THE STUDY OF NORMS

Syllabus

This course will deal with a range of perspectives on normative phenomena that have been developed in sociology since World War II. The course will focus on the nature of rules, the question of whether norms can be viewed as determining social behavior, the role of norms in the organisation of cognition and conduct and with methodological questions concerning how the role of norms in conduct can best be studied.

Readings for the course will include the following:

John Heritage, Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology

Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology

Selected Readings

The overall structure of the course and the required readings for each section are outlined on the following pages. This outline is also reproduced on the opening pages of the reader.

Note: Items in the reading list marked [Reader] are reproduced in the Selected Readings for the course. Most other items are on reserve.

All material in the Reader and assigned chapters from the two books above are required.

Course grades will be based on the following exams and exercises:

Monday, Week 3: Definition Test [Scantron] [15%]
Wednesday Week 6: Midterm (Take home) [30%]
Monday Week 8: Definition Test [Scantron] [15%]
Finals Week 11: In-class Final [40%]

The nature of these exams will be discussed in class.
Weeks 1-3

Introduction

Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 'Norms'.

Social Norms and the Moral Order: Parsons's Foundation

T. Parsons, Talcott Parsons on Institutions and Social Evolution: Selected Writings, edited by L.H. Mayhew, 'Introduction' (pp.1-19, 52-62) and Chs. 4, 6, 7 and 8.

E.C. Devereux, 'Parsons' Sociological Theory' in M. Black (ed.), The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons.


J. Heritage, Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, Ch.2.


Weeks 3-5

Social Norms and the Cognitive Order: Garfinkel's Alternative


J. Heritage, Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, Chs.4-5.


**Weeks 6-7**

**Norms and the Reproduction of Social Reality: Empirical Studies**


J. Heritage, Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, Ch. 7.

**Norms and 'World Maintenance'**

M. Pollner, 'Mundane Reasoning', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 4, pp. 35-54.

M. Pollner, "The very coigne of your brain:" the anatomy of reality disjunctures. Philosophy of the Social Sciences 5: pp. 411-430.

E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande [Abridged Edition], pp. 120-163.

J. Heritage, Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, Ch. 7.

**Norms and 'Ordinary Experience'**


Gail Jefferson, "At First I thought:" A Normalizing Device for Extraordinary Events', mimeo.

Dorothy Smith, "K is mentally ill:" the anatomy of a factual account', Sociology, 12, 1978, pp. 23-53.


Weeks 8-9

Norms and 'Extraordinary Experience': The Case of Suicide


Steve Taylor, Durkheim and the Study of Suicide, Macmillan 1982, Chapter 3 'Some Critiques of Official Suicide Rates', and Chapter 4 'Proving Suicide'.


Norms and Gender

H.Garfinkel, 'Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an "Intersexed" Person', in H.Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology.

J.Heritage, Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, Ch.7.


Week 10

Review and Revision