

Political Sociology

Course Description

In its essence, political sociology is the study of social power. Because the modern state has come to occupy our imaginations with its vast reservoir of power, social power is also commonly associated with it. But power is produced and sustained in a wider field well beyond the state. It operates through class, race, gender-based systems of domination, both structurally and in everyday interactions. It has been shaped in the modern history by the processes of capitalism and nation-state formation. Internationally, it has been skewed heavily towards the West through imperial and colonial domination. Some of these elements and processes are commonly ignored when discussing political sociology and power. We will instead problematize both the notion of power and the ways within which it operates. The aim here is to broaden our lenses beyond the naturalized understandings we possess today about state, capitalism, and international structures while acquiring the knowledge of the foundational concepts of political sociology.

We will start with an investigation of power and domination. What does power mean? How does it operate exactly? How does domination occur; how is it sustained? We will then move onto investigating the different axes of domination: class, race, and gender. We will attempt to understand how these axes structure power relations, and how they are interconnected. The second half of the course will focus on significant historical processes in the modern history. It will proceed through four main parts: a) state, state-formation, and nation; b) capitalism and market society; c) colonialism and imperialism; and d) resistance, revolutions, and social movements. As we analyze these broad topics, we will constantly keep in mind that state-formation, capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism are not independent processes but have been reinforcing and reproducing each other in the last several centuries. We will also discuss, in Ursula Le Guin's words, how all systems of power are human products, and thus, can be changed through human actions.

The class format will be a mixture of lectures, discussions, and debates. We will start each class with a short lecture about the social and intellectual context of the writers, their main arguments, and how they are tied to other works and general themes of the course. We will then engage in discussions about the texts and sometimes form debate groups to explore specific topics. These will help you to process, understand, and apply the readings to the questions the course explores and to your own broader intellectual interests.

Student Attainment Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Discuss fundamental topics of political sociology.
- Discuss how power operates in many ways in our modern societies.
- Interpret social and political issues from a wide range of social scientific perspectives.
- Analyze the connections between various actors in politics such as states, corporations, citizens, etc.

Course Requirements

Participation in class discussions (10%): Students are required to come to the class having done the reading material and ready to participate in discussions.

In-class quizzes (20%): There will be short quizzes in some of the classes which will ask questions about topics previously covered.

Analysis papers (1-2 double-spaced pages, 20%): Starting at Week 3, students will submit an analysis paper every three weeks (until the 12th week, i.e., four in total). The paper will choose an empirical event and analyze it using the readings and themes of the previous three weeks.

Final exam (50%): Students will take an in-class final exam approximately one week after the last class. The format and details will be discussed in class.

All assignments will be explained in further detail in the first class meeting. Each assignment relates to all objectives.

Course Schedule (Reading list is tentative; to be adjusted)

Introduction, Power, Domination

Introduction, Power

Week 1

- Lukes, Steven. "Introduction" and "Power: A Radical View," in *Power: A Radical View*, pp. 1-59.
- Gaventa, John. "Power and Participation," in *Power and Powerlessness*, pp. 3-25.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Power and Subject." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer, 1982), pp. 777-795

Week 2

Domination

- Weber, Max. "The Types of Authority and Imperative Co-ordination," in *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, pp. 324-333, 341-46, 358-373.
- Weber, Max. *From Max Weber*. "Politics as a Vocation," pp. 77-87.
- Hall, Stuart. "Gramsci and Us." Available at <http://inclusion.uci.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/11/Hall-Gramsci-and-Us.pdf>

Class, Race, Gender

Week 3

Class

- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," focus on pp. 469-491.

- Marx, Karl. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” pp. 594-617.
- Weber, Max. *From Max Weber*. “Class, Status, Party,” pp. 180-195.

Week 4

Race

- Du Bois, W. E. B. “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” and “Of the Sons of Master and Man,” in *The Souls of Black Folk*.
- Hall, Stuart. “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance,” in Baker Jr., Diawara, and Lindeborg (eds), *Black British Cultural Studies*. Available at <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/Race,%20articulation%20and%20societies%20structured%20in%20dominance.pdf>

Week 5

Gender

- Collins, Patricia Hill, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Politics of Empowerment (1st edition)*. “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination.” Available at <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/252.html>
- Zerilli, Linda M. G. “Politics,” in *the Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, pp. 632-650.
- Bettie, Julie. “Women without Class,” in *Women without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*, pp. 32-56.

State, State-Formation, and Nation

Week 6

State (focus on 3 out of 4)

- Lenin, V. I. “Class Society and the State,” in *State and Revolution*, pp. 41-58.
- Block, Fred. “The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State,” in *Revising State Theory*, pp. 51-68.
- Mann, Michael. “The Autonomous Power of the State,” *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1984), pp. 185-213.
- Brown, Wendy. “Finding the Man in the State,” in *States of Injury*, pp. 166-196

Week 7

State-Making (focus on 2 out of 3)

- Anderson, Perry. “Conclusions,” in *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, pp. 397-431.
- Tilly, Charles. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in *Bringing the State Back in*, pp. 169-191.
- Adams, Julia. “Culture in Rational-Choice Theories of State-Formation,” in *State/Culture*, pp. 98-116.

Week 8***Nation and Nationalism (focus on 2 out of 3)***

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp. 1-46.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Theorizing Gender and Nation," in *Gender and Nation*, pp. 1-25.
- Chatterjee, Partha. "Whose Imagined Community?" in *The Nation and Its Fragments*, pp. 3-13.

Week 9***Immigration and Citizenship***

- Somers, Margaret R. "Citizenship, Statelessness and Market Fundamentalism: Arendtian Right to Have Rights." Pp. 35-62 in *Migration, Citizenship, Ethnos*, edited by Y. M. Bodemann and G. Yurdakul. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Choo, Hae Yeon, "Decentering Citizenship," "Everyday Politics of Immigration Raids," and "Coda," in *Decentering Citizenship*, pp. 1-14, 72-92, and 164-171.

MIDTERM DUE**Capitalism and Market Society****Week 10*****Analysis of Capitalism***

- Marx, Karl. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," pp. 66-105.
- Marx, Karl. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. "Capital, Volume One," focus on pp. 303-367.

Week 11***Market Society and Neoliberalism***

- Polanyi, Karl. "Introduction," "Societies and Economic Systems," and "The Self-Regulating Market and the Fictitious Commodities: Labor, Land and Money," in *The Great Transformation*, pp. xviii-xxxviii, 45-58, 71-80.
- Harvey, David. 2005. "Introduction" and "Freedom's Just Another Word..." in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, pp. 1-38.

Colonialism and Imperialism**Week 12*****Colonialism***

- Fanon, Frantz. "Introduction," "The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples," and "The Fact of Blackness," in *Black Skin, White Masks*.
- Césaire, Aimé. "Discourse on Colonialism." Available at http://abahlali.org/files/Discourse_on_Colonialism.pdf

- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 8, No. 4. (2006): 387-409.

Week 13

Imperialism

- Lenin, V. I. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Skim the first six chapters (33-90). Focus on Chps. 7-10 (pp. 91-123).
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. pp. 3-19.
- Reeves, Jeffrey. "Imperialism and the Middle Kingdom: The Xi Jinping Administration's Peripheral Diplomacy with Developing States," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 5. (2018): 976-998.

Resistance, Revolutions and Social Movements

Week 14

Resistance and Revolutions

- Freire, Paulo. "Chapter 1," in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp 43-69.
- James, C. L. R. [1963] 1989. *The Black Jacobins* – Selections

Week 15

Social Movements

- Della Porta, Donatella, and Mario Diani. "The Study of Social Movements," in *Social Movements: An Introduction*, pp. 1-32.
- Robnett, Belinda. "Rethinking Social Movement Theory: Race, Class, Gender, and Culture," in *How Long? How Long?: African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*, pp. 12-35.