COURSE SYLLABUS

The Sociology of Prejudice
Understanding the Methods of Social Research

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Nationalism Studies Program
Central European University
Fall – Winter, 2015-2016
MA
4 Credits
Course e-learning site:
Office hours:

Course Description

This course will focus on ethnic prejudice and specifically on the sociological understanding of prejudice against certain minority groups. We will examine the most influential classical theories of prejudice and will deal with the more recent developments in this field of research. At the same time, the course will give an insight into the broad variety of research methods used in social sciences. The first aim of the course is to introduce the highly diverse and multi-disciplinary field of prejudice research and to show that the notion of prejudice is present in various concepts of nationalism studies as identity-formation, inter-group conflicts and majority-minority relations. While learning about these issues, participants will also familiarize with a range of methods of empirical social research and understand the function and applicability of these and gain knowledge and support for successfully designing and carrying out their own research projects.

The course consists of six main thematic blocks focusing on different aspects of prejudice and research methods. In the first block the concept of prejudice and the main approaches and dilemmas of prejudice research will be in the focus. The second thematic block is an overview of the qualitative and quantitative methods of empirical social research. In order to be able to critically review the results of empirical studies and to plan own research projects, we will familiarize with a wide range of research methods and will discuss their pitfalls and applicability. In the third thematic block we look at various forms of prejudice based on results of recent national and international surveys. Consequently, in the fourth block, we will seek answers to the question “Why people have prejudices?” Theories will be presented according to a
multi-level approach separating micro- meso- and macro-level factors. The fifth block will conclude the study of prejudice by discussing the possibilities of prejudice-reduction through an overview of various intervention and prevention methods. Finally, the sixth block will give students a deeper insight into the practice of the most commonly applied methods of qualitative research: interviews, group discussions, and critical discourse analysis. Here, students will be able to plan their own (thesis) projects and will also gain support with practical issues to ensure a well-planned and successful fieldwork.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course, students will have a fuller understanding of the extensive and highly multidisciplinary scholarly literature on prejudice in particular regarding the origins and forms of prejudice towards ethnic minority groups. They will have extensive knowledge about empirical studies focusing on various types of prejudice the results of which they will be able to critically discuss. They should also know to take the perspective of the targets of prejudice and understand how prejudice might affect the identity of the members of stigmatized groups. They will also have an understanding of the role of the institutions of socialization in transmitting norms related to prejudice. Finally, participants of the class will be familiar with the most effective methods of prejudice reduction and will have an understanding of the ethical and normative debates in the field of prejudice studies.

By the end of the semester students should have a basic understanding of the logic of a variety of research methods most commonly applied in empirical social research. Based on this knowledge they should be able to make a well-founded decision on the optimal method for their own research projects and should be able to apply this method from data collection through analysis to the presentation of the findings.
Course Requirements

Participants are expected to attend class regularly, read the assigned readings every week, and actively engage in discussions. All students are expected to present at least two texts as an introduction to the discussion on the given subject. The presentations should be summarized on a one-page handout. Students are also asked to write two critical remarks or questions about each reading along with the completion of smaller assignments before some of the classes. These are intended to shape the common discussion. Both the remarks and the handouts should be sent by email until Tuesday 9PM.

The participants of the course will also be required to prepare a final research paper (15 pages) or two shorter papers (at least 8 pages each) on a subject connected to the topics discussed in the course. The paper should either be a research paper in the field of prejudice research including a (small) empirical study, or one paper on prejudice and one detailed plan regarding the own research project. The literature for the final paper should be based on the common readings and on individual research.

Assessment:

1. Class participation and activity: 30%
2. In-class presentation and critical remarks about the readings: 30%
3. Final paper: 40%
COURSE SCHEDULE

I. ETHNIC PREJUDICE: CONCEPTS, APPROACHES, AND DILEMMAS

1. Introduction

Readings:


2. The concept of prejudice

Readings:


3. Individual and social consequences of prejudice: the targets’ perspective

Readings:

Recommended:

II. RESEARCH METHODS –INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

4. Quantitative methods of prejudice research

Readings:

A selection of attitude measures from various questionnaires, available on the e-learning site.

5. Qualitative methods I.

6. Qualitative methods II.

Readings for both classes (select two readings from the list the methods of which are the closest to your own project):

*Semi-structured qualitative interviews with 202 participants

*Group discussions

*Life history interviews
Karen Ross. (2014). Narratives of belonging (and not): Inter-group contact in Israel and the formation of ethno-national identity claims. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*

*Mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative)

*Linguistic and content analysis of textual data

*Critical discourse analysis of everyday discourse

*Discourse analysis of textual data

*In-depth interviews with 11 participants*


*Discourse analysis of textual data and film*


*Cognitive interviews and focus groups*


*Comparative analysis of media representation*


*Film analysis: the representation of Islam in five French feature films*


*A list of further literature explaining the use of specific qualitative research methods can be found on the e-learning site of the course.*

7. **The logic of qualitative and quantitative research**

*Readings:*

Flick, U. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research.* SAGE. Part 2: Qualitative and quantitative research (pp. 24-34)


*Recommended:*
III. THE FORMS OF ETHNIC PREJUDICE

8. Anti-Roma prejudice in Hungary

Readings:


Suggested:

9. Anti-Semitism in Europe

Readings:


Recommended:

10. Anti-Muslim Prejudice

Readings (split among course participants):


11. Xenophobia / Anti-immigrant prejudice

Readings:


12. Group-focused enmity


IV. WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE PREJUDICES?

13. Explanations of prejudice 1: The micro-level
Readings:


14. Explanations of prejudice 2: The meso-level


15. Explanations of prejudice 3: The macro-level

Readings:


Suggested:


V. POSSIBILITIES OF PREJUDICE REDUCTION

16. Reducing prejudice through contact

Readings:

17. Intervention against prejudice: personal responsibility and psychological costs

*Reading:*

18. Prejudice Reduction: What Works?

*Reading:*

VI. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES: PREPARATION FOR THE FIELDWORK

19. Interviews

*Suggested readings:*


20. Group discussions

*Suggested readings:*


22. Discourse analysis 2.

*Readings for both classes:*


Recommended:

23. Planning the fieldwork

*Readings:*


24. Principals of ethical research and other practicalities

*Readings:*


*Recommended:*