Seminar in Sociology of Contemporary Institutions: Political Sociology

Tuesday 4:30-7:10pm
Instructor: Dr. Gordon Gauchat
Office: Bolton 742
Spring 2016
Bolton Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-1:30; Wednesday 11:30-1:00pm and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course examines the field of political sociology including programmatic statements of theorists and recent debates in the field. In this class, we will interrogate the major theoretical questions about power, politics and the state from a sociological perspective. It will introduce you to the major theories, methods and analytic strategies within the field of political sociology as a basis for conducting your own research. We will read a wide range of important research on the dynamics of political institutions and processes. We begin the course by analyzing theories of power and the state. In the second section, we examine macro-political questions concerning the development and transformation of modern states. In the third sections of the course we will examine policy regimes and policy formation. Finally, in the fourth section, we will focus on political culture and civic actors. Major topics include ritual and performance, political discourse and public opinion, polarization, political identities, and social movements. Throughout the course, a wide range of empirical cases will be covered including the state and economy, revolution and warfare, the welfare state, social inequality and policy, democracy and political participation, social movements and interest groups. The primary writing assignment will be a well-developed research proposal for a major project in political sociology suitable for submission for funding support.

Note: It is possible that we will fall slightly behind or get ahead of ourselves, so the dates on the syllabus may change slightly if we find it necessary.

Attendance and Participation are both essential for success in this course. More than one absence will seriously impact this portion of your grade, and it is vital that you participate actively in discussion each and every week. As a general rule, plan on talking at least twice each meeting—even if you are not particularly comfortable with class discussion, it is definitely important that you actively participate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reflections Papers and Presentations
You will be required to turn in a total of four short reflection papers (5 pages) on the readings over the semester. This is designed to help you with comprehension and retention of these often challenging readings, AND to provide you material that should be helpful in writing your final paper. I will provide further details about these reflection papers on D2L. In addition, in two of
the weeks that you are writing a reflection, you must also organize the class discussion of the readings. This will involve you posting a short abstract on the readings that provides a broad summary and starting point for the discussion (i.e., what unifying ideas did you see, what were the key ideas, what criticisms did you observe). Then, you should include a minimum of 7 discussion questions for the class to discuss in class. You will need to post this summary on Monday by 11:59pm the week we discuss your readings—plan ahead, as there WILL be penalties for late notes. Please include page numbers when you refer to specific points in the readings. This course requirement will be worth 60% of your final grade.

**Final Research Paper**
In addition to the short reflection papers outline above, you will also be required to write a longer research paper at the end of the semester. You and I must discuss the general topic of your paper. This should happen before March 14, the week before spring break. However, I encourage you to think about the paper topic and come talk to me before this date. The easiest way is to schedule an appointment with me. Again, I will have a more detailed description of the final paper posted to D2L. In brief, the paper will be a well-developed research proposal for a major project in political sociology suitable for submission for funding support.

**Grades**
10% Participation and Attendance
60% Reflection Papers and Discussions (10% each)
30% Final Paper

**Warning**
Plagiarism and cheating of any kind are unacceptable, and will be penalized both with a 0 on the relevant assignment, and according to UWM Academic Disciplinary Procedures. If you have any doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me or to consult university regulations. I HAVE caught plagiarism cases in the past, and I am NOT interested in having to deal with that! ANY TIME that you use someone else’s words, those words MUST be in quotation marks and MUST be thoroughly cited—no exceptions. Late papers will be penalized one-third grade for each day late (an A- paper will drop to a B+, for example). Incompletes will only be granted in extremely rare and severe cases and only with relevant documentation.

************The Syllabus is subject to change************
You are responsible for keeping track of any changes to the syllabus. If for any reason you are not in class when a change is announced, it is YOUR responsibility to find out what has been changed by asking me or a classmate. It is very possible that we will fall slightly behind or get slightly ahead of ourselves in terms of the reading, so each week I will make clear what the next week’s readings will be.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


* All other readings will be posted on D2L (and are indicated by underlining below).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 Jan. 24 Introductions

Week 2 Jan. 31 Pluralism, Polyarchy, and Democracy

Week 3 Feb. 7 Power, Authority, Coercion, and States
State Formation and Transformation

Week 4 Feb. 14 Marx

Week 5 Feb 21.

Week 6 Feb. 28 [NO CLASS]
National Academies of Science Roundtable

Week 7 March. 7 Global Institutions and Processes


Markets and the Policy Process

Week 8 March. 14 Economic Policy and Regulation

Week 9 March. 28 Policy Process

Week 10 April 4 Ideology


Week 11 April 11 Science and Policy
Week 12 April 18 Media and Political Discourse


Week 13 April 25 Polarization and Culture and Cognition


Week 14 May 2 Protest, Social Movements and Revolution
Tarrow, Sidney. Power in Movement (3rd edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chs. 1-4, 8, 10-11)

Week 15 May 9 Final Paper Due at 11:59 p.m.
Presentations of Proposed Research

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that page is: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf)

**Students with Disabilities.** Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following: [http://www4.uwm.edu/arc](http://www4.uwm.edu/arc)

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm)

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: [http://www4.uwm.edu/academics/military.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/academics/military.cfm)

**Incompletes.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: [https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf](https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf)

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding
discriminatory conduct can be found at: 
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminating_Policy.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: 
http://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at: 
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminating_Policy.pdf

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the sociology department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at 
http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/upload/grievance_procedure.pdf

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at 
http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-appeals-procedure/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: 
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

Update 08/2016