This course introduces students to theories and concepts of political sociology through utilizing them to make sense of major developments in our contemporary world.

Part I of the course explores scholarship on the relationship between State and Economy. We begin with Marxist approaches that help us understand our current economic crisis by contextualizing it within a larger history of capitalist crises from the Great Depression to the Great Recession. We then proceed to examine two major state projects in the contemporary era of neoliberal capitalism: mass incarceration and mass deportation.

In Part II, we shift our focus to scholars that forefront State Violence. We begin by utilizing Weberian approaches that emphasize the state’s monopoly of legitimate violence, followed by scholarship that historically traces the development of state power through war, borders and money.

We conclude in Part III with Feminist Revisions of the approaches we studied in the first two parts of the course, providing us with radically different perspectives on states, capitalism, violence, and particularly the current pandemic and crisis of social reproduction.
1/20  **Booms & Busts: The Crises of Capitalism**


*Watch this video lecture **BEFORE** today’s class utilizing the provided viewing guide

1/25  **The Stock Market Crash of 1929 & The Great Depression**

Viewing Assignment: “1929: The Great Depression”

Part 1: [https://youtu.be/bCEJ65H_1XE](https://youtu.be/bCEJ65H_1XE)

Part 2: [https://youtu.be/gO42ZfC9ug](https://youtu.be/gO42ZfC9ug)

*Watch both parts of this documentary **BEFORE** today’s class

1/27  **Classical Marxism: The State as an Instrument of the Ruling Class**


2/1  **Neoliberalization**


2/3  **The Neoliberal State**

Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (Pp.26-35; 64-70; 72-74; 75-78)

*READING RESPONSE DUE

2/8  **Primitive Accumulation & Accumulation by Dispossession**


Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (Pp.154; 159-165)
**2/10  The Global Economic Crisis of 2008 & The Great Recession**

Viewing Assignment: *Inside Job* (2010)  [*Link for viewing will be posted]*

*READING (VIEWING) RESPONSE DUE*

**Suggested Additional Reading:**

Badger, Emily. 2013. “The Dramatic Racial Bias of Subprime Lending During the Housing Boom” *CityLab.*  [https://www.citylab.com/equity/2013/08/blacks-really-were-targeted-bogus-loans-during-housing-boom/6559/](https://www.citylab.com/equity/2013/08/blacks-really-were-targeted-bogus-loans-during-housing-boom/6559/)


*** EXAM 1 distributed on 2/10 - DUE on 2/16***

**2/15  NO CLASS – Exam 1 due on 2/16**

**2/17  Neoliberal Rationality and the Undoing of Democracy**


**2/22  The Economies of Peculiar Institutions: Mass Incarceration**


*READING RESPONSE DUE*

**2/24  Global Apartheid: Mass Deportation**

# PART II: STATE VIOLENCE

## War, Borders & Money

“The decisive means for politics is violence.” (Max Weber)

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<th>3/1</th>
<th><em>The State’s Monopoly of Violence</em></th>
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<th>3/3</th>
<th><em>(II)Legitimate Violence</em></th>
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<td>Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” (Pp.80-83)</td>
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<th>3/8</th>
<th><em>War Makes States</em></th>
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<tr>
<th>3/10</th>
<th><em>War (Re)Makes States</em></th>
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<th>3/15</th>
<th><em>Settler Colonialism, Slavery and US Border Formation</em></th>
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*READING RESPONSE DUE

3/22 NO CLASS - Spring Break

3/24 NO CLASS - Spring Break

3/29 US Empire & the Rise of the Dollar

McNally, Blood and Money. (Pp.177-180; 192-195; 204-210; 213-218; 230-234)

*** EXAM 2 distributed on 3/29 - DUE on 4/4***

3/31 NO CLASS – Exam 2 due on 4/4

4/5 NO CLASS

Given that Exam 2 was submitted yesterday, there is no class today to give you a chance to catch your breath, and sufficient time to complete the reading assignment for the next class.

PART III: FEMINIST REVISIONS

Patriarchy, Prerogative Power & Crises of Social Reproduction

[T]he state is an insignia of the extent to which politics between men are always already the politics of exchanging, violating, protecting, and regulating women; the one constitutes the imperatives of the other.” (Wendy Brown)

4/7 Masculinist State Power

4/12 **Patriarchy & Prerogative Power**

Brown, “Finding the Man in the State.” (Pp. 186-190; 191; 193-194)


4/14 **Primitive Accumulation & Patriarchy of the Wage**


*READING RESPONSE DUE*

4/19 **Black Women and Legacies of Reproduction & Resistance**


4/21 **Crises of Social Reproduction**


*READING RESPONSE DUE*

4/26 **The Pandemic & the Crisis of Care**


*READING RESPONSE DUE*

4/28 **CONCLUSION**

*Reading TBA*
**GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

15%  Reading Responses  
25%  Exam 1  (Due 2/16)  
30%  Exam 2  (Due 4/4)  
30%  Exam 3  (Due 5/9)

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

Students are expected to attend all lectures, which is crucial for understanding course content and performing well in the class. Being present and actively participating in class is central to the learning process. Please note that while class recordings will be posted on bCourses, they will not capture class discussions and are therefore not complete or ideal, but they are available for you in cases where you have to be absent from class.

Class begins promptly at 10 minutes after the scheduled hour (3:40 pm). 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.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

The primary work for this class is 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 exams which you will have limited time to complete, and which will require extensive citation (in other words, your answers to the exam questions will require that you provide the corresponding page numbers from the text). Hence, keeping up with the readings and notetaking throughout the semester are crucial for performing well on 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). You must first purchase the reader on their website (the link for doing so will be posted on bCourses) and then you’ll have the option of picking it up or having it shipped to you.
All course readings are also available on bCourses. However, I strongly recommend that you utilize a course reader rather than these digital copies. Extensive research indicates that we learn and process information much more effectively with hard copies. The course reader will also prove advantageous for exams (all your readings/notes will be organized and easily accessible).

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 all 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.

**READING RESPONSES:**

Students are required to submit 6 out of 8 reading responses. These reading responses require answering questions from the reading guides (the specific questions to be answered are noted at the bottom of the reading guides). Your answers may be brief but must clearly reflect that you carefully and thoroughly read the assignment (or viewed assigned documentaries). There are a total of 8 reading responses (marked on the syllabus), out of which you are required to complete 6. This is intended to accommodate for situations of illness or other crises, allowing you to skip 2 if necessary. For students who submit all 8, the lowest grade will be dropped and only the highest 6 grades will count.

Reading responses must be uploaded to bCourses by 3:30pm (prior to our class meeting) to receive full credit. Submission by this deadline is required because the purpose of these assignments is to assess whether students have completed the reading before class.

Late submissions will be accepted for up to 1 week after the deadline for partial credit.

**EXAMS:**

The 3 exams for this course will be open-book, take-home examinations that consist of short essays that assess students’ mastery of the course materials. Exams will be cumulative (covering material from the entirety of the semester) and will be geared towards asking students to synthesize the scholarship covered in the course.

The time allotted for completing these exams is purposively limited because part of the objective is to assess how well students have kept up with course readings and lectures. Those who have done so will have sufficient time to complete the exam, while those who have not will be struggling to catch up with completing the course work. Late submissions will result in a grade penalty.
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.

**POTENTIAL DISRUPTIONS:**

If our ability to hold class in person is interrupted for any reason, class will be held via zoom until in person instruction resumes. All course requirements will remain in effect.

**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 exams are required to contact me about this well in advance.

**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. bCourses will automatically screen all submitted coursework for plagiarism.