

Sociology 304: Political Sociology
Spring 2019

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday, 11:00-12:15pm

Classroom: Bolton B40

Course Website: <http://d21.uwm.edu/>

Instructor: Prof. Gordon Gauchat

Office: Bolton Hall 742

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:30-2:30pm

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Political sociology is the study of political behavior from a sociological perspective. Sociology offers a unique view of politics and society, by endeavoring to explain how different spheres or domains of society interact and negotiate social order. These overlapping realms of society include the private sphere, public/civil sphere, the market sphere, and the state sphere. Each domain of society is semi-autonomous, consisting of distinct logics of action and social patterns. At the same time, the separate domains of society must translate their internal logics to form a cohesive social order. How these different spheres come together and negotiate society will be the main subject of this course. We will examine a number of different theories in this course to explain this complex process, including pluralism, democracy theory, conflict theories, state-centered theories, and cultural theories of political action. We will also question the assumptions of the “modernist” standpoint toward society and whether it is outmoded or simply false.

Class Organization

This course will revolve around reading primary sources and discussing ideas. I will provide brief lectures that summarize major ideas and provide further context, but we will spend most of class time discussing the readings. Many of the ideas in this course will be fairly complex. The only way to fully engage with complex arguments and ideas is to work through them together. This means “interrogating” the readings, asking questions, mapping out the logic, and making arguments about what we think a reading might mean. Doing this in a group, with your peers, can be very rewarding and fun.

In sum, it is very important that you ask questions and interact with your peers during our class meetings. I adopt the principle that THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION. You should think of this class as a safe environment to voice your views and make sense of new and interesting ideas. Sometimes the simplest questions or the most misdirected comments are the most productive and illuminating ones, and we need to embrace that in this class. In order to make our exploration of political sociology as relevant as possible to you, I have organized this class around a common theme: how can social science help us make sense of contemporary society and better understand our role in democratic life? As you will see, this will be a central element in the papers that you will write and I will try to make my lectures and our discussions revolve around this theme.

Assignments and Workload

The grading scheme in this course is aimed at encouraging and maximizing the core elements of this class: reading and discussion.

Readings: there will be a considerable amount of reading to do for this class. We have an average of 30 pages per session (with some variability), but some of the texts are more difficult. Remember, you don't just want to go through the motions with the readings (or with life in general, really), but you actually want to get something out of it. This will require more time than a superficial reading. To ensure that you are reading effectively and understanding the texts, I will give you a quiz every Wednesday (see the class schedule below for exact dates) at the beginning of class about what you read since the previous quiz. Importantly then, at least some quiz questions about the texts will be about things that we have yet to discuss in class. The quizzes will focus on making sure that you have read, not that you fully understood the readings. My goal here (besides making sure that you are keeping up with the readings) is to help you learn to read intellectually challenging texts. Thus, this class is not only about learning sociological theories of politics, but also how to engage with intellectual materials by identifying arguments and key ideas, even if you miss some of the complicated details. I will distribute a set of questions to guide your reading for each session of the semester. If you are still having difficulty, please come to see me during office hours. Of the 13 quizzes that we will have during the semester, I will drop the three lowest grades. You cannot make up a missed quiz (it will be one of the three dropped grades). Each quiz will be worth 10 points, so the total number of possible points for the quizzes will be 100 (there will be more detailed information in the "Quizzes FAQs" document on D2L).

Participation: Class discussion will be central to this course. For that reason, 10 points of your grade will be devoted to participation in class discussions. My main goal is to encourage you to think critically about the readings and bring questions, comments, doubts, and observations to class. People often disagree about politics, and given that this course is about politics, I want everybody to be respectful of other people's ideas. I want people to feel free to express their viewpoints about the readings and how they relate to society. I only ask that our discussion relate to the course materials (the text or topic of discussion) and help further your understanding of the course materials. I am not expecting everyone to talk in every class, but to be generally engaged and contribute regularly. However, I am aware that it is hard to ensure everyone's participation in class because we are a relatively large group, because people have different personalities and it is hard for some to speak in public. For this reason, I have set up a discussion board on the D2L website where you can post comments and questions about the readings and our sessions. I do not want you to think that writing online posts means that there is no need to participate in the classroom. My main goal is to have a lively class discussion, and thus you should think about the online posts to complement your participation in class. If you are someone who is usually engaged and active in class you do not need to write anything online, but if you are on the quiet side and want to get the 10 points for participation you should regularly make meaningful contributions to the online forum. And notice that I say 'regularly'. Submitting several posts in the last week of class will not make up for no participation in the previous fourteen.

Papers: with the quizzes and the points for participation I will ensure that you are reading and critically engaging with the course materials. However, neither of these components will allow

you to develop your thoughts in any depth. For this reason, the last required element for this class will be to write three 4 to 6-page papers. In these three papers, I will ask you to reflect upon the material that we have seen in class and relate it to some contemporary problem. Each paper is worth 30 points, for a total of 90 points for this component of the course, and you have to submit *all three* in order to get a passing grade. I will distribute detailed instructions for the papers in class.

This is all you will need to do for this course. There are no midterm or final exams. There will be quite a lot of difficult reading, so I want you to focus on doing that and come to class ready to ask questions and discuss. Importantly, the only other requirement for the course will be attendance to class. Attendance is required and I will take attendance each and every class. I will allow up to 4 unjustified absences. These are supposed to cover illnesses and other uncontrollable circumstances. They are not a free pass to miss four classes without reason. Therefore, if anyone misses more than four classes I will need to see a justification for ALL the absences if you do not want to be penalized. You are expected to be in class every day, and therefore any unjustified absence beyond the 4 will subtract 3 points from your final grade. And just to be clear: attending a class implies being there for all (or most) of the class and being ‘active and engaged’. Showing up for a quiz and leaving right after it, as well as showing up late or leaving early without reason will be counted as an absence. In the same way, being in class watching videos or writing emails on your laptops (and believe me, it is obvious when you are not using them to take notes for the class) will also be counted as an absence, and I will be the only judge of whether you are ‘active and engaged’.

The grading scheme, therefore, will be the following:

- **10 quizzes x 10 points each = 100 possible points (50%)**
- **3 papers x 30 points = 90 possible points (45%)**
- **Participation = 10 possible points (5%)**

TOTAL = 200 possible points (100%)

The final letter grades will be applied over the total possible 200 points in the following way:

A	186-200
A-	180-185.9
B+	174-179.9
B	166-173.9
B-	160-165.9
C+	154-159.9

C	146-153.9
C-	140-145.9
D+	134-139.9
D-	120-125.9
F	0-120

This scheme will be strict. If you get 185.9 points your grade is A-, not A. You are warned from

the very beginning: if you want a higher grade, you need to work harder (and take advantage of the opportunities that I will give you over the course of the semester). Complaints of the “but I am so close!” at the end of the semester will have no effect. A further comment on ‘complaints’ about grades: I am happy to discuss with you any concerns you might have about how you are evaluated and about your grades. However, I will only make changes to your grades if I have made an obvious mistake. My main concern when I evaluate you is to make sure that I am fair to everyone in relation to each other. If somebody comes to see me and ‘convinces’ me to increase his or her grade that puts those who just accept their grade and do not come to see me at a disadvantage, and therefore as a policy I do not change grades.

A note on participation in class discussion

As I mentioned above, your active participation will be a key element of the learning experience in this class, so I want to make sure that it is clear what I mean: participating in class is not a function of speaking a lot or of making only brilliant points. My main criterion for evaluating participation is: does this comment move the conversation forward? This can happen by asking a very simple question of clarification, or by saying something that is completely wrong but allows us to confront an issue that we had not considered before. Someone who speaks non-stop or who shuts other people off is in fact stifling debate, and that is the exact opposite of what I am looking for. As I said before, I want to encourage you all to participate, thus the principle that there is no such thing as a stupid question or comment in this class. But I do ask you to be mindful: you are part of a group, and our goal is to move forward and learn together. Disrupting the conversation or putting someone else down is not acceptable and I will be strict about that.

Office hours, email

I will hold office hours every Tuesday (from 12:30 to 2:30pm). I am happy to see you by appointment at other times if you cannot make the office hours. You should see this as a resource to which you have access in order to seek clarification, to discuss issues both with the material and the functioning of the class, or simply to make your views known about specific topics and readings. Given the difficulty of some of the material that we will be covering this semester, you should make use of office hours! You can also contact me by email at any point during the semester. I will try to reply to your messages promptly. However, you should always allow 24-72 hours for my replies. Therefore, you should not wait until the last minute to ask me important questions. Plan ahead!

Required texts

Most of the readings that we will do during the class will come from the following list of books, which you can buy from the University Bookstore. They are also on reserve at the library:

- On Democracy, by Robert A. Dahl. Yale University Press (2015). ISBN-13: 978-0-300194463.

-Who Rules American (Seventh Edition), by G. William Domhoff. McGraw Hill (2013). ISBN-13: 978-0078026713.

- Capitalizing on Crisis, by Greta R. Krippner. Harvard University Press (2011). ISBN-13: 978-0674066199.

- Strangers in Their Own Land, by Arlie Russell Hochschild. The New Press (2016). ISBN-13: 978-1-620972250.

For all of these books several editions (and translations) are available. I am not opposed to the use of other editions, but notice that in many occasions I am asking you to read specific page numbers, so you will have to figure out exactly what the correspondence is. Finally, there will be other occasional readings required. These will be available on D2L, or I will just email them to you.

Credit hours and workload

Following university guidelines, this course requires at least 9 hours of work outside of the classroom every week. You should expect to spend about 4.5 hours doing the readings, 0.5 hours writing comments online, 2 hours studying and preparing for the quizzes, and 2 hours writing your papers (this is an average – you are likely to spend much more time working on a paper on the weeks before a paper is due).

Calendar of sessions and readings

In the reading list below, whenever specific page numbers are mentioned without any further indication it means that in that page there is a section or chapter break, so it should be completely straightforward to figure out where you should start/stop reading. For the cases where there are no such breaks I have indicated – between brackets after the page number – the sentence at which I want you to start/stop. Qs by the date indicate that we have a quiz on that day (Qs are followed by the quiz number).

Introduction / Theoretical Perspectives and Pluralism

W 1/23	The Syllabus (No Readings)
M 1/28	Background and Theoretical Perspectives
	Domhoff. “The Four Networks of Power: A Theoretical Home for Power Structure Research.” D2L
	Domhoff. “Alternative Theoretical Views.” D2L
W 1/30	Introduction to Pluralism and Functionalism
	Dahl. “On Democracy: Chapters 1, 2 and 3”

M 2/4	The Ideal Democracy: Political Institutions Dahl. "On Democracy: Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7"
W 2/6 (Q1)	Actual Democracy: Political Institutions Dahl. "On Democracy: Chapter 8"
M 2/11	Actual Democracy: Varieties Dahl. "On Democracy: Chapters 9,10 and 11"
W 2/13 (Q2)	Threats to Democracy: Capitalism and Politics Dahl. "On Democracy: Chapters 12-16"
Conflict Theory of Political Sociology	
M 2/18	Introduction to Conflict Theory Domhoff. "Who Rules America: Chapter 1"
W 2/20 (Q3)	Corporate Community Domhoff. "Who Rules America: Chapter 2"
M 2/25	Corporate Community Domhoff. "Who Rules America: Chapter 3"
W 2/27 (Q4)	Policy-Planning Domhoff. "Who Rules America: Chapter 4"
M 3/4	Public Opinion/Conflict/Culture Hofstadter. "Paranoid Style in American Politics" D2L
W 3/6 (Q5)	Parties and Elections Domhoff. "Who Rules America: Chapter 6"
M 3/11	Big Picture of Power Elite— <u>Paper 1 Due</u>

Domhoff. “Who Rules America: Chapter 8”

State-Centered Theory / Structure of the State

W 3/13 (Q6) Introduction to State-Centered Theories
Krippner. “Capitalizing on Crisis: Chapter 1”

[Spring Recess March 17-24]

M 3/25 What is Financialization?
Krippner. “Capitalizing on Crisis: Chapter 2”

W 3/27 (Q7) Finance Capitalism and State Policy
Krippner. “Capitalizing on Crisis: Chapter 3”

M 4/1 Monetary Policy and Conclusions
Krippner. “Capitalizing on Crisis: Chapters 5 and 6”

Culture and Politics / Identity and Ideology

W 4/3 (Q8) Introduction to Culture and Politics
Hochschild. “The Ecstatic Edge of Politics” D2L

Friday 4/5 —Paper 2 Due: Dropbox D2L

M 4/8 The Great Paradox
Hochschild. “Strangers in Their Own Land: Chapters 1 and 2”

W 4/10 (Q9) The Great Paradox Cont.
Hochschild. “Strangers in Their Own Land: Chapters 3,4 and 5”

M 4/15 The Social Terrain
Hochschild. “Strangers in Their Own Land: Chapters 6,7 and 8”

W 4/17 (Q10) Deep Story and the People in It
Hochschild. “Strangers in Their Own Land: Chapters 9, 10, and 11”

M 4/22 Deep Story and the People in It Cont.
 Hochschild. “Strangers in Their Own Land: Chapters 12 and 13”

W 4/24 (Q11) Going National
 Hochschild. “Strangers in Their Own Land: Chapters 14, 15 and 13”

M 4/29 Ideology
 Gordon Gauchat, “The Politicization of Science in the Public Sphere”
 D2L

W 5/1 (Q12) Ideology and Polarization
 Prior, Markus. “Media and Political Polarization.” D2L

M 5/6 Polarization and Inequality
 TBA

W 5/8 (Q13) Politics of Climate Change
 Final Thoughts

Friday May 10—Paper 3 Due

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

1. **Students with disabilities.** Notice to students with disabilities that special services and accommodations are provided. Information is available from the Accessibility Resource Center at <http://uwm.edu/arc/>
2. **Religious observances.** Information concerning accommodations for absences due to religious observance is available at: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>
3. **Students called to active military duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty is available at <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>
4. **Incompletes.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. The policy outlining incomplete grades is available at: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf
5. **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. Policy regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf
6. **Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. The policy and procedures concerning academic misconduct is available at <http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>
7. **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. Policy may be found at: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf
8. **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 College of Letters & Science 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://uwm.edu/letters-science/advising/answers-forms/policies/appeal-procedure-for-grades>
Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at <http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-appeals-procedure/>
9. **LGBT+ resources.** Resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment are available at <http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/>
10. **Final examination policy.** Policies regarding final examination requirement can be found at: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm>
11. **Publication royalties.** Royalties from the sale of faculty-authored publications to students in their classes are donated to the UWM Foundation–Sociology account to support activities and awards for UWM Sociology students.