



Course name:	Political Economy of Appalachia
Department, course #, level:	Soc 349, undergraduate
Semester(s) and year(s) taught (without significant variation):	Fall 1998
Institution:	Union College
Instructor(s):	Deborah Thompson (606) 546-1324

APPALACHIAN SEMESTER

SOC 349 Political Economy of Appalachia

Fall 1998

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This course is taken concurrent with SOC 422 and 487 and HIS 475, therefore the course content, objectives, and activities are part of a complex, extremely interrelated fifteen (15) hour block of study.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Bruce Ergood & Bruce Kuhre, Ed., Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present (Third Edition). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 1991. (also used for SOC 422)

John Gaventa, Power and Powerlessness. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Thomas Plaut, People, Politics, and Economics: An Interactive Exploration of the Appalachian Region. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 1996.

Selected articles and other readings will be placed on reserve in the Weeks Library or will be distributed in class.

Suggested supplemental text:

Ronald D. Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: The Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1870-1930. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1982 (available in the library or bookstore).

OBJECTIVES:

This course concerns the development of the political economy of the Appalachian Region. Through course readings, lectures, class discussion, field trips, films, and student papers, the following topics will be analyzed: how settlement patterns, land ownership, early industry, and commercial and subsistence agriculture contributed to the economic and political development of Appalachia prior to 1880; how the rise of resource industries (coal, timber, gas, etc.) changed the political economy of Appalachia beginning around 1880; how subsequent modernization affected the lifestyle and social fabric of the region in the 20th century; how more recent events such as the New Deal, the War on Poverty, and the technological revolution of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s have influenced the region; and how the political economy of Appalachia is influenced by and reflects that of the country as a whole.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance: As in all other courses in the Appalachian Semester, attendance and participation in all scheduled events and activities is crucial.
2. Models/Causes of Poverty Debate: Each student will participate in a debate concerning the causes of poverty and the models used by sociologists and others to understand the Appalachian Region. This will occur in mid-November; more detailed guidelines will be provided.
3. Integrative Papers: Two short papers (about 3-4 type-written, double-spaced pages) are assigned in which the students will reflect on a field trip or conference, using the critical skills and knowledge gained from class and readings. The purpose of these short papers is to more consciously fuse experiential with theoretical learning. They will be due approximately one week from the event or activity that serves as the springboard and **must include references to assigned or outside readings**. Criteria for grading include depth and sophistication of observations, focus, organization of thought, critical thinking, and writing style and mechanics, as well as inclusion of readings.
4. Interview Report: In the process of completing the project in SOC 422, each student will interview a person of her/his choice, turning in an outline of your prospective questions and information about your interviewee first for review. The interview must be video or audio taped and a short (3-5 page, typed, double-spaced) report of the experience turned in. The paper should include a brief description of the informant and context, a summary of the topics covered, followed by an evaluation of the experience: things that went right or wrong, ways to improve technique or questions, why you would or would not want to interview again, how this skill would be helpful in your chosen field, etc. A detailed outline of the topics covered in the interview must accompany the tape and summary paper. This informant should be someone from the Appalachian Region and the information gained should be important to your project.. Each student will share his/her experience with the class in an informal presentation. Again, more detailed guidelines will be given.

GRADING:

Class Attendance & Participation.....	30%
Two Integrative Papers (15% each).....	30%
Models/Causes of Poverty Debate.....	25%
Interview report?.....	15%
.....	100%

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