

SEMINAR IN SOCIAL SCIENCES
Bluefield State College
SOSC 490—SPRING 2014
CRN: 20040 & 20800
IVNWE
Sections: 001 & 003

Colin S. Cavell, Ph.D.

Class: W: 5:00 p.m.-7:50 p.m. [17:00 – 19:50]

Office Hours: TBA

VOICE: 304.327.4034 (W)

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512-924-2364 (M)

The capstone course for social science majors assesses competence in social science Core courses and in the area of specialization through a variety of assignments such as book critique, research paper, and content exam. PR: Social Science major and senior standing.

Grading Policy: 20% for Attendance & Participation*; 20% for the Class Presentation; 20% for the Midterm Exam; 20% for the Research Paper; and 20% for the Final Exam. A Guidelines sheet will be distributed outlining the requirements for your Class Presentation and for your Research Paper.

Grading Scale: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 0-59=F. These numerical scores correspond to the following evaluations: “A” = Excellent; “B” = Good; “C” = Satisfactory (NOTE: A grade of “C” or better is required in major courses); “D” = Poor (passing, except in major courses); “F” = Earned Failure (removed only by repeating the course; upon successfully passing the course, the first grade is “excluded” from grade point average. The second grade is “included” in the recalculation of the grade point average); and “I” = Incomplete.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of SOSC 490, students should be able to read and provide an immanent critique of texts; to articulate arguments and examine their flaws; be familiar with the basics of logical, ethical, and dialectical reasoning; understand the difference between epistemology and ontology; be able to differentiate between social science and natural sciences and humanities; be familiar with essays, both pro and con, regarding various theoretical perspectives and methodologies of the social sciences; differentiate between scientific knowledge and unscientific, pseudoscientific, revelatory, theological, or spiritual knowledge; differentiate between positivist and interpretivist social scientific methods; understand the necessity for valid systematically gathered measurable evidence and plausibility of claims subject to specific principles of reasoning; differentiate between logical, semantic, systemic, and empirical knowledge; understand the difference between the *what, where and when* of empirical versus the *how and why* of qualitative research and testing; be able to propose hypotheses as explanations of phenomena and design experimental studies to test such hypotheses based upon prior predictions derived from them; be able to document, archive, and make available all data and methodology(ies) to be scrutinized by others in order to test validity and reproduce claimed results; understand the differences between secular and theistic forms of living; understand the historical evolution of human culture, including struggles over rights and responsibilities; be familiar with the horrendous tragedies as well as accomplishments of human social formations; empathize with the plight of all who have struggled to overcome adversity in their quest for liberation; understand the effects of race, gender, class and other divisions on society and the effect of constitutional and legal provisions to either enhance or dissipate such divisions; articulate some conception of human behavior and adopt a stance towards it; and be able to envision a defensible explanation of reality.

Academic Integrity Policy: Academic integrity is expected of all students. This means that all work for this class must be undertaken and completed by you alone without collaboration from others. Any dishonesty in the performance of course work, such as plagiarism or cheating in other forms, will be reported. In the event the student is charged with some form of dishonesty, the Student Discipline Policy will be followed. The full text of the BSC Academic Honesty Policy can be found at: <http://www.bluefieldstate.edu/academics/academic-honesty-and-proctoring>. In addition, students should be aware that research paper assignments must be submitted to [Turnitin](#) for the purpose of grading and checking for plagiarism. Submitted assignments will be included in the BSC dedicated database of assignments at Turnitin.

Attendance Policy*: Attendance in class is mandatory. It is the student’s responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each day of class; failure to sign the attendance sheet—even if in attendance—will be counted as an absence. “When the number of clock hours of willful absences exceeds the number of semester hours of credit, the instructor will notify the Registrar that the student has exceeded the permissible number of absences and should be withdrawn from class.” Students with Excused Absences must submit to me a hard copy of the campus publication *The Bulletin* announcing your allowed absence in order to get credit for the day(s) of your absence. “It is the responsibility of the student

to...provide supporting documents for institutional and unavoidable absences” (*Bluefield State College Academic Catalog 2012-2014*, p. 55). As well, you are expected to follow the syllabus and accordingly be prepared for each day’s class. This means that you must read the pre-assigned readings before class so that you will be prepared to discuss and debate in class the subject matter scheduled for that day and answer questions related to the issues being covered.

* Absence from class may be made up by preparing a **two-page, typed** (i.e. using maximum 12 point font size and maximum double-spaced text with one-inch margin on all sides), **summary** on the missed material scheduled to be covered the day(s) of your absence. The summary must be in your own words and must **not** be copied material from the text(s), the internet, or any other source(s). **All summaries must be turned in to me by the last day of classes if you want credit for your absences.**

Cell Phone Policy:

Turn off all cell phones during class or put on vibration. If you absolutely must answer your phone, leave the classroom before answering your phone and return only after you have completed your conversation.

Withdrawal Policy: Academic Withdrawal from the course prior to the deadline date for withdrawal as published within the academic calendar is accomplished by securing a Change In Schedule form and having it signed by appropriate persons. Blank copies of the change in schedule form are available in the offices of the Registrar, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean and the advisor. After obtaining the required signatures, the student must submit, prior to the deadline date, the change in schedule form to the Office of the Registrar.

Disability Services Statement: BSC is committed to full inclusion of all students. Students who, by nature of a **documented disability**, require classroom, equipment, testing or assignment accommodations should contact the Student Support Services at 304.327.4227 to request accommodations before the start of the semester. Your immediate attention to these arrangements is necessary to assure a positive learning experience.

Free Tutoring Services Available: BSC offers **free online tutoring for all BSC students** in the following subjects: Math; Accounting, Managerial; Accounting, Financial; Writing (all subjects); Grammar; Microeconomics; Macroeconomics; Statistics; Spanish. Chemistry, etc. **This service is free and available 24 hours a day to all BSC students.** Go to <http://www.smarthinking.com/> and follow these instructions.

Required Texts:

Backhouse, Roger E. and Philippe Fontaine. 2010. *The History of the Social Sciences since 1945*. Cambridge University Press. London: UK. [ISBN-10: 0521717760; ISBN-13: 978-0521717762], 272 pages.

*****This class is web-enhanced and students will be able to access supplemental materials on the BSC BlackBoard website, including chapter outlines, chapter PowerPoint summaries, etc.*****

Mandatory LiveText Assessment Statement:

"An active LiveText account is a required resource for this course because at least one assignment *must* be submitted electronically using this online platform. LiveText is used by Bluefield State to demonstrate the quality of our academic programs, and to improve teaching and learning. As a student, you have the option to use your account for secure online storage of your academic work, and to create digital documents such as electronic portfolios or reflective journals, which can be shared with prospective employers or other audiences.

If you do not already have a LiveText account, one will be emailed to your Bluefield State email account. You will be expected to activate the account immediately. LiveText will be a required resource in many different courses throughout your program, and you can use the same account for any course that requires it for a full five years, so **you only need one account**. If you already have an active LiveText account, you do not need another one. After five years you can extend your membership if you continue to need it for additional coursework or would like to maintain it for your personal use."

Jan. 20 [Monday]: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (College Closed)

January 21 [Tuesday]: Classes begin for Spring 2014 Semester

Jan. 22 [Wednesday]: Introduction to Seminar in Social Sciences: Main Themes

Main Themes: Nature of the social sciences, various methodologies

Explain Syllabus: Go over class requirements, required books, class presentation, research paper, midterm and final exams.

Readings: Backhouse and Fontaine, Preface ix-x; Ch. 1 “Introduction”, pp. 1-15

Jan. 29 [Wednesday]: Social Science and Its Methods

Readings: Pearson, *Social Science and Its Methods* (in Selected Readings on course BlackBoard page), Part I, Ch. 1 “Social Science and Its Methods”, pp. 1-24

Feb. 5 [Wednesday]: Psychology: social science that studies mental functions and behaviors

Readings: Backhouse and Fontaine, Ch. 2 “Psychology”, pp. 16-37

Feb. 12 [Wednesday]: Economics: social science that analyzes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services

Readings: Backhouse and Fontaine, Ch. 3 “Economics”, pp. 38-70

Feb. 19 [Wednesday]: Political Science: social science concerned with the study of the state, nation, government, and politics and policies of government

Readings: Backhouse and Fontaine, Ch. 4 “Political Science”, pp. 71-101

Feb. 26 [Wednesday]: Sociology: social science that studies human social behavior and its origins, development, organizations, and institutions

Readings: Backhouse and Fontaine, Ch. 5 “Sociology”, pp. 102-135

Mar. 5 [Wednesday]: History: social scientific study of the past, specifically how it relates to humans

Readings: Backhouse and Fontaine, Ch. 8 “Towards a History of the Social Sciences”, pp. 184-233; and (in Selected Readings on course BlackBoard page) Pearson, *Social Science and Its Methods*, Appendix “Historical Roots of Social Science”, pp. 25-27

Mar. 10-14: MIDTERM EXAM [online]

Mar. 17: Mid-Semester grades due to Registrar

Mar. 17-21: Spring Break (No Classes)

Mar. 26 [Wednesday]: Social Sciences: a group of academic disciplines that study human aspects of the world; they diverge from the arts and humanities in that the social sciences tend to emphasize the use of the scientific method in the study of humanity, including quantitative and qualitative methods

Readings: (In Selected Readings on course BlackBoard page) Wikipedia, “List of social sciences”; “H-Net: Discussion Networks”

Apr. 2 [Wednesday]: In-Class Presentations Begin

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

Apr. 9 [Wednesday]: In-Class Presentations (cont'd.)

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

Apr. 16 [Wednesday]: In-Class Presentations (cont'd.)

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

Apr. 23 [Wednesday]: [**Research Papers Due**] (Research Papers must be submitted today); In-Class Presentations (cont'd.)

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

Assignment: Research Papers Due today. Hand in a hard copy of your Research Papers to me in class and upload an electronic copy to Turnitin

Apr. 30 [Wednesday]: [**In-Class Presentations due.**] In-Class Presentations (cont'd.)

Assignment: In-Class Presentations Due today. Make sure you have completed your in-class presentation. See Presentation Guidelines.

May 7 [Wednesday]: Institutional Support for the Social Sciences

Readings: In Selected Readings on course BlackBoard page, "Social Science Research Council"

May 9: (Last day of classes. All course work MUST be completed by this date. No submissions will be accepted after this date.

May 12-16: FINAL EXAM [online]

May 19: Final grades due to Registrar electronically