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Sociology 377: The Sociology of Revolutions (Fall 2009)

Of all the forms of social change in the modern world, the revolution is certainly the most dramatic—and the most controversial. The word “revolution” is often used metaphorically to emphasize the dramatic nature of certain events, as in “the Reagan revolution,” or “the Industrial revolution.” However, this course will focus on the specific phenomenon of “social revolutions”: that is to say, rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies.

Course Requirements:

The final grade for this course will be based on

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| 1) A test given toward the beginning of the course: | (20 points) |
| 2) 5 pop quizzes @ 5 points each: | (25 points) |
| 3) A 5-7 page essay: | (25 points) |
| 4) A final examination: | (25 points) |
| 5) Class participation | (5 points) |
| TOTAL: | 100 points |

Most students find this course quite challenging. Many courses in sociology deal with topics with which students are familiar from their everyday lives (i.e., race in the United States, social inequality, gender relations, crime). However, this course deals with historical and international themes about which most students have little prior knowledge (not many of you have lived through a revolution, for example!). Some of the readings for this course are quite dense, and will require extensive explanation and elaboration in class. Other class material will be presented in lecture, but is not in the readings. **Therefore, class attendance is imperative to your performance in this course.** If you must miss a class session, it is your responsibility (and in your best interest) to get the notes from a classmate.

Vocabulary Test: This course deals with concepts and themes that are new for many students, such as the rise of capitalism, and the role of peasants in revolutions. These sorts of concepts and themes will be introduced during the first few class sessions, and will serve as “building blocks” for the rest of the course. Without these building blocks, the rest of the course won’t make very much sense. Therefore, 20 percent of your grade will be based on an in-class test on terms and concepts given during the third week of the course. This test is designed to test your *understanding of concepts*, not your ability to memorize phrases. I will hand out a list of key terms and concepts prior to the vocabulary exam.

Quizzes: To ensure that you come having done the reading for the class, I will give 9 pop quizzes at the beginning of class at random intervals throughout the semester. Each quiz will be worth 5 points, and your 4 lowest grades will be dropped. Thus, you will be graded on a total of 5 quizzes @ 5 points each, for a total of 25 points. If you have to miss class on a day that a pop quiz is given (due to illness, religious observance, a death in the family, athletic event, etc.), or if you arrive late to class on a quiz day, your quiz grade will be “zero,” and will count toward the four that get dropped. **No extra credit will be given to students who miss a pop quiz.**

Essay: Toward the middle of the semester, students will hand in a 5-7 page essay (topic to be announced).

Final Exam: The final will be a cumulative, in-class exam covering all the material from readings and lectures from the beginning through the end of the course. Its format will be essay and short answer. A makeup exam will be scheduled for students who have conflicts with other exams.

Participation: Your 5-point participation grade depends on both *class attendance* and *quality of discussion* (i.e., whether it is insightful, relevant to the topic at hand, grounded in the reading).

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to comply with the standards for academic honesty outlined in the Boston College Student Guide (<http://www.bc.edu/offices/odsd/services/guide/part4/>). Cheating on tests, quizzes, or exams will result in a grade of “0” for the test in question. Plagiarized assignments will also receive a grade of “0.” In the case of either cheating or plagiarism, I am required to contact your academic dean.

Readings: There are two sources of readings for this course.:

- 1) A collection of articles available on O’Neill Library online reserve system under “Babb.”
- 2) 3 books available at the Boston College bookstore. They are:

Marc Cooper, *Pinochet and Me*.

Jack Goldstone (ed.), *Revolutions*.

Ana Julia Jatar-Hausmann, *The Cuban Way*.

There will also be a copy of each book available on 2-hour loan at O’Neill Library Reserve.

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
September 8 Introduction	I. Modernization and Revolution September 10 Farmer, Paul, "On Suffering and Structural Violence" (online).
September 15 Rius, <i>Marx for Beginners</i> : pp. 124-42 (online). Marx, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (In Goldstone, pp. 21-29).	September 17 Marx, continued.
September 22 Downing, Brian M. 1992. "The Military Revolution" (online).	September 24 Darnton, excerpt from <i>The Great Cat Massacre</i> (online). Scott, chapter from <i>Weapons of the Weak</i> (online).
September 29 **Concept/Vocabulary test in class**	II. The Causes of Revolution October 1 Skocpol and Trimberger, "Revolutions: A Structural Analysis" (in Goldstone).
October 6 Skocpol, "France, Russia, and China," (online). Kenez, "The Revolution, 1917-1921," pp. 14-27 (online).	October 8 Sewell, William J. 1985. "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case" (online). **Paper topic handed out in class.**
October 13 Excerpts from Che Guevara, "Guerilla Warfare" (online). Moreno, "Che Guevara on Guerilla Warfare" (online).	October 15 Wickham-Crowley, "Toward a Comparative Sociology of Latin American Guerrilla Movements" (in Goldstone). Peceny and Durnan, "The FARC's Best Friend" (online).
III. The Outcomes of Revolutions October 20 Kelley and Klein, "Revolutions and the Rebirth of Inequality" (in Goldstone).	October 22 Sen, excerpt from <i>Development as Freedom</i> (online). **Paper due in class.**
October 27 Kenez, "The Revolution, 1917-1921," pp. 27-40 (online). Gouldner: "Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism" (online).	October 29 Lenin: Excerpts from <i>What is to be Done</i> Luxemburg: Excerpt from "The Russian Revolution."

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
November 3 Chiot, "What Happened in Eastern Europe in 1989?" (online)	November 5 Cooper, <i>Pinochet and Me</i> (first half)
November 10 Cooper, excerpt from <i>Pinochet and Me</i> (second half).	IV. The Cuban Revolution November 12 Paterson, "Curve Balls..." and "Supplying Repression" (online) Jatar-Hausmann, Preface, Chapter 1.
November 17 Jatar-Hausmann, Chapters 2-5.	November 19 Guevara, "Socialism and Man in Cuba" (online). Hausmann, Chapters 6-8.
November 24 Pérez, "Fear and Loathing of Fidel Castro" (online).	November 26 **No Class--Thanksgiving**
December 1 Hausmann, Chapter 9. Cuba reading to be announced.	V. The Mexican Revolution December 3 MachLachlan and Beezley, "The Porfiriato" (online). Goldfrank, "The Mexican Revolution" (in Goldstone).
December 8 Fuentes, "History out of Chaos" (online).	December 10 La Botz, Dan, "Carlos Salinas and the Technocratic Counterrevolution" (online). Womack, John. 1999. "ENOUGH!" (online).