

## **SYLLABUS**

### **SOCI 4350 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

FALL 2011

Online class

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### **Course Description**

This is an undergraduate course about community organization. More particularly, the course examines the nature, structure and functioning of human or social communities. It applies a comparative-historical, including globalization, perspective on community organization, thus encompassing and comparing the United States and other contemporary societies. The course uses empirical evidence and theoretical conceptions alike to analyze, and when necessary suggest solutions to, questions of community organization and disorganization. Emphasis is placed on the real-life implications and applications of the frameworks for approaching community organization and social structure generally.

Whereas this is largely a course in the field of sociology, a multi-disciplinary approach to community organization is also applied and encouraged by complementing the sociological perspective with those of other social sciences. Hence while being of primary interest for students seeking a major or minor in sociology, the course can also be of interest and usefulness for those with majors or minors in other social sciences, including anthropology, history, political science, psychology, business, economics, and so on. Expectations are that students will have some prior background in sociology or/and anthropology in light of the dominant sociological orientation of the course and in order for them to be able to deal successfully with its content. Given the level of the course, attempts will be made to encourage students in pursuing further studies in this and related areas of sociology as well as to assist them in planning for graduate studies in various fields of social science.

### **Course Objectives**

In this course the following objectives will be attempted to achieve:

- a. Offering both empirical evidence and theoretical arguments on community organization and disorganization, namely on the character, structure, and functioning of social communities in traditional and contemporary societies.
- b. Contributing toward describing and explaining the historical and current, and when possible predicting the future, patterns of the relationship between traditional communities and modern societies, viz. between what classical sociologists called community and society.

- c. Putting the organization (and disorganization) of communities and their relationships to larger social structures within which they exist and function in a comparative-historical and globalization framework, by comparing, for example, the United States with other societies.
- d. Evaluating the real-life importance and applications of various conceptions of community organization and social structure overall, including identification and assessment of corresponding policies and practical solutions.
- e. Identifying and assessing the impact that the on-going tendencies toward economic, political and cultural integration on the world scale or simply globalization have on traditional and contemporary communities in the United States and elsewhere.
- f. Encouraging students for further studies of community organization and similar subjects as well as assisting them in preparing for graduate study in sociology and other fields of social science.

### **Course Requirements**

This course has simple requirements in the form of objective, knowledge-testing exams only in order to simplify and objectify the grading process to the maximum. In this course there will be two exams, a midterm exam and a final examination. The format of midterm and final exams will have short and clear multiple-choice questions (usually 50). The exams will be objective such to evaluate students' reading, knowledge, and grasp of the readings. Exam scores will be computer-generated and so will be the final grade. Therefore there will be *no* subjective elements in how exam scores and the final grade are determined. The worth of each exam will be 100 points (maximum). Exams will be given and taken only online (UNT Blackboard) during the specified time period and with specific time limits (e.g., 1 hour).

Failure to take an online exam, without proper documented justification, during the specified time period (see below) will result in a *zero* (0) score for the missed exam. If an online exam is missed with documented justification during the specified period, make-up exams can be taken either online or in person (*closed* books and notes) in the department of sociology no later than 2 days after the specified exam period. This applies only to *midterm* exams, *no* final make-up exams will be given after the specified time period. Therefore, *no* incompletes will be given in case of a failure to take an exam during the specified time period without documented justification.

Exams *cannot* be retaken or continued either online or in person because of 'bad' Internet connection and other computer 'problems'. It is student responsibility to have a proper Internet connection and computer. Online computer-generated exam scores are final and *cannot* be changed by professor under any circumstances (just as SAT or GRE scores cannot be changed).

It is the policy of this course that *no* extra-credits or 'special treatments' will be given to any students. Online discussions are optional (not required), and used as the tool to better prepare

students for exams, and *not* for extra-points. The only basis for dispensing credits/grades is objective performance and merit rather than needs, desires and other subjective considerations. This ensures maximum fairness in grading. It is students' own responsibility for class notes, outlines, announcements, etc. The professor will be always and maximally available to students online and in office to address their queries and concerns. The only basis for dispensing credits/grades is objective performance and merit rather than needs, desires and other subjective considerations. This ensures maximum fairness in grading. Academic honesty is expected and enforced. The professor will be always and maximally available to students online as well as in office to address their queries and concerns.

Final grades will be calculated as follows.

|                                                   |                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Midterm Exam                                      | 100 points (maximum) |
| Final Exam                                        | 100 points (maximum) |
|                                                   | -----                |
| Total points from exams<br>(maximum)/divided by 2 | 200 points           |

The following grading scale will be applied:

| Total Points/Divided by 2 | Grade |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 180/2 and above           | A     |
| 160-179/2                 | B     |
| 140-159/2                 | C     |
| 120-139/2                 | D     |
| Under 120/2               | F     |

## Readings

### Required (for exams):

Robert Putnam. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse And Revival Of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 0-684-83283-6

### Optional:

Zygmunt Bauman. *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*. Blackwell [UNT library].

### Tentative Reading Assignments by Weeks (Course Schedule Subject to Change)

|                              |                                                               |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 25-September 05, 2011 | Introduction<br>Social Change in America<br>Putnam, pp. 15-28 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|

|                               |                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 05-12, 2011         | TRENDS IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL<br>Political and Civic Participation<br>Putnam, pp. 31-64                                          |
| September 12-19, 2011         | Religious Participation<br>Putnam, pp. 65-79                                                                                                     |
| September 19-26, 2011         | Informal Social Connections<br>Altruism, Volunteering and Philanthropy<br>Putnam, pp. 93-133                                                     |
| September 26-October 03, 2011 | Reciprocity, Honesty and Trust<br>Against the Tide?<br>Putnam, pp. 134-180                                                                       |
| October 03-10, 2011           | Review for Midterm Exam                                                                                                                          |
| October 15-17, 2011           | Midterm Exam                                                                                                                                     |
| October 17-24, 2011           | WHY?<br>Pressures of Time and Money<br>Mobility and Sprawl<br>Putnam, pp. 184-215                                                                |
| October 24-31, 2011           | Technology and Mass Media<br>Putnam, pp. 216-246                                                                                                 |
| October 31-November 07, 2011  | What Killed Civic Engagement? SO WHAT?<br>Putnam, pp. 277-306<br>Safe and Productive Neighborhoods<br>Economic Prosperity<br>Putnam, pp. 307-325 |
| November 07-14, 2011          | Health and Happiness<br>Democracy<br>Putnam, pp. 326-349.                                                                                        |
| November 14-21, 2011          | The Dark Side of Social Capital<br>Putnam, pp. 350-363.                                                                                          |
| November 24, 2011             | Thanksgiving                                                                                                                                     |
| November 28-December 05, 2011 | WHAT IS TO BE DONE?<br>Lessons of History: The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era                                                                |

**Putnam, pp. 367-402**

December 05-09, 2011

Review for Final Exam

December 10-12, 2011

Final Exam (material since midterm exam)