

***The University of Texas at Brownsville
and Texas Southmost College***
Fall 2005

Course	Pro-Seminar on Sociological Theory (SOC1 6333)
Time	Tuesday, 7:15-10:00 p.m.
Place	North 228
Instructor	David E. Pearson, Ph.D.
Office	South 295
Phone	882-7265
Email	david.pearson@utb.edu
Office Hours	Monday-Thursday 12:05-1:30 (and by appointment)

Description: During the Fall 2005 semester, SOC1 6333 examines the assumptions of neo-Darwinian theory and its relevance for sociology. The major neo-Darwinian concepts examined are three: sexual selection, kin selection, and reciprocal altruism.

Format: Classes will include both lectures and discussions in which students assume primary responsibility for analyzing the week's readings. Given this format, it is required that all readings be completed prior to the class session.

Attendance: Regular class attendance is expected. More than one unexcused absence will result in a lowering of your final grade.

Make-Up Policy: You are responsible for all readings and class materials missed due to absences. A grade of zero will be given when you are not present to take an examination, give a presentation, or when written work is handed in late. Make-ups and extensions will be given only in documented instances of emergency or extreme illness.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request academic adjustments in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate accommodations may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting academic adjustments must provide documentation of the disability to the Disability Services counselor. For more information, call or visit the Counseling Center at Tandy 205 (956-544-8292).

Evaluation: Grades will be calculated as a percentage of 100 points. Each week you will be responsible for leading the class in a discussion of a portion of the week's readings. Collectively these summaries will be worth 20 percent of your grade. There will also be two exams in the course, a mid-term and a final, each worth 20 percent of your grade; and two written assignments, worth 20 points each. Due dates are found on the Course Outline below.

Texts: Four of the books used in the course, denoted by asterisks (***) below, are available at the College Bookstore. The remainder of the readings will be handed out in class or placed on Closed Reserve at the Library.

David M. Buss, *The Dangerous Passion: Why Jealousy is as Necessary as Love and Sex*, (New York, The Free Press, 2000).

Jerry Coyne, "The Case Against Intelligent Design: The Faith That Dare Not Speak Its Name," *The New Republic Online* (August 11, 2005).

Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, (New York, Oxford Press, 1976).

Joseph Lopreato and Timothy Crippen, *Crisis in Sociology: The Need for Darwin*, (New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction, 1999).

*** Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*, (New York, Viking, 2002).

*** Steven E. Rhoads, *Taking Sex Differences Seriously*, (San Francisco, Encounter Books, 2004).

*** Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology*, (New York, Pantheon, 1994).

*** Robert Wright, *Non-Zero: The Logic of Human Destiny*, (New York, Pantheon, 2000).

Course Outline

On the following page is a weekly listing of topics and readings covered in Pro-Seminar on Sociological Theory:

Wk	Dates	Topic	Reading
1	Aug. 23	Sociology and the Darwinian Revolution	
2	Aug. 30	The Blank Slate	Pinker, 1-102
3	Sept. 6	Politics Left and Right	Coyne, 1-26 Pinker, 103-135
4	Sept. 13	Four Fears	Lopreato, 21-80 Pinker, 137-194
5	Sept. 20	Sex Differences	Lopreato, 135-168 Pinker, 337-371 Wright (1994), 33-54
6	Sept. 27	Sex Differences Matter	Rhoads, 1-78 Wright (1994), 55-92
7	Oct. 4	<i>Essay 1 Due</i> The Dangerous Passion	Buss, 1-100
8	Oct. 11	<i>Exam 1</i> Marriage and the Family	Lopreato, 169-206 Rhoads, 79-131; 190-263
9	Oct. 18	Kin Selection	Dawkins, 88-140 Wright (1994), 155-179
10	Oct. 25	Aggression, Dominance, and Violence	Pinker, 306-335 Rhoads, 134-187
11	Nov. 1	Social Stratification	Lopreato, 207-45 Wright (1994), 236-286
12	Nov. 8	The Invisible Brain	Lopreato, 247-77 Wright (2000), 3-77
13	Nov. 15	Civilization	Wright (2000), 78-154
14	Nov. 22	New World Order	Wright (2000), 155-239
15	Nov. 29	<i>Essay 2 Due</i> Non-Crazy Questions	Wright (2000), 243-334
	Dec. 6	<i>Exam 2, 8:00-10:30 p.m.</i>	

Essay Topic No. 1

Many aspects of female physiology constitute an apparent evolutionary puzzle. Things like the loss of substantial amounts of blood through menstruation, cryptic ovulation, the need for considerable sexual foreplay, risky pregnancies, the high level of miscarriages, the early onset of menopause, and other characteristics all appear at first glance to diminish a women's reproductive fitness. Your task in the first essay is to advance an argument for how and why these factors in fact served to enhance reproductive fitness.