LIS 6278 Seminar in Theory Development
Spring 2007
Dr. Michelle M. Kazmer

Tuesdays, 2-4:45 p.m.
206 Louis Shores Building

Course Description

Students will discuss and critique the structural components and research processes related to the origination, construction, and evolution of theory. The seminar will provide students with an awareness of the historical and social conditions that influence a tradition of ideas.

Objectives

The student will understand the theoretical approach to the development of knowledge by:

- Analyzing historical and social factors associated with theory construction
- Reading critically in the area of theory creation and development
- Understanding and practicing tools to critique theories
- Analyzing the progression of ideas through the development of a specific theory

Texts


Required readings are listed below. They may be placed on reserve in the Goldstein Library for your convenience.

Assessments

5% Discussion leading of an assigned class reading (January 23 through March 20)
20% Theory paper 1 (theory background) due January 31
20% Theory paper 2 (theory propositions and concepts) due February 28
20% Theory paper 3 (theory development and criticisms) due March 28
20% Theory paper 4 (theory application and synthesized paper) due April 18
15% In-class presentation of theory (including assigning 1 reading)

Requirements for assessments

5% Discussion leading of an assigned class reading

By Friday of the first week of classes, please email the professor with your top three choices (ranked 1 as the highest and 3 as the lowest) of readings for which you would like to lead the discussion. The professor will assign the discussion leading schedule during the following week.
20% Theory paper 1 due January 31
Select a theory with which you will work for the remainder of the semester. It need not be a “library and information science” theory per se, but it needs to be one that will have a reasonable and cogent application to your own research ideas. For the first paper, you should identify the theory with which you will work and write approximately 3000 words (excluding references) about its origins. You should include information about the person(s) who developed the theory; the intellectual traditions in which the theory was originated; and the research milieu in which the theory was originated.

20% Theory paper 2 due February 28
For the second paper, you should write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) identifying, analyzing, relating, and otherwise discussing the concepts and propositions associated with the theory. This paper needs to draw heavily on the class readings and be an extremely rigorous and systematic dissection of your theory.

20% Theory paper 3 due March 28
This paper (approximately 3000 words excluding references) should trace the development of the theory over time by the persons(s) who originated it; the development of the theory by persons(s) other than those who originated it; explore how it has been applied and modified over time; and discuss criticisms and limitations of the theory.

20% Theory paper 4 due April 18
This paper has two tasks. First, you should write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) provide a detailed discussion of how the theory might be applied to, and refined as a results of, the research problem you wish to explore. Then, you need to go back and using feedback from the instructor on the first 3 papers, combine all 4 papers to produce a coherent whole of between 10000-12000 words (excluding references). You should not simply string the 4 papers together, but rather should assemble them together to make one coherent paper.

15% In-class presentation of theory (including assigning 1 reading)
Select one reading about your theory that is appropriate background for a class discussion and provide the professor with a citation and a copy of the reading two weeks before your in-class presentation. The presentation of theory in class should include, in some way, all the points addressed in papers 1-3. The presentation should allow time for discussion within the allotted time (approximately 45 minutes).

January 9


January 16
No Class Meeting (ALISE)
January 23


January 30


February 6


February 13


February 20

February 27


March 6
No Class Meeting (Spring Break)

March 13


March 20


March 27 Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)
April 3 Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)
April 17 Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY:

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those
expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

(1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
(2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the

Student Disability Resource Center
97 Woodward Avenue, South
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.