

Sociology 140: *POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY*

Fall 2016
University of California, Berkeley

Laleh Behbehanian, Ph.D.

T/Th 5-6:30pm (105 Northgate)

Email: laleh@berkeley.edu
Mailbox: 410 Barrows Hall

Office Hours (477 Barrows): Tuesdays 2:30 - 3:30
Thursdays 3:30 - 4:30

Sociologists have always been inspired by the need to make sense of the world around them. Just as classical sociologists like Marx and Weber sought to understand the enormous changes unleashed upon their societies by Industrialization or political processes of democratization, we too are faced with a range of massive social transformations. This course will provide students with an *introduction to the field of political sociology through engagement with major contemporary developments*. The course is structured around three themes – the *Global Economic Crisis*, the “*War on Terror*,” and the *Occupy Movement*. Each theme provides an empirical entry point into the field of political sociology. In pursuing questions related to these contemporary developments, we will be introduced to a variety of concepts, theories and debates that are central to the field. In particular, we will focus on one of the main concepts of political sociology – *the state*.

Part I of the course introduces the case of the **Global Economic Crisis** that spread throughout the world in 2008. This provides the opportunity to engage with a long tradition of Marxist scholarship that seeks to understand the *relationship between state and economy* (Engels, Lenin, Block, Harvey). In doing so, we will explore a range of issues (the relation between state and capital, the political and economic power of the “ruling class,” the role of the state in mediating the crises of capitalism) that we can then apply towards understanding the Global Economic Crisis.

While Marxists have generally approached the state in terms of its ends or economic objectives, scholars inspired by Weber focus upon the *means of state power* (violence, bureaucracy, war-making, surveillance). Part II of the course will explore the case of the US’ “**War on Terror**” through the lens of this scholarship. These readings raise a series of questions that we will then apply towards understanding the “War on Terror”: What is the relationship between states and violence? How do states monopolize the power to classify certain forms of violence as “(il)legitimate”? (Weber) How is war-making central to processes of state-making? (Tilly) What are the various forms of state power and how are they intrinsically gendered? (Brown) How have surveillance practices historically developed as a means of governing race and class relations in the US? (Parenti & Guzik)

Political sociology is generally oriented around the study of relations of power. Sociologists seek to understand both the nature and operation of power, as well as the various forms of resistance that inevitably surface within unequal power relations. Part III of the course will introduce the case of the **Occupy Movement** as a way of exploring scholarship on *resistance and social*

movements. Beginning with the classic work of Piven & Cloward, we will consider the various ways sociologists have approached the study of resistance and social movements in the US. Drawing upon the first two parts of the course, we return to some of the same scholars (Harvey, Brown) in order to understand how the contemporary economic and political developments we've discussed have played a role in fueling the emergence of the Occupy Movement. And just as we focused upon identifying the concrete means and techniques of state power in Part II, we now turn to exploring the particular tactics and strategies of resistance that characterize "Occupy" (occupation, disruption, civil disobedience), considering how they are shaped by a long history of social movements in the US. Maintaining our focus upon the state, we conclude by examining the dialectical relationship between strategies of resistance and repression.

PART I: STATE & ECONOMY (The Global Economic Crisis)

8/25 COURSE INTRODUCTION

Film shown during class: *Capitalism Hits the Fan* (2008) - Lecture by Economist Richard Wolff

(Available at the Media Resources Center at Moffitt Library: DVD X1278)

8/30 MARXISM: *The Global Economic Crisis*

Film shown during class: *Capitalism Hits the Fan* (2008) - Lecture by Economist Richard Wolff

9/1 MARXISM: *Origin & Functions of the State*

Engels, Friedrich. 1978 [1884]. "The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State" in *The Marx-Engels Reader, Second Edition*. New York: EE Norton. (Pp.751- 759)

9/6 MARXISM: *Origin & Functions of the State*

Lenin, V.I. 1932. *State and Revolution*. New York: International Publishers. (Pp. 7-15; 71-75)

9/8 NEO-MARXISM: *Autonomy & Dynamics of the State*

Block, Fred. 1987. "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State" in *Revising State Theory: Essays in Politics and Postindustrialism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (Pp. 51-68)

9/13 CONTEMPORARY NEO-MARXISM: *Neoliberalism*

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ("Introduction" Pp. 1-4; "Freedom's Just Another Word..." Pp. 5-38)

9/15 CONTEMPORARY NEO-MARXISM: *The Neoliberal State*

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ("The Neoliberal State" Pp. 64-86; "Neoliberalism on Trial" Pp. 159-165)

9/20 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

Review Marxists (Wolff, Engels/Lenin, Block & Harvey): *How would they explain the Global Economic Crisis?*

Film shown during class: *Inside Job* (2010)

9/22 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

Taibbi, Matt. 2015. "Eric Holder, Wall Street Double Agent, Comes in From the Cold" *Rolling Stone*. July 8. (<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/eric-holder-wall-street-double-agent-comes-in-from-the-cold-20150708>)

Katz, Claudio. 2011. "Interpretations of the Economic Crisis" *International Socialist Review* 75. (<http://www.isreview.org/issues/75/feat-katz.shtml>)

Film shown during class: *Inside Job* (2010)

*****ESSAY 1** will be distributed during class and is **due on Monday 9/26 by 10pm**

PART II: THE MEANS OF STATE POWER (The "War on Terror")

9/27 WEBER: *Violence*

Weber, Max. 1946 [1919]. "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Pp. 77-85)

9/29 WEBER: *Violence*

Weber, Max. 1946 [1919]. "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Pp. 115-128)

Whitaker, Brian. 2001. "The definition of terrorism." *The Guardian*. May 7. Retrieved September 19, 2010. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/may/07/terrorism>).

10/4 TILLY: *War-Making & State-Making*

Charles Tilly. 1985. "War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime" in *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. NY: Cambridge University Press. (Pp.169-191)

10/6 TILLY: *War-Making & State-Making*

Watch the documentary *Top Secret America* (PBS/Frontline)
[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/topsecretamerica/#original-report-\(sept.-2011\)](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/topsecretamerica/#original-report-(sept.-2011))

10/11 BROWN: *Masculinist State Power*

Brown, Wendy. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State" in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Pp. 166-186)

10/13 BROWN: *Prerogative Power*

Brown, Wendy. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State" in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Pp. 186-196)

Baker, Aryn. 2010. "Afghan Women and the Return of the Taliban." *Time Magazine*. August 9. Retrieved September 27, 2010. (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2007238-1,00.html>).

Jones, Ann. 2010. "Afghan Women Have Already Been Abandoned." *The Nation*. August 30. Retrieved September 27, 2010. (<http://www.thenation.com/article/154020/afghan-women-have-already-been-abandoned>).

CIA Memorandum. 2010. "Afghanistan: Sustaining West European Support for the NATO-led Mission—Why Counting on Apathy Might Not Be Enough." March 11. Released by Wikileaks. March 26. (<http://file.wikileaks.org/file/cia-afghanistan.pdf>).

10/18 THE "WAR ON TERROR"

Film shown during class: *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007)

10/20 THE "WAR ON TERROR"

Parenti, Christian. 2003. *The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America from Slavery to the War on Terror*. New York: Basic Books. Chapters 1-3 & 5 (Pp. 1-42; 61-76)

Film shown during class: *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007)

10/25 PARENTI: *Race, Class & Surveillance*

Parenti, Christian. 2003. *The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America from Slavery to the War on Terror*. New York: Basic Books. Chapters 11, 12 & 14 (Pp. 151-182; 199-212)

10/27 SURVEILLANCE: *The "War on Terror" and Beyond...*

Watch the documentary *Spying on the Homefront* (PBS/Frontline)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/homefront/>

Guzik, Keith. 2009. "Discrimination by Design: predictive data mining as security practice in the United States' 'war on terrorism'" *Surveillance & Society* 7(1):1-17.

Winston, Ali. 2015. "Predictive policing is 'wave of the future,' NY commissioner says" *Center for Investigative Reporting*. July 31. (<https://www.revealnews.org/article/predictive-policing-is-wave-of-the-future-ny-commissioner-says/>)

Joseph, George. 2015. "Feds Regularly Monitored Black Lives Matter Since Ferguson" *The Intercept*. July 24. (<https://theintercept.com/2015/07/24/documents-show-department-homeland-security-monitoring-black-lives-matter-since-ferguson/>)

*****ESSAY 2** will be distributed during class and is **due on Monday 10/31 by 10pm**

PART III: RESISTANCE & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (OCCUPY)

11/1 PIVEN & CLOWARD: *The Structuring of Protest*

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. 1977. *Poor People's Movements: Why they succeed and how they fail*. New York: Vintage Books. (Introduction to Paperback Edition & Introduction, Pp. ix – xxiv; Chapter 1, "The Structuring of Protest" Pp. 1 – 37)

11/3 THE POWER OF DISRUPTION

Piven, Frances Fox. 2011. "Economic Collapse, Mass Unemployment, and the Rise of Disorder" in *Who's Afraid of Frances Fox Piven?* New York: The New Press. (Pp. 41-66)

Wolf, Sherry. 2009. "Stonewall: The birth of gay power" *International Socialist Review* 63. January. (<http://isreview.org/issue/63/stonewall-birth-gay-power>)

11/8 TACTICS OF DISRUPTION

Ciccariello-Maher, George. 2015. "Riots Work: Wolf Blitzer and the Washington Post Completely Missed the Real Lesson from Baltimore." *Salon.com*. May 4. (http://www.salon.com/2015/05/04/riots_work_wolf_blitzer_and_the_washington_post_completely_missed_the_real_lesson_from_baltimore/)

Schultz, Bud and Ruth Schultz. 2001. "The Vietnam Era: The War Against the Peacemakers" in *The Price of Dissent: Testimonies to Political Repression in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Pp. 289-302)

Brissette, Emily. 2011. "For the Fracture of Good Order: On 'Violence' at Occupy Oakland." *Counterpunch*. Nov 4-11. (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/11/04/for-the-fracture-of-good-order/>)

11/10 OCCUPY WALL STREET

Gould-Wartofsky, Michael A. *The Occupiers: The Making of the 99 Percent Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. (Chapters 1-3)

Film shown during class: *History of an Occupation*, Fault Lines/*Al Jazeera* (2012)

11/15 WHY OCCUPY?

Harvey, David. 2011. "The Party of Wall Street Meets its Nemesis" October 28.
(<http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/777-david-harvey-the-party-of-wall-street-meets-its-nemesis>)

Brown, Wendy. 2011. "Occupy Wall Street: Return of a Repressed *Res-Publica*." *Theory & Event* 14.4.

Butler, Judith. 2011. "For and Against Precarity" *Tidal: Occupy Theory, Occupy Strategy*. Issue 1. Pp. 12- (http://bjsonline.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/12/TIDAL_occupythory.pdf)

Hammond, John L. 2015. "The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street" *Science & Society* 79(2): 288-313.

11/17 OCCUPY OAKLAND

Behbehanian, Laleh. 2016. *The Pre-emption of Resistance: Occupy Oakland and the Evolution of State Power*. PhD Dissertation, *University of California, Berkeley*. (Chapter 2, "Naked Coercion: Holding Ground").

11/22 DIALECTIC of RESISTANCE & REPRESSION

Noakes, John. 2001. "From Water Cannons to Rubber Bullets: How the Policing of Protest Has Changed and What it Means." *The Long Term View* 5, no. 2: 85-94.

Gilham, Patrick F., Bob Edwards, and John A. Noakes. 2013. "Strategic incapacitation and the policing of Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City, 2011." *Policing & Society* 23, no. 1: 81-102.

Ciccariello-Maher, George. 2013. "Counterinsurgency and the Occupy Movement" in *Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency*. Ed. By Kristian Williams, Will Munger and Lara Messersmith-Glavin. Oakland: AK Press.

11/24 NO CLASS

11/29 DIALECTIC of RESISTANCE & REPRESSION

Murch, Donna. 2015. "Ferguson's Inheritance." *Jacobin*. (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/ferguson-police-black-lives-matter/>)

12/1 PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS

Murray, Daniel. 2014. "Prefiguration or Actualization? Radical Democracy and Counter-Institution in the Occupy Movement" *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. November 3. (<http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/11/prefiguration-or-actualization-radical-democracyand-counter-institution-in-the-occupy-movement/>)

Wright, Erik Olin. 2011. "Real Utopias" *Contexts* 10:2 (Pp. 36-42)

*****ESSAY 3** will be distributed during class and is **due on Monday 12/12 by 10pm**

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

10% Attendance
30% ESSAY on Part 1 (9/26)
30% ESSAY on Part 2 (10/31)
30% ESSAY on Part 3 (12/12)

REQUIRED READINGS:

All readings listed on the syllabus are included in the **course reader, available at *Replica Digital Ink*** (510 549-9991) at 2138 Oxford Street (by the Center Street entrance to campus near the Downtown Berkeley BART station], around the corner from Starbucks). Required readings have purposely been limited to ensure that students can be reasonably expected to read *all* assigned texts *carefully* and *thoroughly*.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are ***allotted 2 absences*** without penalty. Any additional absences will result in a grade penalty. Absences may be excused by the instructor only in *extreme* circumstances, and only if discussed with me *prior* to the absence. It is crucial that all students arrive on time (class will start promptly at 10 minutes after the hour).

ESSAYS:

Students will write a short take-home essay (no longer than 5 pages double spaced) at the conclusion of each of the three parts of the course. Essays will be geared towards asking students to synthesize the scholarship covered in each part of the course, and to apply relevant concepts and theories to our three themes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All written work must be your own. Any words, or *ideas*, borrowed from another source (even if paraphrased) must be appropriately cited. Any form of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS:

Please notify me immediately if you require any special accommodations for the course. If you are registered with the DSP program, please ensure that your authorization letter is forwarded to me at the beginning of the semester.