

CONF 701**THEORIES OF SOCIAL HARMONY**

Semester: Fall 2005
Class Time: Thursdays, 4:30 to 7:10 p.m.
Class Room: "Original Building" Room 256
Instructor: Terrence Lyons
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Welcome to the course. This course explores theories that define and explain social harmony and cooperation. The relationships between harmony and conflict are of course close, and one is defined in part by the absence of the other. This course will therefore include consideration of how certain processes associated with conflict may promote either. We will also consider the relationships among concepts of harmony, cooperation, and order.

The course will be run as a seminar with an emphasis on in-depth discussion. It is therefore imperative that students read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Active participation in class discussions will be expected. The purpose of the short papers (see details below) is in part to encourage you to develop your thoughts regarding the readings prior to class and to be prepared to engage in the discussion.

Requirements:**Participation:**

In recognition of the importance placed on participation in classroom discussions, 20 percent of the total grade will reflect a student's participation.

This is a graduate seminar, not a lecture course. My role is to facilitate and guide discussion. Your active participation is essential to the success of the course and you will benefit from the discussion to the extent that you have completed the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Participation grades will be based on frequency and quality of your involvement in each week's class, with an emphasis on the latter. You are not encouraged to speak on every topic simply for the sake of participating but rather are strongly encouraged to find opportunities to contribute in ways that advance and deepen the discussion.

In evaluating participation, I will look for evidence that you have done the readings with sufficient attention that you can contribute to the discussion. An ability to succinctly summarize what you have read is regarded as a given. In order to further the discussion you should be prepared to offer your opinions on an author's argument: Do you find it convincing? If so why?

If not, why not? Is it clearly presented? Do you find the use of evidence satisfying? How would you further test the argument to confirm its validity? Do you think that the argument works best for some cases but is less convincing for other cases?

If you can demonstrate that you know what you have read, have thought about it, and can articulate an opinion on it, you have nothing to worry about.

Short Papers

To promote informed discussion, ten short (three-page) papers are required and account for 50 percent of the final grade. Students may write these papers for all twelve weeks and have the lowest two grades dropped or may skip up to two weeks. **A student who hands in fewer than ten papers will receive zero points for the missing essays.**

These papers should *analyze* the assigned books and articles, place them in the *context* of the literature on the topic, and *assess* both their contributions to the field and their weaknesses. These short papers should emphasize a thoughtful understanding of the week's readings and should not merely summarize the authors' arguments. A student may illustrate the value or weakness of a theory by demonstrating its effectiveness in explaining a case of which the student is knowledgeable.

The goal of the exercise is to assess and critique the theory from within its own perspective. In other words, rather than saying that Basic Human Needs is wrong or right, seek to understand the theory from its own perspective and goals and think through its assumptions, logic, and claims. Then you can specify where you find the logic convincing or faulty, rigorous or incomplete, compelling or circular, strong or generally unintelligible. This exercise should occupy most of your essay. You may well wish to use a final paragraph or two to explain some implications of the theory for practice but that is not the primary goal of the exercise. You may also want to "step outside" of the given theory's structure and argue that entire exercise of trying to explain cooperation or social harmony from this perspective is flawed and that some other theory is better. Illustrating with a case about which you are familiar may be a useful means to demonstrate either the value or weakness of a given concept or causal connection but the point of these brief essays is to analyze the theory as theory.

The papers *must* be handed in prior to (or at the beginning of) the class in which the topic is discussed. If a student cannot attend a class, e-mail or faxed submissions can be accepted but it is the student's responsibility to make sure that the paper arrives. These ten papers will account for 50 percent of the total grade.

Final Paper

There will be a take-home final exam due on December 15. This 15-page paper will be in response to a question that will be handed out on the last day of class, December 8. The question will deal very broadly with the question of social harmony, its relationship to social order and cooperation, and how the various theories we have discussed help us understand the concept. This take-home final will account for 30 percent of the total grade. You will naturally build on your earlier, short papers in writing this final paper but this final paper should integrate and link the various theories, not merely summarize your earlier views on specific theories.

Readings:

The following books have been ordered through the university bookstore. We will be reading all or most of each.

Frans De Waal, *Peacemaking Among Primates* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964).

Robert Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

Robert Axelrod, *The Complexity of Cooperation* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (California, 1987).

Dennis Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Robert C. Ellickson, *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* (Harvard, 1991).

Robert D. Putman, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles, *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1992)

Week One (September 1): Introduction to the course

In addition to a review of the syllabus and course requirements, we will discuss various meanings of concepts such as harmony, cooperation, and order.

Week Two (September 8): The Biological Basis for Cooperation

Frans De Waal, *Peacemaking Among Primates* (Harvard, 1989). The entire book is a great and easy read. Concentrate in particular on the Prologue (pp. 1-7), Chapter One (pp. 8-27), Chapter Two (pp. 35-87), and Chapters five and six (pp. 171-271).

Week Three (September 15): Evolution and Cooperation

Peter Hammerstein, ed., *Genetic and Cultural Evolution of Cooperation* (MIT Press, 2003), chapters 1, 2, 3, 19, 20, 21, 22.

Week Four (September 22): Reciprocity, Social Exchange, and Cooperation

Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964). Read chapters 1, 4, and 5.

Week Five (September 29): Strategic Interaction and Cooperation

Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (Basic Books, 1984). Ch. 1- 4.

Robert Axelrod, *The Complexity of Cooperation* (Princeton University Press, 1997), Ch. 2, 3, 6.

Week Six (October 6): The Role of Group Identity

Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (California, 1987), read all, skim ch. 5 and 7.

Week Seven (October 13): Social and Psychological Processes and Collective Action

Dennis Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Chicago Press, 1991). Ch. 1, 3-6, 10.

Week Eight (October 20): Tragedy of the Commons

Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), chapters 1-3, 6.

Week Nine (October 27) Solving Social Dilemmas: Social Psychological and Experimental Approaches

Roderick M. Kramer and Marilyn B. Brewer, "Effects of Group Identity on Resource Use in a Simulated Commons Dilemma," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1984): 1044-1057.

David M. Messick and Marilyn B. Brewer, "Solving Social Dilemmas: A Review," *Review of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol. 4, (1983): 11-44.

Peter Kollock, "Social Dilemmas: The Anatomy of Cooperation," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:1 (1998). Available on Infotrac.

Week Ten (November 3): Order without Law

Robert C. Ellickson, *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* (Harvard, 1991).

Week Eleven (November 10): Trust and Civic Traditions

Robert D. Putman, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, 1993). Read chapters 1, 4-6. Skim the history and look for the logic of the argument.

Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6:1 (1995): 65-78. Available on Project MUSE database.

Week Twelve (November 17): Trust and Cooperation

Diego Gambetta, "Can We Trust Trust?" in Diego Gambetta, ed., *Trust: Making and Breaking Co-operative Relations* (Basil Blackwell, 1988).

Karen S. Cook, ed., *Trust in Society*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001. Chapters to be announced.

NOTE – No class November 24 due to the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Week Thirteen (December 1): Concepts of Community: Analyzing Crime and Urban Life.

George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles, *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), chapter 1, 4, and 7.

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961), skim pp. 3-25, read pp. 26-73. The entire book is well worth reading.

Week Thirteen (December 8): Integration, Concluding Ideas

There will be no new reading for this class. We will recap the theories discussed during the

course of the semester and discuss the linkages and contradictions among them. The final paper question will be handed out in class and will be due in my office by December 16.