

SEMINAR IN SOCIAL SCIENCES
Bluefield State College
SOSC 490—SPRING 2016
CRN: 20104 & 20106
IVNWE
Sections: 001 & 002

Colin S. Cavell, Ph.D.

Class: M 4:00 p.m.-6:50 p.m. [16:00 – 18:50]

Office Hours: TBA

VOICE: 304.327.4034 (W)

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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 In-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.

Institutional Learning Outcomes for General Studies:

ILO1: Communication [AAC&U WRITTEN AND AAC&U ORAL COMMUNICATION]

Students will communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

ILO2: Information Literacy [AAC&U INFORMATION LITERACY]

Students will select appropriate resources, prioritize information in terms of relevance and reliability, question and evaluate the complexity of the information environment, and use information in an ethical manner.

ILO5: Social, Artistic, and Cultural Literacy [AAC&U GLOBAL LEARNING AND AAC&U CIVIC ENGAGEMENT]

Students will analyze and compare diverse social and cultural patterns, texts, and performances and will evaluate them from a global perspective.

ILO6: Scientific Literacy [AAC&U INQUIRY AND ANALYSIS]

Students will understand and apply scientific concepts and develop science inquiry and research skills.

ILO7: Critical and Ethical Reasoning [AAC&U CRITICAL THINKING AND AAC&U ETHICAL REASONING]

Students will interpret, analyze, and construct ethical arguments.

(effective August 8, 2013)

Program Learning Outcomes:

PO2: Understand and/or apply basic knowledge of principles and methods found in the social sciences disciplines.

PO3: Communicate effectively within a social science area of concentration.

PO4: Critique, analyze, and assess topics, ideas, and/or sources within the social sciences disciplines.

PO5: Evaluate, select, and apply an appropriate research methodology in the social sciences. PO6: Apply ethics across the social science disciplines.

Course Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of SOSC 490, students should:

CLO1: be able to read and provide an immanent critique of texts;

CLO2: be able to articulate arguments and examine their flaws;

CLO3: be familiar with the basics of logical, ethical, and dialectical reasoning;

CLO4: understand the difference between epistemology and ontology;

CLO5: be able to differentiate between social science and natural sciences and humanities;
 CLO6: be familiar with essays, both pro and con, regarding various theoretical perspectives and methodologies of the social sciences;
 CLO7: be able to differentiate between scientific knowledge and unscientific, pseudoscientific, revelatory, theological, or spiritual knowledge;
 CLO8: be able to differentiate between positivist and interpretivist social scientific methods;
 CLO9: understand the necessity for valid systematically gathered measurable evidence and plausibility of claims subject to specific principles of reasoning;
 CLO10: be able to differentiate between logical, semantic, systemic, and empirical knowledge;
 CLO11: understand the difference between the *what, where and when* of empirical versus the *how and why* of qualitative research and testing;
 CLO12: be able to propose hypotheses as explanations of phenomena and design experimental studies to test such hypotheses based upon prior predictions derived from them;
 CLO13: 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;
 CLO14: understand the differences between secular and theistic forms of living;
 CLO15: understand the historical evolution of human culture, including struggles over rights and responsibilities, the horrendous tragedies as well as numerous 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;
 CLO16: be able to envision a defensible explanation of reality;
 CLO17: be able to articulate, either orally or in writing, a coherent, logical, and critically persuasive argument, embodying a defensible conception of human freedom, on a designated topic relating to the social sciences.

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:

Donovan, Todd and Kenneth Hoover. 2014. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking, Eleventh Edition*. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. Boston, MA. [ISBN-10: 1-133-60767-5; ISBN-13: 978-1-133-60767-0], 208 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."

— Tracey Anderson, Ed.D., BSC Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, 2013

Jan. 18 [Monday]: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (College closed)

January 19 [Tuesday]: Classes begin for Spring 2016 Semester

Jan. 25 [Monday]: 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.

Feb. 1 [Monday]: 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. 8 [Monday]: Psychology: social science that studies mental functions and behaviors

Readings: Donovan & Hoover, Ch. 1 "Thinking Scientifically", pp. 1-11

Feb. 15 [Monday]: Economics: social science that analyzes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services

Readings: Donovan & Hoover, Ch. 2 "The Elements of Science", pp. 12-39

Feb. 22 [Monday]: Political Science: social science concerned with the study of the state, nation, government, and politics and policies of government

Readings: Donovan & Hoover, Ch. 3 “Strategies”, pp. 40-59

Feb. 29 [Monday]: Sociology: social science that studies human social behavior and its origins, development, organizations, and institutions

Readings: Donovan & Hoover, Ch. 4 “Refinements”, pp. 60-79

Mar. 7 [Monday]: History: social scientific study of the past, specifically how it relates to humans

Readings: Donovan & Hoover, Ch. 5 “Measuring Variables and Relationships”, pp. 80-121

Mar. 14 [Monday]: History: social scientific study of the past, specifically how it relates to humans

Readings: (In Selected Readings on course BlackBoard page)_Pearson, *Social Science and Its Methods*, Appendix “Historical Roots of Social Science”, pp. 25-27

Mar. 8-13: Midterm Exam [Click on Quizzes and then on “Midterm Exam”. You will have 120 minutes to complete the exam and only one attempt. You must complete the Midterm Exam by 11:55 p.m. on March 13, 2016.]

Mar. 14: Mid-Semester grades due to Registrar

Mar. 14-18: Spring Break (no classes; college closed)

Mar. 21 [Monday]: [Guest Lecturers Dr. Sean Connolly and Dr. Rodney Montague] “The Differences Between the Humanities and the Social Sciences”

Readings: (In Selected Readings on course BlackBoard page) University of Idaho, ISEM 101 Integrative Seminars: “The Humanities and the Social Sciences: Contrasting Approaches”

Mar. 28 [Monday]: 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. 4 [Monday]: In-Class Presentations Begin

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

Apr. 8: Last Day to Withdraw from course/college with a grade of "W"

Apr. 11 [Monday]: In-Class Presentations (cont’d.)

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

Apr. 18 [Monday]: In-Class Presentations (cont’d.)

Assignment: Critique in-class student presentations

April 24 [Sunday]: [Research Papers Due]

Assignment: Research Papers Due today. Submit a copy of your Research Papers to Turnitin. Click on the Turnitin button on the course BlackBoard page for submission instructions. As well, you must submit a hard copy of your Research Paper to me in class. Also, send an electronic copy to me by email as a Microsoft Word attachment to ccavell@bluefieldstate.edu or to the course BlackBoard page.

Apr. 25 [Monday]: [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 2 [Monday]: Institutional Support for the Social Sciences

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

May 6: [Friday] (Last day of classes. All course work MUST be completed by this date. No submissions will be accepted after this date.

May 6-15: Final Exam [Click on Quizzes and then on "Final Exam". You will have 120 minutes to complete the exam and only one attempt. You must complete the Final Exam by 11:55 p.m. on May 15, 2016.]

May 16 [Monday]: Final grades due to Registrar by 12:00 Noon electronically.