

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

University of California, Berkeley
Spring 2022

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Tuesday/Thursday 3:30 – 5:00 (145 Dwinelle)

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Office Hours: Thursday 1-3 (434 Social Sciences)

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**.

PART I: STATE & ECONOMY

Economic Crises, Mass Incarceration & Mass Deportation

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

1/18 *Course Introduction*

*Read the course requirements and policies laid out on Pp.7-9 of this syllabus before class.

1/20 Booms & Busts: The Crises of Capitalism

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

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

*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

Part 2: <https://youtu.be/gO42ZfCN9ug>

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

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

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)

2/1 Neoliberalization

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Pp.1-3; 5-12; 13-26)

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

Marx, Karl. 1978. “The So-Called Primitive Accumulation” in *The Marx-Engels Reader* (2nd edition) Edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton & Company. (Pp.431-436)

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/>)

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/>)

***** 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*

"What Exactly is Neoliberalism?" Interview with Wendy Brown (2015) *Dissent Magazine*. <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-3-what-exactly-is-neoliberalism-wendy-brown-undoing-the-demos> (Pp.1-4; 5-6)

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

Wacquant, Loic. "From slavery to mass incarceration: Rethinking the 'race question' in the US." *New Left Review* 13 (2002): 41-60.

**READING RESPONSE DUE*

2/24 *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: STATE VIOLENCE

War, Borders & Money

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

3/1 *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.77-79)

3/3 (II) *Legitimate Violence*

Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” (Pp.80-83)

Whitaker, Brian. 2001. “The definition of terrorism.” *The Guardian*. May 7.
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/may/07/terrorism>)

3/8 *War Makes States*

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.169-175; 178-184; 185-6)

3/10 *War (Re)Makes States*

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

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

Torpey, John. 1998. “Coming and Going: On the State Monopolization of the Legitimate ‘Means of Movement’” *Sociological Theory* 16(3): 239-259. (Pp.239-240; 241-242)

**READING (VIEWING) RESPONSE DUE*

3/15 *Settler Colonialism, Slavery and US Border Formation*

Walia, Harsha. 2021. “Historic Entanglements of US Border Formation” in *Border & Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

3/17 *War Makes Money*

McNally, David. 2020. *Blood and Money: War, Slavery, Finance, and Empire*. Chicago: Haymarket Books. (Pp.1-6; 15-16; 67-70; 122-124; 128-134; 173-176)

**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*

Brown, Wendy. 1995. “Finding the Man in the State” in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Pp. 166-177; 179-183; 184-186)

4/12 Patriarchy & Prerogative Power

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

hooks, bell. 2012. *Understanding Patriarchy*. Louisville Anarchist Federation. (Pp.1-4)

4/14 Primitive Accumulation & Patriarchy of the Wage

Federici, Sylvia. 2014 [2004]. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia. (Pp.7-8; 11-13; 22-25; 69-70; 71-72; 73-75; 92-100)

*READING RESPONSE DUE

4/19 Black Women and Legacies of Reproduction & Resistance

Davis, Angela. 1981. "The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood" in *Women, Race & Class*. (Pp.1-4; 5-6; 8-10; 11-12; 15)

Davis, Angela. 1981. "Racism, Birth Control and Reproductive Rights" in *Women, Race & Class*. (Pp.1-3; 7-11)

4/21 Crises of Social Reproduction

Fraser, Nancy. 2017. "Crisis of Care? On the Social Reproductive Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism" in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. Edited by Tithi Bhattacharya. London: Pluto Press. (Pp.21-35)

*READING RESPONSE DUE

4/26 The Pandemic & the Crisis of Care

Featherstone, Liza. 2020. "The Pandemic is a Family Emergency" *The New Republic*.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/157528/coronavirus-pandemic-family-care-work-crisis-social-reproduction-theory> (Pp.1-6; 9-10)

Federici, Silvia. 2012. "On Elder Care Work and the Limits of Marxism" in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland: PM Press. (Pp.115-120; 123-125)

*READING RESPONSE DUE

4/28 CONCLUSION

*Reading TBA

***** EXAM 3 distributed on 4/28 - DUE on 5/9*****

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 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 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.