**Groups, Identity, and Conflict**

**SO 351B, M/W 2:30pm-3:45pm**

**Spring 2017**

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00am-12:00pm

Thursday 1:00pm-2:00pm, and by appointment

**Course Description**

This class will introduce you to sociological perspectives (and social science perspectives more broadly) on the interrelationship between our society, our social groups, the identities we come to construct for ourselves, and the emergence of conflict. We live in a world where it seems impossible to escape news of some form of conflict emerging. This conflict takes a wide range of forms: Interpersonal disagreements among friends and colleagues, political activists competing over legislation, protests or rioting over racial or economic injustices, war and genocide, etc. Our interest in this class is to understand the role that larger social structures, and the social groups to which we belong, influence the beliefs, values, and behaviors of those people engaging in the conflict. In particular, we will focus on how conflict can emerge as a consequence of how we construct our identities and how those identities influence, or pattern, our perception of the world.

The course begins by introducing theoretical perspectives that highlight the ways in which we attach meaning to our interactions/relationships, and construct our own understanding of “reality.” That is, these theories provide a framework that allows us to understand how two people could come to view the same action (a suicide bombing, to take an extreme example) as either justified resistance or unjustified terrorism. After providing this framework, we move to understanding where our identities come from and their relationship with conflictual behaviors.

The readings will provide the theoretical and empirical links between identity construction and conflict. Beyond this, we will address one final tension. While we tend to attach negative connotations to the term “conflict”, it can be either a productive and healthy aspect of a society or a disruptive and destructive force. In class, and in the readings, we will wrestle with an understanding of how and when conflict can be used for social change, the broader impacts that conflict can have on seemingly unrelated processes, and how we can apply what we learn in the classroom to events in our own lives.

**Core Requirements**

This course fulfils the Citizenship requirements of the core curriculum. The objective and outcomes of this requirement, as defined by the college, are listed below:

*Citizenship*

### Goals and Objectives

Develop student understanding that Citizenship requires an awareness of the balance between individual rights and individual responsibilities within a society.

**Required Readings**

This class does not have a required textbook. Instead we will draw on peer reviewed publications providing theoretical and empirical arguments around the issues of the construction of group identities and the nature of conflicts that may emerge from these group identities.

For your convenience, the readings will be uploaded to our Sakai site.

Additionally, you will be required to read 2 academic manuscripts about particular aspects of identity based conflicts. While some of these refer to older conflicts, their insights remain relevant and we will work to link them to contemporary society. For the section on class/status conflict, everyone will read the same book. For religious conflict, you will choose one of the two options below

Required Manuscripts

Class/Status and Conflict:  
Isenberg, Nancy. 2016. *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*. Penguin.

Religious Identity and Conflict:

Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2003. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence. 3rd Edition.*  University of California Press

**OR**

Smith, Christian. 1996. *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central American Peace Movement.* The University of Chicago Press.

**Course Requirements (\*Requirements are different for those completing the service-learning option)**

*\*Book Review:* Over the course of the semester you will be required to read and review two books about identity and conflict (from a set of options). The first will be due on **4/5** and the second will be due on **5/3**. These books are academic research projects, so approach reading them as you would any article that we read for this class (identify their research question, their theoretical approach to the topic, their data and methods, their evidence, and their conclusion/answer to their research question).

You will submit a 4-5 page review of the book. In addition to the written component, on **5/3** you (and the others who read the same book) will be responsible for presenting the content of your book to the class.

Each of the two written reviews will be worth **75 points** (**or 7.5% of your final grade**), and each presentation will be worth **25 points** (**or 2.5% of your final grade**) for a total of **100 points**.

*Exams:* We will have two exams in this course. The midterm exam is a take home exam. This will be distributed via Sakai. This exam is worth **250 points (or 25% of your grade).** We will discuss the exam in more detail as the date approaches, but the exam will be due by **5pm** on **3/1**.

The final exam will occur during our scheduled final exam time. The exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. This exam is worth **300 points (or 30% of your grade).** More information on the content and structure of each of the exams will be given as they approach.

*In Class Assignments/Quizzes:* Over the course of the semester, I will assign 5 in class assignments or quizzes. These will be designed to help you directly engage with, and interpret, empirical evidence about the day’s topic. These will be announced in advance. Individually, these will be worth **20 points** (**or 2% of your final grade**).

*Attendance:* In accordance with the official policy of the College (page 8 of the student handbook), you are permitted to miss a total of 2 classes for any reason. Any absences beyond the allotted 2 will result in a **30 point** reduction of your total grade. If extraordinary circumstances arise, please inform both the college and I and we will discuss possible solutions.

*Participation:* Especially in small classes, it is vital that all students are active participants in the classroom. **To this end, each student will be required to lead class discussion twice over the course of the semester. Doing so will be worth 50 of the total 100 participation points.**

Outside of your discussion leader role, participation involves not only completing the required readings and actively listening, but also raising questions and participating in the discussions. This requires that you **must complete the readings before** class in order to adequately participate. You should bring the readings with you to class, to reference during discussion if necessary. Active participation in the class (including discussion leading) is worth **100 points (or 10%** **of your final grade)**. Reading materials not relevant to the day’s content, sleeping, talking, texting, and otherwise violating the electronic devices policy laid out below will result in you being asked to leave class. If this occurs, you will be counted as absent for that day.

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on the above requirements in the following manner:

Requirement Points Each Total Points

Midterm Exam 250 250

In Class/Quiz (5) 20 100

Book Review (2) 100 200

Final Exam 350 350

Participation 100 100 \_\_\_

Total 1000

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 100-93% | (1000-930) |  | C | 76.9-73% | (769-730) |
| A- | 92.9-90% | (929-900) |  | C- | 72.9-70% | (729-700) |
| B+ | 89.9-87% | (899-870) |  | D+ | 69.9-67% | (699-670) |
| B | 86.9-83% | (869-830) |  | D | 66.9-63% | (699-630) |
| B- | 82.9-80% | (829-800) |  | D- | 62.9-60% | (629-600) |
| C+ | 79.9-77% | (799-770) |  | F | <60% | (<600) |

**Additional Policies**

­*Makeup Policy:* In almost all instances, **there will be no makeup exam for the final exam**. Make up exams will only be granted under extraordinary circumstances. If you **absolutely** **have to** miss the final, **you need to notify me at least one week in advance** via email, and to provide proper documentation. If an emergency occurs on the day of an exam, you must email me before the exam and provide me with documentation immediately. Questions on any makeup exams will reflect the fact that students had additional time to prepare.

Similarly, there are no makeup options for failure to complete service-learning journal entries or the various components of the final project that are due throughout the semester except under extraordinary circumstances.

If you have to miss the day of an in class assignment, you should email me to set up a time to meet to discuss a make-up opportunity. **This option is only available if you have not surpassed the allotted two absences.**

Take home exams and final papers that are turned in late will be subject to the following procedure. Work that is turned in within 24 hours of the deadline will receive a **ten percentage point reduction** in the score. **An additional ten percentage point reduction** will be applied for each additional day that the work is late.

*Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:* Plagiarism will absolutely not be tolerated in this class. All work in assignments and exams MUST be your own. In your written work, if you are presenting the ideas of someone else or providing a quotation, you must properly cite the author using a consistent format (ASA, APA etc.) . Presenting the work of someone else as your own or cheating on an exam will result in a failing grade (potentially for the course depending on the severity) and potential recourse by the college. (See page 11 of the Student Handbook). For more information on Saint Anselm’s policy on academic integrity see the following link:

http://www.anselm.edu/Library/Research-Help/Research-Tutorials/Academic-Integrity.htm

*Student Disabilities:* Saint Anselm College is committed to meeting the needs of students disclosing physical, sensory, psychiatric, and/or learning disabilities. To disclose a disability and request accommodations, please see Kenneth Walker, the College’s disability services provider, in the Academic Resource Center (ARC) in Lower Cushing, who will assist you in making contact with appropriate faculty members and arranging support services and accommodations available within the ARC or elsewhere. To ensure that accommodations are arranged in a timely manner, you are encouraged to make your request at the beginning of each semester.

 F**or questions concerning support services, documentation guidelines, or disability issues contact:**

Office of Disability Services  
Academic Resource Center (ARC)  
Kenneth J. Walker, Director  
Lower Cushing  
Tel. (603) 641-7193  
kwalker@anselm.edu

**For additional information on documentation guidelines:**

http://www.anselm.edu/Current-Students/Academic-Resources/Disability-Services.htm

*Electronic Devices:* “As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pages ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the Office of the Dean prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDA’s, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. Text messaging or accessing information on these devices is likewise forbidden. All such devices must be put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the College’s emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a college emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor” (Student Handbook, p.13).

**With the exclusion of documented medical issues requiring the use of a laptop computer in class, I do not permit the use of laptops during the class period.** Tablets that lay flat on the desk and serve the function of either a notebook or an e-reader for the class readings are allowed.

The reasons for this are twofold: 1. Empirical studies demonstrate that the use of a laptop during a lecture period is associated with poorer performance in the class (ex. Hembrook 2003, Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014). 2. Relatedly, the temptation to use the computer for non-lecture related material distracts not only the student using the computer, but also those around them.

*Communication:* The best way to contact me is through email. I will check my email at least twice per day (once in the morning and once in the evening) and will respond to most emails within 24 hours. I will use email as the primary means of communication with you outside of the classroom, and will do so with the assumption that you will check your email at least once per day.

**Tentative Reading Schedule\***

\*This schedule is subject to change depending on the progression of the course

Week 1:

1/18: Introduction and Syllabus

**Theoretical Backgrounds**

Week 2:

1/23: Weber – Objectivism in Social Science

Blumer – “Mead and Blumer: The Convergent Methodological Perspectives of Social Behaviorism and Symbolic Interactionism”

1/25: Excerpt from Goffman – “The Presentation of Self”

Excerpt from Blumer – “Society as Symbolic Interaction”

**Where do identities come from?**

Week 3: Identity Theory

1/30: Stryker and Burke – “The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory”

Tajfel and Turner – “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict”

2/1: Cerulo – “Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions”

Week 4: Gender Identity; Class Identity

2/6: Kimmel – “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity”

Thorne – “Borderwork Among Girls and Boys”

2/8: Hout – “How Class Works in Popular Conception”

Lawler – “Disgusted Subjects: The Making of Middle-Class Identities”

Week 5: Racial/Ethnic Identity

2/13: Lewis – “’What Group?’ Studying Whites and Whiteness in the Era of ‘Color-Blindness’”

Hughey – “Navigating the (Dis)Similarities of White Racial Identities”

2/15: Demo and Hughes – “Socialization and Racial Identity among Black Americans”

Brunsma – “Interracial Families and the Racial Identification of Mixed-Race Children”

Week 6: Ethnic Identity; Nationalism

2/20: ~~Attend the showing of “the 13~~~~th~~~~” on 2/15 (or watch it outside of class on Netflix)~~

~~Kroneberg and Wimmer – “Struggling over the Boundaries of Belonging”~~

~~Nielsen – “Toward a Theory of Ethnic Solidarity in Modern Society”~~

**Theories of Intergroup Conflict Broadly**

2/22: ~~Excerpt from Simmel – “Conflict”~~

Week 7:

2/27: Excerpt from Coser – “The Functions of Conflict”

3/1: **Mid-Term Exam**

***Mid-Semester Recess***

Week 8:

3/13: Sherif – “Superordinate Goals in the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict”

3/15: Tajfel et al. - “Social Categorization and Intergroup Behavior”

Week 9:

3/20: Brewer – “When Does Ingroup Love Become Outgroup Hate”

Jackson – “Intergroup Attitudes as a Function of Different Dimensions of Group Identification and Perceived Intergroup Conflict”

~~Davies – “A Formal Interpretation of the Theory of Relative Deprivation”~~

3/22: Blumer – “Racial Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position”

**Gender Identity and Conflict**

Week 10:

3/27: Taylor et al. – “The Women’s Movement: Persistence through Transformation”

3/29: Crenshaw – “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”

**Class/status Identity and Conflict**

Week 11:

4/3: Hout, Brooks and Manza – “The Democratic Class Struggle in the United States”

Excerpt from Gusfield – Symbolic Crusade

4/5: Discussion of “Isenberg -White Trash”

**Racial Identity, Ethnicity/Nationality/Citizenship and Conflict**

Week 12:

4/10: Bonacich – “A Theory of Racial Antagonism: The Split Labor Market”

Bobo and Hutchings – “Perceptions of Racial Group Competition”

4/12: McVeigh – “Structural Incentives for Conservative Mobilization: Power Devaluation and the Rise of the Ku Klux Klan”

Week 13:

4/17: Easter Recess

4/19: Klandermans Van der Toorn and Van Stekelenburg – “Embeddedness and Identity: How Immigrants Turn Grievances into Action.

Week 14:

4/24: Andrews and Biggs – “Protest Campaigns and Movement Success: Desegregating the U.S. South in the Early 1960s”

4/26: Topic and Readings to be voted on by class

**Religious Identity and Conflict**

Week 15:

5/1: Readings TBA

5/3: Discussion of Juergensmeyer – “Terror in the Mind of God” and Smith- “Resisting Reagan”