Course Syllabus

Course Title: “Principles of Sociology: Foundations and Qualitative Methods”

Name of the instructor: KONIORDOS Sokratis

Type of Class Arrangement (Time of the course): Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 08:30-12:00.

Course description including objectives:
This course introduces students to the field of sociology. In the process of doing so you shall be surveying social theories as well as empirical studies, and you will be acquiring the sociological imagination, i.e. the ability to think “away” from your own personal circumstances so that you may connect your experience with those of others and larger social structures too. This will help you see that the world we so often take for granted is actually socially constructed. The idea is to become aware of the social contexts and circumstances that both constrain us but also empower us to act. The course covers a set of diverse and often controversial social issues and concerns, from interactions between individuals to social inequalities, organizations, or globalization. Further to this it presents and discusses the various themes in relation to a step by step outlining of sociological research methods of inquiry, particularly qualitative ones.

The course’s main objectives are twofold.

One, to introduce students to the main theories and currents of sociology and engage them in exploring essential aspects of sociology: in particular to acquaint them with its subject matter and perspectives; present its basic tenets and areas of interest, and make them aware in the ways that may be used to meaningfully construe contemporary social processes.

Two, probe into the methods sociological research unfolds: (i) charting the kind of questions sociologists ask, (ii) outlining the steps of the research process and research design, (iii) identify appropriate research methods (qualitative, quantitative, mixed), in particularly (iv) delineate qualitative research methods (ethnographic, content analysis, focus groups, other), and (v) explore the role of theory both for the
collection and interpretation of empirical data. The aim is to do so by means of deciphering well-known examples of sociological research.

In terms of structure,

- The course is organized around 12 themes (or topics). It also includes a concluding part. The course content unfolds over the 28 hours teaching hours allocated to it.
- Each theme/topic involves a presentation of factual information, a discussion of main ideas and arguments and a probe on specific issues raised by well-established sociologists.
- Also, each topic embraces a methods segment that interacts with the theme of the topic. By way of these segments students are gradually introduced to the modes of sociological inquiry and to the essentials of research methods, particularly qualitative ones.

*Topic or topics for each session:*


   **Focus:** Georg Simmel on metropolis, money and domination. Emile Durkheim on forms of social cohesion, solidarity and anomie.

   - **Steps of the Research Process I: The Research Circle. Defining the Research Question.**


   **Focus:** Steven Lukes on power. Max Weber on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Michel Foucalt on the circulation of power.

   - **Steps of the Research Process II: Reviewing the Literature and Formulating Hypotheses. Further Specifying the Research Question.**


   **Focus:** The Self and Identity: George. H. Mead on the development of self. Richard Jenkins on what is identity.
4. **Social Interaction and Everyday Life.** What is social interaction? The management of impressions in daily life. Rules that guide our communication with others. How do time and space affect our interactions? How the rules of social interaction affect your life? The Internet and social interaction.

   *Focus:* Ervin Goffman on the presentation of self in everyday life.


   **Focus:** The State: Michael Mann on the autonomous power of the state. Charlels Tilly on the role of war in the making of states.


   **Focus:** Albert O. Hirschman on the passions and the interests, Thorstein Veblen on the theory of the leisure class, Karl Polanyi on the self-regulatory economy.


10. **Gender Inequality.** Gender differences: are they due to nature, nurture or both? The role of biology. Gender socialization. The social construction of gender. Findings from non-western cultures. The impact of gender inequalities on social institutions: education, workplace, family, politics. Women and violence. Sexual violence against women: kinds, evidence and interpretation. Explaining gender inequality: functionalist approaches, feminist approaches. How gender inequality affects our lives?

    **Focus:** Mary Holmes on what is gender. Hadas Mandel on the configurations of gender inequality.


    **Focus:** Benedict Anderson on imagined communities. Anthony S. Smith on nations and nationalism. Alejandro Portes on migration, assimilation and transnationalism, Doreen Massey on patterns and processes of international migration.

    - Interpreting the Research Results-linking them to theory and other research. Triangulation, again.

**FOCUS:** Anthony Giddens on globalization and the runaway world. David Harvey on globalization in question.

- Reporting the research findings. Structuring your writing. Issues in academic writing.

13. **Conclusions.** Summing up the course. Advising on the written examination.

*Teaching methods:* Lectures, questions-answers, and in-class discussion.

*Assessment:* Final examination – exam items includes both essay-type questions and multiple choice ones; counts 90% of the course grade. Also, student class participation: joining classes and energetically participating in in-class-discussions; counts 10% of the course grade.

*Required and/or recommended readings:*

**Required textbook:**

**Recommended readings:**