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).

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


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

*Watch this video lecture above BEFORE today’s
9/5 **Classical Marxism: The Origin and Function of the State**


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


*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**


“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


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


10/1 The Economies of Peculiar Institutions

10/3 Global Apartheid: Mass Deportation


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


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

10/10 (II) Legitimate Violence
Weber, Max. 1946 [1919]. “Politics as a Vocation” (Pp. 115-128)

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

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

10/15 The State as Racketeer


10/17 War (Re)Makes States

Viewing Assignment: Top Secret America (2013) PBS/Frontline

*Watch this documentary BEFORE today's class

Class Discussion: Applying Tilly to Top Secret America

10/22 Masculinist State Power

10/24 **Prerogative Power**


Class Discussion: Applying Brown to Baker & Jones Articles

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*
*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


11/5 Disciplinary Technologies & Discourses


11/7 Surveillance in the “War on Terror”

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

*Watch this documentary *BEFORE* today's class

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


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


**11/19 Security**


11/21 The New Penology: Risk Management


11/26 TBA

11/28 NO CLASS (University Holiday)

12/3 Security Technologies: Risk Assessment


12/5 *The Newest Jim Crow*


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

***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 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 ACCOMMODATIONS:

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.