

# **SOAN 130: PROSEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGY, Spring 2014**

First Block of Classes, Fridays 12:30-2:20

Barnett 2225

## **Dr. Wolfgang Hoeschele**

Professor of Geography

Office: Barnett 2205

Office phone: 785-4032

E-mail: [whoesch@truman.edu](mailto:whoesch@truman.edu)

Office hours: Monday through Thursday 10:30-12; Friday 10:30-11 (please note that it is best to make appointments in advance, because I often make international Skype calls during this time) or by appointment (TuTh 1:30-3, MW 3-4 are usually good options)

## **Course Description**

This class is designed to provide new Sociology/Anthropology majors with an introduction to the expectations of the academic disciplines in the department, an opportunity to learn how to be successful in the major, and a chance to develop relationships with other students in their cohort. Basic study and research skills will be emphasized, along with developing a plan of study in both curricular and co-curricular areas. Sessions will be led by departmental faculty with contributions from staff and administrators from various university departments. Active participation in the proseminar class will provide students with a foundation for academic achievement at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

SOAN 130 meets a Level 1 requirement for the Sociology/Anthropology Major.

## **Course Goals**

This course will

- foster an opportunity early in the major for students to become part of an academic cohort and establish closer ties with other majors/minors and departmental faculty;
- present information about doing good research in the social sciences, with an emphasis on Sociology, Anthropology, and Geography;
- instruct about academic expectations and professional ethics in all three disciplines, and the usefulness of such knowledge for success in their major/minors, and for graduate school and/or future careers;
- help students see how internships, field schools, study abroad programs, and service learning opportunities can contribute to both academic and career success;
- introduce students to the range of services available on campus for maintaining a work/life balance, and making effective use of scholarship hour requirements and out-of-class activities;
- encourage students to engage in reflective practice as they develop their own plan of study for the major, plan for out-of-class activities, and draft a statement of academic and career goals.

## Course Requirements:

Because the goals of this course are more about preparing you to succeed in other courses than about evaluating what you know, everyone has the potential to get an A by carefully completing all assignments and revising assignments as recommended.

### Assignments for Proseminar

All assignments for this class will be turned in sometime during the semester via Blackboard. You may revise any of the assignments by the final exam period to improve your grade.

- Attendance [15%]
- Assignments to prepare for class
  - Discussion paper on a chapter in *The Wealth of the Commons* [15%]
  - Essay on academic and career goals [20%]
- Review of one campus-wide lecture or event such as Global Issues Forums, relating to themes in sociology or anthropology [10%]
- Preparation of a Plan of Study for the Major [20%]
- Preparation of a Plan for Out-of-Class Activities [15%]
- Critical Thinking Assignment submission for Major Portfolio [5%]

### Discussion paper on a chapter in *The Wealth of the Commons*

Read at least one of the chapters from the text in advance of each class session, among the chapters listed for that session. In the case of very short chapters, read two or more so that you have read at least five pages. Do ONE written assignment on a selected chapter for the course (you'll sign up for your choice early in the course), responding to the prompt for that class session.

### Essay on academic and career goals

This should be a 3-5 page statement of your academic and career (or life) goals which includes reflection about how your choice of classes (majors, minors, other classes) and out of class activities could help you achieve these goals.

Use this written statement to tie the other pieces of your portfolio together.

### Review of one campus-wide lecture or event such as Global Issues Forums, relating to themes in sociology or anthropology

Your review paper should be about two double-spaced (or one single-spaced) typed pages in length. Briefly summarize the speaker's or film's or discussion participants' main points or arguments. Then assess the validity of those claims in light of the evidence provided, or the logic of argumentation, or other pertinent evidence that was not provided. You can also assess whether rhetorical strategies were used to advance an argument that seemed designed to distract the audience from pertinent issues, or lead them to accept a biased view uncritically. Even if you think a very strong case was made in favor of specific claims, you may also discuss who might challenge these claims, and how.

### Preparation of a Plan of Study for the Major

### Preparation of a Plan for Out-of-Class Activities

Detailed instructions for these assignments will be given in class.

### Begin Major Portfolio

In addition to the Proseminar Portfolio which reflects the work you've done in this class, you will begin building your Sociology/Anthropology Major Portfolio this semester. By the end of this semester, you will submit one example of work you have completed for a 200-level Sociology/Anthropology course which has helped you to learn critical thinking. This should be selected as an example of the kind of assignment that helped you learn the best. You will continue to add examples of significant assignments to this online Major Portfolio throughout your time at Truman. By the time you graduate, you should have a good record of how you have grown as a student. The department will use these submissions to evaluate how well the curriculum as a whole meets our program objectives.

The online Major Portfolio is part of the University Portfolio Project web site.

### **Text:**

There is one required text:

David Bollier and Silke Helfrich (editors) (2012) *The Wealth of the Commons: A World beyond Market and State*, Amherst, Massachusetts: Levellers Press.

## **Class Schedule**

### **January 17**

Introductions: the course; self-introductions by about 9 students; self-introduction by Dr. Hoeschele. Students select chapters of the text on which to write discussion papers.

Questions for self-introductions

1. What resonates with you, and gives you a sense of aliveness? When, or doing what, do you feel totally alive?
2. What are you best or good at doing? What do other people notice about you that you can do well?
3. Which daily activities do you enjoy doing? This does not need to be something as intense as in question 1, though it should be something that you do frequently.
4. How do your answers to the first three questions relate to each other? Is there an interplay, consistency or conflict? For example, are the things you are good at doing the same or different than the ones that give you a sense of aliveness?

Please note down answers to all of the above questions for your own reference; you can share as much or as little of this as you like with the class. What you write will not be collected.

## **January 24**

12:30-1:20: Dr. Amber Johnson, professor of anthropology, and Dr. Paul Shapiro, professor of sociology, introduce themselves. Self-introductions by next 9 or so students.

Discussion: the relationship between social science and social issues in the real world.

Readings:

David Bollier and Silke Helfrich. Introduction: The Commons as a Transformative Vision. Text, pp. xi-xix.

Silke Helfrich. Commons Goods Don't Simply Exist – They are Created. Text, pp. 61-67.

Readings question: How we conceive of the world can change how we act in the world, and can ultimately change the world itself. Hence, academic study need (and should) not just be about writing papers, it should be about making a positive impact in the world. Based on the two readings, how might this apply to the “commons”?

## **January 31**

Self-introductions by final 8 or so students; 1:30-2:20: Dr. Elaine McDuff, department chair and professor of sociology, and Dr. Anton Daughters, professor of anthropology, introduce themselves to the class.

Discussion: life and career paths – what makes you feel alive.

Readings:

Jacques Paysan. My Rocky Road to the Commons. Text, pp. 3-5.

Neal Gorenflo. Share or Die – A Challenge for Our Times. Text, pp. 249-253.

Readings question: The author of each of the week's readings discusses how his views changed as a result of a personal experience. Often, we truly understand an issue only if we have made a personal experience that drives that point home. Think about your own life and recount an example to illustrate this observation.

## **February 7**

Computer lab: DegreeWorks course planning.

Discussion: study abroad opportunities.

Students who have studied abroad tell about their experiences and offer advice.

Readings:

Mayra Lafoz Bertussi. The Faxinal: A Brazilian Experience of the Commons and its Relationship with the State. Text, pp. 254-257.

Gloria Gallardo Fernandez and Eva Friman. Capable Leadership, Institutional Skills and Resource Abundance behind flourishing Coastal Marine Commons in Chile. Text, pp. 258-264.

Shrikrishna Upadhyay. Community Based Forestry and Livelihood Management in Nepal. Text, pp. 265-270.

Papa Sow and Elina Marmer. Salt and Trade at the Pink Lake: Community subsistence in Senegal. Text, pp. 271-276.

Readings question: Each of this week's readings discuss the experience of a commons in a foreign country. Imagine that you were going to take part in a study abroad program in which you would visit one of these initiatives, and work with them for a couple of weeks. What would you do in order to be as well prepared as possible before your visit? What kinds of activities would you engage in while there in order to gain better experiential as well as intellectual knowledge of the issues that they face? Which people would you especially want to interview, or have in-depth conversations with, in order to understand their perspectives, and what kinds of questions would you ask them?

## **February 14**

Discussion: internship and field school opportunities. Students who have done internships share their experiences and offer advice.

Discussion: Planning out-of-class activities. Guest presentation by Lou Ann Gilchrist, 1:30-2:20.

Due: Plan of Study for the Major

Readings:

George Por. School of Commoning. Text, pp. 217-218.

Christa Müller. Practicing Commons in Community Gardens: Urban Gardening as a Corrective for *Homo Economicus*. Text, pp. 219-224.

Katharina Frosch: Mundraub.org: Sharing Our Common Fruit. Text, pp. 225-226.

Margrit Kennedy and Declan Kennedy. Living in the “Garden of Life.” Text, pp. 227-229.

Thomas H. Greco. Reclaiming the Credit Commons: Towards a Butterfly Society. Text, pp. 230-235.

Gert Wessling. Transition Towns: Initiatives of Transformation. Text, pp. 239-242.

Takayoshi Kusago. Learning from Minamata: Creating High-Level Well-Being in Local Communities in Japan. Text, pp. 243-248.

Readings question: Each of this week’s readings discuss some organization or group working to promote better commoning. Imagine applying to one such organization for an internship. What would you propose that you could do as an intern, which would help you gain valuable experience while contributing to the work of that organization or group? Try to find out more about these, or similar organizations by checking (and citing) websites, and work the information that you gain from there into your response.

## **February 21**

Computer lab: selecting material for major portfolio.

Discussion: research opportunities.

Students who have been involved in research projects share their experiences and offer advice.

Due: Plan for Out-of-Class Activities

Due: Essay on academic and career goals

Readings:

Ryan Conway. Ideas for Change: Making Meaning out of Economic and Institutional Diversity. Text, pp. 361-368.

Michael Madison, Brett Frischmann and Katherine Strandburg. Constructing Commons in the Cultural Environment. Text, pp. 369-374.

Helen Markelova and Esther Mwangi. Multilevel Governance and Cross-Scale Coordination for Natural Resource Management: Lessons from Current Research. Text, pp. 379-388.

Readings question: Each of this week’s readings discuss research approaches to problems concerning the commons. How can the research approach discussed in one of these readings help people who are involved in commoning to manage their commons more effectively? In other words, how can this research contribute to solving real-world problems?

## **February 28**

Discussing academic and career goals with peers

Discussion: realizing life and career goals.

Due: Critical Thinking Assignment submission for Major Portfolio

Due: Review of one campus-wide lecture or event such as Global Issues Forums, relating to themes in sociology or anthropology

Readings:

Gerhard Scherhorn. Transforming Global Resources into Commons. Text, pp. 395-401.

Julio Lambing. Electricity Commons – Toward a New Industrial Society. Text, pp. 402-409.

Dirk Löhr. The Failure of Land Privatization: On the Need for New Development Policies. Text, pp. 410-415.

Alberto Acosta. The Yasuni-ITT Initiative, or the Complex Construction of Utopia. Text, pp. 416-421.

Christina Godt, Christian Wagner-Ahlf and Peter Tinnemann. Equitable Licensing – Ensuring Access to Innovation. Text, pp. 422-427.

Nikos Salingeros and Federico Mena-Quintero. P2P Urbanism: Backed by Evidence. Text, pp. 428-433.

Readings question: Each of this week's readings proposes either a solution for a concrete issue, or a broad approach for solving a certain type of problem. Imagine you made it your career goal to promote or implement one such approach – how would you prepare yourself to do it? In what kind of organization might you work, what kinds of skills would you need, with whom would you have to collaborate to make the vision into a reality?

Any revisions of assignments submitted earlier in the semester will have to be submitted by March 5.