

Fall 2020
TuTh 12:30-2:00

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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 (primarily institutionalism and neo-Marxism, but also functionalism and pragmatism). The cases will include American populism, the New Deal, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Civil Rights movement, student movements of the 1960s, and the global uprisings of 2011-2013. We will build up to an analysis of today's politics, including BLM-, sexual harassment-, and pandemic-related movements and state interventions.

Evaluation: There will be three take-home examinations (5 double-spaced pages). Section discussions and reading response memos also constitute a part of the final grade.

Take-home examinations: 75% (due October 1; November 5; December 17)

Reading memos: 16%

Section participation: 10%

Note that this adds up to 101%. You are starting the course with a bonus of 1%!

Required texts: The reader is available at Copy Central (on Telegraph Ave). You can also buy the reader in digital format instead (from the same store).

Reading response memos: Students will write 300-word responses to the texts. You will write eight of these memos. You will write them AFTER you hear the professor lecture on the text. They will be uploaded on bcourses. Each response memo will be worth two points. Further guidelines on memos will follow.

Recognizing and appreciating our era: In the spirit of the current moment in world and American politics, we will do our best to make this course participatory and inclusive. I therefore encourage you to upload to bcourses analyses of contemporary politics. You can then, if you want, bring up these texts and your take on them in lecture or discussion.

These texts can be of any political color. The only two criteria are that 1) they need to be analytical; 2) they cannot incite exclusion based on race, gender, sexuality, class, immigration status, religion, or nationality. I prefer to see scholarly texts, but other texts (journalism, poetry, political writings) are welcome too.

Lectures will be online and synchronous. They will be recorded and posted on bcourses. We will also discuss other pandemic-related accommodations as the need arises. Lecture attendance is not required. However, a lot of learning happens during lecture, and I strongly advise attendance to the extent your situation permits it. Please do not plan on relying on recordings of lecture unless you have to.

REQUIRED TEXTS

September 1-3: Voting in America

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. 2000. *Why Americans still don't Vote*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 23-71, 108-36.

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

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/stop-blaming-young-voters-not-turning-out-sanders/608137/>

September 8-10: The functionalist approach to politics

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1963. *The First New Nation: the United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective*. New York: Basic Books. Pp. 101-139, 207-247.

September 15-17: Institutional and Marxist approaches to politics

Michels, Robert. 1949. *Political parties: a sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy*. Glencoe, Il: Free Press. Pp. 400-408.

de Leon, Cedric, Manali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal. 2015 “Political Articulation: The Structured Creativity of Parties.” Pp. 1-35 in *Building Blocs: How Parties Organize Society*, edited by Leon, Desai, and Tuğal. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

September 22-24: The New Deal

Skocpol, Theda, Kenneth Finegold vs. Michael Goldfield. 1990. “Explaining New Deal Labor Policy.” *The American Political Science Review* 84(4): 1297–1315.

Eidlin, Barry. 2016. "Why is There No Labor Party in the United States? Political Articulation and the Canadian Comparison, 1932-1948." *American Sociological Review* 81(3):488-516.

September 29: Review

October 1: Midterm due

Upload your essay on bcourses by 2 pm.

October 6-8: Direct Action in the Civil Rights movement and the New Left

Polletta, Francesca. 2002. *Freedom is an endless meeting: democracy in American social movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 44-48, 55-146.

October 13-15: Comparative analysis of revolutions

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 3-43, 284-293.

Burawoy, Michael. 1989. "Two methods in search of science: Skocpol vs. Trotsky." *Theory and Society* 18(6): 759-805.

October 20-22: New Social Movements and "life politics"

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press. pp. 209-241

Boltanski, Luc (2002) "The left after May 1968 and the longing for total revolution." *Thesis Eleven* 69(1): 1-20.

October 27-29: The global protest wave of 2011-2013 and rightwing reaction

Tuğal, Cihan. 2015 "Elusive revolt: The contradictory rise of middle-class politics." *Thesis Eleven* 130(1): 74-95.

Tuğal, Cihan. 2013. "Resistance Everywhere: The Gezi Revolt in Global Perspective." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 49: 157-172.

Tuğal, Cihan. 2020. "The Radical Right: Thriving and in Disarray." *Marxist Sociology Blog: Theory, Research, Politics*, pp. 1-5.

November 3: Review

November 5: Midterm due

Upload your essay on bcourses by 2 pm.

November 10-12: Racial violence and the BLM movement

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2016. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black liberation*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books. Pp. 153-219.

November 17-19: The #metoo movement and contemporary feminism

Watkins, Susan. 2018. "Which Feminisms?" *New Left Review* 109: 5-76.

November 24-December 1: The pandemic

Texts TBD

December 3: Review