

SC015
Political Sociology

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This course will explore the nature of power in society. Sociologists have theorized about power since the beginning of the discipline. Marx, Weber, Durkheim, de Tocqueville and others all attempted to throw light on this complex subject. In the United States different groups vie for control: business interests, political parties and racial/ethnic groups among others. Capitalism, as a system of power, has grown all through the twentieth century and soon will cover the globe. It is a question of our time whether capitalism will penetrate into every aspect of society - are we all ultimately "consumers" in the final analysis?

The course will have some basic goals. One goal will be to introduce you to a sociological perspective on the mechanics of power. Another goal will be to expose you to various theories of power and enable you to critically examine these theories. I also hope to link current events to the larger issues we explore in the class. Finally, the course, through the term paper, will endeavor to develop your ability to research sociological literature and apply your own analysis.

Texts: Orum, Anthony M. Introduction to Political Sociology (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001).

Neuman, William L. Power State and Society (note only chapters 4, 9, 10 and 11) (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

Robbins, Richard H. Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism (note only chapters 1-4)(Boston: Pearson, 2005).

Evaluations: : There will be a mid-term examination on March 3 worth 30% of the final grade, a final on May 10 at 12:30 pm worth 40% of the final grade and a 10 to 15 page paper due on April 10 which will be worth 30% of the final grade.

The paper is a basically a vehicle for you to explore an area of political phenomena that interests you. A one page outline/description of what you are going to write your paper on is due on February 9. A 3 to 5 page rough draft is due on February 24. The papers can be of three types. A basic paper will simply be expository in nature, demonstrating that you have come to understand a particular area of knowledge. A more sophisticated paper will be expository, but will also contain critical analysis. The most sophisticated paper will have an argued thesis. If you need guidance or help please come see me.

We will cover topics in this order:

Orum:

January 18,20

2) Marx, alienation, class, superstructure/substructure, capitalism, overproduction, Lenin, imperialism, Marcus, Poulantzas.

January 20, 25

3) Weber, calculability, bureaucracy, Protestantism, state, authority, status groups, Tilly, mobilization, Skocpol, social revolution.

January 27, 30 February 1

4) Durkeim, social norms, education, religion, division of labor, de Tocqueville, democracy.

February 3, 6, 9

5) Aristotle, oligarchy, democracy, moral vision, empirical view, totalitarianism, Nazis, authoritarianism, power in the United States.

February 9, 10, 13

6) American State, American military, the welfare state, American business and corporations, economic inequality, political equality.

Newman:

February 15, 17, 20

4) expansion of the right to vote, two party system, political appointees, bureaucracy, access to political power, policy organizations, affirmative action, women's rights, sexual orientation, racial restrictions on power, violent repression.

February 20, 22, 24

11) history of welfare state, goals of the welfare state, welfare state explanations, three types of welfare state (liberal-market, Christian democratic, social democratic), gender and the welfare state, private welfare state, results of the welfare state.

February 27, March 1, 13

10) relationship between the state and business, liberal capitalism, coordinated capitalism, militarism, stagflation, Regan revolution, taxes, corporate benefits, state spending, regulation, capture theory, deregulation.

March 15, 17, 20

9) social models of crime, ideology in legal order, lawyers, judiciary, supreme court, crime and state power, capital punishment, prisons, immigration, domestic political spying.

Orum:

March 20, 22, 24

7) pluralism, growth, three policy domains of the city (allocational, redistributive, developmental), history of cities, rise of the suburbs, global cities.

March 27, 29, 31

8) caucus and branch parties, electoral laws, Michel's iron law of oligarchy, American voting history, shift in values from materialist to post-materialist, social class and voting, shift from party loyalty to issues, decline of parties.

March 31, April 3, 5

9) forms of political participation, gender/race and participation, contentious politics, identity politics, cultural forces, institutionalized forms of contention.

April 12, 17, 19

10) aspects of the nation-state, nationalism, political stability, Marshall and citizenship, Brubaker and citizenship, economic development, social agents in development, military and development, peasants and revolution, development of democracy, world system theory.

Robbins:

April 19, 21, 26

1) consumer, worker, capitalist and the nation state, rise of consumerism in the US.

April 28

2) structure of capitalism, characteristics of the modern working class, Malthus and Marx, surplus value of labor, methods of reducing labor costs in modern international capitalism, primary and secondary industry.

May 1

3) history of the world trading system, rise of "new world" slavery, rise of the joint-stock company, the industrial revolution, global depression of 1873-1895, colonial expansion that leads to WWI, discussion of the historical creation of corporate America, the current ideology of neo-liberalism, creation of the World Bank and IMF, third world debt crisis.

May 3

4) historical rise of the nation state, the nation-state and violence/genocide, threats to the nation-state.