LIS 6278 Seminar in Theory Development  
Spring 2008  
Dr. Michelle M. Kazmer

Mondays, 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 21 through March 17)  
16% Theory paper 1 (3 theories) due February 4  
16% Theory paper 2 (theory background) due February 18  
16% Theory paper 3 (theory propositions and concepts) due March 3 (yes, really; yes, I plan to; no, I won't)  
16% Theory paper 4 (theory development and criticisms) due March 24  
16% Theory paper 5 (theory application and synthesized paper) due April 14  
15% In-class presentation of theory (including assigning 1 reading)

Requirements for assessments

5% Discussion leading of an assigned class reading  
By Sunday January 13 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 early in the week of January 14.
16% Theory paper 1 due February 4
Identify three theories that you think might have potential application to your area of research interest. They need not be from “library and information science” per se, but they need to be theories that might have a reasonable and cogent application to your own research ideas. Write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) in which you identify the three theories you are considering; describe briefly the research and/or disciplines from which they come and the research for which they are normally used; and describe how each of the three theories might be applicable to your own research.

16% Theory paper 2 due February 18
Select ONE theory with which you will work for the remainder of the semester. For this paper, you should identify the theory with which you will work and write approximately 2000 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.

16% Theory paper 3 due March 3
For the this 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.

16% Theory paper 4 due March 24
This paper (approximately 2000 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.

16% Theory paper 5 due April 14
Write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) provide a detailed discussion of how the theory might be applied to, and refined as a result of, the research problem you wish to explore.

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 14 (an introduction to get us started thinking about theory in LIS)

January 21 (no class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

January 28 (the pieces of what we need to talk about)


February 4 (how to "read" a theory – terms and approaches) (paper 1 due)


February 11 (more pieces and processes of theory development)


February 18 (some ways to categorize theories) (paper 2 due)


February 25 (back to LIS-specific readings: theory use in LIS)


**March 3 (big-picture approaches to LIS) (paper 3 due)**


**March 10**

No Class Meeting (Spring Break)

**March 17 (examples of theory in specific subfields of LIS)**


**March 24 (paper 4 due)** Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

**March 31** Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

**April 7** Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

**April 14 (paper 5 due)** 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://dof.fsu.edu/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
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

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