Social Capital

I. Introduction

A. Description of the Seminar

Social capital consists of normatively regulated social relationships that permit long-term reciprocity and mutual trust. Interest in social capital has rapidly increased in all the social sciences in the last 15 years. The concept’s applicability is vast. It has already been applied to health, education, social stratification, economic action, urban planning, political community and voting, and so forth. However, possibly because of the hyper-rapid growth of interest in the topic, users of the term are not always clear about how social capital can best be applied, nor are they aware of what critics declare the lamentable potential for stretching the concept beyond suitable limits.

Students have some exposure to social capital before they start this course. Indeed, without that exposure, they would have no idea what the words mean nor any interest in the topic. This graduate seminar intends to expose already savvy students to the emerging core literature on the topic of social capital while providing them an opportunity to branch out on their own into literatures of special interest and relevance to themselves. Parts I and II of the course basically consist of reading and discussing Halpern’s recent, excellent textbook on social capital as well as Lin’s earlier and more specialized textbook. Then part III consists of independently researching the literature on topics of special interest, reporting on them in class, and preparing a term paper that critically reviews the literature you have uncovered. The purpose of this course is to enable students to broaden their appreciation of social capital, and to explore the possibility of developing a serious research interest in some aspect of the topic.

B. Administrative Details

**Instructor:** Ivan Light, Professor

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Office:** Haines Hall 255

**Telephone:** 825-4229 and 825-1313 (messages)

**Email address:** light@soc.ucla.edu

**Class meetings:** Tuesdays, 2:00 to 4:50 pm

**Classroom:** Rolfe 3131
II. Required Readings


Light, Ivan, ed. Reader for Sociology 291, Spring 2005. Produced by Course Reader Materials. Contents:
- De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America.*


III. Readings by Topic and in Sequence

*Part I*

April 4
1. 2:00 to 3:15 Instructor’s Introduction
2. 3:30 to 4:45 illustration: rotating credit and savings associations

April 11
3. 2:00 to 3:15 Other explanations using SC: Coleman; Jacobs; de Tocqueville
4. 3:30 to 4:45 Lin, “Theories of Capital,” Ch. 1

April 18
5. 2:00 to 3:15 Halpern. Ch. 1
6. 3:30 to 4:45 Halpern, ch. 2

April 25
7. 2:00 to 3:15 Halpern, ch. 3
8. 3:30 to 4:45 Halpern, ch. 4

May 2
9. 2:00 to 3:15 Halpern, ch. 5
10. 3:30 to 4:45 Halpern, ch. 6

*Part II*

May 9
11. 2:00 to 3:15 Halpern, ch. 7
IV. Written Work and Grading

Students write two take-home examinations. The first covers Part I; the second covers Part II. Part I also includes Lin, chapter 1; and Part II also includes Lin, chapter 2. The instructor will provide a single topical question for Part I exam on May 2 in class; it will be due May 9 in class. The single, topical exam question for part II will be provided in class on May 16, and will be due May 23. The take-home examinations are essay format, and should not exceed 5 typed pages in length each.

In part III, students will write a term paper on a topic of their choosing that is related to social capital. In general, this term paper is a review of existing literature that includes your conclusions about what now needs to be done. For example, one might write a review of the literature on social capital and education, offering a concluding evaluation of what is the promise of social capital to date in this field, and what should now be done. In general, preparing these term papers will require students to do some independent bibliographic work on their own. Happily, with the many efficient search engines now out there (try google.scholar) this task is easier than it used to be. If a student has a specialized research topic on which he or she wishes to write, then this special topic can provide the term paper rather than a review of literature.

Nonetheless, to facilitate your search for a term paper topic, I have suggested several easily prepared term papers. They are easy because the readings are readily available. For example, a term paper on “Putnam and his critics” is easy to prepare because Putnam’s many critics have conveniently published a book. Conversely, a term paper on, say, “social capital in the nursing profession” would require a student to undertake more independent research to access the literature, to read it, and then to evaluate it.
Students will make a class presentation based on their term paper research. In so doing, they will be presenting their independent research to people who understand social capital, but are less informed or even uninformed about the specific application they are making. The advantages of this procedure are two: your classmates learn about your specific application, broadening our knowledge, and you obtain the informed criticism of people who understand social capital. Everyone benefits. These critical reviews are due on the last day of class, June 6, or before. They should not exceed 20 pages in length, exclusive of bibliography.

The purpose of the term paper is to enable students to undertake semi-independent research on a social capital topic of interest specifically to them in the expectation that they may wish later to follow up on this preliminary access with a larger research project.

May 2    Take-Home on Part I    due May 9   5 pages = 1500 words
May 16   Take-Home on Part II  due May 23  3 pages = 1200 words
June 06   Term paper due in class 20 pp. max. excluding references = 6000 words

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I exam</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part II exam</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Segment</td>
<td>05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>05</td>
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Total 100 points

96-100 A+
93-95 A
91-92 A-
88-90 B+
80-87 B

V. List of Term Papers and Suggested Readings

These lists are suggested starting places. You need not stop here, nor need you include everything. It’s up to you. The list is intended to assist you to find the literature you need to review. I have put the obvious books on sale as “not required” and you can obtain them that way if you wish.

# 1 “Theoretical Critique of Social Capital”

Schuller, Tom, Stephen Baron, and John Field. “Social Capital: Review and Critique.” Ch. 1

Paterson, Lindsay. “Civil Society and Democratic Renewal.” Ch. 2

Szreter, Simon. “Social Capital, the Economy, and Education in Historical Perspective.” Ch. 3

Fine, Ben and Francis Green. “Economics, Social Capital, and the Colonization of the Social Sciences.” Ch. 4

Fevre, Ralph. “Socializing Social Capital: Identity, the Transition to Work and Economic Development.” Ch. 5

Maskell, Peter. “Social Capital, Innovation, and Competitiveness.” Ch. 6

Loizos, Peter. “Are Refugees Social Capitalists?” Ch. 7

Lauglo, John. “Social Capital Trumping Class and Cultural Capital? Engagement with School among Immigrant Youth.” Ch. 8

Munn, Pamela. “Social Capital, Schools, and Exclusions.” Ch. 9

Campbell, Catherine. “Social Capital and Health. Contextualizing Health Promotion within Local Community Networks.” Ch. 10

Macgillivray, Alex, and Perry Walker. “Local Social Capital: Making It Work on the Ground.” Ch. 11


Brown, Philip and Hugh Lauder. “Human Capital, Social Capital and Collective Intelligence.” Ch. 13

Field, John, Tom Schuller, and Stephen Baroon. “Social Capital and Human Capital Revisited.” Ch. 14


# 2 “Putnam and his Critics”


# 4 “Community Studies”


# 5 “Urban Planning and Social Capital”
This is a special issue on social capital. Read articles by Light, Briggs, Rohe, Vidal, Hutchinson, which contain extensive additional bibliography.

# 6 “Nan Lin”
Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001


# 7 “Social Capital and Migration”

   *Bibliography can be obtained inside this book, esp. in chapters 1 and 2.*

# 8 “Historical Studies of Social Capital”

#8 “Social Capital and Ethnic Economies”

VI. Other Books and Articles about Social Capital

Friendship
Organizations
Katinka Bijlsma-Frankema and Ann Cristina Costa. “Understanding the Trust-Control Nexus.” 2005. *International Sociology* vol. 20, no. 5, pp. 259-283. *This article summarizes a special issue devoted to trust-control nexus in organizations e.g. the more trust, the less control, and vice-versa.*

Historical Methodology

Education

Economic Sociology

Social Networks Methodology

*End*