Critical reflexivity and the foundations of psychology

“The logic of the human sciences is a logic of the question” (Gadamer 1960/1997, p. 370).

Tentative Course Outline and Reading List

September 10, 2014:
1. Introduction


September 17, 2014:
2. Can we learn anything from history?


**Ontological reflections**

September 24, 2014:
3. What is the nature of the discipline of psychology?


October 1, 2014:
4. What does it mean to be human?


October 8, 2014:
5. What is the nature of psychological concepts and theories?


• Martin, J., & Sugarman, J. (2009). Does interpretation in psychology differ from


**Epistemological reflections**

October 15, 2014:
6. What are the consequences of positivism in psychology?


October 22, 2014:
7. Do social characteristics influence knowledge?


October 29, 2014: Co-curricular days

November 5, 2014:
8. What does culture contribute to knowledge?

November 12, 2014:
9. What are the influences of money, (a lack of) morality, and moral praxis in psychology?


November 19, 2014:
10. Does psychology care about social justice?


November 26, 2014:
11. Does psychology make people into problems?


**Aesthetic reflections**

December 3, 2014:

12. *Should psychologists embrace aesthetics?*


**Evaluation**

**Regular attendance and participation**

• There are no exams in this course.

• In order to ensure that the material has been reflected upon adequately, regular attendance and participation is necessary.

• If **more than 3 meetings in the term are missed** the student must write an additional essay (or essays) regarding the missed meetings (regardless of the reasons for missing class) to be handed in on the same day as the regular paper. If you miss 4 meetings, then you need to hand in one additional paper, if you miss 5 meetings, then you need to submit 2 additional papers, etc. Each additional paper is worth 20% and changes the composition of the fall grade accordingly.

**Presentation in class**

• The duration of the presentation (and leading a class discussion) for each student should be approximately 30 (25-35) minutes (longer if a video is shown).

• Assessment of the presentation by the whole group is taken into account (peer evaluation). Written assessments by class include sections on "Strengths," "Suggestions for Improvement," and a "Grade."
• The presentation must go beyond class reading material and must include additional sources. It can take the student’s area of specialization into account. The presentation may include audiovisual material and class discussions should involve specific questions derived from the reading material.
• Presentations can be done individually or as a group effort.
• PowerPoint (Keynote, or a similar presentation software) is recommended.
• Provide an electronic copy of your PowerPoint or Keynote presentation at least 12 hours before your presentation (send to instructor via e-mail).
• List all sources at the end of the PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.
• The presentation (and leading a class discussion) counts towards 30% of the grade.
• Averaged grades and feedback are provided usually one week after the presentation.
• Grading for each presentation: Instructor: 50%. Peers: 50%.
• Letter grades will be used (A+, A, A-, B+, etc.) which are converted into numbers (A+ = 9, A = 8, A- = 7, etc.) which are averaged (for instance, A- ranges from 6.5 to 7.49).

Paper
• The written elaboration of the presentation in the form of a manuscript is required.
• The paper must be written in APA format and have a length of about 18 pages including references. To be precise: 4500 words without references!
• References must be drawn from at least 15 different academic sources.
• The paper must have a psychological perspective!
• The deadline for the paper is December 17, 2014. There will be deductions for late submissions. Deductions: Each day late will count as a deduction of 0.15 for the first two days, 0.25 for the next two days, 0.35 for the next two days, etc. This means if you receive an average A for the paper and you are two days late you would receive: 8 – 0.30 = 7.7 (which is still an A).
• All papers must be sent as an e-mail attachment to the instructor [criterion for date of submission] and handed in [mailbox, secretary, instructor] as a hardcopy until Friday.
• Organization: 1. Title page (p. 1): Title of paper, name, student number; course title; term). 2. Abstract (p. 2) (150 - 200 words). 3. Paper and 4. References (pp. 3 – 18): [Start a new page for the reference section]. Typing: Papers should be typed in Times New Roman. Use a 12-point font and double spacing for the entire manuscript. Use 1-inch margins on the left, right, top, and bottom of the page. The text is to be left-aligned and not right-justified. Proofread the paper. Staple finished manuscript]. More information on guidelines for the paper will be provided in one of the class meetings.
• The paper represents 40% of the grade.
• Grading: Letter grades.

Comments

All three papers should be read. For the written comments (response to the readings) choose 2 out of the 3 readings.
• Choose 1st reading (decide which one of the two texts is the first).
o 400 words concerning the 1st reading (use the word count function in your word processing program and list the number of words at the end of the comment). Do not count headings, references, and direct quotes!
o Identify the most significant issues (2-3) in the texts and respond to them. Or, alternatively, respond to the main argument in the article.
o A comment should be evaluative, provide arguments, and express a viewpoint. It contains an assessment of the text (see American Psychologist for advanced examples).
o Respond to essential issues of the reading material! Do not summarize material. Referencing of chosen text is not required -- but referencing is necessary if you use additional sources.

• Choose 2nd reading: same rules as 1st reading.
• Comments are due on each Monday at 15:00 and must be sent as 1 attachment to my e-mail address (see above) (or in the main text). Identify texts.
• Write your name at the top of the comments!
• Write 6030 in the "subject" heading of the e-mail.
• There will be deductions for late submissions and comments received on Tuesday after 15:00 will not be accepted anymore (Exception: documented medical reasons).
• The first comments are due on Monday, September 15 at 15:00 for the Wednesday, September 17 meeting. Comments are usually returned via email.
• It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that all comments were received back.
• If the day of a comment submission falls on a holiday, comments should be submitted earlier - if student cannot submit on a holiday.
• Comments represent 30% of the grade.
• Grading: Each weekly comment will receive a qualitative grade: Outstanding (exceptional) = A+; excellent = A; Very good = A-; Good = B+; etc. These qualitative comments are converted into numbers (A+ = 9, A = 8, A- = 7, etc.) and averaged.
• For the day of one’s own presentation, no comments are accepted!
• You need to submit a total of 6 comments! If you submit more than 6 comments, only the best 6 comments will be used in the final grade.