

SOC 320

Individual and Society

Spring 2019

Instructor: Craig Boylstein

Office Hours: M/W 11-12; 1-2 or by appointment

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Course Description: We will go “inside social life” to explore the ways that people create, make sense of, reproduce, and/or challenge the meaning and experience of everyday life. We will primarily use a theoretical perspective known as symbolic interactionism, which views humans as continually engaged in the process of seeking and creating meaning through interaction with others. Our starting point will be the social construction of “the self.” However, as we move through the course, we will give increasing attention to the ways that individual action both shapes and is shaped by social contexts and institutional structures.

Ultimately, the goal of this course is to provoke thought about what we take for granted as “natural” about the social order of everyday life, in order that we may think more critically about the ways our own social interactions both reinforce and challenge the cultural practices and social institutions that constrain those very interactions.

Since this is a 300 level course, I do not expect students to memorize and rehash concepts. Recognition and recall learning will not suffice. We will be learning to apply concepts, to engage in comparison, contrast, and critique of theory, and to develop our own syntheses.

Required Text:

Title: Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality 4th Ed.

Authors: Sandstrom, Lively, Martin, and Fine

Oxford 2014

*** You are also responsible for the additional readings provided by the instructor throughout the semester on Moodle (and listed in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus)

MAJOR COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Familiarize students with a sociological approach to social psychology.
2. Provide students with the theoretical and substantive insights necessary to think systematically about the interrelationships between the "self" and "society."
3. Encourage students to think systematically about their personal life experiences and situations from a social psychological perspective.

4. Introduce students to readings that provide them with an opportunity to reflect on different types of individuals and life experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the role of culture and social structure in shaping individual lives and be able to provide and recognize examples of this process.
2. Students will be able to articulate the history of social psychology, how the specialty of social psychology is unique, and how to develop an identity as a social psychologist.
3. Students will be able to discuss how seminal works within the field of social psychology (including the areas of social cognition, social influence, attitudes, intergroup relations, and interpersonal relations) apply to social contexts.

Course Requirements

1. **Reading Checks** (20%) There will be a reading check at the beginning of most classes according to the class schedule below. The checks will consist of 5 multiple-choice questions from textbook chapters or assigned readings. These questions are designed to enable you to demonstrate whether you have completed the assigned reading on time with rudimentary comprehension. The questions can only be answered at the time they are given to the whole class; late-comers or absentees will forego the opportunity for credit for that reading. Your grade for this component of the course will accumulate throughout the semester
2. **Personal Reflections** (3 x 10%) After each unit of the course, write a 600 word (2-page) informal reflection on selected course material that demonstrates your personal interaction with it, and functions as a form of journaling. No further study beyond doing the assigned readings and participating in class discussion is required. Comment on ideas or analyses presented in the preceding unit of the course that have interested or impressed you the most, explaining why you think they are significant. In order to develop your reflections meaningfully, you should probably limit your focus to the topics of one or two classes/readings. Due Date: Unit I (CHs 1-3): Symbolic Interactionism [February 18](#); Unit II (CHs 4-6): Social Interaction [March 25](#); Unit III (CHs 7-9): Group Dynamics [May 1](#)
4. **Chapter Assignments** (20%) Due Date (TBD/Varies): At the end of most chapters you will find "Questions for Reflection and Assignment". Some of these will be listed on Moodle as a chapter assignment (with due date/time indicated). I will be looking for thoughtful, thorough, precise responses to the assigned items with responses demonstrating an understanding of the chapter material.
5. **Exams** (15% x 2) There will be two exams, each worth 15% of the final letter grade, and each consisting of approximately 30 multiple choice questions plus 8 written definitions and examples of concepts. Each exam will hold you responsible for only but all the material in the lectures since the previous exam; the final exam is not comprehensive. The dates of the exams are as follows: Exam #1 [March 8](#); Exam #2 [May 8 11:00 am](#)

Important Reminder: I DO NOT USE MOODLE TO COMPUTE OVERALL GRADES

Grading Summary

1. Grade Components

- Reading Checks 20%
- Personal Reflections 30% (10% x 3)
- Chapter Assignments 20%
- Exams 30% (15% x 2)

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned using the following scale:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- 59% or below = F

Class Attendance

Full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. Questions on exams will be designed to reward class attendance and attention. While I am committed to making the classes as interesting and informative as possible, it is neither my role nor my gift to be an entertainer. I am happy to give additional assistance outside the classes to students who find themselves struggling with course material, but only to those who have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

An ICT-free Classroom

Student use of electronic information and communication technologies, including laptop computers, is not allowed in class. Anyone found using one will be asked to either put it away or leave the classroom. (If you have a special learning need, please consult with me.) While I deeply regret the inconvenience for note-taking this becomes, too many students in the past have abused ICTs in the classroom, distracting themselves and their classmates, and disrespecting the educational enterprise. Our advanced technologies have by now created a need to regain the ability to give sustained total attention to a single focus, a life skill now more in need of nurture than the ability to multi-task, though I well realize that banning ICTs does not guarantee it. As partial compensation, I will post the PowerPoint presentations from my lectures on Moodle after each topic is completed, for you to download if you wish.

Late Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due (or uploaded via Moodle by the date/time listed for each assignment). Assignments will not be accepted after their due date; a grade of zero will be given for that component of the course. Furthermore, I will not receive requests for due date extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and I will make a decision if and when your paper is graded. Assigning a late penalty (usually 10% or one letter grade per week) or waiving the zero grade will be considered only in the cases of medical or personal emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, changes in employment schedules, or competition for library resources do not constitute such personal emergencies. Failure to

plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

Missed Exams

Students who miss exam 1 are responsible to contact me within one week of the exam date if they still wish to write the exam. Permission to do so will be given to only those students who present evidence, acceptable to me, of medical reasons for having missed the exam. The format of the exam will be at my discretion, with essay questions likely. Students who do not write an exam by at most two weeks after the exam date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. Due to exam 2 being on the final exam date and that date being close to the final grade due date for the university, missing it = 0% for exam 2.

Academic Honesty:

You are expected to follow all university rules and regulations outlined by the Code of Student Conduct. Any instances of cheating and plagiarism will result in a zero for that test/assignment and disciplinary procedures with the Dean of Students will be initiated. More information about what constitutes an honor code violation, and how the university handles violations is available from the Office of the Dean of Students (www.coastal.edu/deanofstudents).

ADA Policy:

Coastal Carolina University is committed to equitable access and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Individuals seeking reasonable accommodations should contact Accessibility & Disability Services (843-349-2503 or <https://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>).

Cancelled Classes: If any classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, the class time will be made up according to university instructions.

Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1: January 14-Jan 18

M – Introductions/ Course description

W/F --- Article 1: The Sad Demise, Mysterious Disappearance, and Glorious Triumph of Symbolic Interactionism

WEEK 2: Jan 22-Jan 25

M/W – Chapter 1: The Meaning of Symbolic Interactionism (pp. 1-23)

F – Article 2: Interactionism's Place

WEEK 3: Jan 28 -February 1

M - Reflection: Why is Symbolic Interactionism Important?

W - Chapter 2: The Interactionist Toolkit (pp. 24-42)

F - Chapter 2: The Interactionist Toolkit (pp. 43-55)

WEEK 4: Feb 4 - Feb 8

M/W – Group Discussion (student groups present theoretical perspective to the class [10 min each])

WEEK 5: Feb 11 - Feb 15

M/W – Chapter 3: People as Symbol Makers and Users (pp. 56-84)

F – Chapter 4: Socialization: The Creation of meaning and Identity (pp. 85-96)

WEEK 6: Feb 18 – Feb 22

M/W - Chapter 4: Socialization: The Creation of meaning and Identity (pp. 97-122)

F - Article 3: The Social Construction of Unreality: A Case Study of a Family's Attribution of Competence to a Severely Retarded Child

WEEK 7: Feb 25 - March 1

M - Chapter 5 The Nature and Significance of the Self (pp. 123-141)

W/F- Chapter 5 The Nature and Significance of the Self (pp. 142-163)

WEEK 8: March 4 – March 8

M –Article 4: Identity Work among the Homeless; Review

W - Review

F – Exam 1

WEEK 9: March 18 – March 22

M - Chapter 6: Role Taking, Role Making, and the Coordination of Action (pp. 164-176)

W/F - Chapter 6: Role Taking, Role Making, and the Coordination of Action (pp. 177-192)

WEEK 10: March 25 – March 29

M – Article 5: Redefining Sex and Intimacy: The Sexual Self-Images, Outlooks, and Relationships of Gay Men Living with HIV/AIDS

W/F – Article 6: The Glorified Self: The Aggrandizement and the Constriction of Self

WEEK 11: April 1 – Apr 5

M - Chapter 7: Interactionist Approaches to the Study of Emotion (pp. 193-210)

W - Chapter 7: Interactionist Approaches to the Study of Emotion (pp. 210-232)

F - Article 7: Indignation, Inspiration, and Interaction on the Internet: Emotion Work Online in the Anti-Human Trafficking Movement

WEEK 12: Apr 8 – Apr 12

M/W/F - Chapter 8: The Politics of Social Reality (pp. 233-245)

WEEK 13: Apr 15- Apr 19

M - Chapter 8: The Politics of Social Reality (pp. 245-272)

W – Article 8: The New Computer Hacker's Quest and Contest with the Experienced Hackers: A Qualitative Study applying Pierre Bourdieu's Field Theory

WEEK 14: Apr 22 - Apr 26

M/W – Chapter 9 Collective Behavior and Social movements (pp. 273-293)
F - Chapter 9 Collective Behavior and Social movements (pp. 293-310)

WEEK 15: Apr 29 – May 1
Review

May 8th, 11AM: Exam 2 [Final] (Chapters 6-9)