

SOC 140: Politics & Social Change

# ***POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY***

University of California,  
Berkeley FALL 2019

**Laleh Behbehanian, Ph.D. T/Th 9:30 – 11:00** (100 Genetics & Plant Biology)

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Sociologists have always been inspired by the need to make sense of the world around us. This course provides students with an ***introduction to political sociology through engagement with major contemporary developments***. Each part of the course focuses on specific cases that provide us with empirical entry points into the field of political sociology. In pursuing questions related to these contemporary developments, students will be introduced to a variety of concepts, theories and debates that are central to the field, with a particular focus on ***the state***.

**Part I** of the course examines three interrelated contemporary developments -- **the Great Recession, Mass Incarceration, and Mass Deportation** – through the perspective of Marxists and other scholars who seek to understand the relationship between ***state and economy***. We focus on the contemporary neoliberal state (Harvey), seeking to understand its projects of mass incarceration (Alexander & Wacquant) and mass deportation (Golash-Boza).

**Part II** explores the case of the US' "**War on Terror**" through the lens of Weberian scholarship that focuses on the ***means of state power*** (violence, war-making, state-making, prerogative power). These scholars 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 forms of violence as "(il)legitimate"? (Weber) How is war-making central to processes of state (trans)formation? (Tilly) What are the various forms of state power and how are they

intrinsically gendered? (Brown)

Finally, in **Part III** we explore the issue of **Surveillance** by turning to Foucauldian scholars who reject “state centered” approaches, focusing instead upon the exercise of **technologies of power** (Foucault). We examine a range of surveillance practices, contextualizing them within a long history of efforts to govern race and class relations in the US (Parenti & Browne), and conclude by exploring the emergence of new technologies of risk assessment (Feeley & Simon and Guzik).

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## **PART I: STATE & ECONOMY**

### ***The Great Recession, Mass Incarceration & Mass Deportation***

*“Prisons are the underbelly of global capitalism.”* (Tanya Golash-Boza)

#### **8/29 Course Introduction**

Reading Assignment: Course Syllabus - Read this syllabus thoroughly as you are responsible for

being aware of all course requirements and policies (laid out on pp.7-9).

#### **9/3 Booms & Busts: The Crises of Capitalism**

Viewing Assignment: “Capitalism Hits the Fan.” (2009) Lecture by Richard Wolff

<https://berkeley.kanopy.com/video/capitalism-hits-the-fan>

\*Watch this video lecture above **BEFORE** today’s

class

**9/5 *Classical Marxism: The Origin and Function 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)

**9/10 *The State as an Instrument of the Ruling Class***

Lenin, V.I. 1932 [1917]. *State and Revolution*. New York: International Publishers.  
(Pp.7-15)

\*The assigned reading for today is very short, so you should use the opportunity to begin the next assigned reading (9/12), which is significantly longer.

**9/12  
*Neoliberalization***

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

"Introduction" and Ch.1 "Freedom's Just Another Word..."  
(Pp.1-38)

**9/17 *The Neoliberal State & Accumulation by Dispossession***

Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Ch.3 "The Neoliberal State" and excerpt

of Ch.6 "Neoliberalism on Trial" (Pp.64-86;  
159-165)

**9/19 *The Global Economic Crisis of 2008***

Viewing Assignment: *Inside Job*  
(2010)

\*Watch this documentary **BEFORE** today's class. [Link for viewing posted on bCourses.]

Class discussion: Applying Marxists to *Inside Job*

**9/24 *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration***

Badger, Emily. 2013. "The Dramatic Racial Bias of Subprime Lending During the Housing Boom" *CityLab*. August 16.

(<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2013/08/blacks-really-were-targeted-bogus-loans-during-housing-boom/6559/>)

Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of*

*Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. Excerpts of Intro & Ch.1 (Pp.1-16; 20-30).

**9/26 *Racial Caste Systems: From Slavery to Mass Incarceration***

Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*. Excerpt of Ch.1  
(Pp.30-57)

**10/1 *The Economies of Peculiar Institutions***

Waquant, Loic. "From slavery to mass incarceration: Rethinking the 'race question' in the

US." *New Left Review* 13 (2002):  
41-60.

### **10/3 *Global Apartheid: Mass Deportation***

Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria. 2015. *Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor, and Global*

*Capitalism*. New York: New York University Press. (Pp.vii-x; 1-19; 167-169; 199-203; 217)

## **PART II: THE MEANS OF STATE POWER**

### ***The "War on Terror"***

*"The decisive means for politics is violence."* (Max  
Weber)

### **10/8 *The State's Monopoly of Violence***

Weber, Max. 1946 [1919]. "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*.

New York: Oxford University Press. (Pp.  
77-84)

**\*\*\*MIDTERM EXAM distributed in class on  
10/8\*\*\***

### **10/10 (II) *Legitimate Violence***

Weber, Max. 1946 [1919]. "Politics as a Vocation" (Pp. 115-128)

Whitaker, Brian. 2001. "The definition of terrorism." *The Guardian*. May 7.

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/may/07/terrorism>)

### **\*\*\*MIDTERM EXAM DUE on 10/13\*\*\***

#### **10/15 *The State as Racketeer***

Tilly, Charles. 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.169-186)

#### **10/17 *War (Re)Makes States***

Viewing Assignment: *Top Secret America* (2013)  
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)))

\*Watch this documentary **BEFORE** today's class

Class Discussion: Applying Tilly to *Top Secret America*

#### **10/22 *Masculinist State Power***

Brown, Wendy. 1995. *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Excerpt of Ch.7 "Finding the Man in the State" (Pp. 166-186)

### **10/24 Prerogative Power**

Brown, "Finding the Man in the State." (Pp. 186-196)

Baker, Aryn. 2010. "Afghan Women and the Return of the Taliban." *Time Magazine*. August 9. (<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. (<http://www.thenation.com/article/154020/afghan-women-have-already-been-abandoned>).

Class Discussion: Applying Brown to Baker & Jones Articles

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### **10/29 The "War on Terror"**

Viewing Assignment\*: *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007)

\*Watch this documentary **BEFORE** today's class. [Link for viewing posted on bCourses.]

Class Discussion: Applying Weberians to *Taxi to the*

*Dark Side*

\*This documentary contains extremely graphic images and footage of physical, sexual and psychological violence. If you are not comfortable viewing this documentary, please contact me and we can arrange for an alternative means of accessing the information presented.

## **PART III: TECHNOLOGIES OF POWER**

### ***Surveillance***

*"To be governed is to be watched.* (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon)

#### ***10/31 Sovereign & Disciplinary Power***

Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage

Books. (Pp. 3-11; 14-31;  
135-138)

#### ***11/5 Disciplinary Technologies & Discourses***

Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (Pp. 170-187; 191-192;

195-203;  
218-221)

#### ***11/7 Surveillance in the "War on Terror"***



Oksala, Johanna. *How to Read Foucault*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.  
“Repressed  
Sexuality” and “A True Sex” (Pp.  
64-79)

Viewing Assignment: *Spying on the Homefront*  
(2007)

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/homefront/>

\*Watch this documentary **BEFORE** today’s  
class

### **11/12 Race, Class & Surveillance**

Parenti, Christian. 2003. *The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America from Slavery to the War on Terror*. New York: Basic Books. Ch.1, 2 & 5 (Pp.1-32; 61-76)

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### **11/14 The Panopticon & the Slave Ship**

Parenti, *The Soft Cage*. Ch.14  
(Pp.199-212)

Browne, Simone. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press. Excerpts of Ch.1 & 2 (Pp.31-52; 76-79)

### **11/19 Security**

Schuilenburg, Marc. 2011. "The Securitization of Society: On the Rise of Quasi-Criminal Law and Selective Exclusion" *Social Justice* 38(1-2): 71-89. (Read **only** Pp. 71-76)

Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Pp. 4-6; 9-11; 55-63; 103-104; 107-110)

### **11/21 *The New Penology: Risk Management***

Feeley, M. M., & Simon, J. 1992. "The new penology: Notes on the emerging strategy of corrections and its implications" *Criminology* 30(4): 449-474. Read excerpts (Pp.449- 452; 455-465; 467-470)

**11/26 TBA**

**11/28 NO CLASS (University Holiday)**

### **12/3 *Security Technologies: Risk Assessment***

Angwin, Julia, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu and Lauren Kirchner. 2016. "Machine Bias."

*ProPublica*. May 23. (<https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing>).

Lum, Kristian and William Isaac. 2016. "To Predict and Serve?" *Significance* 13(5): 14-19.

(<https://hrdag.org/publications/to-predict-and-ser>

ve/).

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. Excerpt (Pp.1- 12)

**12/5 The Newest Jim Crow**

Alexander, Michele. 2018. "The Newest Jim Crow." The New York Times. November 8.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/08/opinion/sunday/criminal-justice-reforms-racetechnology.html>)

**\*\*\*FINAL EXAM distributed in class on 12/5\*\*\***

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**\*\*\*FINAL EXAM DUE on 12/16\*\***

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

**10%** Attendance

**15%** Pop Quizzes

**35%** Midterm Exam on Part 1 (Due 10/13)

**40%** Final Exam on Parts 2 & 3 (Due 12/16)

***Students are expected to thoroughly and carefully read the course policies below.***

**DO NOT** email me with questions that can be answered by referring to this syllabus.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

Class **attendance is mandatory** and lectures are structured to maximize student participation. Being present and actively participating in class is central to the learning process. Attendance will be taken at every class meeting and it is students' responsibility to make sure that they have signed the attendance sheet.

Students are **allotted 3 absences** without penalty. This allotment is intended to accommodate for ***any and all illnesses or family and personal matters***, and therefore relieve me of the enormous administrative work of dealing with absence requests on an individual basis. Please **do not email** to notify me of or explain absences – the absence allotment is intended to accommodate for any/all reasons for missing class. Exceptions to the attendance policy will only be made in situations of serious *extended* illness or severe crises and require submitting the relevant documentation, as well as a meeting with me to discuss the situation.

Class begins promptly at 10 minutes after the scheduled hour. Please be **present on time** as late arrivals disrupt the class. Students are expected to remain in the classroom until the conclusion of the lecture. Students should **never leave class early** without discussing this with me prior. Late arrivals and early departures will impact the attendance grade.

## **REQUIRED READINGS:**

Our primary work as sociologists involves reading – this course requires extensive and careful reading. The assignments listed for each class meeting are to be read **prior** to that scheduled class. The expectation is that students allocate the necessary time to undertake a **thorough and careful reading**. The examinations for this course consist of take-home, open-book essays which students will have a limited time to complete. Thus highlighting, underlining and notetaking throughout the semester will prove highly beneficial for these exams.

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). Course readings are **also available on bCourses**.

Whether you choose to purchase the course reader or utilize the digital copies on Bcourses, you are expected to **bring the assigned readings to every class** meeting.

## **READING GUIDES:**

Included in the course reader (and available on bCourses) are reading guides for most of the assigned readings. You should always **refer to the reading guides before beginning the assigned readings** as they are intended to make the process easier (especially for the more difficult theoretical texts). Utilizing these guides will enable you to focus on the most important issues and help clarify your reading. Paying careful attention to the reading guides is also crucial for doing well on the pop quizzes.

## **POP QUIZZES:**

To ensure that students keep up with reading and viewing assignments, **6 pop quizzes** will be given in class throughout the semester at unannounced times. The quizzes will be quick and short and will assess basic comprehension of the assigned readings (or viewing assignments). You don't have to fully understand the readings to do well on the quizzes (we will make full sense of them together in class), but they do require that you read the assigned texts *fully and carefully*. They also require that you pay careful attention to the reading guides provided (as pop quizzes may pose questions drawn from the reading guides).

Out of the 6 pop quizzes given, **only 4 will count** towards the final grade. The purpose of this is to accommodate for missed pop quizzes due to absences. **There are no make-ups for pop- quizzes**. For students who complete more than the required 4 pop quizzes, the lowest grades will be dropped. Given that this policy allows students to miss 1/3 of the total pop quizzes, no further accommodations or exceptions will be made. I have purposely set this generous allotment to accommodate for any/all situations resulting in missed quizzes, and thus to relieve myself of the extensive work

of dealing with individual requests for accommodations.

## **EXAMS:**

The midterm and final for this course will be **open-book, take-home examinations** that consist of short essays that assess students' mastery of the course materials. Essays will be geared towards asking students to synthesize and bring together the scholarship covered in the course.

The distribution and due dates for the exams are listed on this syllabus. Students are expected to be aware of these dates and to schedule and prepare accordingly. (You should check these deadlines against your other academic obligations at the beginning of the semester and ensure

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that you are able to meet them before deciding to remain in this course.) **Please do not contact me with requests to change due dates because of other academic obligations.** Late submissions will result in a grade penalty.

## **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 accommodation letter is forwarded to me at the beginning of the semester. Students who wish to utilize DSP accommodations for the midterm or final exams are required to contact me about this well in advance. Students who need accommodations for the pop quizzes are required to discuss this with me in the beginning of the semester.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

All written work must be your own. Any words, or even *ideas*, drawn from another source (even if paraphrased) must be appropriately cited.

