

**Political Sociology 01:920:290**  
**Fall 2020**

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Davidson  
Teaching Assistant: Nil Uzun

**ORGANIZATION**

**Lectures**

Monday and Wednesday, 2:15pm - 3:35pm (synchronous, via Zoom)

**Virtual office hours:**

Monday, 3:35pm - 4:35pm (open office hours after class)

Wednesday, 4pm - 5pm (individual 10 minute appointments) book here:

<https://politicalsociology2020.youcanbook.me>

**Contact**

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*A note on email:*

I will respond to email within 48 hours except on weekends. This [guide](#) provides some useful pointers for academic email etiquette. Where possible please try to use the Canvas discussion forum to get answers to your questions.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Political sociology is a large and diverse field that focuses on the intersecting relationships between politics and society. This course is intended to provide an introductory survey to the field. We will begin by reading classical theories of political sociology, focusing on how these thinkers developed concepts to think through the relationship between politics and society and how their ideas have influenced later scholarship. We will then focus on the formation of political institutions and structures: the origins and consolidation of the modern nation-state; democracy and the welfare state; political competition and the role of political parties; and the relationship between institutionalized politics and non-institutionalized politics, including social movements and revolutions. We will then transition to analyzing important topics in political sociology and contemporary politics including colonialism and postcolonialism, populism and nationalism, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, inequality, and the role of social media and technology in politics.

**Learning objectives**

Students who complete the course will

- understand the historical foundations and major theoretical traditions in the field of political sociology.
- understand major topics and debates in the field of political sociology and how they shape contemporary research.

- be able to apply theories and concepts developed by political sociologists to study historical and contemporary political issues.
- think critically about arguments and issues and understand how evidence is used in the service of arguments.

## READINGS

Each week there will be a selection of readings posted on the Canvas website in the Files tab. The readings corresponding to each lecture are listed below in the course outline. You should **complete the necessary readings before each lecture** since they will both help you to understand the material presented in the lectures and will aid in your discussions with other students. The amount of reading and the difficulty of the reading will vary but you should expect to read approximately 50-100 pages each week.

*You do not need to purchase any additional texts for this course.* However, if you are interested in purchasing an introductory text I would recommend the following book, which retails for around \$20:

Elisabeth S. Clemens. 2016. *What Is Political Sociology?* John Wiley & Sons.

## ASSESSMENT

### Participation (10%)

10% of your grade will be determined by your participation. Participation includes interaction during lectures and in activities such as in-class quizzes, posting on the discussion board, and attending office hours. You will receive feedback on your participation part-way through the course, providing an opportunity to make improvements if necessary to achieve the full participation grade.

If you are unable to attend lectures synchronously, you can still get a full participation grade by participating in other activities (see the Attendance policy below for more details).

### Exams (90%)

The remainder of your grade will be determined by in-class exams. There will be three exams over the course of the semester, the first two will be in class (dates are below in the Course Outline) and the final exam will be scheduled for the exam period in December. Each will count for approximately one third of the grade.

Each exam will focus on material from the preceding weeks since the last exam, they will only be cumulative in the sense that there are general themes running through the course. Each exam will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions.

### Extra credit

There will be opportunities to gain extra credit throughout the course.

### Missed exams

If you are unable to complete an exam at the allotted time **you must notify me by e-mail at least one week in advance** (unless of course there is an emergency and you cannot provide notice, in which case you must notify me as soon as possible) so that we can make alternative arrangements.

## COURSE POLICIES

### **Attendance policy**

Students are expected to attend all online lectures. The course is synchronous to allow for questions, to facilitate discussions, and to ensure that course participation is routine. The exception to this policy is for students located in a timezone that impedes synchronous participation (e.g. the allotted class time will fall in the middle of the night). If you think you fall into this category please **send me an email on the first day of class**.

### **Virtual classroom etiquette and conduct**

Lectures will be held using Zoom. During the lecture portion of the class all students will need to have their microphones muted to avoid interruptions. Using your video is optional but it would help if you could make sure to upload a profile picture. Breakout groups may be used intermittently for in-class discussion, during which you will of course have to unmute yourselves. If you have questions during lecture please post them in the Zoom text chat and I will try to respond to them, but if necessary feel free to unmute yourself and interrupt.

I understand that it can be difficult to pay attention during lectures at the best of times and that in these exceptional circumstances it may be particularly difficult to remain focused. There is evidence that the use of computers during lectures can be detrimental to learning, but we obviously have to make a compromise under the circumstances since you will need a computer or tablet to participate in the class. To prevent distractions, I strongly encourage you to use the Zoom app and to close or minimize any web browsers (unless we are using them for an exercise, e.g. an in-class quiz) and other applications that may interrupt you and to silence or turn off your cell phones.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. This class will be a space for tolerance, respect, and mutual dialogue. Students must abide by the [Code of Student Conduct](#) at all times, including during lectures and in participation online.

### **Academic integrity**

All students must abide by the university's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find the full policy [here](#). Common violations of academic integrity include plagiarism and cheating, for example copying or sharing answers to quizzes with other students or posting solutions online. Violations of academic integrity will result in disciplinary action.

### **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact me **during the first week of classes**. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Student Disability Services and must provide verification of their eligibility for such accommodations.

### **COVID-19**

I will also be making additional accommodations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you or your family are affected in any way that impedes your ability to participate in this course, please contact me as soon as you can so that we can make necessary arrangements.

## COURSE OUTLINE

The following pages contain the tentative structure for the course. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as the course progresses and will endeavor to notify you of any changes during class, but please make sure to consult the syllabus regularly in case there are any changes. I have included a short summary of the materials covered each week.

### *Week 1*

In the first session we will cover the structure of the course, the learning objectives, and the expectations. In the second session I will introduce the topic of political sociology, discuss how it relates to sociology more broadly and the adjacent field of political science, and provide further explanation for the structure of the course, including how to approach the materials covered.

#### **9/8 [Class meets on Tuesday instead of Monday due to Labor Day]: Orientation**

Readings:

1. The syllabus.

#### **9/9: Introduction to political sociology**

Readings:

1. Elizabeth Clemens. 2016. *What Is Political Sociology? Introduction*.

### *Week 2*

This week we will focus on the writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883). More than perhaps any other theorist of his time, Marx's writings have shaped both academic analyses and real-world politics. We will read key works in Marx's oeuvre, focusing on the political aspects of his writings. The first lecture will be devoted to Marx's analysis of the relationship between capitalism and society as it pertains to politics. The second lecture will cover on Marx's political project, as outlined in the polemic *The Communist Manifesto* and other writings. Finally, we will assess how his analyses of politics have shaped subsequent thinking, focusing on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

#### **9/14: Marxism I: Capitalism and society**

Readings:

1. Karl Marx. 1845. "Theses on Feuerbach."
2. Karl Marx. 1844. "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts." Excerpt: alienated labor.
3. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1846. *The German Ideology*. Excerpt.
4. Karl Marx. 1859. Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*.

#### **9/16: Marxism II: Class Struggle, Hegemony, and Neo-Marxism**

Readings:

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1848. *The Communist Manifesto*. Excerpt.
2. Karl Marx. 1852. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." Excerpt.
3. James P. Hawley. 1980. "Antonio Gramsci's Marxism: Class, State and Work." *Social Problems* 27 (5): 584–600. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800198>.

### Week 3

This week we turn our attention to the works of two other “founding fathers” of sociology, Max Weber (1864-1920) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). We will study Weber’s perspective on politics and how his view of class differs from that of Marx. We will also discuss his writings on the nature of power and authority and on rationalization and bureaucracy, which have had an impact on subsequent political sociology. While a pivotal figure in sociology at large, Durkheim’s contributions to political sociology are less well known. We will analyze his conceptualization of social structures in *The Division of Labour in Society* and then focus on more recent secondary analyses of his contributions to political sociology.

#### 9/21: Weber: power, politics, and bureaucracy

Readings:

1. Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” and “Class, Status, Party,” in *From Max Weber*, pp. 77-87; pp. 180-195.
2. Max Weber, “Domination and Legitimacy” in *Economy and Society* (3rd edition), pp. 941-955.

#### 9/23: Durkheim: the individual and the collective

Readings:

1. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*. Excerpt.
2. To be confirmed.

### Week 4

This week we move away from classical theoretical statements and introduce two core topics in political sociology. In the first class we will discuss the origins and nature of the modern nation-state. We will discuss the foundational work of Charles Tilly (1929-2008), as well as subsequent debates regarding state autonomy. In the second class we will discuss the path to democracy in modern nation states and explanations for why some states follow different paths. We will focus on the classic comparative-historical work of Barrington Moore (1913-2005) and Seymour Martin Lipset’s (1922-2006) analysis in *Political Man*.

#### 9/28: The nation-state and society

Readings:

1. Charles Tilly. 1992. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. Wiley-Blackwell. Excerpts.
2. Michael Mann. 1984. “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results.” *European Journal of Sociology* 25 (2): 185–213.

#### 9/30: The path to democracy

Readings:

1. Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Excerpts. (Preface, Chapter 7)
2. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man*. Excerpts.

### Week 5

The lecture this week focuses on the emergence of the modern welfare state in advanced democracies. We will study the nature and origins of the welfare state and compare different countries to understand why it differs and why it is relatively weak in the United States compared to many European countries. The first exam will take place online during the second lecture, covering all of the material covered so far.

## 10/5: The welfare state and capitalism

### Readings:

1. Francis Fox-Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*, 1971. Excerpts.
2. Gøsta Esping-Anderson. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Excerpts.

## 10/7: Exam 1, covering weeks 1 through 5.

### Week 6

This week we focus on political competition within the arena of the nation-state. Lipset and Rokkan's concept of political cleavages is fundamental to political sociology and how we think about the organization of political competition. We will then discuss the distinction between theories of articulation and reflection, which differ in how they view the relationship between political parties and society. In the second lecture we will discuss Ronald Inglehart's (1934-) work on the concept of "postmaterialist values", focused on how generational change and shifting socioeconomic conditions eroded materialist political cleavages, creating space for new types of political demands. Veugelers analyzes how the emergence of far-right parties in Europe posed challenges to both cleavage theory and the postmaterialist hypothesis.

## 10/12: Political parties and social cleavages

### Readings:

1. Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In *Party Systems and Voter Alignments : Cross-National Perspectives*, by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, 1–64. London: Collier Macmillan. Excerpts.
2. De Leon, Cedric, Manali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal. 2009. "Political Articulation: Parties and the Constitution of Cleavages in the United States, India, and Turkey." *Sociological Theory* 27 (3): 193–219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2009.01345.x>.
  - a. Read p.193 - 201 until section "Articulation Practices," skim 201-214, read Conclusion 214-216.

## 10/14: Political parties II: Postmaterialist values and new cleavages

### Readings:

1. Inglehart, Ronald. 2007. "Postmaterialist Values and the Shift from Survival to Self-Expression Values."
2. Veugelers, John W. P. 1999. "A Challenge for Political Sociology: The Rise of Far-Right Parties in Contemporary Western Europe." *Current Sociology* 47 (4): 78–100.

### Week 7

Previously we studied the role of political parties within democratic states. This week we turn to two forms of political action that exist outside of institutional politics: social movements and revolutions. The first lecture focuses on social movements and the concepts developed by sociologists to understand them including resource mobilization, political opportunity structures, and framing. We will discuss these theories as they pertain to historical and contemporary social movements, with a particular focus on scholarship related to the Civil Rights Movement. The second lecture focuses on revolutions, large-scale political events which fundamentally transform social and political life. Here we will focus on the classic work of Theda Skocpol (1947-) as well as contemporary events in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

## 10/19: Social movements

### Readings:

1. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement*. Excerpts: Introduction, C1.
2. Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Excerpts: p.1-65.
3. Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*. Excerpts.

### 10/21: Revolutions

#### Readings:

1. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*. Excerpts: Introduction.
2. Goldstone, Jack A. 2011. "Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies." *Foreign Affairs* 90 (3): 8-10,11-16.

### Week 8

We will shift from analyzing political structures, institutions, and events to study how social and cultural factors shape political and social life. The first lecture will focus on the concepts of political culture and social capital. We will read the foundational work of Robert Putnam (1941-) on the concept of social capital as it pertains to politics and Alexis de Tocqueville's (1805-1859) classic work on political culture and American democracy. In the second lecture we will study the topic of public opinion. In particular we will address two questions: What is public opinion and how does public opinion change over time?

### 10/26: Social capital and political culture

#### Readings:

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Excerpts.
2. Robert Putnam. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." Interview in *Journal of Democracy*.

### 10/28: Public opinion

#### Readings:

1. Zaret, David. 1996. "Petitions and the 'Invention' of Public Opinion in the English Revolution." *American Journal of Sociology* 101 (6): 1497-1555. <https://doi.org/10.1086/230866>.
2. Katz, Elihu. 1957. "The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on an Hypothesis." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/266687>.
3. Nyhan, Brendan. 2020. "Facts and Myths about Misperceptions." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 34 (3): 220-36. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.34.3.220>.

### Week 9

This we turn our attention to the topics of nationalism, fascism, and the radical right. The first lecture will focus on nationalism and the classic work of Benedict Anderson (1936-2015). The second lecture will focus on the historical phenomenon of fascism and its relationship to contemporary radical right politics.

### 11/2: Nationalism

#### Readings:

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, excerpts.
2. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, excerpts

### 11/3: Election day. Please vote if you are able to!

### 11/4: Fascism and the radical right

Readings:

1. Berezin, Mabel. 2015. "Fascism." In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism*, 1–5. Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
2. Muis, Jasper, and Tim Immerzeel. 2017. "Causes and Consequences of the Rise of Populist Radical Right Parties and Movements in Europe." *Current Sociology* 65 (6): 909–930.

#### Week 10

This week starts by focusing on the concept of populism, which has become widely used (and misused) in contemporary political discourse. The second lecture will focus on the topics of colonialism and postcolonialism. Mahmood Mamdani (1946-) analyzes how the nature of colonial rule in Africa had an enduring impact on postcolonial politics and Julian Go reviews the relevance of postcolonial theories to political sociology.

#### 11/9: Populism

Readings:

1. Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2018. "Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective: Reflections on the Contemporary and Future Research Agenda." *Comparative Political Studies* 51 (13): 1667–93.
2. Bonikowski, Bart, and Noam Gidron. 2016. "The Populist Style in American Politics: Presidential Campaign Discourse, 1952–1996." *Social Forces* 94 (4): 1593–1621. Excerpts.

#### 11/11: Colonialism and postcolonialism

Readings:

1. Mahmood Mamdani. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Excerpts.
2. Julian Go. 2020. "Political Sociology and the Post-Colonial Perspective." *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*.

#### Week 11

During the first class we will examine the politics of race, ethnicity, and immigration, both in the United States and from a comparative perspective. We will read three different review articles that cover how these issues relate to the field of political sociology. The second lecture will consist of an exam covering the materials from weeks 6 through to 11.

#### 11/16: The politics of race, ethnicity, and immigration

Readings:

1. Brubaker, Rogers. 2009. "Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (1): 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115916>.
2. Joe R. Feagin and Sean Elias. 2020. "Theories of Race, Ethnicity, and the Racial State." *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*. 191-215.
3. Irene Bloemraad and Rebecca Hamlin. 2020. "Migration, Asylum, Integration and Citizenship Policy." *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*. 880-909.

#### 11/18: Exam 2, covering material from week 6-11

#### Week 12



The lecture this week will focus on the political sociology of sex, gender, and sexuality and myriad ways in which these categories shape political life. There is no class on Wednesday due to the Thanksgiving break.

### 11/23: Sex, gender, and politics

Readings:

1. Jeff Hearn and Barbara Hobson. "Gender, State, and Citizenship: Challenges and Dilemmas in Feminist Theorizing." *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*. 153-190.
2. Brubaker, Rogers. 2016. "The Dolezal Affair: Race, Gender, and the Micropolitics of Identity." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39 (3): 414–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1084430>.

11/25 - Thanksgiving, no class

### Week 13

The first lecture of the week will return to the theme of inequality and power. We will study C. Wright Mills' (1916-1962) classic analysis of the power elite and more recent studies of wealth inequality. We will also examine how recent political movements such as Occupy have addressed the issue of inequality. The second lecture will turn to the topic of technology. Langdon Winner (1944-) makes the case for how material objects can become politicized. Virginia Eubanks (1972-) and Ruha Benjamin both analyzed how big data and computing have been used to reproduce inequality and structures of racial domination.

### 11/30: Inequality and power

Readings:

1. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*. Excerpts.
2. Thomas Piketty. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Excerpts.

### 12/2: Technology and politics

Readings:

1. Winner, Langdon. 1980. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus* 109 (1): 121–36.
2. Virginia Eubanks. 2018. *Automating Inequality*. Excerpts.
3. Benjamin, Ruha. 2019. *Race After Technology*. Excerpts.

### Week 14

The final week of the course will focus on the role of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook in contemporary politics. The first lecture will be devoted to the study of how social media has been used in collective action events and by social movements. The second lecture will analyze some of the recent threats posed by social media such as misinformation/fake news and bots.

### 12/7: Social media and social movements

Readings:

1. Tufekci, Zeynep. 2017. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Excerpts.
2. Hanna, Alex. 2013. "Computer-Aided Content Analysis of Digitally Enabled Movements." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 18 (4): 367–388.

### 12/9: Social media and democracy in crisis

Readings:

1. Tucker, Joshua A., Yannis Theocharis, Margaret E. Roberts, and Pablo Barberá. 2017. "From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media And Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 28 (4): 46–59.

2. “Anatomy of a Russian Facebook Ad.” 2017. *The Washington Post*. Accessed July 22, 2020.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/business/russian-ads-facebook-anatomy/>.
3. “How QAnon rode the pandemic to new heights - and fueled the viral anti-mask phenomenon”. 2020.  
*NBC News*  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/how-qanon-rode-pandemic-new-heights-fueled-viral-anti-mask-n1236695>. Accessed August 19, 2020.

**Exam 3, covering weeks 12 through 14. Date to be confirmed.**