

## **POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY Winter 2023**

**Instructor:** Anne-Marie Livingstone  
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**Lecture:** Wednesday 2:30 PM-5:30 PM  
**Office:** KTH 634  
**Office hours:** By appointment.

### **Course Description**

The graduate seminar introduces students to the broad field of political sociology and will be grounded in Canadian and international literature. In broad terms, political sociology consist of “the study of power and the relationship between societies, states, and political conflict” (Manza, 2011). In essence, political sociology analyzes how social phenomena are inextricably bound to, and reflect, systems of political power.

The course covers leading conceptual approaches in the field, including both older and newer areas of the discipline. Readings will cover well-established areas of the field, such as those drawing on Marx, Foucault, and Gramsci, together with newer scholarship in post-colonial theory, critical race studies, and queer theory. The aim is for students to develop a critical appreciation of the strengths and limitations of alternative perspectives and be able to build on the best of different traditions.

In order for students to become skilled in analyzing some of the most pressing contemporary issues, the course will cover themes such as the surge in ethnonationalism, the impact of neoliberalism on inequality and labour rights, settler colonialism and Indigenous resistance, and the politics of multiculturalism and immigration in Canada. Other key subjects of the discipline, such as social movements, public policy, and citizenship, will also receive significant attention. Finally, to bring due attention to voices and knowledge that have long been relegated to the margins of Sociology, the course features seminal writings by Indigenous, Black, and other scholars of colour.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Describe, compare, and contrast leading perspectives in political sociology;
- 2) Understand major debates surrounding questions of the state, the role of power, systems of class/gender/race, public policy, social movements, and citizenship.
- 3) Examine the interplay, complementarities, and contradictions between different concepts and findings from the literature;

4) Think creatively and rigorously about the potential for theories to answer complex empirical issues;

5) Feel confident to build on the concepts, theories, and empirical findings from the literature in pursuing new and unknown lines of inquiry.

### **Required Materials and Texts**

There are no required texts. Readings are available either electronically through the McMaster library website or will be posted in PDF on Avenue to Learn.

### **Class Format**

Classes may include short introductory lectures; however, the main format consists of small and large group discussions on the readings and topics. Students are expected to complete the readings on time and be ready to engage in in-depth discussions.

### **Course Evaluation – Overview**

The seminar encourages students to be self-directed in their learning and to play an active part in steering group discussions and learning activities. While each student is responsible for his/her/their assignments, classroom discussions will be group-oriented. The belief is that each person comes to class with unique experiences and knowledge to contribute, and together, we learn more as a group than we would alone. Therefore, class discussions will be a space for open, creative, and thoughtful intellectual exchanges. In addition, respectful and non-judgemental behaviour will be maintained. The instructor will hold brief lectures throughout the term to give context to a topic or reading and to clarify any concepts and explanations.

Success in the course is contingent on class participation and completion of each assignment, including a class presentation, two response memos, and a final research paper. Written assignments will be graded based on the following factors: a) whether the assignment meets the stated objectives, b) the quality of the analysis and critical thinking, c) the reliance on empirical data to substantiate claims, d) the persuasiveness of the argument(s) and e) grammar and spelling.

#### **1) Class Participation (15%)**

No later than 11:59 pm on the day before class, students must submit a reflection or a question for the next day's seminar on Avenue to Learn. The contribution should be about one or a combination of the assigned readings. Examples of submissions include:

- Interesting similarities and differences between the readings;
- An intriguing, compelling, or insightful observation in the readings;
- A puzzling, ambiguous, or contradictory element in or across the readings.

Full points will be awarded to students who submit their discussion posts on time. Absences will be accepted if a student provides a written explanation. No more than one discussion question may be missed for students to earn full points.

## **2) Presentation and Moderation of a Group Discussion (15%)**

In teams of two, students will lead a group discussion on the readings for 90 minutes. For the assignment, students must present a critical assessment of the readings and a list of questions for the class to examine together. The presentation should take no more than 15-20 minutes, after which the students will lead the class in an in-depth discussion. Students should think of questions for discussion that will be engaging, pertinent, and thought-provoking. Within the first three weeks of class, students will find a teammate and decide on the date when they will present and lead a seminar.

## **3) Response Memos (40%)**

Students will prepare 2 short response papers (3-4 pages in length) during the semester. In the first memo, due February 15th, students will compare and contrast two or three conceptual perspectives examined in class. Students are free to choose 2-3 of their preferred readings to compare and contrast. This could be the full list of readings for one seminar or a selection of readings from different classes. Each response memo should include a brief overview of the readings (30% of the memo), an analysis of the similarities and differences between perspectives, their relative strengths and weaknesses, and conclusions about the implications for research.

In the second response memo, due November 22nd, students will hone their skills in political sociology to propose a theoretically-guided interpretation of an empirical phenomenon or research question. Students may select one or a couple of perspectives or schools of thought (e.g., Marxism, conflict theories, settler colonialism, the political economy of race). The empirical issue to be analyzed may be one covered in the readings or one the student is particularly interested in examining.

## **4) Final Research Paper (9-10 double-spaced pages) (30%)**

For the final research paper, students develop a research project in which they identify an empirical problem, formulate research questions, and articulate a convincing conceptual framework for examining it. The research paper does not need to discuss the data collection methods. Students only need to demonstrate which analytical tools and approaches will be pertinent to their analysis and why. The format of the paper should include: a) an introductory paragraph to the subject and the paper's thesis (3/4 page), b) a brief synthesis of the literature on the topic (2 pages), c) the research question(s) for further study (1 paragraph), d) elaboration of the conceptual framework for the research question(s) and supporting arguments (main body of the paper), e) tentative hypotheses for the study and concluding remarks (1-1.5 page).

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

1. Weekly reflections and/or questions submitted on Avenue to Learn (15%)
2. Presentation of readings and moderation of group discussion (15%)
3. Response memo (20%): due February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
4. Response memo (20%): due November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.
5. Research Paper (30%): due April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **WEEK 1 (January 11th)**

#### **Topic: Introduction to the course**

NO ASSIGNED READINGS.

### **WEEK 2 (January 18th)**

#### **TOPIC: Conceptual Perspectives**

De Leon, C., and A. Clarno. 2020. "Power." In *New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by T. Janoski, C. De Leon, J. Misra, and I.W. Martin (Pp. 35-52). Calif: University of California Press.

Prechel, H., and Berkowitz, L. 2020. "Conflict Theories in Political Sociology: Class, Power, Inequality and the Historical Transition to Financialization." In *New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by T. Janoski, C. De Leon, J. Misra, and I.W. Martin (Pp. 53-78). Calif: University of California Press.

Berezin, M., Sandusky, E., and Davidson, T. 2020. "Culture in Politics and Politics in Culture: Institutions, Practices, and Boundaries." In *New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by T. Janoski, C. De Leon, J. Misra, and I.W. Martin (Pp. 102-131). Calif: University of California Press.

### **WEEK 3 (January 25th)**

#### **Topic: Relations of Ruling**

Amenta, E. 2005. "Institutionalist and State-Centric Theories of Political Sociology," In *Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies, and Globalization*, edited by T. Janoski, R.R. Alford, A.M. Hicks, and M.A. Swartz (Pp. 96-114). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Block, Fred. 1977. "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State," *Socialist Revolution*, 3, 6-28.

Domhoff, W.G. 2006. "C. Wright Mills, Floyd Hunter, and a Half-Century of Power Structure Research." Keynote Address to the Michigan Sociological Association (28 pages).

Recommended:

Wright, E.O. 2000. "Working-class Power, Capitalist-class Interests and Class Compromise." *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(4): 957–1002.

**WEEK 4 (February 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Topic: Conceptions of the State**

Mann, M. 1986. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results." In *States in History*, edited by J. Hall (Pp. 109-136). Oxford: Blackwell.

Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime" in *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Pp.169-191). NY: Cambridge University Press.

Go, J. 2020. "Political Sociology and the Postcolonial Perspective." In *New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by T. Janoski, C. De Leon, J. Misra, and I.W. Martin (Pp. 132-152). Calif: University of California Press.

**WEEK 5 (February 8<sup>th</sup>)**

**Topic: Settler Colonialism and the Racial State**

Nakano-Glenn, E. 2015. "Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of US Race and Gender Formation." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1 (1), 52-72.

Simpson, A. "The State is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders, and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty." *Theory and Event*, 19 (4), 1-17.

Howard, P.S.S. 2018. "A Laugh for the National Project: Contemporary Canadian Blackface Humour and its Constitution through Canadian Anti-Blackness." *Ethnicities*, 18 (6), 843-868.

Recommended:

Feagin, J. and Elias, S. 2020. "Theories of Race, Ethnicity, and the Racial State." In *New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by T. Janoski, C. De Leon, J. Misra, and I.W. Martin (Pp. 191-215). Calif: University of California Press.

**WEEK 6 (February 15th)**

**Topic: Governmentality and Bio-Politics**

Rose, N., O'Malley, P., and Valverde, M. 2006. "Governmentality," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 2, 83-104.

Foucault, M. 2003. *Society Must Be Defended Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (Pp. 239-263), edited by A. Mauro and F. Bertani. New York: Picador.

Murdocca, C. 2010. "There is Something in that Water: Race, Nationalism, and Legal Violence." *Law and Social Inquiry*, 35 (2): 369-402.

**WINTER BREAK (February 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>)**

**WEEK 7 (March 1st)**

**Topic: Capitalism and Neo-liberalism**

Calliston, W., and Manfredi, Z. 2019. "Introduction: Theorizing Mutant Neoliberalism." *Mutant Neoliberalism: Market Rule and Political Rupture*, edited by Étienne Balibar, Sören Brandes, Wendy Brown, Melinda Cooper, Julia Elyachar et al (Pp 7-32). New York: Fordham University Press.

Thomas, M., and Tufts, S. . "Enabling Dissent: Contesting Austerity and Right Populism in Toronto, Canada." *Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27 (1), 29-45.

Aho, T. 2017. "Neoliberalism, Racial Capitalism, and Liberal Democracy: Challenging an Emergent Critical Analytic." *Lateral*, 6 (1), 1-7.

**WEEK 8 (March 8th)**

**Topic: Multiculturalism and Immigration**

Isin, E. 2012. "Citizenship." In *Routledge Handbook of Law and Society*, edited by M. Valverde, K. Clarke, E. Darian-Smith, and P. Kotiswaran (Pp. 94-97). London: Routledge.

Bannerji, M. 2000. "On the dark side of the nation: Politics of multiculturalism and the state of Canada" (Pp. 87-124). In *The Dark Side of the Nation*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Razack, S. "The Muslims are Coming: the Sharia Debate in Ontario." In *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Pp. 145-172). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

### **WEEK 9 (March 15th)**

#### **Topic : Ethno-Nationalism**

Flemmen, M., and Savage, M. 2017. "The Politics of Nationalism and White Racism in the UK." *British Journal of Sociology*, 68 (S1), S233-S264.

Manza, J., and Crowley, N. 2017. "Working Class Hero? Interrogating the Social Bases of the Rise of Donald Trump." *The Forum*, 15 (1), 3-28.

Slobodian, Q. 2021. "Hayek's Bastards: The Populist Right's Neoliberal roots." *Tribune Magazine*, June 15<sup>th</sup>, Available at: <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2021/06/hayeks-bastards-the-populist-rights-neoliberal-roots>

### **WEEK 10 (March 22nd)**

#### **Topic: Social Policy and the Welfare State**

Ingram, H.M., and Schneider, A.L. 2005. "Introduction: Public Policy and the Social Construction of Deservingness." In *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy*, edited by H.M. Ingram and A.L. Schneider (Pp. 1-34) Albany: State University of New York Press.

Orloff, A. 1993. "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States." *American Sociological Review*, 58 (3): 303-328.

Dobrowolsky, A., and Jenson, J. 2004. "Shifting Representations of Citizenship: Canadian Politics of "Women" and "Children." *Social Politics*, 11 (2): 154-180.

### **WEEK 11 (March 29th)**

**Topic: Queer Politics**

Cohen, C. 1997. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?," *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 3 (4), 437–465.

Smith, M. 2005. "Social Movements and Judicial Empowerment: Courts, Public Policy, and Lesbian and Gay Organizing in Canada." *Politics and Society*, 33 (2), 327-353.

Awwad, J. 2016. "Queer Regulation and the Homonational Rhetoric of Canadian Exceptionalism." In *Disrupting queer inclusion: Canadian homonationalisms and the politics of belonging*, edited by J. Awwad, S. Lenon, and O.H. Dryden. Victoria: UBC Press.

**WEEK 12 (April 5th)**

**Topic: Social Movements**

Edwards, G. 2014. *Social Movements and Protest* (Introduction & Chapter 8). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Andrews, K.T. 2001. "Social Movements and Policy Implementation: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty, 1965-1971." *American Sociological Review*, 66 (1): 71-95a

Coburn, J. 2010. "Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Justice." In *Tackling Health Inequalities through Public Health Practice: Theory to Action*, Edited by R. Hofrichter and R. Bhatia (Pp. 417-441). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**WEEK 13 (April 12th)**

**Topic: Everyday Resistance**

Scott, J.C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Chapters 1, 3 & 7). New Jersey: Yale University Press.

**Course Policies**

**Submission of Assignments**

Assignments must be submitted on Avenue to Learn by the 11:59pm on the due date and saved either in MS Word or PDF. The memos, abstract, and final paper must be double-spaced and written in 12 size font, either Times New Roman or Arial. Citations should follow the ASA style.



### **Late Assignments**

Due dates have been selected to give students reasonable intervals to complete assignments on time. If students cannot meet the deadline for reasons beyond their control, they should inform the instructor as soon as possible.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Under exceptional circumstances a course instructor may approve an extension for the student for the completion of work in a course and assign an Incomplete grade (INC). The instructor will submit an incomplete grade with a 'Lapse To' grade, which is the grade that will default to at the date to clear incomplete grades. Normally this extension is in the range of a few weeks. A student who receives an incomplete grade must complete the work as soon as possible, and in any case early enough to allow the instructor to report the grade by the 'Final Date to Submit Results of Incomplete Grades'. If the INC grade is not cleared by the deadline, the lapsed grade will be recorded.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **University Policies**

#### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

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

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to the School of Graduate Studies ([askgrad@mcmaster.ca](mailto:askgrad@mcmaster.ca)) normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail 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 his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

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.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
0-69	F

