

SOCIETY AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUALITY

Course Description

What is the social scientist's role as a public intellectual? This question has been asked for centuries. Changes in today's society are so pervasive and are unfolding so quickly that is difficult to understand them in a comprehensive manner. These transformations are global in nature, but have local consequences and go a long way toward shaping lives at the interpersonal level. As the forces of Western capitalism continue to spread to the far reaches of the planet, newer modes of communication and transportation are connecting disparate cultures more extensively than ever before.

The attempt to comprehend today's society at both the institutional and individual levels has facilitated a renewed interest in the work of social scientists. Their expertise in a range of areas such as politics, economics, and culture has drawn them into the domain of public affairs in a number of ways. Social scientific knowledge is systematically derived, but it also fundamentally interpretive and can shed new light on complex practical questions. Researchers have the ability to examine what appear on the surface to be isolated occurrences and to demonstrate how these are connected to one another and to larger societal changes.

In addition to informing public policy, social scientific work can also involve stepping into the arena of public opinion. This raises the question of the place of social scientific knowledge in relation to the perspectives of members of the broader population in democratically organized societies. Is the goal of social inquiry in this setting to influence the directions of popular sentiment, or is it to provide assessments of the social world that are limited in their persuasive appeal but enlightening to those who may seek them out on their own?

Although political and economic institutions continue to influence the course of academic knowledge, opportunities remain for social scientist to act independently of these constraints and approach their work as public intellectuals.

Course Objectives

A main objective of this class is to familiarize students with ideas, concepts, and relations of social sciences and public intellectuality. The seminar is designed to give students exposure to

interdisciplinary research and to show them how approaches to the same topic differ between disciplines. Another goal of the class is to teach students to analyze scientific papers critically. Active class participation is essential to the success of the seminar and will be encouraged by contrasting findings from scientific research with the students' own intuition.

Course Requirements

This seminar is a two-unit class that meets once a week for two hours at a time. The seminar is going to be graded only **Credit** or **No Credit**. Two-unit classes require less work than four-unit classes, so you can sign up, earn a couple of extra units, and learn about something completely different from your major or minor. The class is open to all students from any major. Students in economics, history, sociology, philosophy, communication and journalism, and international relations are especially welcomed. There is NO prerequisite for the class.

Participation: The Class will meet **2 hours each week in a seminar format**. Active, effective contribution to seminar discussion is the most important expectation of participation in the course.

Each session will cover one theme as per the syllabus of the course. Students will be encouraged to participate actively in the discussion. Students are expected to read the materials. There will be no control of the readings, but it is assumed that the readings included in the syllabus will help considerably the understanding of the subject, thus the elaboration of the papers and the participation in the discussion in class.

In this class, we will use Charles F. Gattone's recent book *The Social Scientist as Public Intellectual: Critical Reflections in a Changing World* to look at findings from economics, history, psychology and sociology about the role of intellectual life in the 21st century. In addition, students are expected to read papers that are going to be posted on the seminar website and will complement the readings in the book.

Grading:

There are two requirements to pass this class: *Reading* and *Talking*.

Each student will prepare two presentations. Students are completely free to organize their talk from different perspectives to help them improve their creative and original thinking.

❖ 1st Presentation: *15-minute Talk*

Each student will do a small scale presentation, which cannot exceed 15 minutes. This presentation will include the analysis of a scientific paper critically.

❖ 2nd Presentation: *30-minute Talk*

Each student will do a large- scale presentation, which will be around 30-45 minutes. This presentation will include the overall views of the students regarding the public intellectuality and the scientists' role in the new century.

The students may also be inspired by any sentence or paragraph appears in the books, press, etc. Students, in this case, present their ideas based on the arguments that they are interested in.

Selected Readings (going to be posted on the seminar website)

- [1] Public Intellectuals and Civil Society
http://research.yale.edu/ccs/research/working-papers/alex_pubIntCivSoc.pdf
- [2] **Becker, George.** "Two Developments in the Rise of the Modern Intellectual." *The School Review*, August 1979, 87(4), pp. 398-412.
- [3] **Bronowski, J.** "A Twentieth Century Image of Man." *Leonardo*, Spring 1974, 7(2), pp. 117-21.
- [4] **Cournand, André.** "The Code of the Scientist and Its Relationship to Ethics." *Science*, November 1977, 198(4318), pp. 699-705.
- [5] **Eidelberg, Paul.** "Intellectual and Moral Anarchy in American Society." *The Review of Politics*, January 1970, 32(1), pp. 32-50.
- [6] **Graff, Gerald; Lacapra, Dominick; Robbins, Bruce; Aimone, Joseph O.; Short, Bryan C.; Miller, J. H.; Hassan, Ihab; and Mignolo, Walter D.** "Today, Tomorrow: The Intellectual in the Academy and in Society." *PMLA*, October 1997, 112(5), pp. 1132-41.
- [7] **Ihde, Aaron J.** "Responsibility of the Scientist to Society." *The Scientific Monthly*, November 1953, 77(5), pp. 244-49.
- [8] **Kadushin, Charles; Hover, Julie and Tichy, Monique.** "How and Where to Find Intellectual Elite in the United States." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Spring 1971, 35(1), pp. 1-18.
- [9] **Madsen, David.** "The Scholar, the Scientist, and Society: Unifying the Intellectual Community." *The Journal of Higher Education*, February 1967, 38(2), pp. 96-101.

- [10] **Mora, Jose F.** "The Intellectual in Contemporary Society." *Ethics*, January 1959, 69(2), pp. 94-101.
- [11] **Park, Robert E.** "Missions and the Modern World." *The American Journal of Sociology*, November 1944, 50(3), pp. 177-83.
- [12] **Zilsel, Edgar.** "The Sociological Roots of Science." *Social Studies of Science*, December 2000, 30(6), pp. 935-49.
- [13] **Whitney, Vincent H.** "Science, Government, and Society." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January 1960, 327, pp. 50-58.