

SOCIOLOGY 476: THE SOCIOLOGY OF MORAL EXPERIENCE

class meeting: Th 9-11:30
seminar room, 1808 Chicago Ave.
office hours: T/Th 2-4 (and by appt.)

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INTRODUCTION

Because the sociology of moral experience is not a staple of the sociological curriculum, some explanation of the topic may be needed. The course is organized around two assumptions. First, it adopts an essentially symbolic interactionist assumption that we are deeply concerned with the meaning of our acts. The second assumption, which is the one around which the course is organized, is that moral evaluation is a central part of what gives acts their meaning. Although some variant of this assumption undergirds much sociological work (for instance in sociological examinations of work, religion, law, deviance, family life, and organizations, to name just a few), the assumption is rarely examined. As sociologists we therefore have not thought very systematically about how moral evaluations, moral training, or vocabularies of motive change from one arena to another. We have not asked how moral evaluations are designed into institutions, how they are taught, or what effect they have. To bring these kinds of questions to the fore, this course will draw on empirical pieces that show what form moral experience takes in a variety of settings as well as on theoretical works that address some of the core questions. The course should be viewed as a collective exploration of a novel topic rather than a comprehensive, synthetic survey of a well established field.

The organization of the course reflects a compromise between two competing principles that might give coherence to the course: processes and concrete locations. We might, for instance, look at moral experience in families, religious groups, war zones, or professions. Or, alternatively, we might focus on how moral thinking is inculcated, how moral violations are punished, or how boundary-making facilitates moral evaluation. Ideally we'd be able to cross-classify processes and settings, but the literature isn't sufficiently developed to permit that.

Class will be devoted to discussions of the reading material, with the objective being to use the assigned readings as raw materials to construct a sociology of moral experience. To that end, we will follow two routines: students will prepare written responses in advance of the class and the instructor will prepare a written summary of the class discussion each week to keep us from rehashing old material and to set the agenda for subsequent classes. A brief written paper proposal will be due in the middle of the quarter and a final paper at the end of the quarter.

CLASS SCHEDULE

April 4 — Introduction to the course. Moral evaluation and boundaries between groups. Readings: Lamont on race in the US and France, Whyte on sex, Beisel on sexuality and class reproduction, Fraser on boundaries and interpretation of need, Heise and Smith-Lovin on evaluation.

April 11 — Temporal and spatial boundaries, shifting situations, and shifting evaluations. Readings: Parsons on the sick role, Waller on war, Goffman on boundaries between situations, Mills on motives, Pendas on the banality of evil, Hacking on interpreting the past.

April 18 — Moral obligations in interpersonal relations and how they arise. Readings: Heimer and Staffen on responsibility to children, Rossi and Rossi on gender and intergenerational helping, Piliavin and Charng on altruism.

April 25 — Organizations, occupations, and work, part 1—moral experience in professional work. Readings: Shapiro (skim much of the first part on lawyers), Parsons on professions, Bosk on errors, Zussman on medical ethics, Baker on tort lawyers.

May 2—no class; paper proposal due in mailbox by 9AM, Monday 5/6/2002.

May 9 — Organizations, occupations, and work, part 2—moving beyond the core professions. Readings: Rees on industrial morality, Shulman on deception (not in packet), Heimer on universalism and particularism, Jackall on managers, Heimer on insurers.

May 16 — Learning about morality. Readings: Swidler on free schools, Gilligan on gender and moral thinking, Selznick on moral development, Mead on the development of the self, Tipton on religion.

May 23 (Th) — Morality and market institutions. Readings: Zelizer on insurance, Zelizer on money, Wolfe on markets (and introduction).

May 30 (Th) — Morality and the state. Readings: Wolfe on states (and rest of book), Lempert and Sanders on justice, law, and “constitutions.”

June 6 (Th) — Toward a sociology of moral experience: revisions, restatements, reconsiderations, manifestos. Readings: none, unless chosen collectively.

June 10 (M)—papers due to mailbox by 5PM

BIBLIOGRAPHY (big course pack at Quartet Copies; Wolfe at SBX)

Baker, Tom. 2001. “Blood Money, New Money, and the Moral Economy of Tort Law in Action.” *Law and Society Review* 35:275-319.

Beisel, Nicola. 1997. *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 49-75 (Chapter 3, Moral Reform and the Protection of Youth), 228-231 (notes to Chapter 3).

Bosk, Charles. 1979. *Forgive and Remember: Managing Medical Failure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 35-70 (Chapter 2, Error, Rank, and Responsibility).

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-4 (Introduction), 5-23 (Chapter 1, Woman’s Place in Man’s Life Cycle), 24-63 (Chapter 2, Images of Relationship), 151-174 (Chapter 6, Visions of Maturity).

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York: The Free Press. Pp. 193-197 (Chapter 12, The Structure and Function of Situational

Proprieties), 198-215 (Chapter 13, Tightness and Looseness), 216-241 (Chapter 14, The Symptomatic Significance of Situational Improprieties), 242-248 (Chapter 15, Conclusions).

Fraser, Nancy. 1989. "Talking about Needs: Interpretive Contests as Political Conflicts in Welfare-State Societies." *Ethics* 99:291-313.

Hacking, Ian. 1995. *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Science of Memory*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Pp. 234-257 (Chapter 17, An Indeterminacy in the Past).

Heimer, Carol A. 1992. "Doing Your Job and Helping Your Friends: Universalistic Norms about Obligations to Particular Others in Networks." Pp. 143-64 in N. Nohria and R.G. Eccles, eds., *Networks and Organizations: Structure, Form, and Action*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Heimer, Carol A. 2001. "Insurers as Moral Actors." Paper presented at conference on Risk and Morality, Green College, University of British Columbia.

Heimer, Carol A., and Lisa R. Staffen. 1998. *For the Sake of the Children: The Social Organization of Responsibility in the Hospital and the Home*. Pp. 1-36 (Chapter 1, Why We Need a Sociology of Responsibility), 77-136 (Chapter 3, What Do We Mean by Responsibility), 368-373 (part of Chapter 8, Responsible Individuals in an Organizational World).

Heise, David, and Lynn Smith-Lovin. 1981. "Impressions of Goodness, Powerfulness, and Liveliness from Discerned Social Events." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 44 (2):93-106.

Jackall, Robert. 1988. *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers*. Pp. 3-6 (Introduction: Business as a Social and Moral Terrain), 7-16 (Chapter 1. Moral Probations, Old and New), 101-133 (Chapter 5, Drawing Lines), 134-161 (Chapter 6, Dexterity with Symbols), 207-210 (notes), 215-225 (notes).

Lamont, Michèle. 2001. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Pp. 55-96 (Chapter 2, Euphemized Racism: Moral qua Racial Boundaries), 169-214 (Chapter 5, Racism Compared), 293-305 (notes to Chapter 2), 320-332 (notes to Chapter 5).

Lempert, Richard O., and Joseph Sanders. 1986. *An Invitation to Law and Social Science: Desert, Disputes, and Distribution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Pp. 279-282 (Part III, Distribution), 283-305 (Chapter 9, The Ends of Social Justice: John Rawls and the Distribution of Welfare), 428-475 (Chapter 13, Styles of Law and the Attainment of Social Justice).

Mead, George H. (1934) 1962. "The Self." Pp. 135-226 in G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mills, C. Wright. 1940. "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive." *American Sociological Review* 5:904-913.

Parsons, Talcott. 1949. *Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. Pp. 185-199 (Chapter 8, The Professions and Social Structure).

- Parsons, Talcott. 1951. *The Social System*. New York: The Free Press. Pp. 428-479 (Chapter 10, Social Structure and Dynamic Process: The Case of Modern Medical Practice).
- Pendas, Devin O. 2002. "Eichmann in Jerusalem, Arendt in Frankfurt: The Eichmann Trial, the Auschwitz Trial and the Banality of Justice." Unpublished manuscript, University of Chicago.
- Piliavin, Jane Allyn, and Hong-Wen Charng. 1990. "Altruism: A Review of Recent Theory and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 16:27-65.
- Rees, Joseph V. 1994. *Hostages of Each Other: The Transformation of Nuclear Safety Since Three Mile Island*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1-7 (Chapter 1, Introduction), 67- 90(Chapter 5, Industrial Morality), 91-120 (Chapter 6, Communal Pressure), 187-189 (notes to Chapter 1), 199-215 (notes to Chapters 5 & 6).
- Rossi, Alice S., and Peter H. Rossi. 1990. *Of Human Bonding: Parent-Child Relations Across the Life Course*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. Pp. 3-22 (most of Chapter 1, Problem and Design), 158-210 (Chapter 4, The Structure of Kin Norms), 211-248 (Chapter 5, Variation in Obligations to Kin), 486 and 489-500 (parts of Chapter 11, Overview and Looking Ahead).
- Shapiro, Susan P. 2001. "Bushwhacking the Ethical High Road: Conflict of Interest in the Practice of Law and Real Life." Unpublished manuscript, American Bar Foundation.
- Selznick, Philip. 1992. *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 148-182 (Chapter 6, Moral Development).
- Shulman, David. 2000. "Professionals' Accounts for Work-Related Deceptions." *Symbolic Interaction* 23:259-282.
- Swidler, Ann. 1979. *Organization without Authority: Dilemmas of Social Control in Free Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-12 (Introduction, Free Schools as Models of Organizational Change), 83-109 (Chapter 4, Ideology and Community), 133-148 (Chapter 6, What Free Schools Teach).
- Tipton, Steven M. 1982. *Getting Saved from the Sixties: Moral Meaning in Conversion and Cultural Change*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. xiii-xvi (Preface), 1-30 (Chapter 1, Culture and Counterculture: Looking Backward at the Sixties), 232-281 (Chapter 5, Summary and Conclusion: Moral Meaning in a Social Context), 282-286 (Appendix 1, Typology of Styles of Ethical Evaluation), 309-317 (notes to chapter 1), 342-348 (notes to chapter 5).
- Waller, Willard. 1940. "War and Social Institutions." Pp. 478-532 in W. Waller, ed., *War in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Random House.
- Whyte, William Foote. 1943. "A Slum Sex Code." *American Journal of Sociology* 49:24-31.
- Wolfe, Alan. 1989. *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. 1978. "Human Values and the Market: The Case of Life Insurance and Death in 19th-Century America." *American Journal of Sociology* 84:591-610.

Zelizer, Viviana A. 1989. "The Social Meaning of Money: 'Special Monies.'" *American Journal of Sociology* 95:342-377.

Zussman, Robert. 1997. "Sociological Perspectives on Medical Ethics and Decision-Making." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23:171-189.