

Politics and Social Change

Sociology 140
Fall 2014

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Class Meetings: TTH 2:00-3:30
Location of Class: 141 McCone

Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:00-11:00am or by appointment
Location of Office Hours: Free Speech Movement Café

Course Description

In this course, we will consider the nature of the relationship between society and politics, and what shapes this relationship. Over the course of the semester, students will become familiar, and critically engage, with different theories about politics and who shapes policy. We will examine different forms of political participation (e.g., participation in voluntary organizations, voting, and participation in social movements), the patterns that we see in terms of this participation across class, race and gender, as well as obstacles to participation for certain social groups. We will discuss how ideas about the role of the state in society have changed – specifically the decline of the welfare state and the rise of the neoliberal state – and the impact that this has had on society. We will consider the impact of media – both traditional forms of media and new media and social networking – on politics and social change. As we consider the relationship between society and politics and social change over time, we will look at variations across countries based on differences in the nature of social stratification, the political system and the economic system. Students will be expected to follow what is happening in U.S. and world politics and make connections between the course content and what we see transpiring in politics today. Through in-class activities, demonstrations, and assignments, students will work on strengthening reading, writing and analytical skills.

Learning Objectives

Content Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of, and critically analyze, different theories about politics.

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of different forms of political participation, how political participation has changed over time in the U.S., and the obstacles that exist for certain social groups to participate in some of these ways.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how the nature of the state and its relationship to society has changed over time in the U.S.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the traditional media, new media and social networking on politics, political participation, and social change.
5. Students will be able to have an informed and articulate discussion and analysis of politics in the U.S. today, as well as a greater awareness and understanding politics outside of the U.S.
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of variations in terms of the state, politics, and social change across countries based on differences in the nature of social stratification, the political system and the economic system.

Skill-building Objectives

7. Students will analyze material both verbally and in writing.
8. Students will strengthen critical reading, analytical, writing, and research skills.
9. Students will strengthen the ability to give constructive feedback, and incorporate feedback received from others.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance & Participation	15%
Group Presentation	10%
Papers (2 each worth 15%)	30%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%

Attendance & Participation

You are expected to attend lecture and section (attendance will be taken in both), to come prepared to participate, and to actively participate in any class activities. Everybody gets three free, excused absences over the course of the semester. Being continuously engaged in the course material over the course of the semester will facilitate your learning.

In order to be able to participate in class activities and get the most out of lecture, it is important that you come to class having both completed the readings assigned for the week and thought about them. You are expected to bring the assigned readings for the week to class in the event that you need to reference them for an in-class activity.

There will be weekly reading quizzes. You will need to purchase an iclicker remote and register it to use for these reading quizzes, as well as for other interactive discussion of the material that will take place during our class meetings. The mobile application, i>clicker GO will not be allowed. To receive credit for the responses you submit with i>clicker, you must register by the drop/add deadline, (September 26th). Students who register after this time will not receive credit. In cases where students are found using more than one iclicker (that is helping somebody else cheat), the students linked to both iclickers will forfeit all clicker points for the whole semester. The iclicker will help me understand what you get and what needs further clarification. In addition, it provides an opportunity for everybody to participate.

At the beginning of the semester, with the first several assigned readings, we will talk about and model how to read effectively. The reading quizzes will be a way for you to get feedback on how effectively you are identifying and retaining the key ideas from the readings. Research also shows that quizzes can help increase retention. In addition, iclicker questions will also facilitate your learning by helping to generate discussion and debate of the material with your colleagues.

Much of the course content will be delivered via the readings. Lecture will situate these readings into a larger context, and guide you in the process of analyzing this material. The readings, films, lectures, and in-class activities will help you meet the content-based learning objective outlined above.

Your participation and attendance grade will be calculated in the following way. The baseline attendance and participation grade is B (85%). You will receive this baseline grade if you always attend class (that is have the three excused absences or less) and are paying attention. Attendance will be recorded if you answer 75% of the iclicker questions during class that day (you don't have to get the answers right, answering them will indicate that you are present). If you have more than three absences, your participation grade will be negatively impacted. If you actively participate in class discussions and activities your participation grade will be positively impacted.

Contemporary Political Topics Presentation

You will present (in groups) a contemporary political topic. These presentations will be about 10 minutes long. This activity, as well as watching the presentations of your peers, will help build your capability to have an informed and articulate discussion of politics today. To sign-up for a presentation topic and date, go to the collaborations tab on our bcourses site. On the Wednesday or Thursday before your presentation you will meet with your GSI to discuss what and how you will present the material, and get feedback from him/her on your plans. You will meet with me the Monday of the week you present to give a practice presentation and receive feedback. At this meeting, you are expected to bring a list of references you used to put together the content of the presentation.

Papers

You will write two 4-page double-spaced papers. In these papers, you will analyze contemporary politics by putting current events into conversation with course content from reading and lectures. You will be provided with additional instructions and guidance in class. The first paper will be due in section during week 5. The second paper will be due in section during week 10. After you turn in your papers, your GSI will facilitate a peer feedback activity to help you improve your writing. You will have the opportunity to revise your paper. The revised draft will be due one week later. The quality and completeness of the first draft will be factored into the final grade for the assignment.

Due Dates:

Complete rough draft paper #1	(9/22 or 9/23 depending on if you have section Mon or Tues)
Final revised draft of paper #1	9/29
Complete rough draft of paper #2	(10/27 or 10/28 depending on if you have section Mon or Tues)
Final revised draft of paper #2	11/3

Exams

The first exam will be an in-class exam on Tuesday October 7th. The final exam is Tuesday December 16th from 8-11am. If you cannot make these dates, do not take the class. Accommodations will be *considered* only in cases where students *present in writing* a request *at the beginning of the semester*.

Laptop and Tablet Policy

Laptops are not allowed in class because they often become a distraction not just for the student using the laptop, but for surrounding students as well. I know that some people like to type their notes so tablets will be allowed in class as they seem to be less of a distraction. Students who are found using their devices for something other than the course work in either section or lecture will lose their laptop and tablet privileges for the rest of the semester. Exceptions on the laptop policy will be made for DSP accommodations that require note takers that need to use computers.

Sections

Your discussion section is scheduled for two days per week. The first meeting of the week is required, and will function as a normal section. The second meeting of the week will be an opportunity for you to sign up with your GSI for one-on-one feedback on your writing, small group writing workshops, or feedback on your presentation.

Bcourses

You should regularly check the bcourse site for this class. On bcourses, you will find the syllabus, as well as a week-by-week breakdown of what will be covered and the readings and assignments due. You should check the module for each week prior to the beginning of the week.

After you have finished reading the syllabus, I would like you to go our bcourses site and fill out the form linked to on the page for Week 1 acknowledging that you have read and understand the course expectations and policies. This form also has general questions about your specific interests so that I can get to know you, and try to find ways to integrate topics that interest you into our class content and activities. Once you have filled out this form, email it to paget@berkeley.edu. The subject heading should have your last name followed by your first name (e.g., Page, Tiffany).

Readings

A reader can be purchased at University Copy (2425 Channing Way, half a block West of Telegraph).

Course Schedule

Week 1 (8/28): Course Overview

Over the next three weeks, you will be reading different theories of politics. I want you to think about the following questions as you learn about these different perspectives:

1. How might you apply these various theories to help you understand the political dynamics shaping contemporary political issues in the U.S.?
2. What are the key differences between these various theories of politics?
3. What do you think are the strengths and limitations of each of these theories?

Week 2 (9/2, 9/4): Theories of Politics: The Pluralist Perspective

We will begin by examining a pluralist explanation of U.S. politics based on a case study of politics in New Haven, Connecticut. You should complete this reading by 9/2.

Required Reading:

Dahl, Robert A. 1974. Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City. New Haven: Yale University Press, pgs. 1-86, and 305-325.

Week 3 (9/9, 9/11): Theories of Politics: The Power Elite Perspective

We will examine political elite explanations of U.S. politics. You should complete this reading by 9/8.

Required Reading:

Domhoff, G. Willam. 2010. Who Rules America? Challenges to Corporate and Class Dominance. New York: McGraw Hill, pgs 1-84 and pgs 147-172.

Week 4 (9/16, 9/18): Theories of Politics: the Marxist Perspective

We will examine a Marxist theory that challenges the orthodox Marxist theory of capitalist states. You should complete this reading by 9/15.

Required Reading:

Block, Fred. 1977. "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State." *Socialist Revolution*, Vol. 33 (May-June).

Week 5 (9/23, 9/25): Relationship between Society and Politics in Socialist Socio-economic Systems

Up until this point, we have been looking at theories of politics in capitalist socio-economic systems, and in particular the U.S. This week we will examine the relationship between socialism and democracy in theory, and how it played out in the case of Cuba. You should complete this reading by 9/22.

Required Reading:

Bengelsdorff Carollee. 1994. The problem of democracy in Cuba: Between Vision and Reality. New York: Oxford University Press, pgs. 3-32, and pgs 66-133.

Paper #1 Due in Section Week 5

Week 6 (9/30, 10/2): The Decline of the Welfare State and the Rise of the Neoliberal State

Returning to capitalist socio-economic systems, we will consider changing ideas about the role of the state in society. We will examine the dismantlement of the traditional welfare state, the rise of the "hidden welfare state," and how this transformation of the state has changed the relationship between the government and different groups of citizens. We will also examine the impact of the rise of neoliberalism on culture, including the shaping of ideas about what falls within public responsibility and the emergence of a "hyperlegal regime" to manage the poor. We will discuss the relationship between the neoliberal restructuring of the state and its role in society and the surge in the levels of incarceration since the 1980s with consideration of how race factors into this relationship. You should complete these readings by 9/29.

Required Reading:

Ventura, Patricia. 2012. Neoliberal culture: Living with American Neoliberalism. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., pgs. 87-105.

Suzanne Mettler. 2011. The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pgs. 1-30.

Wacquant, Loic. 2001. "Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh" *Punishment and Society*, 3(1):95-121.

Revised Paper #1 Due 9/29 Uploaded to Bcourses via Assignment Function

Week 7 (10/7, 10/9): Changes in the Nature of Civic Engagement in the U.S.

We will consider civic engagement in the U.S. and how it has changed over the course of U.S. history. We will also examine the impact of increasing inequality on political participation in the U.S. You should complete these readings by 10/9.

Required Reading:

Skocpol, Theda. 2007. "Government Activism and the Reorganization of American Civic Democracy." In The Transformation of American Politics: Activist Government and the Rise of Conservatism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pgs. 39-65.

Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Theda Skocpol. 2005. "American Democracy in an Era of Rising Inequality." In Equality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn. Eds. Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pgs. 1-14.

In-Class Midterm Exam Week 7 (October 7th)

Week 8 (10/14, 10/16): Voting, Non-Voting, and Disenfranchisement

We will consider who turns out to vote, various theories that seek to explain low voter turnout, voter suppression, and felon disenfranchisement. You should complete these readings by 10/13.

Required Reading:

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. 2000. Why American still don't Vote? And Why Politicians Want it that Way. Boston: Beacon Press, pgs. 23-44.

Piven, Frances Fox, Minnite, Lorraine C., and Margaret Groarke. 2009. Keeping Down the Black Vote: Race and the Demobilization of American Voters. New York and London: The New Press, pgs. 164-203.

Manza, Jeff and Christopher Uggen. 2006. Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pgs. 69-94.

Week 9 (10/21, 10/23): Immigrants and U.S. Politics

We will examine political incorporation of immigrants in the U.S., the large immigrant rights mobilizations in 2006, and the question of non-citizen voting rights. You should complete these readings by 10/20.

Required Reading:

Bloemraad, Irene. 2006. Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada. Berkeley: University of California Press, pgs 1-11, 233-252.

Voss, Kim and Irene Bloemraad. 2011. Rallying for Immigrant Rights: the Fight for Inclusion in 21st Century America. Berkeley: University of California Press, pgs. 3-39.

Hayduk, Ron. 2006. Democracy for All: Restoring Immigrant Voting Rights in the United States. New York: Routledge, pgs. 1-13, 57-85.

Week 10 (10/28, 10/30): Social Movements in the U.S.

We will examine social movements as a form of political participation, and the impact that they can have on politics. We will compare and contrast The Tea Party and The Occupy Movement. You should complete these readings by 10/27.

Required Readings:

Piven, Frances Fox. 2006. Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., pgs. 19-35.

Skocpol, Theda and Vanessa Williamson. 2012. The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism. New York: Oxford University Press, pgs. 83- 120.

Castells, Manuel. 2012. Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age. Cambridge: Polity Press, pgs. 156-200.

Paper #2 Due in Section Week 10

Week 11 (11/4, 11/6): Social Movements Elsewhere: The Politics of Development

We will examine social movements contesting the way progress has been defined, the types of policies, projects and modes of economic development that states have pursued, as well as the tendency for development to be defined by “experts” in institutions like the World Bank while members of the societies that are being “developed” are excluded from these discussions. You should complete these readings by 11/3.

Required Readings:

McMichael, Philip. 2010. “Changing the Subject of Development.” In Contesting Development: Critical Struggles for Social Change. Ed. Philip McMichael. New York and London: Routledge, pgs. 1-11.

Hindery, Derrick. 2013. From Enron to Evo: Pipeline Politics, Global Environmentalism, and Indigenous Rights in Bolivia. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, pgs. 164-184.

Revised Paper Due 11/3 Uploaded to Bcourses via Assignment Function

Week 12 (11/13): Social Movements Elsewhere: The Arab Spring

We will discuss the Arab Spring, including what produced rapid change, and what type of change occurred. You should complete these readings by 11/10.

Required Reading:

Rand, Dafna Hochman. 2013. Roots of the Arab Spring: Contested Authority and Political Change in the Middle East. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pgs. 1-19.

Larémont, Ricardo René. 2014. Revolution, Revolt and Reform in North Africa: The Arab Spring and Beyond. London and New York: Routledge, pgs. 1-14 148-167.

Week 13 (11/18, 11/20): Impact of Media on Politics

We will discuss how the way the t.v. and print media functions shapes what we see as the political issues and how we understand them. We will also consider the role of new media and social networking in shaping politics. You should complete these readings by 11/17.

Required Reading:

Gitlin, Todd. 2003. The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left. Berkeley: University of California Press, pgs. 1-13, 249-282.

Kellner, Douglas. 2012. Media Spectacle and Insurrection 2011: From the Arab Uprisings to Occupy Everywhere. London: Bloomsbury, pgs. 207-243.

Week 14 (11/25): Impact of Globalization on Politics and Social Change

We will consider the impact of networks of activists and social movements on a global level, and how this impacts politics and social change within individual countries. You should complete these readings by 11/24.

Required Reading:

Keck, Margaret E. and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pgs. 1-37, 199-217.

Manuel Castells. 2012. Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age. London: Polity, pgs. 218-237.

Week 15 (12/2, 12/4): Course Wrap-Up and Final Discussion

Final Exam Tuesday December 16th 8-11am

