

**Sociology 140: Politics & Social Change**  
***POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY***

Spring 2019  
University of California, Berkeley

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**T/Th 3:30-5:00**

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Sociologists have always been inspired by the need to make sense of the world around them. This course provides students with an *introduction to political sociology through engagement with major contemporary developments*.

The course focuses upon two specific cases: the *Global Economic Crisis of 2008* and the “*War on Terror*.” Each case provides us with 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 an opportunity to engage with a long tradition of *Marxist* scholarship that seeks to understand the *relationship between state and economy* (Engels, Lenin, Wolff, Block and Harvey). In doing so, we will grapple with 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 or exacerbating 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, *Weberian* scholars 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 formation? (Tilly) What are the various forms of state power and how are they intrinsically gendered? (Brown)

Finally, we conclude in **Part III** by turning to *Foucauldian* scholars who reject “state centered” approaches, focusing instead upon the exercise of *technologies of power*. What new technologies of power emerge with the “securitization” fueled by the “War on Terror”? We particularly examine surveillance practices, contextualizing them within a long history of efforts to govern race and class relations in the US (Parenti & Browne), and concluding by exploring the emergence of new techniques of risk assessment (Feeley/Simon & Guzik).

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

## **1/22 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).

In-Class Viewing: *The Flaw* (2010)

## **1/24 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS of 2008**

Viewing Assignment: *The Crash of 1929* (1990) PBS ([https://youtu.be/kDRTf\\_hWnxY](https://youtu.be/kDRTf_hWnxY))

\*Watch the documentary above (*The Crash of 1929*) **BEFORE** today's class. It can be viewed on youtube through the link above (if viewing other available versions, be sure that you watch the entire program which is roughly 56 minutes).

Class Discussion: The Stock Market Crash of 1929 & The Global Economic Crisis of 2008

## **1/29 BOOMS & BUSTS: *The Crises of Capitalism***

Viewing Assignment: Wolff, Richard. "Capitalism Hits the Fan" (2009)  
<https://berkeley.kanopy.com/video/capitalism-hits-fan>

\*Watch the video above (*Capitalism Hits the Fan*) **BEFORE** today's class and be sure to refer to the Viewing Guide beforehand.

## **1/31 CLASSICAL 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)

## **2/5 CLASSICAL MARXISM: *Origin & Functions of the State***

Lenin, V.I. 1932 [1917]. *State and Revolution*. New York: International Publishers. (Pp. 7-15; 71- 75)

## **2/7 NEO-MARXISM: *Structural 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. 51-62)

Viewing Assignment: *1929: The Great Depression – Part 1* (2009)  
[https://youtu.be/bCEJ65H\\_1XE](https://youtu.be/bCEJ65H_1XE)

\*Watch the documentary above (*1929: The Great Depression – Part 1*) **BEFORE** today's class.

## 2/12 NEO-MARXISM: *Relative Autonomy of the State*

Block, Fred. 1987. "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State" (Pp. 62-68)

Viewing Assignment: *1929: The Great Depression* – Part 2 (2009)  
(<https://youtu.be/gO42ZfCN9ug>)

\*Watch the documentary above (*1929: The Great Depression* – Part 2) **BEFORE** today's class but *after completing the assigned reading*, the goal being to apply Block's theory to the developments covered in the documentary.)

Class Discussion: Applying Block to *1929: The Great Depression*

## 2/14 CONTEMPORARY 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)

## 2/19 CONTEMPORARY MARXISM: *The Neoliberal State & Accumulation by Dispossession*

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

## 2/21 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

White, Gillian B. 2015. "The Recession's Racial Slant" *The Atlantic*. June 24.  
(<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/06/black-recession-housing-race/396725/>)

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/>)

Mui, Yian Q. 2012. "For Black Americans, financial damage from subprime implosion is likely to last" *Washington Post*. July 8. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/for-black-americans-financial-damage-from-subprime-implosion-is-likely-to-last/2012/07/08/gJQAwNmzWW\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.5eccd661f89a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/for-black-americans-financial-damage-from-subprime-implosion-is-likely-to-last/2012/07/08/gJQAwNmzWW_story.html?utm_term=.5eccd661f89a))

Review Marxists: *How would they explain the Global Economic Crisis?*

In Class Viewing: *Inside Job* (2010)

## 2/26 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>)

Class discussion: Applying Marxists to *Inside Job*

## 2/28 CONCLUSION

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

\*\*\*MIDTERM Exam distributed during class

**MIDTERM EXAM DUE on Monday 3/4 by 9pm**

## **PART II: The MEANS of STATE POWER (*The "War on Terror"*)**

### 3/5 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)

### 3/7 WEBER: (*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.  
Retrieved September 19, 2010. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/may/07/terrorism>).

### 3/12 TILLY: *War-Making & State-Making*

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.169-191)

### 3/14 TILLY: *War-Making & State-Making*

Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime" (**RE-READ** Pp.181-186)

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 the documentary above (*Top Secret America*) **BEFORE** today's class but *after completing the assigned reading*, the goal being to apply Tilly's theory to the developments covered in the documentary.)

Class Discussion: Applying Tilly to *Top Secret America*

**3/19 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)

**3/21 BROWN: *Prerogative Power***

Brown, Wendy. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State" (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>).

Class Discussion: Applying Brown to Baker/Jones

**3/26 NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

**3/28 NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

**4/2 THE "WAR ON TERROR"**

Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books. (Pp. 3-11)

Review Weberians (Weber, Tilly & Brown)

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

\*Please watch the documentary above (*Taxi to the Dark Side*) **BEFORE** today's class.

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.

Class Discussion: Applying Weberians to *Taxi to the Dark Side*

## **PART III: TECHNOLOGIES of POWER (*Surveillance*)**

### **4/4 FOUCAULT: *Sovereign & Disciplinary Power***

Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (Pp. 14-31; 135-138)

### **4/9 FOUCAULT: *Hierarchical Observation & Normalization***

Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (Pp. 170-187; 191-192; 195-203; 218-221)

### **4/11 SURVEILLANCE in the “WAR on TERROR”**

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

Viewing Assignment: *Spying on the Homefront* (PBS/Frontline)

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

\*Please watch the documentary above (*Spying on the Homefront*) **BEFORE** today’s class.

### **4/16 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 1-2 (Pp.1-32), 5 (Pp.61-76) & 14 (Pp.199-212)

### **4/18 BROWNE: *The Panopticon & the Slave Ship***

Browne, Simone. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press. Excerpts of Chapters 1 (Pp.31-57) & 2 (Pp.76-79)

### **4/23 FOUCAULT: *Securite***

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

Schuilenburg, Marc. “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)

### **4/25 The NEW PENOLOGY: *From Punishment and Correction to 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)

#### 4/30 RISK ASSESSMENT in the “WAR on TERROR” and BEYOND

Angwin, Julia, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu and Lauren Kirchner. 2016. “Machine Bias: There’s software used across the country to predict future criminals. And it’s biased against blacks.” *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-serve/>).

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.

#### 5/2 CONCLUSION

\*\*\*Final Exam distributed during class

***FINAL EXAM DUE on Monday 5/13 by 3pm***

#### GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

10% Attendance

20% Pop Quizzes

30% Midterm Exam on Part 1 (Due 3/4)

40% Final Exam on Parts 2 & 3 (Due 5/13)

*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. If you are present in class and for some reason fail to sign the attendance sheet, you are required to notify me of this via email within 24 hours.

Students are **allotted 3 absences** without penalty. This allotment is intended to account for *all illnesses and any family and personal matters*, as well as to 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/accommodations 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 be noted and 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 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***. If you choose to use these digital copies rather than the course reader, be sure to refer to the syllabus for exact page assignments as some of the texts are uploaded to bCourses in their entirety (while only portions are assigned).

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 (as we will be doing extensive readings of the texts together in class).

## **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 questions/issues/concepts listed in the guides is crucial for doing well on the pop quizzes.

## **POP QUIZZES:**

To ensure that students keep up with reading assignments, **6 pop quizzes** will be given throughout the semester at unannounced times. The quizzes will be quick and short and will assess basic comprehension of the assigned readings. 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*. Always pay careful attention to the reading guides provided, as pop quizzes may include questions drawn from them.

Out of the 6 pop quizzes given, **only 4 will count** towards the final grade. This accommodates for any students who miss pop quizzes due to absences. **There are no make-ups for pop-quizzes.** For students who are present and complete more than the required 4 pop quizzes, the lowest grades will be dropped. Given that this policy enables 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 for missed quizzes to accommodate for any/all situations 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 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 the scholarship covered in each part of the course, and to apply relevant concepts and theories to our empirical cases. Please note that exams will require thorough citation of course materials, thus it is to your advantage to underline and make notes in your texts throughout the semester.

**NO EXTENSIONS** will be given for the exams. 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. It is your responsibility to check these due dates at the beginning of the semester and ensure that you are able to meet them alongside your other academic obligations. **Please do not contact me with requests for extensions because of other academic obligations.** Students may submit their exams late but a grade penalty will be imposed.

## **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. 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 or attendance 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. Be aware that all submissions for this class are routinely checked for plagiarism by bCourses. The system will automatically compare your submitted document with all other student submissions on bCourses (including previous years), academic sources and all other publicly available documents on the internet.