Senior Seminar: Identity and Systems of Belief

Socl 376, Spring 2011
Instructor: Elaine R. Cleeton
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Milne 213, 11:30-12:45
Office: Sturges 122A
Office Hours: W/F 8:00-8:20, 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

Objectives: In this course, we will explore the concept of identity as influenced and shaped by culture. Our focus will be changing beliefs held by generations of Americans from the 1940s to the present day. Exploring all forms of cultural media, we will look for evidence of assumptions about China, its political history, and population. Indicators of shifting beliefs will be explored to identify processes by which beliefs are modified.

Through the study of the emergence of a global society, students will develop their understanding of changing notions of identity. Students will apply Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography to the study of the representation of China in US popular texts and map the presence of identity as a social ideal shaping local and particular experience.

Goals: These course goals are related to several of the desired **outcomes** for courses adopted by the Department of Sociology:

* An understanding of the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality.
* An understanding of the role of evidence and qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology to identify, compare and contrast basic methodological approaches for gathering data.
* To improve ability to think critically.
* To improve ability to write effectively.
* To improve ability to speak effectively to a group.

Assessment: All students are required to complete:
An annotated bibliography of 10+ journal articles examining American beliefs about China.
An annotated bibliography of 10+ cultural media pieces referencing American beliefs about China.
Assist with completion of class power point presenting research findings on GREAT Day

Required Reading

Smith, Dorothy. 2005. *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Course Outline

Subject to Change with Adequate Notice

I. Introduction/Preface

Week 1 January 23	W: Course Overview, Background, Assignments
Week 2 January 28, 30	M/W: Smith, Chapters 1-3
Week 3 February 4, 6	M/W: Smith, Chapters 4-6
Week 4 February 11, 13	M/W: Smith, Chapter 7-10

II. Journal References

Week 5 February 18, 20	M/W: students present articles
Week 6 February 25, 27	M/W: students present articles

III. Cultural References

Week 7 March 4, 6	M/W: students present cultural references
Spring Break	
Week 8 March 11, 13	M/W: students present cultural references

IV. Linking texts to interview findings

Week 9 March 25, 27	M/W: analyze interview data referencing professional & cultural texts
Week 10 April 1, 3	M/W: analyze interview data referencing professional & cultural texts

V. Preparation of GREAT Day Presentation

Week 11 April 8, 10	M/W: prepare GREAT DAY powerpoint

VI. Revise Findings

Week 12	M: Practice GREAT Day presentation
April 15, 16, 17	T: GREAT Day
	W: Evaluate GREAT Day

VII. Revise Results

Week 13 April 22, 24	M/W: Revisit interviews, literature (professional & cultural)
Week 14 April 29, May 1	M/W: Propose questions for ongoing study
LAST CLASS May 6	M: Wrap up course

FINAL EXAMINATION: Friday, May 10, noon to 3:00, determine meeting place