COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to know something? What are the different types of knowledge and what distinguishes them from one another? What counts as fact vs. opinion vs. belief and so on; who gets to decide and under what conditions? How is knowledge produced and how does it gain traction? How does the source and type of knowledge interact with socio-political-cultural constructs and systems of power and, in turn, how can “knowledge” be used to produce and/or perpetuate power and privilege or to empower those who are marginalized? Finally, how does what we do in SESP and at Northwestern as both consumers and producers of knowledge fit within the landscape of these questions?

In this course students will explore these and other questions to gain insight into the social production, distribution, consumption, interpretation, and operationalization of “knowledge.” Using primarily seminar-style discussion, the first portion of the course focuses on building and analyzing theoretical frameworks and applied texts in order to generate a working understanding of “knowledge” in its myriad forms. Among our goals for the first portion of the course is to tie theoretical, academic, and “folk” knowledges to everyday experiences and the world around us writ large. The second portion of the class will welcome members of the SESP faculty community to present on their research, which we will then work to bring into conversation with our generated frameworks regarding the sources, types, and implications of knowledge.

Fundamental to the course is developing the ability to cultivate an awareness of one’s own “baggage” (i.e. cognitive frameworks, beliefs and meaning systems, ideologies, knowledge in all its forms, analytic lens, etc.) and to try and understand how our own lenses shape the ways in which we see (or don’t see) things and how we interpret and make meaning out of the world around us. We will think deeply about the processes involved in the construction of knowledge and what it means to “know” something. We will also strive to bracket our own lenses, as much as possible, so as to understand “other” meaning systems and points of view. This can
often prove highly challenging, particularly when we encounter bodies of knowledge and systems of meaning that conflict with, contradict, and emotionally challenge our own deeply held ideas and identities. While full, unfettered relativism is impossible, these skills of self-awareness and perspective taking are essential components of social science, valuable for good and responsible citizenship, and will serve you well throughout your academic and professional life.

Required Texts and Other Potential Course Costs
There are no textbooks required for this course and no anticipated financial costs. All assigned readings will be available in ereserves, as ebooks, or posted on Canvas.

COURSE COMPONENTS
This course has a heavy workload and is writing intensive. You should be prepared to spend a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of class engaged in class preparation, reading, and writing. For the group project you will be given some time to meet with your group during class, however, you should expect to do the bulk of that work outside of class and plan to meet with your group as much as needed.

Critical Engagement Journal (67.5 total points):
During the course you are required to keep a weekly journal on Canvas - you must complete a total of 9/10 possible entries. You are free to select any week other than weeks 1 and 10 as a “skip” week. The entries for weeks 1 and 10 are required and will have slightly different instructions, which you will receive in class prior to each entry.

The journal entries for weeks 2 through 9 have 2 components each week:

1. By no later than 10:00 PM on the night before class you must post a minimum of 2 questions or analytic points about the session’s assigned readings. Your questions and/or analytic comments will be used to help inform the day’s discussion and, as such, should reflect deep and critical engagement with the one or more of the day’s assigned texts. These must be submitted by 10:00 PM on Mondays and Wednesday (the night before each class) so that we have sufficient time to look through your posts prior to class. You should submit these posts by the due date even if you will not be in class on a given day.

   During weeks 5 through 8 when we have a guest speaker, you will be given instructions regarding how to approach your questions/analytic posts in preparation for speaker visits.

2. By no later than 10:00 PM each Sunday you must post an integrating analytic essay. These entries should be a minimum of 1 page, single-spaced, and can be as long as you need them to be. These integrating pieces are intended as a space for you to extend your thinking to continue to work through and analyze readings and for you to bring the ideas raised in the readings and in-class discussions into conversation with personal experiences, familiar social contexts, current events, and so on. Finally, the journal also is a space to reflect on feelings, thoughts, questions, concerns, etc. that arise in reaction to the course material and class discussion.
These pieces should be analytic, critical, and, when appropriate, reflective in nature. They should not be a summary of the readings and class discussion. You should integrate ideas from the texts, as needed, in your own words, and well as to cite our class discussions. Finally, you are encouraged to be bold and take risks in your thinking.

Since these pieces are intended to provide space for you to integrate the full week’s work, they cannot be turned in earlier than Thursday afternoon/evening. You are always encouraged to take time to complete the assignment so that you have sufficient time to write, reflect, and revise prior to submitting.

**Individual Analytic Paper (7.5 points):**
The Individual Analytic Paper asks you to select at least 3 of the theories/models for thinking about and understanding knowledge that we have worked with during the first 4 weeks of the course and apply them to analyze 1) a real world situation that is currently or has recently been in the news, 2) a past or present political or social justice issue, 3) an organization or population with an identifiable “group-think,” 4) a personal experience. The paper should be approximately 3-5 pages, single-spaced, and is due by 8:00 AM on Monday, February 3rd.

The paper is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your mastery of course concepts and to apply them to further your understanding of a novel context. Additional details for this assignment will be provided in class during Week 3 of the quarter.

Following submission of your Individual Analytic Paper, each student will meet individually with Prof. Shapiro to talk through their work and receive feedback. These meetings are required and will be your only opportunity to receive feedback on this assignment.

**Group Project/Presentation (10 points):**
The production and communication of knowledge can take many forms and each approach has both costs and benefits. The group project/presentation will ask you to engage in a similar process to the individual analytic paper, but to analyze and construct your knowledge collectively and to communicate in a form other than writing. Each group will have some leeway in determining the mode by which it chooses to communicate its ideas. Additional details for the group project/presentation will be given in class. Groups will be determined the 5th week of the quarter and each group will meet with Prof. Shapiro to discuss their plans of the project/presentation. Group presentations will take place in class on March 10th and 12th.

**Class Contribution (15 points):**
A primary component of this course is discussion. Your full, active, and high-quality participation is expected throughout the course. This means that you are expected to come to class having completed the readings and assignments, and prepared to actively contribute to the full class and group discussions with substantive and meaningful engagement. Given that we are a large class, we will often break out into smaller groups so to provide more opportunities for all students to actively participate.
For each week of the course you will be given feedback on your class contribution to help you to gauge how the instructors are perceiving your participation. Canvas does not allow for -/✓/+ inputs, so numerical equivalents will be entered for each of these. The following rubric represents the outcomes that will inform class contribution feedback.

Your contributions over the course of the quarter will collectively inform your class contribution grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Contribution</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual participated at a high level, consistently throughout course of discussions. Contributions were substantive and meaningful and helped to move the conversation forward. There was strong evidence of deep thought and critical engagement with the material.</td>
<td>3 (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual actively participated. Participation made some but limited contribution to moving dialogue forward. Some evidence of deep thought and critical engagement with the material.</td>
<td>2 (✓)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual’s participation was either highly limited and/or comments were not reflective of deep thought and critical engagement with the material. Comments not reflective of student having read and engaged with the texts.</td>
<td>1 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual was present for discussion but did not participation</td>
<td>0.5 (-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there is a reason why fulfilling any element of the active participation requirement for this course is a problem for you, please speak with Prof. Shapiro as soon as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

**Extra Credit:**

If you choose to not skip a week of your journal and complete all 10 weeks of the journal, you can receive up to ½ credit for each component of the “extra” week, for a total of 3.5 potential extra credit points. These points will be added to your course point total at the end of the quarter.
Summary of Assignments and Points:
Point values and assignments may be adjusted at the discretion of Prof. Shapiro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal Week 1</td>
<td>6.5 (1.5 + 5)</td>
<td>Wed 1-8 by 10:00 PM and Sunday 1-12 by 10:00PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Weeks 2-9</td>
<td>56 (1.5 + 1.5 + 4 each week)</td>
<td>Each week on Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday by 10:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Analytic Paper</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Mon, February 3rd by 8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project/Presentations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 10th and Thursday, March 12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Week 10: Final Reflection</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friday, March 13th by 8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Contributions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSE POLICIES
Due Dates, Grading, & Academic Rigor:
Grading standards for the course are high and grading is absolute rather than relative (that is, you are being assessed based on individual growth and mastery of content rather than relative to performance of others in the course). Success in the class will require considerable investment of time and energy, attention to detail, and careful integration of feedback. There are a large number of assignments over the course of the quarter, so you have many opportunities to ensure a strong performance in the course.

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are to be submitted on Canvas. Assignments are due by the time given on the course calendar. Due dates are selected so as to give you the maximum amount of time to complete work, as well as receive necessary feedback before class sessions and/or moving on to subsequent assignments. Please note that this means that written assignments are not due on class dates.

Late assignments will bring down your grade on the given assignment and frequent late assignments will also affect your class contribution grade. Assignments more than 4 days late will not be accepted. Extensions will be granted only with ample notice and under documented, extraordinary circumstances. If you anticipate that completing any of the course requirements will be problematic for you, please speak with me as soon as possible.
to share your concerns and so that we may work together to create a solution that will enable you to succeed in the course.

The tentative grading scale for the course is below. The scale may be adjusted at the discretion of Prof. Shapiro.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Total:</th>
<th>Letter Grade Equivalent:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 70</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formatting of Assignments:**
- All turned-in written work must be typed and in 12 pt Times New Roman or a similar font and should be submitted in .doc or .docx formats. All assignments are single-spaced, unless otherwise specified.
- Assignments submitted in formats other than .doc or .docx will not be read and will be counted as late.
- If/when you quote from a text in your writing, please be sure to cite using the name of the author and page number.
- Unless otherwise specified, all work is to be uploaded to the course Canvas site. Occasionally uploads to Canvas fail – be sure to retain a copy of your assignments for your records.

**Attendance & Late Policy:**
Attendance at this course is required.
- You are allowed two absences from class for whatever reason - although you are free to do so, you do not need to share with me the reason for your absence.
  - A third absence for whatever reason will result in the lowering of your total class participation grade by 1/3 of a letter grade
  - A fourth absence will result in the lowering of your final course grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.
Five or more absences will be handled on an individual basis and may result in failure of the course.

- If you are going to miss class for whatever reason please email Prof. Shapiro at least 1 hour before class so that we can notify your group of your absence.
- Exceptions to the attendance policy will only be considered under documented emergency circumstances. In general, additional absences from class will not be excused.
- Excessive late arrivals (3 late arrivals to class of more than 10 minutes) will be counted as an absence.

If you must miss class it is assumed that you will be in touch with your classmates so that you are caught up on what you missed. Prof. Shapiro and/or Michael will be happy to meet with you following an absence but only after you have conferred with a classmate on what you missed.

**Communication Policy:**
I will make every attempt to respond to your emails within 24 hours. If you do not get a response from me within 24 hours please send me a follow-up email – it is possible that I inadvertently missed your email.

I will be using email and Canvas announcement. I assume that you will be regularly checking email and the course Canvas site.

**Writing Support:**
This course is writing intensive. You will be doing a great deal of writing. Quality of writing is important on both individual and group assignments. The construction of an effective argument is predicated on the ability to communicate compellingly. You will be getting considerable, substantive feedback on both your writing (both content and the writing itself, as needed) throughout the course. This feedback is intended to support your learning and there is the assumption that you will apply feedback, as appropriate, to grow throughout the quarter.

Prof. Shapiro will be happy to meet with you at any time throughout the quarter to provide writing support and if you feel that you need additional assistance or support, you are encouraged you to visit the Northwestern University Writing Center (www.writing.northwestern.edu).

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Any student with a disability requesting accommodations must register with Services for Students with Disabilities (ssd@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and request an SSD accommodation notification for his/her professor, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

**School of Education and Social Policy Academic Integrity Statement**
Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic guide". All papers submitted for
credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit:
http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html