

**Political Sociology and Social Movements**  
**Sociology 714 ~ Fall 2017**

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30pm

**Class Meetings:** Weds, 11:30am-2:20pm

**Classroom:**

Political sociology is the study of the polity, its insiders and outsiders, contentions and social change. At the center of this inquiry is the state and its institutions, both legislative and bureaucratic. Analyses of the state and its politics have been at the core of sociology since its inception. Sociologists are concerned not only with accurately describing and measuring the states and their functions, but also in how the state confers and maintains legitimacy, the influence that states have on cultural values, and the ways that states resist or adopt change over time. Scholars in this field use a diverse range of methodologies and theories.

Although this topic is far too broad to cover comprehensively in one semester, this course will provide its participants with an overview of the theoretical and empirical developments in this body of scholarly work, focusing where we can on Canadian contributions to the field, and turning our attention to global issues and the supranational political sphere.

This course assumes that students share a desire to both understand and contribute to scholarship on political sociology. Therefore, the course is designed to provide opportunities to hone scholarly and professional skills, as well as to deliver relevant content. Throughout the course, each student will work both independently and interactively to contribute to this scholarly project.

**Learning outcomes**

- Develop a deep, fluent understanding of the major theoretical perspectives in political sociology.
- Understand the main debates in the sociological literature on this topic in terms of theory, hypothesis, evidence and implications.
- Apply theoretical and methodological tools of sociology to conceptualize and explain the state, politics, and social change in Canadian, comparative, and global contexts.
- Search for relevant research articles, understand their claims and the evidence offered to support them, evaluate their contribution to the field, and consider how they may support future research.
- Demonstrate effective and clear analytic, writing, and discussion skills.

**Required texts**

Almeida, Paul. 2014. *Mobilizing Democracy: Globalization and Citizen Protest*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ferree, Myra Marx. 2012. *Varieties of Feminism: German Gender Politics in Global Perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

FitzGerald, David Scott and David Cook-Martin. 2014. *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1990. *Continental Divide*. NY: Routledge.

Howard Ramos and Kathleen Rodgers, eds. 2015. *Protest and Politics: The Promise of Social Movement Societies*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Smith, Miriam. 2008. *Political Institutions and Lesbian and Gay Rights in the United States and Canada*. London: Routledge.

American Sociological Association. 2014. *ASA Style Guide, 5th edition*. Available for purchase through the ASA's online bookstore at <http://www.asanet.org>.

Additional journal articles are available through JSTOR and Mills Library.

Additional book chapters will be posted on Avenue to Learn.

### **Course requirements**

#### *Seminar Participation*

This course is a graduate seminar; therefore, students are expected to attend every class meeting having thoughtfully completed the readings and having prepared some questions or comments for class discussion. Each class meeting, every student is responsible for stimulating discussion by asking questions, offering topics for debate, or otherwise challenging their classmates to fully consider the course materials and the larger topic for that week. As the professor, I will contribute to the discussion, ask questions, and challenge students' claims; however, class discussion will be an intellectual exchange, not a lecture.

While all high-quality seminar contributions make it clear that the course material has been read and considered thoughtfully, there are numerous forms that contributions can take, such as declarative statements, strong opinions, insightful questions, requests for clarification, and challenges to class materials and to others' claims. Class should always maintain the highest standards of intellectual exchange. Interruptions, excessive holding of the floor, or other rude behavior is not allowed. If you feel that the class is somehow unwelcoming of your full participation, please talk to me so that we can make adjustments such that all students feel comfortable participating every week.

#### *Response Memos*

At the start of the semester, you will be assigned to a group. One member of your group is required to write a brief memo in response to the week's assigned readings and submit them through Avenue to Learn. In this brief (1-2 page, double-spaced) memo, you should make it clear what the main claims of the week's assigned reading (or one of the readings—your choice—for weeks in which multiple readings are assigned). Once the main claims are established, you should respond to the reading with a thoughtful critique, an application of the reading's insight to another case or different data, or a thoughtful consideration of the work in some other way.

Send your memo to your groupmates to receive feedback for revision—as well as to bring them up to speed on your thoughts—so that every student engages with a response memo in some way each week, either as author or reviewer.

Response memos are to be turned in to Avenue to Learn by **noon on the Tuesday** before class. Memos will be graded on comprehension of the reading's main claims, as well as the depth and quality of the author's response. The length of each memo should be 1-2 pages of double-spaced type. Please edit your work rather than go over this limit.

*Term Paper*

Each student will complete an 8-10 page seminar paper (not including works-cited list), in which a) one of the weekly topics is reviewed in greater depth, or b) another topic in political sociology—approved by the professor—is reviewed. The goal of a seminar paper is to review the literature in this area of scholarship, synthesize this work to present major themes and areas of debate, and to critically analyze the arguments made.

Proposals for the term paper are to be submitted to Avenue to Learn by the start of class on Wednesday, October 4. Proposals should consist of a 1-2 page memo describing the subfield of sociology that the paper will address, as well as the research questions that will drive the paper. A brief 1-2 page bibliography should be attached to this memo. Consult the *ASA Style Guide* for formatting.

This assignment is to be submitted to Avenue to Learn by Thursday, December 17, at noon. Late papers will not be accepted. This paper should follow the style standards of the ASA. It should be double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with page numbers and properly formatted citations for all sources. Your seminar paper will be evaluated in terms of the quality of the literature review and the strength of your critical analysis. I am available to provide feedback on this assignment throughout the semester, and I recommend that you talk with me about your project in my office hours.

**Evaluation**

Marks will be assigned for each course requirement, as follows:

Seminar participation	10%
Response memo #1	10%
Response memo #2	15%
Response memo #3	20%
Paper proposal	5%
Final seminar paper	40%

**Course schedule**

**Week 1     September 13     Introductions**

**Week 2     September 20     Democracy and the State**

Skocpol, Theda. "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research." Introduction to *Bringing the State Back In*, Peter B. Evans, Deitrich Reuschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds. Cambridge University Press.

Barrington Moore, Jr. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. ch 7-8.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1989. "The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*. 26:10-36

**Week 3     September 27     Origins of Political Cultures**

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1990. *Continental Divide*. NY: Routledge. Especially ch 1-3, 10.

Baer, Grabb and Johnston. 1990. "The Values of Canadians and

Americans: A Critical Analysis and Reassessment." *Social Forces* 68:693-713,

- Week 4            October 4    State, Policy and Racism**  
Fitzgerald and Martin-Cook. 2014. *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Esp. ch 1-4.
- Fall break - Happy Thanksgiving**
- Week 5            October 18    State, Gender and Citizenship**  
Orloff, Ann Shola. 1993. "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States." *American Sociological Review* 58:303-328.  
Haney, Lynne. 1996. "Homeboys, Babies, Men in Suits: The State and Reproduction of Male Dominance." *American Sociological Review* 61:759-778.
- Week 6            October 25    Social Change in State Policy**  
Amenta, Edwin and Bruce Carruthers. 1988. "The Formative Years of U.S. Social Spending Policies: Theories of the Welfare State and the American States During the Great Depression." *American Sociological Review* 53:661-678.  
Amenta, Edwin, Neal Caren, Elizabeth Chiarello, and Yang Su. 2010. "The Political Outcomes of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:287-307.
- Week 7            November 1    Political Institutions and Social Change**  
Smith, Miriam. 2008. *Political Institutions and Lesbian and Gay Rights in the United States and Canada*. NY: Routledge. Especially ch 1-2, 6-7.
- Week 8            November 8    The State and Social Movements**  
Ferree, Myra Marx. 2012. *Varieties of Feminism: German Gender Politics in Global Perspective*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Esp. Ch 1, 2, 5, 7.
- Week 9            November 15    Movements in States, beyond States**  
Almeida, Paul. 2014. *Mobilizing Democracy: Globalization and Citizen Protest*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Especially ch 1-3, 6,8.
- Week 10          November 22    Social Movement Societies**  
Howard Ramos and Kathleen Rodgers. 2015. *Protest and Politics: The Promise of Social Movement Societies*. UBC Press. Introduction, Ch 1-4.
- Week 11          November 29    Howard Ramos and Kathleen Rodgers. 2015. *Protest and Politics: The Promise of Social Movement Societies*. UBC Press. Ch 5-8, Conclusion.**

**Week 12      December 6      Research workshop**

In-class research paper workshop. Bring a working draft of your final paper, as well as a reference list.

**Academic dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means. It can result in serious consequences, such as the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

**Faculty of Social Sciences email communication policy**

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors and staff must originate from the student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at their discretion.

**Please note**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**Miscellany**

As this class meets over the lunch hour, I expect food and beverages to be a regular part of our class meetings. If you have an allergy so severe that a floating spore of someone else's lunch may affect your health, please let us all know so that we can avoid bringing that food.