

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 3446

University of Utah, Fall 2015

Online Course

[THIS IS A TENTATIVE SYLLABUS. IT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.]

Instructor: Marcel Paret, marcel.paret@soc.utah.edu
Office hours: Wednesday 2:00pm – 3:00pm (see details below)
Teaching Assistant: Shane Miller

Course Description

This introductory course in political sociology aims to challenge you to see the world as deeply political. Politics is not just about politicians and elections; nor is it necessarily something that happens far away or behind closed doors. Politics is happening all around us, with our participation, and it shapes our everyday lives. Political sociology is broadly about the organization and reorganization of social relations between people. It is thus concerned with, among others, the diffusion of ideas and institutions, the formation of groups, processes of decision-making, the allocation of resources and status, and the distribution and exercise of power. Through exploration of these topics, we will consistently compare politics in the United States and in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa.

The objectives of the course include:

- to develop an understanding of what “politics” entail, and a familiarity with core concepts within political sociology;
- to develop critical thinking skills by comparing and contrasting the perspectives of different authors within political sociology;
- to apply political sociology perspectives to the social or “real” world and evaluate their relevance;
- to compare and contrast the experiences of people in the United States and other parts of the globe.

Online course and communication

This is a fully online course. All of the lectures, activities, and assignments will take place online, through Canvas. The core content of the course includes readings, lectures, and assignments, all of which you can access through the Modules on the home page of the Canvas site for this course.

You will be able to access all of the course materials – including all of the readings – at no charge (i.e. free), through Canvas.

I will communicate with the class in two primary ways: Announcements and the Canvas email system. So that you do not miss any updates, please make sure to check regularly both the Announcements page in Canvas and the email account that is associated with your Canvas account.

Office hours

I will hold virtual office hours through Zoom every week on Wednesday from 2:00pm-3:00pm. All students are welcome, and I encourage you to visit me for a chat for any reason. It always helps if you come prepared with some questions, but this is not required.

To visit my office hours, you must first sign up for one 10-minute time slot using SignUpGenius. If you think you need more than 10 minutes, please email me (marcel.paret@soc.utah.edu) to request to sign up for multiple slots. At the selected time, you can get to my office hours by accessing Zoom.

The links you need to access SignUpGenius and the Zoom chat room will be available in Canvas under the “Office Hours” page.

Assignments

This course includes three types of assignments, as outlined below. You are welcome to work with other students on any of the assignments, but you must complete and submit the final product of your work individually, on your own.

Weekly reflections.

These consist of brief surveys related to the readings and lectures. They will primarily ask you to consider how the course material relates to your own life and contemporary society, and to evaluate its relevance or value.

Each student must complete 13 weekly reflections, following the details and due dates available on Canvas. The surveys will be available through Canvas.

Paired conversations

These include 10-15 minute video chats with one other student in the course, which will focus on how the class as a whole is responding to the weekly reflections. You will have to prepare for the conversation by reviewing the results of the relevant weekly reflection surveys. During the conversation, you will discuss the results of the surveys with another student in the course.

Each student must complete three (3) paired conversations and subsequent evaluations, which you should submit through Canvas. You will have a different assigned partner for each conversation, and it will be up to the two of you to determine a suitable time for the conversation with a one-week window of time. Each student must complete the subsequent evaluation of the conversation individually, on their own.

Take-home essays

The take-home essays will consist of 300-400 word essays, which will require you to demonstrate comprehension of the course material and/or apply it to contemporary society.

Grade calculation

Your final grade will depend on the following components:

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| Take-home essays | 40% | 4 essays, 10 points each (40 total points) |
| Weekly reflections | 39% | 13 reflections, 3 points each (39 total points) |
| Paired conversations | 18% | 3 conversations, 6 points each (18 total points) |
| Completion bonus | 3% | 3 possible points (3 total points) |

Take-home essays are worth 10 points each. For each essay, you will receive a letter grade that translates into points as follows: A+ = 10 points; A = 9 points; A- = 8 points; B+ = 7 points; B = 6 points; B- = 5 points; C+ = 4 points; C = 3 points; C- = 2 points; D = 1 point; F = 0 points.

Weekly reflections are worth 3 points each. There is no partial credit. You will receive 3 points if, and only if, you answer all of the survey questions completely and thoughtfully.

Paired conversations are worth 6 points each. You will receive credit after you have both completed your video conversation with another student, and submitted your individual evaluation of the conversation within Canvas. You will receive full credit if you complete an evaluation that demonstrates effort by following the stipulated guidelines, and partial credit (3 points) if you complete the assignment but demonstrate weak effort.

The *Completion bonus* is worth 3 points. There is no partial credit. To earn these bonus points, you must complete all of the assignments in the course, including all 13 weekly reflections, all 3 paired conversations, and all 4 take-home essays.

Determination of the final letter grade for the overall course:

It is possible to earn 100 total points in the course. The total points you earn in the course will determine your final letter grade in the course.

Total points will translate into final letter grades as follows:

| | |
|----|---------------|
| A+ | 98-100 points |
| A | 91-97 points |
| A- | 81-90 points |
| B+ | 71-80 points |
| B | 58-70 points |
| B- | 48-57 points |
| C+ | 38-47 points |
| C | 28-37 points |
| C- | 21-27 points |
| D | 14-20 points |
| E | 0-13 points |