Students are advised to keep course outlines in personal files for future use.

Shaded headings are subject to change at the discretion of the department – see course syllabus available from instructor

SOC 430  Social, Cultural and Media Studies  4

Knowledge, Power, Science, and Society

COURSE NAME/NUMBER  FACULTY/DEPARTMENT  UFV CREDITS

This course is an examination of scientific and other knowledge about the “natural” world. In it we explore how social factors such as power relationships influence what is known and how knowledge is used. For example, who decides if a medical procedure is used—the doctor, patient or the government? The course is a critical examination of the ways in which social factors influence whether a claim is considered to be knowledge, a cultural belief, or a misinformed idea; how methods of observation and analysis influence what becomes known (or not known); and who has authority to say what is “the truth.” This course draws on material from the areas of sociology of science and sociology of knowledge.

PREREQUISITES: 60 university-level credits, to include SOC 101 and six additional credits in Sociology (SOC 230 recommended).

COREQUISITES: PRE or COREQUISITES:

SYNONYMOUS COURSE(S):
(a) Replaces:
(b) Cross-listed with:
(c) Cannot take: for further credit.

SERVICE COURSE TO: (department/program)

TOTAL HOURS PER TERM: 60

TRAINING DAY-BASED INSTRUCTION:
Length of course:
Hours per day:

STRUCTURE OF HOURS:
Lectures: 45 Hrs
Seminar: 15 Hrs
Laboratory: Hrs
Field experience: Hrs
Student directed learning: Hrs
Other (specify): Hrs

OTHER:
Maximum enrolment: 25
Expected frequency of course offerings: Once every 3 years (every semester, annually, every other year, etc.)

WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (lower-level courses only)  Yes ☐ No ☐
WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (upper-level requested by department)  ☒ Yes ☐ No
TRANSFER CREDIT EXISTS IN BCCAT TRANSFER GUIDE:  ☐ Yes ☒ No

Course designer(s): Chantelle Marlor
Department Head: Eric Spalding
Supporting area consultation (Pre-UEC) Date approved: April 8, 2011
Curriculum Committee chair: Tetsuomi Anzai Date of meeting: April 29, 2011
Dean/Associate VP: Jacqueline Nolte Date approved: October 14, 2011
Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) approval Date of meeting: October 28, 2011
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how various forms of power influence what comes to be known, who knows it, and how it is used
- Describe social processes involved in members of society determining who is an authoritative “knower” (e.g. a scientist, physician, sociologist, etc.)
- Explain theoretical ideas developed and used by sociologists to discuss knowledge and power
- Apply relevant sociological theories to analyze examples where different groups have (i) created a new knowledge claim (e.g. scientific research), (ii), proposed their claim to others (e.g. scientists getting peer review), and (iii) institutionalized their claim in some way (e.g. as policy or as a common practice)
- Critically discuss how what is known can be affected by how it is come to be known

METHODS: (Guest lecturers, presentations, online instruction, field trips, etc.)

Lectures, discussion, student presentations, and possibly field trips.

METHODS OF OBTAINING PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION (PLAR):

☐ Examination(s) ☐ Portfolio assessment ☐ Interview(s)

☒ Other (specify): Methods will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCES, MATERIALS:

[Textbook selection varies by instructor. An example of texts for this course might be:]


SUPPLIES / MATERIALS:

STUDENT EVALUATION:

[An example of student evaluation for this course might be:]

Reading reflection report #1 25%
Reading reflection report #2 25%
Research paper 30%
Discussion leader assignment 20%

COURSE CONTENT:

[Course content varies by instructor. An example of course content might be:]

Week 1: Introduction to the course, a brief overview of how sociologists study scientific & other knowledge
Week 2: How social factors shape what we observe and pay attention to
Weeks 3 and 4: Theories about how epistemology and research methods can differ, in what sense are they “socially constructed,” and how differences in epistemology and methods influence what comes to be known about the natural world (e.g. biology, geography, geology, etc)
Week 5 and 6: Theories about how politics and power relations are related to epistemology and research methods
Week 7: The relationship of authority to science, religion, and other “official” knowledge claims (an historical analysis)
Week 8: Example #1 of knowledge and power: the case of AIDS activism (Epstein’s work)
Week 9: Example #2 of knowledge and power: the case of medical research and research subjects (Epstein’s work)
Week 10: Example #3 of knowledge and power: sheep farmers and government officials (Brian Wynne’s work)
Week 11 and 12: Student “workshop” and presentations on research paper projects