**SHORT PAPER GUIDELINES**

**Due:** July 14, noon sharp. Send by email to Greg. 1/3 of a letter grade will be deduced for each 24 hours of tardiness.

For this **short paper** (5-6 pages, double-spaced), you will conduct a comparison of two sets of readings from two separate weeks (e.g. Weeks 1 and 4, or Weeks 2 and 3). One week consists of two classes’ worth of readings (e.g. Week 1 = Classes 1 and 2).

We will evaluate the paper based on three criteria: (a) Set-Up, or how you selected the readings and comparison; (b) Engagement, or how well you understood and used the material; and (c) Execution, or how well-written it is. An A-range paper will be solid on all three fronts; a B-range paper will have 2/3 done well; a C-range paper will have 1/3 criteria met; and if you have significant problems in all three domains, it will be < D+.

Please note you are not expected to deliver your political/moral/personal evaluations of any of the readings (there will be time for that in the Final Paper!). We will grade on logic, coherence, delivery, and fairness of interpretation – not your politics or values. Auto-biographical and personal reflections should be avoided: no “sociology of me.” Use reasoning and evidence from the texts to support your summaries.

A. **Set-Up**: The paper should be organized around some kind of comparison of the two separate weeks’ readings. The dimension of comparison is up to you, but it should be clearly stated and appropriate to the readings and weeks you’ve selected. For example, you might want to compare abstract *theoretical* arguments to concrete *empirical* arguments. Or, you could compare *macro*-sociological approaches (which focus on collectivities) with *micro-*sociological approaches (which focus on the individual). You might compare *conflict-theory* themes in the readings with *Durkheimian* themes. Alternatively, you might want to compare thinkers who give causal primacy to *economy* with thinkers who give causal primacy to *culture.* Or, you might compare authors who assume a lot of *rational agency* with authors who assume the importance of *symbolism.*

These are just examples: there is no single correct comparison, and you are encouraged to be creative in choosing one. But whatever it is, your selection should reflect your understanding of the readings. Try to think about what comparison makes sense (are you comparing “apples” to “oranges”?), and whether your scope is manageable for this short paper (is this dimension too broad perhaps?). For example, grouping Goffman and Fanon as a “class identity” approach against Marx and Tilly as a “racial identity” approach might be a little weird. But grouping Hobsbawm’s and Mann’s view of violence against that of Lukes and Weber sounds more reasonable. Likewise, comparing analyses of ideas about everything from the dawn of time may be a little too much for 5-6 pages; comparing analyses of the role of religion in modernity, however, sounds more focused.

Within your chosen Weeks, you should cover a majority of the readings within each class. For example, if you select to compare Weeks 2 and 3, you should make use of 2/3 readings from Class 3, 3/4 readings from Class 4, 4/6 from Class 5 and 2/3 from Class 6. You may cite more than the majority of a given Class, but are not required to.

B. **Engagement:** The paper should demonstrate your understanding of the material by referencing specific arguments, theses, examples, etc. in the readings and by synthesizing the main points across authors. *Referencing* should be specific enough for us to see that you’ve done and understood the readings. The reader should be able to reconstruct precisely where you are drawing your summaries and interpretations from. The *synthesis* should contain only the relevant aspects of the comparison, without superfluous information. For example:

**Great**: Tilly and Hobsbawm liken state-making to criminal activity: state “rulers resembled racketeers” (Tilly p. 75), while “the only effective law and power” was often provided by mafias (Hobsbawm p.35).

**Good**: Durkheim said solidarity is important, and that we have two forms of consciousness, one social and one individual. Mead said language is important, and differentiated the “I” from the “me.”

**Not so good**: Marx and some of the others thought class was more important than religion, but not everybody agreed with that because sometimes coercion is despotic power.

Don’t be intimidated by imperfections of your comparison. It’s OK to acknowledge ambiguity and complexity. Exploring gaps not only gives the reader an ability to accurately assess your comparison, but demonstrates your integrity as an author. There will always be alternative interpretations, confusing passages, and incomplete descriptions. The goal is to differentiate the relevant from the irrelevant, to clarify arguments, and to synthesize what you’ve learned from the readings concisely.

**C. Execution:** Strong papers will be well-written. Take advantage of resources such as the Summer School Writing Center (<https://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies>) and the “Harvard Guide to Using Source.” Make sure sentences within a paragraph are coherently connected to each other, and that the paragraphs are clearly building on each other (not merely repeating what has already been said). Do spellcheck, and be grammatical. Please avoid run-on sentences. Use in-text citations and a Works Cited page in a consistent style of your choice (MLA, APA, ASA, or equivalent). Any referencing style is OK, but be consistent throughout (if it’s Chicago Style, stick to Chicago Style!). Use page numbers according to the reading uploads, or note alternative editions. Do not cite the lecture note slides.

Please review, if you haven't already, the Academic Integrity rules in the syllabus and online at the Summer School website. Zero tolerance for plagiarism and other funny business.