The Rapid Rise of the Randomistas and the Trouble with RCTs." *Center for Global Development*.  
<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/rapid-rise-randomistas-and-trouble-rcts>

#### Reading for Wednesday December 11:

- McNeil, Donald G. December 20, 2010. "Five Years In, Gauging Impact of Gates Grants." *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/21/health/21gates.html?pagewanted=all>
- Buffett, Peter. July 26, 2013. "The Charitable-Industrial Complex." *The New York Times*.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/27/opinion/the-charitable-industrial-complex.html>
- Barrett, Christopher B. 2006. "Food Aid's Intended and Unintended Consequences." Background Paper FAO State of Food and Agriculture.  
[http://dyson.cornell.edu/faculty\\_sites/cbb2/Papers/MixedEffectsv2Mar2006.pdf](http://dyson.cornell.edu/faculty_sites/cbb2/Papers/MixedEffectsv2Mar2006.pdf)