POLITICS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

This course analyzes the intersection between politics and society. We begin by considering theories of the state and the organization of society. The course then examines different forms of political engagement including social movements, voting, and political parties. We will consider how the changing organization of civil society and new technologies, including the Internet and social media, influence political engagement. Among the questions we will ask are: How does the organization of the political system affect whose voices get heard? How do different groups mobilize to become effective in politics? How do great inequalities of wealth affect patterns of political mobilization and the prospects for social change? The course will draw on material from the developed world, focusing in particular on comparisons between the United States and Europe.

REQUIREMENTS:

This course uses a combination of lecture format, weekly sections, and class-wide discussion sessions. Requirements include regular attendance at lectures, regular participation in section discussions, a closed-book midterm, a 10-12 page research paper, and a closed-book final exam. For final grades, these components will be weighted as follows:

- attendance and participation in class discussions 10%
- midterm exam 20%
- research paper 30%
- final exam 40%

Regular attendance and careful preparation of the readings are both essential. Since there is much variation in politics across cities, much of the essential theoretical material is presented in lectures. Section discussions are designed to give you an active command of the factual material as well as theoretical debates, which in turn requires your informed participation based on the readings. The first six weeks of the course will be covered in an in-class midterm exam, **February 20, 2011.**
A 10-page research paper is due at 4 p.m. on May 2. Further information on the topics for the research paper will be distributed in class.

The final exam will take place according to the Registrar’s published schedule. Everyone must double-check the location and date toward the end of class. The final will be a comprehensive, closed-book exam. More information on the exam format will be distributed in class.

READINGS:

Most of the required articles and chapters are included in a Course Reader, available from Central Copy on Bancroft Way.

One book
A few required readings have been omitted from the reader and are available on the Web or on the course B–space site.

OFFICE HOURS:

To sign up for Professor Weir’s office hours, please use the electronic sign-up sheet http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/egmjl.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Because the course moves quickly, everyone should decide within the first two weeks whether they expect to stay in the class. To be sure you get entered onto our class roster, everyone must do two things: (1) register through Telebears and (2) subscribe to the course bSpace site under the site title, POL SCI 175A LEC 001.

If you are waitlisted for the course, these two steps do not guarantee your enrollment but are necessary in order to let us know of your interest.

SOME GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

There are several commonsense policies that I will follow in order to ensure fairness for all members of the class.

Attendance at lectures is required. Since lectures will run parallel to the readings, but without always summarizing them, everyone should plan to take notes on the lectures as well as readings. Material covered in lectures will be included in the exam questions.
Make-up exams or extra-credit assignments will not be offered. Dates for the exams are listed on the syllabus. If you have conflicts with these dates, please let me know at the beginning of the term. Exceptions will be granted only in cases of serious illness, injury, or documented family emergencies.

Be respectful of your classmates. If you arrive late or need to leave early, please take a seat quietly in the back of the lecture room. If someone engages in disruptive activities during class, please expect that I will ask them to leave the class.

Please turn all cell phones off before coming into class!
No laptops in class!!!
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

I. STATES

Week 1 (Jan. 21, 23) Introduction to the Course/ Political Authority and Perspectives on the State


Week 2 (Jan. 28, 30) What Do States Do?


Desmond King and Marc Stears, “How the U.S. State Works: A Theory of Standardization, Perspectives on Politics vol.9, no.3 (September 2011); 505-518.


Week 3 (Feb 4, 6) Welfare States


Week 4 (Feb. 11, 13) States and Globalization

Week 5 (Feb. 18, 20) Review and Midterm

II. THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY

Week 6 (Feb 25, 27) The Organization of Civil Society


Week 7 (March 4, 6) Class Organization -- Business and Labor


III. Making Social Change
Week 8 (March 11, 13) Mobilizing for Actions

Hank Johnston, States and Social Movements (Polity Press, 2011), pp. 31-64.


Week 9 (March 18, 20) Elites and the Grassroots


Week 10 (March 25, 27) **Spring Break**

Week 11 (April 1, 3) Mobilizing Wealth/Mobilizing Ideas


Week 12 (April 8, 10) Reviving Labor: New Strategies/New Organizations


April 8 **Outline for paper due**
Week 13  (April 15, 17) Local Mobilization and the Problem of Scale

Mark Santow, “Running in Place: Saul Alinsky, Race and Community Organizing,” in *Transforming the City: Community Organizing and the Challenge of Political Change* edited by Marion Orr (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2007), pp.28-55.


Week 14  (April 22, 24) International Waves of Mobilization: the Role of the Internet


Week 15 (April 29, May 1) Course Wrap-Up