

SYLLABUS

SOCI 4350/900/950 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

Spring 2014

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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, namely objective exams only, simplifying and objectifying the grading process as much as possible. In this course there will be two exams, a midterm exam and a final examination (see course schedule). The format of midterm and final exams will have short, 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 Learn) 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). Each exam may be taken only ONCE (in one attempt), and any attempts to take the exam again will be an act of academic dishonesty and pursued accordingly. Exams must be taken by each student *individually* and independently of other students, and not in groups and collaboratively; if it is determined that an online exam is taken in groups and collaboratively, this will be treated as academic dishonesty and pursued accordingly.

Technical instructions (from UNT CLEAR). Avoid using a wireless connection for exams unless one is certain of its reliability. Take exams using a supported web browser on a computer or laptop rather than using an iPad. If using an iPad, the Chrome browser is recommended. Contact the UIT Helpdesk at 940-565-2324 for assistance in the event of technical problems affecting the ability to access or complete a test.

It is the policy of this course that *no* extra-credits or ‘special treatments’ will be given to any students—NO additional assignments, chances, requests, and exceptions. 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.

Final grades will be calculated as follows.

Midterm Exam	100 points (maximum)
Final Exam	100 points (maximum)

Total points from exams (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.

<http://books.simonandschuster.com/Bowling-Alone/Robert-D-Putnam/9780743203043>

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0684832836/bowlingaloneco00>

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

January 13-20, 2014	Introduction Social Change in America
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	Putnam, pp. 15-28
January 20-27	TRENDS IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL Political and Civic Participation Putnam, pp. 31-64
January 27-February 03	Religious Participation Putnam, pp. 65-79
February 03-10	Informal Social Connections Putnam, pp. 93-115
February 10-17	Altruism, Volunteering and Philanthropy Putnam, pp. 116-133
February 17-24	Reciprocity, Honesty and Trust Against the Tide? Putnam, pp. 134-180
February 24-March 03	WHY? Pressures of Time and Money Mobility and Sprawl Putnam, pp. 184-215
March 03-07	Technology and Mass Media Putnam, pp. 216-246
March 08-16	Spring Break
March 17-21	Review for Midterm Exam
March 22-23 (2 days)	<u>Midterm Exam</u> (Online)
March 24-31	What Killed Civic Engagement? SO WHAT? Putnam, pp. 277-306
March 31 April 07	Safe and Productive Neighborhoods Economic Prosperity Putnam, pp. 307-325
April 07-14	Health and Happiness Democracy Putnam, pp. 326-349.
April 14-21	The Dark Side of Social Capital Putnam, pp. 350-363.

April 21-April 28

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Lessons of History: The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era
Putnam, pp. 367-402

April 28-May 02

Review for Final Exam

May 03-04 (2 days)

Final Exam (Online)