Sociology 433

Wealth, Status and Power

Instructor: Tom Semm Office: NH211

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Course Meets:

Tuesday/Thursday 11-12:15

Office Hours:

Tuesday/Thursday 2-3PM

**Required Text**:

Bacevich, Anthony. The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War.(Updated)

Chomsky, Noam. Profit Over People.

Johnson, Chalmers. The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic.

Klein, Naomi**.** Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism.

Nace, Ted. Gangs of America: The Rise of Corporate Power and the Disabling of Democracy.

Reich, Robert. Aftershock: The Next Economy and America’s Future.

Roy, Arundhati. Walking With the Comrades

**Course Description**:

This course examines how concentrated wealth and power have shaped both United States and global society. The first part of the course will examine how increasing inequality in wealth and income and the rise of corporate monopoly capitalism in the United States have undermined the political system, turning it into an oligarchy. The second part of the course will examine how the same phenomena, increasing wealth and income and global monopoly capitalism have created a global system of governance, the goal of which is "profit over people." And the third part of the course will examine Chalmers Johnson's theory of the American Empire. Johnson argues that the United States is an empire like the Roman Empire and the British Empire, but unlike those two empires, it rules through an empire of bases. Johnson argues though that like previous empires it will collapse, therefore the title of his book, The Sorrows of Empire.

**Course Goals**:

1. The students should understand how the concepts of wealth, status and power function within the discipline of sociology.

2. The students should understand the relationship between increasing inequality and the concentration of power in American society and globally.

3. The students should have a better understanding of how wealth and power shape their life experience.

**Evaluation Process**:

Exams. There will be three exams, each exam will be worth one hundred (100) points. The exams will be based on the lectures, the readings, in-class videos and out of class assignments. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and matching. See Course Schedule for day and date. (Scantron 882).

Quizzes. I will give occasional quizzes to evaluate student progress and to encourage students to keep up with the reading assignments. Bring Scantron 815 (small green) to every class.

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities for extra credit.

**Class Conduct**

I will treat you as adults and with respect, and I expect to be treated likewise. From my point of view, disrespect includes students engaging in private conversations, reading the Daily Aztec, and non-class related e-activity during class. I will give one polite warning, but if the activity continues, I will deduct enough points that the student will fail the course.

Class Schedule:

Date Topics Reading Assignments

Week 1 Introduction

Week 2 Inequality in U.S. Reich: Intro, Part I (1 thru 5)

Week 3 Downward Mobility Reich: Part I (6 thru 11)

and Poverty Nace: Ch 1, 4, 5

Week 4 Power in the U.S. Nace: Ch 7, 11, 12

Week 5 **Exam #1**

Week 6 Global Inequality Klein: Intro, Part I

Nace: Ch 13, 16

Week 7 Neoliberal Globalization Chomsky: Intro, Ch I

Week 8 Global Power Arrangements Klein: Part II; Roy: Intro Ch 1, 2

Week 9 **Exam #2**

Week 10 Global Theories of Power Roy: Ch 3, 4

Week 11 **Spring Break**

Week 12 American Empire Johnson: Chapters Prologue and 1

Bacevich: Preface, Intro and Ch 1

Week 13 **Exam #3**

Week 14 American Empire Johnson: Chapters 2 and 3

Bacevich, Chapters 2.3 and 4

Week 15 Resistance to Power Johnson: Chapters 4, 5, and 6

Bacevich: Chapters 5, 6 and 7

Week 16 **Exam #4**  Johnson: Chapters 7, 8, and 9

Bacevich: Chapters 8, 9

Final Grade: Total points and grade average will be posted on Blackboard.

A 92.5%-up B+ 87.5%-89.4% C+ 77.5%-79.4% F <60%

A- 89.5%-92.4% B 82.5-87.4 C 69.5%-77.4%

B- 79.5%-82.4% D <69.4%