

MIDTERM REVIEWER: PHILIPPINE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Murray Edelman — Constructing the Political Spectacle

Political spectacle refers to the public presentation of politics that shapes how people perceive leaders, events, and social problems.

Political representation is how events and social conditions are presented and interpreted.

Framing is presenting an issue from a particular perspective, emphasizing certain explanations while downplaying others.

Political symbols, speeches, images, and media coverage can influence public opinion by shaping emotions, beliefs, and perceptions. However, how a political action is presented is not necessarily the same as its actual results.

Social problems are real, but how people understand them is influenced by political communication. For example, poverty may be framed as an individual failure or as a consequence of structural inequality. Each explanation directs attention toward different causes and solutions.

Key idea: Political power operates partly through the construction of public meaning. Examine how political messages shape people's understanding of reality.

2. Antonio Gramsci — The Sociology Book

Hegemony is the dominance of a group maintained partly through cultural influence, leadership, and the consent of others.

Dominant groups maintain power not only through force but also by making their ideas appear natural, reasonable, or beneficial to society.

Consent means acceptance or support. **Coercion** means obtaining compliance through force, threats, or punishment. Both can contribute to maintaining social order.

Common sense refers to everyday beliefs people often accept without questioning. **Ideology** is a system of ideas through which people interpret society. Culture can spread these ideas through shared values, practices, education, and media.

For example, believing that poverty always results from laziness may cause people to overlook unequal opportunities and economic structures.

Intellectuals help shape and communicate ideas. Organic intellectuals emerge from particular social groups and help express, organize, and develop those groups' experiences and interests.

The statement, "The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions and without becoming disillusioned," encourages people to recognize social realities without losing the ability to hope and work toward change.

Key idea: Power is maintained partly by shaping what people believe, accept, and consider common sense.

3. Steven Jones — Antonio Gramsci

Jones discusses Gramsci's ideas about hegemony, institutions, intellectuals, political struggle, and social change.

Hegemony operates through culture, identities, representations, and institutions. These can reinforce dominant beliefs and make unequal arrangements appear normal.

War of position is a prolonged struggle to build influence within civil society, culture, and institutions. **War of maneuver** is a more direct struggle for political power.

Crisis of hegemony occurs when a dominant group loses its ability to lead society and secure consent. However, a crisis does not automatically produce progressive change; competing groups may offer different solutions.

Caesarism concerns the emergence of a powerful leader amid serious conflict or a balance between opposing forces. **Bonapartism** describes a political arrangement in which executive leadership or the state gains relative autonomy from competing social forces while claiming to stand above their conflict.

Fordism refers to a system associated with mass production and standardized industrial labor. **Americanism** refers more broadly to a social and cultural model associated with modern American industrial development.

These concepts explain how economic systems, institutions, ideas, and political leadership influence society.

Key idea: Social and political change involves struggles over ideas, institutions, consent, and state power, not merely changes in political leadership.

4. Niels Mulder — Filipino Culture and Social Analysis

A sociological analysis of culture examines shared meanings, beliefs, values, norms, and practices within their social and historical contexts.

Culture consists of learned and shared meanings, values, beliefs, and practices. **Values** are beliefs about what is important or desirable. **Norms** are expectations about appropriate behavior. **Socialization** is the process through which people learn these expectations.

Culture influences social relationships, but it is not identical for every Filipino. Experiences differ across regions, generations, social classes, families, and historical circumstances.

Culture also interacts with **social structure**, which refers to organized patterns of relationships, institutions, and social positions that shape people's opportunities and constraints.

For example, family expectations can influence career decisions, while economic conditions and access to education affect which choices are available.

A sociological approach avoids stereotypes and examines why practices exist, what they mean, and how they relate to wider social conditions.

Key idea: Understand Filipino cultural practices within their social and historical contexts rather than treating them as universal or unchanging.

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE READINGS

Edelman explains how political communication shapes public perception.

Gramsci explains how dominant groups maintain power through culture, ideology, and consent.

Jones develops Gramsci's concepts to explain institutions, political struggle, and changes in power.

Mulder's assigned reading should be consulted for his specific arguments about Filipino culture and social analysis.

Together, these perspectives emphasize that beliefs and behavior are shaped not only by individual choices but also by culture, institutions, political communication, and wider social conditions.