

Political Sociology

Sociology 485—Undergraduate Syllabus

Spring 2010

Tuesday, Thursday 2:10-3:30

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Office Hours: T,Th 1:10-2; and by appt

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

What are politics and political sociology? Are they the debates leading up to an election which chooses between a Democrat and a Republican? Certainly they are that, but they are also much, much more. In general, political sociologists analyze social bases of power and policy determination, institutional interrelationships, intellectuals and ideologies, political trends and change, and political participation and membership. More than anything else, political sociology studies power, authority, and legitimacy.

This class aims to expose students to relevant theoretical and empirical issues in order to introduce the range of problems that define the field of political sociology. We will only cover a very small amount of the sociological scholarship that tries to understand concepts like state, power, authority, domination, autonomy, and global capitalism on a very "macro" level. This class, in particular, will focus on the notion of "citizenship."

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

At the conclusion of this course, the student should

- be familiar with a portion of the literature on political sociology
- be able to distinguish among theoretical approaches used by political sociologists, including the concepts, levels of analysis, and theories of change
- begin to analyze current and historical social and political events from a variety of viewpoints, developing your critical thinking skills

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Familiarity with the literature:

Reading:

Our text will set the stage for discussion:

Orum, Anthony M. and John G. Dale. 2008. *Political Sociology: Power and Participation in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

In addition, there will be several articles and short news pieces placed on Blackboard, depending on the interests of the class.

Distinguish among theoretical approaches

Midterm:

There will be an in-class midterm examination that will test your understanding of the concepts, levels of analysis, and theories of change used by each of the political thinkers we study in this course, and will account for approximately 20% of your grade. The exam will be a combination of short answer, multiple choice, and short essay.

Analyzing current social and political events:

It is expected that students will maintain awareness of current events, drawing from a variety of sources. I highly recommend at least one major national and one local newspaper, an international news source, and two partisan sources, from the right and from the left. For example:

National News:	<i>New York Times</i>	http://nytimes.com/
	<i>Washington Post</i>	http://www.washingtonpost.com/
Local News:	<i>Missoulian</i>	http://missoulian.com
International:	look for intriguing news sources in a language you can read	http://onlinenewspapers.com/
	e.g. Guardian UK	http://www.guardian.co.uk/
Right:	Fox News	http://www.foxnews.com/
Left:	<i>The Nation</i>	http://www.thenation.com/

Discussion Questions:

Your assignment is to derive a discussion question relating your assigned reading (since the last assigned discussion question) to a current event. Please be sure to imagine what sort of question would lead to a good discussion. Each question will be worth 5 points: Excellent (5), Very good (4), satisfactory (3), marginal (2), you submitted something (1) and you didn't even try (0). You will post your question on Blackboard no later than midnight Tuesday (see calendar for due dates), for discussion on Thursday.

Attendance and Participation:

In addition, developing skills in analyzing current events requires regular attendance and participation in the discussions, which are based on the submitted questions. Therefore, attendance will count as 20 points, which means arriving in a timely fashion and staying for at least 2/3 of the class, and actively participating, to the extent that you are comfortable, in discussions.

Distinguishing among theoretical approaches and analyzing historical social and political events:

Paper:

You are required to submit a paper, 8-12 pages in length, that will focus on the application of two or more theoretical perspectives introduced in the course on some historical or current event, using a minimum of five "peer reviewed" articles. You are required to submit your paper problem no later than week seven and your list of references no later than week ten.

Reading Groups and Presentations:

You will choose one additional book and form a reading group to read it over the course of the semester and present it to the class. Obviously, you will have to set a schedule, time to meet, and actually read the book, as well as come up with a way to make the book interesting and relevant to the class. You will grade each other on participation, so it is hoped that you will not shirk this task! The books from which you may choose include, but are not limited to:

Herman, Edward S. and Noam Chomsky. 2002. *Manufacturing Consent*.
 Frank, Thomas. 2004. *What's the Matter with Kansas?*
 Gingrich, Newt. 2009. *Real Change: The Fight for America's Future*.
 Klein, Naomi. 2006. *The Shock Doctrine*.
 Rand, Ayn. *Atlas Shrugged*.
 Sharlet, Jeff. 2009. *The Family*.
 Stiglitz, Joseph. 2002. *Globalization and Its Discontents*.
 Viguierie, Richard. 2006. *Conservatives Betrayed: How George W. Bush and Other Big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause*.
 Yoo, John. 2006. *War by Other Means: An Insider's Account of the War on Terror*.
 Zinn, Howard. *People's History of the United States*.

Discussion questions	20
Attendance	20
Midterm	50
Paper proposal	10
Annotated Bibliography	20
Presentation	20
Final paper	100
Total	240

HOUSEKEEPING ISSUES

All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard. If you have difficulty using this platform, please let me know and we'll go over it together.

Academic Dishonesty: Please note that there are severe penalties for plagiarism. See the Library website for information on how to avoid unintentional plagiarism. <http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/plagiarism>
 The BEST outcome for plagiarized assignments is a zero on the assignment and an opportunity to resubmit. The WORST outcome is expulsion from the University.

Respect: Politics is something that excites some very deep passions (a reason why people avoid the topic at family dinners!), and I want you to bring that passion to class. However, please be respectful of the passions and beliefs of others. You may not believe this, but over time opinions change. The best way to bring about the change that you believe others should make in their opinions is to argue persuasively and respectfully, not condescendingly or dismissively. Furthermore, you cannot be an effective advocate for your position until you understand the opposing viewpoints.

Deadlines: I know that difficulties arise in all our lives, but I have limited flexibility in accommodating late assignments. The reason for the deadlines is to give me an opportunity to help you learn. If the assignments are late, I have less opportunity to help you. Therefore, while there will be no point penalty except for the paper and the discussion questions (see below), late assignments WILL NOT BE RETURNED. I will grade them, but will not comment on them. This is exceptionally difficult in the case of the paper problem and the annotated bibliography. GET THOSE IN ON TIME!!

Late discussion questions will lose one point for each eight hours that they are late. Late papers will lose five points for each day they are late, unless I have given you explicit permission. Early papers (submitted on or before Wednesday, May 12) will receive a five point bonus.

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Week	Date	Subject	Reading	Assignment/Activity
1	1/26	Introducing the course; Power & Authority		Lecture
	1/28	We the People: Nations & Nation-States	Orum Ch1	Egalité for All
2	2/2	to form a more perfect Union: Forms of governance	Orum Ch 6	Lecture
	2/4			
3	2/9	Theories of Political Sociology insure domestic Tranquility	Orum Ch 4	Lecture <i>Discussion questions (BB)</i>
	2/11	Durkheim, Toqueville, Putnam and Consensus		
4	2/16	Theories establish Justice	Orum Ch 2	Lecture <i>Paper problem (BB)</i>
	2/18	Weber Bureaucracy and Revolution		
5	2/23	Theories provide for the common defence	Orum Ch 3	Lecture
	2/25	Marx, Poulantzas, Miliband		Butte Miners' Strike
6	3/2	Theories promote the general Welfare	Orum Ch 5	Lecture <i>Discussion questions (BB)</i>
	3/4	Polanyi and the Welfare State		
7	3/9	Review		Using the library
	3/11	Midterm (in class)		
8	3/16	Marginalization	Hobson (BB) Collins (BB)	<i>Discussion questions (BB)</i>
	3/18			<i>Annotated Bibliography (BB)</i>
9	3/23	Media	Orum Ch 12	
	3/25		Gray, et al. (BB) Moreale (BB) Baym (BB)	
10				
11	4/6	Media, cont.		<i>Discussion Questions (BB)</i>
	4/8			
12	4/13	Social Movements	Orum Chs 10,11	
	4/15	NCUR—No Class, see alternate assignment		

13	4/20	Social Movements		<i>Discussion Questions (BB)</i>
	4/22			
14	4/27	Presentations		
	4/29	Presentations		
15	5/4	Presentations		
	5/6	Presentations		

Final Paper due Thursday, May 13 at 2 p.m. on Blackboard.