

## SC570 S09: Political Sociology

Wednesdays 3-5:20, Carney Hall 203

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### Course Description

This seminar will introduce the major themes, concepts, and debates in political sociology, with an eye toward giving you a basic understanding of the political and economic issues we see in the news every day and the ability to monitor and influence decisions that have a very real impact on your life. While the field is vast, overlapping to some degree with almost every other area of sociology, political sociologists have traditionally studied the relationships between the State and other collective actors in society (e.g. interest groups, political parties, social classes, and social movements). At the broadest level, political sociologists are concerned with answering two fundamental questions:

- 1) *What is the relationship between the state and other collective actors in different kinds of political systems?*
- 2) *How does the political-economic organization of social systems change over time?*

For about half of the semester we will be focused on the first question, which is basically a question about the sources and distribution of power: Who has power in society and how do they wield it? This kind of question lends itself to synchronic analyses of power across social actors and societies—like taking a snap-shot of the power dynamics in a particular constellation of participants, at a particular point in time. Most of the readings in this section will focus on the US, in explicit or implicit comparison with other nation states. As we move through the course, we'll begin to focus more on the second question about change. This question also deals with power but is more focused on how struggles *between* powerful actors change the system as a whole. It requires a more diachronic (developmental) analysis of power over time, be it within particular societies or in world-systemic transformations. While much of what we will be talking about is theoretical, our discussions in class and your writing assignments will focus on how these theories play out in real life situations, addressing contentious issues such as the political power of corporations, religion and politics, neo-liberal globalization, military intervention, the role of the State in addressing social inequality, and the tension between security and civil/human rights.

### Course Requirements

- 1) Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions. While I do not take attendance, my assessment of your level of engagement with the class will constitute a significant part of your grade. This will include occasional assignments to bring discussion questions, newspaper articles, visit a website, etc. If you have to miss class, please make sure to get notes from a fellow student and keep up with all readings and assignments.
- 2) Three short (5-7 pg.) papers. Out of a list of four possible topics, each person will sign up to write three short papers over the course of the semester. The papers address four important debates in political sociology: 1) the nature of power, 2) the degree of corporate influence in politics, 3) the tension between liberty and equality, and 4) the degree to

which national security justifies/demands the constriction of civil and/or human rights. In these papers you will be asked to elaborate the various positions in the debate and then to take a position on the question yourself and defend it.

- 3) **Final exam.** The final will be an in-class essay exam held during the scheduled exam period. You will probably need to draw on material from earlier in the semester as well, but the question(s) will primarily address the issues related to globalization, which we will cover in weeks 13-15. You will be given a review sheet ahead of time with potential exam questions, and if there is interest, I will also hold an optional review session during the study days to help you prepare.

### Grading

Your final grade for the course will be derived according to the following weighting of individual requirements:

Participation	15%
Short papers (20% each)	60%
Final Exam	25%

### Course Format

While I will do some lecturing to help put the readings in a larger context, most of our time will be spent in discussion, working together to understand, apply, and critique the various theories and ideas we are covering. I will do my part to facilitate discussion, help you understand the key arguments being made in the readings, and challenge you to think intelligently and critically about the issues they raise and use them to interpret current events. But the quality of the discussion will really depend on your engagement, interest, and preparedness, so please do your best to come to class having completed the readings assigned for that day and prepared to discuss them.

### Academic Integrity

It is each student's responsibility to understand and adhere to the accepted norms of intellectual honesty in their academic work. Any form of cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty, or collusion in another's dishonesty is a fundamental violation of these norms. To see the College's policies in this area go to: <http://www.bc.edu/integrity>. Two other sources to consult about proper citation rules and exactly what constitutes a breach of policy are: "Plagiarism Examples and Guidelines: A Quiz" at [http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz/#Example\\_four](http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz/#Example_four) and the American Sociological Association's "Quick Style Guide" at <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?section=Sociology+Depts&name=Quick+Style+Guide>).

**Policy on missed exams and late assignments (please read carefully!):** If you miss the exam or any other assignment because of an *emergency* (i.e. something that is both unavoidable and unforeseeable), make sure to contact me by email as soon as possible afterwards to arrange a make-up. If you know about an unavoidable conflict with any assignment ahead of time, you must make other arrangements with me *in advance*. Missing an exam or in-class assignment due to an unexcused absence will result in a grade of zero. Papers will be graded down by *5 percentage points for each day they are late* unless other arrangements have been made in advance.

## Readings

The following books will be available at the bookstore and on reserve at O'Neill Library:

- W. Lawrence Neuman. 2005. *Power, State, Society: An Introduction to Political Sociology*. New York: Waveland Press Inc. (ISBN: 978-1-577-66588-5) [\$42]
- Steven Lukes. 2005. *Power: A Radical View* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Palgrave. [\$23]
- G. William Domhoff. 1998. *Who Rules America?* 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. McGraw-Hill. (ISBN-13: 978-0-072-87625-3) [\$43]
- Milton Friedman. 2002. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (ISBN: 978-0-226-26421-9) [\$13]
- Naomi Klein. 2008. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Picador. (ISBN: 978-0-312-42799-3) [\$11]
- Starr, Amory. 2005. *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements against Globalization*. New York: Zed Books. (ISBN: 1-84277-483-2) [\$27]

The books were ordered a bit late, but they should be in the bookstore in a week or so. Until then, I will hand out copies of any readings from the books. Please note that because I will not be teaching this course next semester, selling them back to the bookstore may not be an option for all of them, so you may want to consider buying the more expensive ones on-line. To give you an idea of what the difference in cost might be, I have listed the full amazon.com price in [square brackets] for each book, and you can usually get them used for much less. If you do that, though, you should order them right away so that they arrive before we read them. *All other assigned readings will be on electronic reserve.*

## Weekly Schedule and Readings

### **1. Jan. 14            What is Political Sociology?**

### **2. Jan. 21            It's All About Power**

Readings:

- Neuman, Ch. 1 "Power, the State, Hegemony, and Struggle"
- Egan, Daniel, and Levon A. Chorbajian. 2005. From Section 1. "Critical Theories of Power" (Marx, Marcuse, Gramsci, Lipsitz, Phillips, & Foucault) in *Power: A Critical Reader*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. pp.1-26.
- Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Palgrave. Introduction and Ch. 1.

### **3. Jan. 28            Power: Lukes' "Radical View"**

Readings:

- Felluga, Dino. "Modules on Foucault: On Power." *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*. 11/23/03. Purdue University.  
<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultpower.html>
- Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*. Ch. 2-3.

**Monday, Feb. 2: Power papers due, 5pm.**

**4. Feb. 4 Capitalism and the State: Intro to States & State Theory**

Readings:

- John Gurley, *Challengers to Capitalism*. New York: Norton, 1980. Ch. 2 “The Triumph of Capitalism,” pp.7-29.
- Wolf, Eric R. 1982. “Modes of Production,” in *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 73-79.
- Neuman, Ch. 2 “Democracy, Nationalism, and the Nation State”; Ch. 3 “Theoretical Frameworks in Political Sociology.”

**5. Feb. 11 The Status Quo: Race, Class, and Gender Inequality in the US Today**

Readings:

- Neuman, Ch. 4 “The Polity of the United States” pp.121-168.
- New York Times. *Class Matters*. New York: Times Books. Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-50), and Ch. 4 “Up from the Holler” (pp. 63-73). Chapters 1 and 2 are available on-line, labeled “Day 1. Overview” and “Day 2. Health.” Ch. 4 will be on e-reserve. <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/class/>
- Leondar-Wright, Betsy. 2005. *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers. From Ch. 1: “Working Definitions” pp.1-4; from Ch. 2: “Class and Our Other Identities” pp.26-42, and “White Working Class Men” pp.55-59.

Fact Sheets/Reports:

- “By the Numbers: The latest and fullest data on income, wealth, CEO pay, etc.” Compiled by Chris Hartman. 2008. <http://www.demos.org/inequality/ByNumbersMay31.pdf>
- “Women & Gender Fact Sheet” Handout.
- Amaad Rivera et al. January 15, 2008. “Foreclosed: State of the Dream 2008.” United for a Fair Economy. [http://www.faireconomy.org/files/StateOfDream\\_01\\_16\\_08\\_Web.pdf](http://www.faireconomy.org/files/StateOfDream_01_16_08_Web.pdf)

**6. Feb. 18 Capital vs. the State: Who Rules?**

Readings:

- Domhoff, Ch. 1-4.
- Neuman, part of Ch. 8, “Cultural Institutions and Tolerance” pp. 335-59.
- Anthony M. Orum and John G. Dale. 2008. *Political Sociology: Power and Participation in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 12 “The Mass Media” pp. 261-81.

**7. Feb. 25 Who Rules? Part II.**

Readings:

- Domhoff, Ch. 5-7.
- Clyde W. Barrow. 1993. *Critical Theories of the State: Marxist, Neo-Marxist, Post-Marxist*. Madison, WI: Univ. of Wisconsin Press. Ch. 2 “Neo-Marxism: The Structuralist Approach” pp. 51-76, and Ch. 5 “Post-Marxism II: The Organizational Realist Approach” pp. 125-45.

**March 2-6: Spring Break!**

**Monday, Mar. 9: State vs. Capital papers due, 5pm.**

**8. Mar. 11 Political-Economic Systems: Liberty vs. Equality**

Readings:

- Orum and Dale. *Political Sociology*. Ch. 6 “Basic Forms of Political Authority” pp. 99-116.
- Norris, Pippa. 1997. “Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems” *International Political Science Review* 18(3):297-312.  
<http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris/Acrobat/IPSR%20Choosing%20Electoral%20Systems.pdf>
- Gross, Bertram. 1980. *Friendly Fascism: the New Face of Power in America*. Boston: South End Press. Ch. 1 “The Rise and Fall of Classic Fascism,” pp.11-31.
- Spiegel Staff. “Letter from Berlin: Neo-Nazi Violence on the Rise in Germany” *Spiegel Online International*. May 22, 2006.  
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,417492,00.html>
- Friedman, Milton. 2002. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Ch. 1-2.
- Noam Chomsky. 1981. *Radical Priorities*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition. New York: Black Rose Books. Ch. 21 “The Relevance of Anarcho-syndicalism” pp.245-61
- Anthony Giddens, *The Global Third Way Debate*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Ch. 10 “Does Equality Matter?” pp.172-77 (Dworkin) and Ch. 11 “The Question of Inequality” pp.178-88 (Giddens)

**9. Mar. 18 A Question of Justice? Taxes, Social Policy, and the Welfare State**

Readings:

- Neuman, part of Ch. 10 “The Politics of Business Policy” and Ch. 11 “Social Programs and Policies.”
- Friedman, Ch. XI “Social Welfare Measures” and Ch. XII “Alleviation of Poverty.”
- Giddens, *The Global Third Way Debate*. Ch. 1 “The Third Way: An Outline” pp.25-35 (Latham); Ch. 3 “The Third Ways of Social Democracy” pp.50-73 (Merkel)

**Monday, Mar. 23: Liberty vs. Equality papers due, 5pm.**

**10. Mar. 25 A Question of Democracy? The Importance of Civil Society**

Readings:

- Orum and Dale. *Political Sociology*. Ch. 10 “Social Movements” pp. 216-37.

- Putnam, Robert. 1994. "Bowling Alone." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1):65-78.
- Naomi Klein. 2002. *No Logo*. Ch. 12 "Culture Jamming: Ads Under Attack" pp. 279-310; Ch. 13 "Reclaim the Streets" pp. 311-324; Conclusion: "Consumerism vs. Citizenship: the Fight for the Global Common" pp.439-446.
- Fung, Archon and Erik Olin Wright. 2003. *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*. Wright's "Preface: The Real Utopias Project" pp.vii-viii; Archon Fung, "Deliberative Democracy, Chicago Style: Grass-roots Governance in Policing and Public Education" pp.111-140.

### 11. Apr. 1            **The War on Terror: Causes, Concepts, and Culprits**

Readings:

- Pape, Robert A. 2005. *Dying to Win*. New York: Random House. Introduction, pp. 3-26.
- Haynes Writer, Jeanette. September, 2002. "Terrorism in Native America: Interrogating the Past, Examining the Present, and Constructing a Liberatory Future" *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 33(3):317-330.
- Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, Introduction and Ch.1-5.

### 12. Apr. 8            **The War on Terror: National Security vs Human/Civil Rights**

Readings:

- Jost, K. (2003, October 24). Civil liberties debates. *CQ Researcher*, 13, 893-916. Retrieved January 9, 2007, from CQ Researcher Online, <http://library.cqpress.com.proxy.bc.edu/cqresearcher/getpdf.php?type=color&file=cqr20031024C.pdf>
- Katherine B. Darmer, Robert M. Baird, and Stuart E. Rosenbaum, eds. 2004. *Civil Liberties vs. National Security in a Post-9/11 World*. New York: Prometheus Books. Ch. 5 "Bigger Monster, Weaker Chains: The Growth of an American Surveillance Society" (Stanley & Steinhardt) pp.53-80; Ch. 15 "Should the Ticking Bomb Terrorist Be Tortured? A Case Study in How a Democracy Should Make Tragic Choices" (Dershowitz) pp.189-214.
- Wilson, Richard Ashby, ed. 2005. *Human Rights in the 'War on Terror'*. New York: Cambridge University Press. David Luban, "Eight Fallacies About Liberty and Security" pp. 242-57.
- Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, Ch. 14 "Shock Therapy in the U.S.A.: the Homeland Security Bubble."

#### **For further reference:**

- Jost, K. (2006, February 24). "Presidential power." *CQ Researcher*, 16, 169-192. Retrieved January 9, 2007, from CQ Researcher Online, <http://library.cqpress.com.proxy.bc.edu/cqresearcher/getpdf.php?type=color&file=cqr20060224C.pdf>
- Doyle, Charles. April 15, 2002. "The USA PATRIOT Act: A Legal Analysis. Congressional Research Service. <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL31377.pdf>

- Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights. 2003. "Assessing the New Normal: Liberty and Security for the Post-September 11 United States"  
<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/pubs/descriptions/Assessing/AssessingtheNewNormal.pdf>

**Monday, Apr. 13: Security vs. Rights papers due, 5pm.**

**13. Apr. 15 Globalization: Road to Salvation or Disaster Capitalism?**

Readings:

- Stiglitz, Joseph E. 2002. *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Ch. 1, "The Promise of Global Institutions" pp. 3-22.
- D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn. 2006. *Globalization: the Transformation of Social Worlds*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth. From Ch. 2: "Globalization" (Giddens), "The World Is Flat" (Friedman), and "Globalization and Its Specter" (Brecher et al) pp.11-30; from Ch. 3: "Free Markets and Poverty" (Weller & Hersh) pp.59-63; from Ch. 4: "The ABCs of the Global Economy" pp.70-80.
- Jagdish Bhagwati. 2004. *In Defense of Globalization*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 5 "Poverty: Enhanced or Diminished?" pp.51-67.
- Lori Wallach and Michelle Sforza. 1999. *The WTO: Five Years of Reasons to Resist Corporate Globalization*. New York: Seven Stories Press. Ch. I. "The WTO's Slow-Motion Coup D'Etat Over Democratic Society" pp.13-27.
- Daniel T. Griswald. 2001. "Seven Moral Arguments for Free Trade" *Cato Policy Report* Vol. 23(4).
- Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, Part 3 (Ch. 6-8) "Surviving Democracy: Bombs Made of Laws."

**14. Apr. 22 Globalization, cont'd.**

Readings:

- Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, Ch. 9 "Slamming the Door on History"; Ch 10 "Democracy Born in Chains"; Ch 15 "A Corporatist State"; Ch. 16 "Erasing Iraq"; Ch 20 "Disaster Apartheid."
- Macleod, Sorcha and Douglas Lewis. 2004. "Transnational Corporations: Power, Influence and Responsibility" *Global Social Policy* 4(1):77-98.
- Held, David. 2000. "Regulating Globalization? The Reinvention of Politics" *International Sociology* 15(2):394-408.

Film: "The Corporation"

**15. Apr. 29 The Global Justice Movement: Globalization from Below?**

Readings:

- Starr, Amory. 2005. *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements Against Globalization*. New York: Zed Books. Chs. 2-3, 7, 9, 12-15, 20-21.
- WSF Charter of Principles.  
[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Charter\\_of\\_Principles\\_%28World\\_Social\\_Forum%29](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Charter_of_Principles_%28World_Social_Forum%29)

- Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton-Rose, and George Katsiaficas (eds.) 2004. *Confronting Capitalism: Dispatches From a Global Movement*. Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press. Ramor Ryan, “And Balanced With This Life, This Death” pp.134-41; Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis, “Genoa and the Antiglobalization Movement” pp.142-53 Kristine Wong, “Shutting Us Out: Race, Class, and the Framing of a Movement” pp.204-14
- Starhawk. 2002. *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*. Section on Seattle: “How We Really Shut Down the WTO” pp.15-20 and “Making It Real: Initiation Instructions, Seattle ‘99” pp.25-28; section on Genoa: “Genova – Friday, 7/20” and “From the IMC – Saturday, 7/21” pp.103-109.  
Film: “This is What Democracy Looks Like” or “Fourth World War”

**Thursday, May 7: Final Exam at 9:00 am.**