

SYLLABUS
POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY (SOC 333)
POWER, CULTURE AND CHANGE
THE ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
FALL 2018

Freedom and democracy are only possible where the resolute will of a nation to not allow itself to be ruled like sheep is permanently alive – Max Weber, 1906

Instructor: Dr. Richard Sullivan
Phone: 438-2408
Office Hours: T/R 2-3pm or by appointment

Office: Schroeder Hall 359
Email: sullivan@ilstu.edu
Website: RichardSullivan.org

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course examines the nature of political power, the cultural dimension of politics, and the dynamics of political change. Special attention is given to the ways political power intersects with structures of class, gender and race. A unit on the political economy of globalization will introduce students to the implications of US policies in an expanding political terrain. The goal for the course is to provide students with the tools necessary for critical analysis of, and active engagement in, U.S. political life.

Often when people hear the word “politics” they think of solely in terms of elections, governments, or squabbling between opposing political parties. Sociologists however have a much broader understanding of what counts as political. Looking at politics from a sociological perspective expands what is normally considered to be *political* and enables us to see the many ways that *social* forces impact the way power is distributed and exercised in our society. We begin to see the political relationships embedded in our most basic daily activities: where we shop, what we buy, what we eat, where we live, who we date, whether or not we go to college, what we pay for tuition, and even what we major in. In fact, *everything* we do (and don’t do) is connected to politics!

It is my goal that by the end of the semester, you will have a better understanding of the political dynamics of everyday life. So what exactly is political sociology and what distinguishes it from other disciplines like Political Science? As a starting point we can describe political sociology as directing our attention toward “how politics both is shaped by and shapes other events in societies. Instead of treating the political arena as independent from other happenings in a society, [political sociology] treats that arena as intimately related to all social institutions” (Orum, 1983:1).

Power is at the heart of a sociological analysis of politics and will be a major theme of the course. Throughout this semester we will engage in critical analysis of the institutional mechanisms and social processes through which political power is constructed, distributed, and maintained. Some of the questions we will wrestle with throughout the semester are: Who has power and how do they use it? How do liberals and conservatives think? Are democracy and capitalism compatible? Why are so many people apathetic about politics? Why are we at war? How can gender or race be “political”? And how do those without power make a difference?

REQUIRED READINGS:

There will be five required books in this class – available at the ISU Bookstore (or at various online retailers). There will also be supplemental readings posted in on ReggieNet (RN). In addition, students are expected to read a daily newspaper (*The New York Times*, *Washington Post* or *Wall Street Journal*).

- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press. ISBN 978-1-59558-643-8
- Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press. ISBN 978-0-25-200985-3
- Hacker, Jacob S. and Paul Pierson. 2010. *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN-13: 978-1416588696
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Hochschild, Arlie. *Strangers in Their Own Land*. New Press. ISBN: 978-1-62-097349-3.
- Lakoff, George. 2016. *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3rd ed. ISBN 978-0226411293

GRADES

Your final grade will be based on formal briefs, quizzes on readings and current events and a final exam. **Note: in order to receive a passing grade (D) in this course you must earn a D or better in each of the areas of evaluation.**

Briefs (40%)

You will be required to write five two-page briefs, for each of the assigned books. Briefs are two page summaries of the central arguments the author makes. They will be due at the beginning of class – completed briefs will be your ticket to join the class. **Late Briefs will not be accepted.**

Mid-Term Exams (30%)

At the end of each unit there will be a test covering both current events and material covered in that unit. Each midterm will be worth 10 percent of your course grade.

Final Research Project (20%)

Students will work in groups and make a presentation at the end of the semester. Groups will select a relevant topic, choose a book or books to read and submit briefs on. Each group will make a formal presentation to the class at the end of the semester. Additional details will be provided as the semester continues. Final exam will be contingent upon the group's performance.

Attendance and Participation (10%)**

Woody Allen said “90% of success is showing up.” I believe this true particularly in a class such as this. Your attendance each week is expected. My policy is to allow everyone one (2) absences for the semester. Beyond that your grade will be reduced one full letter grade for each additional missed class. **Missing more than four classes will result in failing the course.** Your active participation in class discussions is also expected and will be assessed based on the *quality* of your contribution to in-class and on-line discussions. If you are uncomfortable speaking publicly you should meet with me early in the semester. Keep in mind that *quantity* is not the same as *quality* when it comes to participation. Quality will be rewarded.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Below is a topical outline and tentative timeline that identifies the themes and primary reading for each week. I will announce any changes in class and via ReggieNet.

Monday		Wednesday
Unit I: Power		
Week 1 Aug. 20,22	Introductions “How to Read a Book” [RN]	Topic: The Sociology of Politics Neuman “Power, State & Struggle” pp. 1-6; 11-27 [RN] Clemens “Power and Politics” pp. 5-25 [RN]
Week 2 August 27,29	U.S. Politics Boot camp (Discussion/Lecture) Domhoff “Power Indicators” pp. 1-8 [RN]	Piven & Cloward “Rule Making and Rule Breaking” (RN) Discuss current events
Week 3 Sept. 3, 5	Labor Day – No Class	John Gaventa – <i>Power and Powerlessness</i> Briefs Due
Week 4 Sept. 10, 12	Foucault – Excerpt From <i>Discipline and Punish</i> (RN)	Discuss current events
Week 5 Sept. 17,19	Michelle Alexander <i>The New Jim Crow</i> Briefs Due	Alexander (continued) Midterm Exam #1
Unit II: Ideology and Consciousness		
Week 6 Sept. 24,26	Lecture: The political Spectrum Neuman - excerpt <i>Ideology</i> (RN)	Snyder “On Tyranny” [RN] Discuss current events
Week 7 Oct. 1, 3	George Lakoff - <i>Moral Politics</i> Briefs Due	Lakoff (cont.) Discuss current events
Week 8 Oct. 8, 10	Kollmeyer – Consensual Domination (RN)	Discuss Current Events
Week 9 Oct. 15,17	Hochschild - <i>Strangers in Their Own Land</i> Briefs Due	Hochschild (Continued) Midterm Exam #2
Unit III: The Political Economy		
Week10 Oct. 22, 24	Marx and Engels "The Communist Manifesto" parts 1,2 and 4 (pp. 8-31;43-4) [RN]	Marx and Engels (continued) Discuss Current Events
Week 11 Oct. 29, 31	Fredrick Hayek – <i>Road to Serfdom</i> [RN] Milton Freidman – excerpt <i>Capitalism and Freedom</i> [RN]	Polanyi – Excerpt <i>The Great Transformation</i> [RN] Discuss Current Events
Week 12 Nov. 5, 7	Robert Reich - <i>Super Capitalism (Excerpt Intro, Ch.3, Ch. 4)</i> [RN]	Matthew Stewart – New Aristocracy [RN] Discuss Current Events
Week 13 Nov. 12,14	Hacker and Pierson <i>Winner Take All Politics</i> Briefs Due	Hacker and Pierson (Continued) Midterm Exam #3
Unit IV: The Politics of “Everything”		
Week 14 Nov. 26, 28	TBA Presentations	TBA Presentations
Week 15 Dec. 3, 5	Discuss Current Events	Last Lecture: What is to be Done? Course Wrap-up and Review