

# Sociology 148: Political Sociology

Winter 2013, UC-San Diego

M-W-F 1-1:50pm, HSS 1330

Prof. Tom Medvetz

Office hours: Wed & Fri, 3-4pm, and by appointment

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## REQUIRED BOOK

David Foster Wallace, *McCain's Promise*

Copies of the required book are on sale at the UCSD bookstore. All additional readings will be made available electronically through Web CT.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This class will survey some of the major themes, problems, traditions, concepts, and theories of political sociology. Political sociology has often been described as the study of "the social bases of politics" or of "state-society relations." Some of the questions we will consider are: (1) What role does the state play in producing and sustaining social order? (2) How do we draw the line between society and the state? (3) How does this differentiation develop historically? (4) How do state and non-state actors engage in politics? (5) What is the relationship between states and classes? (6) What is the role of politics in supposedly universal trends such as rationalization and bureaucratization? (7) How do states act in an international/global order? We will consider some of the major theoretical traditions in political sociology, including the Marxist and Weberian approaches. During the last part of the class, we will turn to several topics of central importance in recent political sociology, including civil society, the media, race, and social movements.

## GRADING POLICY

Your grade in this class has four parts. The first part (25%) is based on a series of six reading quizzes. Most of these will happen on Fridays and cover the material from that week (and usually *only* that week). The quizzes are meant to give you an incentive to do the reading. They will all follow the same format: 10 multiple-choice questions of a straightforward nature. The quizzes will be graded as follows: 7 or more correct out of 10 = 1 credit. 6 or fewer correct out of 10 = 0 credits. At the end of the quarter, I will multiply the number of credits by 5. There are six quizzes, so you get one "freebie" (e.g, 5/6 = 25%, i.e. full credit). Put differently, you can fail one of the six quizzes and still get a perfect score for this portion of your grade. (But you can't earn extra credit.)

The second part of your grade (15%) is based on attendance. *Attendance is a requirement for the class.* While I will not record attendance every day, I will pass around a sign-in sheet during some classes. Active participation will also count positively toward your attendance grade. I won't be tyrannical about forcing everyone to speak in class, but I do expect classroom discussion. Apart from talking in class, there are other ways for you to demonstrate your engagement, such as coming to office hours.

The third and fourth parts of your grade are based on written assignments. There will be a short writing assignment (about 3-4 pages; 25% of your grade) due at the end of week 6 and a final paper (~10 pages in length; 35% of your grade) due at the end of week 10. To recap:

25%	Reading quizzes
15%	Participation / attendance
25%	Short writing assignment (Week 6)
35%	Final paper
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100%	Your total grade

## OTHER POLICIES

### *Academic integrity*

You may not misrepresent your work in any way or be party to another student's failure to maintain academic integrity. I will refer any suspected cases of cheating, including plagiarism, to the Academic Integrity Office. For the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, see <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>. The minimum penalty for violations of academic integrity will be an F for the course.

### *Classroom conduct*

Please refrain from being disruptive to your fellow students and your instructor. Disruptive behavior includes coming to class late, leaving early, text messaging, and not silencing your phone before class.

### *Writing*

The ability to write clearly is very important, and not something that can be reliably distinguished from "good ideas" expressed poorly. In your papers, please pay special attention to grammar, mechanics, syntax, style, and organization. In the past, students have asked me for references on writing advice, and I often point them to these two: the classic *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White and *The St. Martin's Handbook* (St. Martin's Press, 6<sup>th</sup> edition).

### *Grievances*

If you wish to contest a grade, you must first go to your reader and submit to him/her a one-page statement explaining why you think the grading is unfair. Only if you are still dissatisfied should you come to me. Please note that I will not change any grade without first discussing it with your reader. Also bear in mind that your grade may move upwards or downwards should I decide to re-grade the paper.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

TOPIC	SUB-TOPIC	L	DATE	READING
<b>Introduction</b>		1.1	Mon, 7 Jan	No reading
<b>The Marxist tradition</b>	foundations	1.2	Wed, 9 Jan	V. I. Lenin, <i>The State and Revolution</i> , p. 1-14
		1.3	Fri, 11 Jan	Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," p. 331-362
<b>The Weberian tradition</b>	foundations	2.1	Mon, 14 Jan	Max Weber, "The Distribution of Power Within the Group: Class, Status, Party," p. 151-162
		2.2	Wed, 16 Jan	
				Max Weber, "The State, its Basic Functions, and the Economic Foundations of Imperialism," p. 230-237
				Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," p. 1-27
		2.3	Fri, Jan 18	Reinhard Bendix, "Basic Concepts of Political Sociology," p. 285-297 [QUIZ #1]
		[3.1]	Mon, 21 Jan	NO CLASS
<b>The birth of American political sociology</b>		3.2	Wed, 23 Jan	Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Sociology of Politics," p. 21-41
		3.3	Fri, 25 Jan	
<b>Conceptions of power</b>	elite theory vs. pluralism	4.1	Mon, 28 Jan	C. Wright Mills, "The Higher Circles," p. 3-29
		4.2	Wed, 30 Jan	Nelson W. Polsby, "How to Study Community Power: The Pluralist Alternative," p. 474-484
				Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," p. 463-469 [QUIZ #2]
		4.3	Fri, 1 Feb	Steven Lukes, "Introduction" and "Chapter 1," <i>Power: A Radical View</i> , p. 1-59
		5.1	Mon, 4 Feb	
	Foucault & power	5.2	Wed, 6 Feb	Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," p. 78-108
<b>"Neo-" theories</b>	neo-Marxist theories	5.3	Fri, 8 Feb	Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule," p. 6-28
				Matthew O'Brien, "The Rise and Rise of the Super-Rich," <i>The Atlantic</i> , p. 1-3 [QUIZ #3]
	neo-Weberian theories	6.1	Mon, 11 Feb	Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In," p. 3-37
	civil society	6.2	Wed, 13 Feb	Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," p. 65-78
				Claude Fischer, "Bowling Alone: What's the Score?," p. 155-167

<b>Race and politics</b>	6.3	Fri, 15 Feb	WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE
	[7.1]	Mon, 18 Feb	Michale Omi and Howard Winant, "Preface to the 1994 Edition," "Introduction," and "Part I," <i>Racial Formation in the United States</i> , p. vii-x, p. 1-50
	7.2	Wed, 20 Feb	
<b>Social movements</b> overview	7.3	Fri, 22 Feb	David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, & Hanspeter Kriesi, "Mapping the Terrain," <i>Blackwell Companion to Social Movements</i> , p. 4-16  Sidney Tarrow, "Introduction" and "Chapter 1," <i>Power in Movement</i> , p. 1-28 [QUIZ #4]
contemporary movements	8.1	Mon, 25 Feb	Neil Gross, Tom Medvetz, & Rupert Russell, "The Contemporary American Conservative Movement," p. 325-354  Frank Rich, "The Class War Has Begun," <i>New York Magazine</i> , p. 1-12
	8.2	Wed, 27 Feb	
<b>Bourdieu and politics</b>	8.3	Fri, 1 Mar	Loïc Wacquant, "Pointers on Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics," p. 3-15
	9.1	Mon, 4 Mar	David Swartz, "Chapter 1: Reading Bourdieu as a Political Sociologist," <i>Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals: The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu</i> , p. 1-27
<b>Contemporary applications</b>	9.2	Wed, 6 Mar	Ryan Lizza, "Life of the Party," <i>The New Yorker</i> , p. 1-11
	9.3	Fri, 8 Mar	[QUIZ #5]
	10.1	Mon, 11 Mar	David Foster Wallace, <i>McCain's Promise</i> [BOOK]  WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE
	10.2	Wed, 13 Mar	
	10.3	Fri, 15 Mar	

[QUIZ #6 WILL BE HELD DURING THE FINAL EXAM PERIOD]