SOC 140
POLITICS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Course description: This course focuses on the interaction between politics and society. We will look at different forms of politics including voting, social movements, party politics, state policies, direct democratic action, and revolution. We will discuss whether, how, when, and why each of these forms of political action impact social change. We will ask whether some are more influential ways of bringing about change than others. We will study both historical examples and contemporary cases based on sociological perspectives.

Evaluation:

There will be two take-home examinations (prompts will be distributed in advance). You will write one research paper. Section discussions also constitute a part of the final grade.

Midterm (October 2, 5 double-spaced pages): 17%
Final (December 14, 11 am, 7-8 double-spaced pages): 27%
Research paper (December 1): 36%
Section participation: 20%

Required texts: The reader is available at Copy Central (on 2411 Telegraph).

The research paper

The goal of the research paper is applying the perspectives we have learned to cases that interest you. You will pick one revolution, policy, or movement and discuss it within the context of the theories. You can, for example, take one theory and discuss why it works better in the case you have chosen than other plausible theories (you do not have to cover all the theories we have learned). You can also seek to combine the insights of two or more theories.

You will have to build the argument you develop in this paper on additional research. This means that you have to read additional articles and books about the revolution, policy, or movement of your choice and refer to these in your paper (along with the articles and books covered in class).

First step: On October 11, you will hand in a research proposal that will outline your argument and provide a provisional bibliography (1 double-spaced page, not counting the bibliography).
Second step: 5-page version -- peer-reading (instead of the GSIs). A fellow student will read your paper and offer comments on it. You need to find somebody who is working on a different topic. (Due on November 13; peer comments due on November 20).

Final step: The final paper will be double-spaced, and a maximum of 9-10 pages (including the bibliography).

Week 1: Voting in America


https://www.brennancenter.org/new-voting-restrictions-america

Week 2: Values and politics


Week 3: Class, slavery, and party


Week 4: The New Deal


Week 5: Direct Action in the Civil Rights movement and the New Left


Week 6: New Social Movements and the media

**Week 7: Comparative analysis of revolutions**


**Week 8: New Social Movements and “life politics”: liberation and dispersion**


**Week 9: End of dispersion? The Global Justice Movement**


**Week 10: Occupy Wall Street**


**Week 11: The Tea Party**


**Week 12: The de-laborization of the Democratic Party and labor’s Republican turn**
