

Sociology 140: *POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY*

Summer 2015
University of California, Berkeley

Instructor: Laleh Behbehanian

M/T/W/Th 4-6pm (170 Barrows)

Email: lalehb@hotmail.com
Mailbox: 410 Barrows Hall

Office Hours: T/Th 3:00 - 3:45 (487 Barrows)

From Marx, Weber & Durkheim to the present period, sociologists have always been inspired by the need to make sense of the world around them. Just as classical sociologists sought to understand the enormous changes being unleashed upon their societies by Industrialization or political processes of democratization, we too are faced with a range of massive social transformations. This course will provide students with an *introduction to the field of political sociology through engagement with major contemporary developments*. The course is structured around three major themes – the *Global Economic Crisis*, the “*War on Terror*,” and the *Occupy Movement*. Each theme provides 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. We will particularly 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 the opportunity to engage with a long tradition of Marxist scholarship that seeks to understand the *relationship between state and economy* (Engels, Lenin, Block, 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 the crises of capitalism) that we can then apply towards understanding the Global Economic Crisis.

While Marxist traditions of political sociology have generally approached the state in terms of its ends or economic objectives, other scholars inspired by Weber focus on highlighting 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-making? (Tilly) What are the various forms of state power and how are they intrinsically gendered? (Brown) How have surveillance practices historically been central to governing race and class relations in the US? (Parenti & Guzik)

Political sociology is generally oriented around the study of power – relations of political, economic, and social power. However sociologists have not only focused upon understanding the workings of power, they have also explored the various forms of resistance that inevitably surface within unequal power relations. Part III of the course will introduce the case of the **Occupy Movement** as a way of exploring scholarship on *resistance and social movements*. Beginning with the classic work of Piven & Cloward, we will explore different ways sociologists have approached the study of protest movements in the US. Drawing upon the first two parts of the course, we will return to many of the same scholars (Wolff, Harvey, Brown) in order to

understand how the contemporary economic and political developments we've discussed have played a role in fueling the emergence of the Occupy Movement. And just as we focused upon identifying the various means and techniques of state power in Part II, we now turn to exploring the specific means and strategies of resistance that characterize "Occupy" (disruption, civil disobedience, the physical occupation of spaces), considering how they are shaped by a long history of social movements in the US. We will read the writings of sociologists and scholars like David Harvey, Ruth Milkman, William Julius Wilson, Saskia Sassen, Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, and Erik Olin Wright who apply their theoretical perspectives towards making sense of the emergence, workings, and possibilities of the Occupy Movement.

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

7/6 COURSE INTRODUCTION

Film: *Capitalism Hits the Fan* (2008) - Lecture by Economist Richard Wolff

7/7 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)

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

7/8 NEO-MARXISM: *Autonomy & 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. 51-68)

7/9 CONTEMPORARY NEO-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)

7/13 CONTEMPORARY NEO-MARXISM: *The Neoliberal State*

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ("The Neoliberal State" Pp. 64-86)

7/14 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ("Neoliberalism on Trial" Pp. 159-165)

7/15 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

Review Marxists (Wolff, Engels/Lenin, Block & Harvey): *How would they explain the Global Economic Crisis?*

Film: *Inside Job* (2010)

7/16 THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

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

*****ESSAY 1 DUE on 7/19 by 9pm**

PART II: THE MEANS OF STATE POWER (The "War on Terror")

7/20 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; 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>).

7/21 TILLY: *War-Making & State-Making*

Charles Tilly. 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)

Priest, Dana and William M. Arkin. 2010. "A Hidden World, Growing Beyond Control" *Washington Post*. (<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/articles/a-hidden-world-growing-beyond-control/print/>)

7/22 WEBER to BROWN: *Masculinist State Power*

Weber, Max. 1978. "Political Communities" in *Economy and Society, Vol. 2*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Pp. 901-910)

Brown, Wendy. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State" in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Pp. 166-180)

7/23 BROWN: *Prerogative 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. 180-196)

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>)

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>).

7/27 THE "WAR ON TERROR"

Film: *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007)

7/28 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 1-3 & 5 (Pp. 1-42; 61-76)

7/29 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 11, 12 & 14 (Pp. 151-182; 199-212)

7/30 GUZIK: *Surveillance in the "War on Terror"*

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.

Film: *Spying on the Homefront* (2007) (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/homefront/>)

*****ESSAY 2 DUE on 8/2 by 9pm**

PART III: RESISTANCE & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (OCCUPY)

8/3 INTRODUCTION: *Sociologists on "OCCUPY"*

Milkman, Ruth, Mohammed A. Bamyeh, William Julius Wilson, Dana Williams and Deborah B. Gould. 2012. "Understanding 'Occupy'" *Contexts* 11:12.

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. 1977. *Poor People's Movements: Why they succeed and how they fail*. New York: Vintage Books. (Introduction to Paperback Edition & Introduction, Pp. ix – xxiv)

Film: *History of an Occupation* (2012)

8/4 PIVEN & CLOWARD: *The Structuring of Protest*

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. 1977. *Poor People's Movements: Why they succeed and how they fail*. New York: Vintage Books. (Chapter 1: "The Structuring of Protest" Pp. 1 – 37)

8/5 THE POWER OF DISRUPTION

- Piven, Frances Fox. 2011. "Economic Collapse, Mass Unemployment, and the Rise of Disorder" in *Who's Afraid of Frances Fox Piven?* New York: The New Press. (Pp. 41-66)
- Piven, Frances Fox. 2011. "Obama Needs a Protest Movement" in *Who's Afraid of Frances Fox Piven?* New York: The New Press. (Pp. 227-231)
- Piven, Frances Fox. 2011. "The Nature of Disruptive Power" in *Who's Afraid of Frances Fox Piven?* New York: The New Press. (Pp. 207-226)
- Brissette, Emily. 2011. "For the Fracture of Good Order: On 'Violence' at Occupy Oakland." *Counterpunch*. Nov 4-11. (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/11/04/for-the-fracture-of-good-order/>)
- Ciccariello-Maher, George. 2015. "Riots Work: Wolf Blitzer and the Washington Post Completely Missed the Real Lesson from Baltimore." *Salon.com*. May 4. (http://www.salon.com/2015/05/04/riots_work_wolf_blitzer_and_the_washington_post_completely_missed_the_real_lesson_from_baltimore/)

8/6 WHY OCCUPY?

- Harvey, David. 2011. "The Party of Wall Street Meets its Nemesis" October 28. (<http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/777-david-harvey-the-party-of-wall-street-meets-its-nemesis>)
- Brown, Wendy. 2011. "Occupy Wall Street: Return of a Repressed *Res-Publica*." *Theory & Event* 14.4.
- King, Mike. 2011. "The Vacancies of Capitalism" *Counterpunch* Nov. 30. (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/11/30/the-vacancies-of-capitalism/>)

8/10 OCCUPYING SPACE

- Morris, Aldon. 2003. "Tactical Innovation in the Civil Rights Movement" in *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*. Ed. By Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing. (Pp.229 – 233)
- Schultz, Bud and Ruth Schultz. 2001. "The Vietnam Era: The War Against the Peacemakers" in *The Price of Dissent: Testimonies to Political Repression in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Pp. 289-302)
- Sassen, Saskia. 2011 "The Global Street Comes to Wall Street" Social Science Research Council's "Possible Futures" Project. (<http://www.possible-futures.org/2011/11/22/the-global-street-comes-to-wall-street/>)
- Butler, Judith. 2011. "For and Against Precarity" *Tidal: Occupy Theory, Occupy Strategy*. Issue 1. Pp. 12- (http://bjsonline.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/12/TIDAL_occupytheory.pdf)

8/11 STATE REPRESSION

McPhail, Clark and John D. McCarth. 2005. "Protest Mobilization, Protest Repression, and Their Interaction" in *Repression and Mobilization*. Ed. By Christian Davenport, Hank Johnston and Carol Mueller. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

King, Mike. 2012. "Occupy Oakland, Permitted Protest, and Police Repression" *Counterpunch* April 17 (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/04/17/occupy-oakland-permitted-protest-and-police-repression/>)

Ciccariello-Maher, George. 2013. "Counterinsurgency and the Occupy Movement" in *Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency*. Ed. By Kristian Williams, Will Munger and Lara Messersmith-Glavin. Oakland: AK Press.

8/12 PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS: "Real Utopias"

Graeber, David. 2011. "Occupy Wall Street's Anarchist Roots" Al Jazeera.com Nov.30 (<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/11/2011112872835904508.html>)

Wright, Erik Olin. 2011. "Real Utopias" *Contexts* 10:2 (Pp. 36-42)

Wright, Erik Olin. 2012. "Occupy Wall Street and Transformational Strategy" New Left Project (http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/print_article/occupy_wall_street_and_transformational_strategy)

8/13 ***ESSAY 3 DUE

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

15%	Attendance & Participation
25%	Pop Quizzes
20%	ESSAY on Part 1 (7/19)
20%	ESSAY on Part 2 (8/2)
20%	ESSAY on Part 3 (8/13)

REQUIRED READINGS:

All readings listed on the syllabus are included in the **course reader, available at Replica Copy** (510 549-9991) at 2138 Oxford Street (by the Center Street entrance to campus [near BART station], around the corner from Starbucks). In addition to the syllabus, a few **supplementary readings** will be assigned throughout the course and will be posted and available on Bspace. Supplementary readings will be short, non-academic pieces that cover current developments relating to the three major themes of the course. Required readings have purposely been limited to ensure that students can be reasonably expected to read *all* assigned texts *carefully* and *thoroughly*.

POP QUIZZES:

In order to ensure that students keep up with reading assignments, 6 pop quizzes will be given throughout the course at unannounced times. The quizzes will be quick and short and will assess basic comprehension of the 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 will require that you read the assigned texts *fully and carefully*. Out of the 6 pop quizzes, only 5 will count, with the lowest grade being dropped. Missing class when a pop quiz is given will count as the lowest dropped grade. Any further absences will count as failed quizzes.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are *allotted 1 absence* without penalty. Any additional absences will result in a grade penalty. Absences may be excused by the instructor only in *extreme* circumstances, and only if discussed with me *prior* to the absence. It is crucial that all students arrive on time (class will start promptly at 10 minutes after the hour). Students should avoid filtering in late as this disrupts the beginning of class discussion. Late attendance beyond the first few minutes of class will result in a partial absence.

PARTICIPATION:

Rather than exclusively lecturing, I will structure class meetings to maximize student participation. The expectation is that *every* student will make contributions to *every* class discussion. **Come to class prepared to engage in discussion.** While I understand that this may be intimidating or uncomfortable for some students, it is important to recognize that this kind of active engagement is crucial for the learning process. The strength of students' contributions to class discussions will hinge upon diligently keeping up with the assigned readings— consider it impossible to attend and participate in class without having carefully read every page of the assignment. Doing so will ensure that our discussions are productive and enjoyable for everyone.

ESSAYS:

Students will write a short essay (no longer than 5 pages double spaced) at the conclusion of each of the three parts of the course. Essay prompts will be given towards the end of each section, and students will have 2-3 days to submit the essays. 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 three themes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All written work must be your own. Any words, or *ideas*, borrowed from another source (even if paraphrased) must be appropriately cited. Any form of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. For UC policies on plagiarism and guidelines for citation, refer to the following link: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Citations.html>.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please notify me immediately if you require any special accommodations for the course. If you are registered with the DSP program, please provide me with this documentation during the first week of class.

