

**Department of Sociology
Dartmouth College
Fall 2008**

Political Sociology (Sociology 21)

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Course Information:
TR 10-11:50, 312 Silsby
X-period: W 3:00-3:50
Office hours: MW 1-3 or by appointment

Course Description:

Welcome to sociology 21! Political sociology is the study of state-society relations, covering an extensive array of topics and theoretical approaches. The goal of this course is to expose students to a range of intellectual debates and research reflective of the diversity of the field. We will anchor the course in the understanding of political power, and then consider how it is wielded across disparate contexts. After introductory statements on power, we turn to research on social policy in the United States, including historical and contemporary debates over health care reform. We then consider social movements and protest politics, and conclude by examining research on political repression and violence.

Evaluation:

Course grades are based on daily participation, reading questions submitted throughout the quarter, a group report and presentation, and two exams. The composition of final grades and grading scale are as follows:

<u>Course Requirements</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>
Participation – 10%	A 93-100
Weekly Reading Questions – 10%	A- 90-92.99
Group Report & Presentation – 20%	B+ 87-89.99
Mid-Term – 30%	B 83-86.99
Final Exam – 30%	B- 80-82.99
	C+ 77-79.99
	C 73-76.99
	Etc.

Class Participation: While I will lecture on certain materials, students are required to attend and be active participants throughout the course. Active class participation can take a variety of forms, including enthusiastic and intellectually rigorous discussion, correspondence with the professor, and regular class attendance. I take roll at each class meeting, mainly for the purpose of learning students' names and assessing students' participation. However, if you miss more than one class, I begin to deduct points from your grade.

Reading Questions: Ten (10) times during the quarter students will submit reading questions to blackboard. Questions pertaining to readings for a Tuesday class are due on the Monday before

class at midnight; questions on a set of Thursday readings are due by Wednesday at midnight. Successfully completed questions are scored 1 point, and students can accumulate a maximum of 10 points towards their final grade. Questions can take a number of forms – from a follow-up on a particular point covered in the reading to a broader issue for class discussion – *but they should convey that the student has carefully read and thought about the assigned material*. The goal of this assignment is to get students thinking critically about course material prior to each class session. There are 14 regular class sessions with readings (i.e., not an exam day, group presentation day, etc.) for which students can submit questions. Students may submit more than 10 times, but late questions are not accepted.

Group Report & Presentation:

Students will work in groups of 3 to investigate a particular national social movement organization, culminating in an 8 page written report and class presentation on Tuesday, November 11. This will involve collecting information on the demographics of the organization, its involvement in politics, and its tactical repertoire. Details on the assignment, groups, and particular social movement organizations will be covered during the first full week of class.

Two Exams:

Students will take an in-class midterm on Thursday, October 30th and a take-home final to be turned in no later than Monday, December 8th at 11:30am. Both are open book, but you will *not* be permitted to discuss them with anyone else. You may bring your laptop to write the essay question part of the mid-term exam if you choose. If you do choose this option, you must be able to submit the essay via blackboard at the end of the exam and it is your responsibility to make sure it arrives “postmarked” no later than the end of the exam period. Exams will be graded for an integration and deep understanding of course material, coherent and well-reasoned arguments, and professional writing skills (more so for the final). The exams will be fairly evenly divided between readings and lecture/discussion. *Exam dates are firm*. Only in extraordinary circumstances may you turn in an exam late without penalty. In such a circumstance you must convince the instructor that you have a good reason for doing so, such as proof from a physician or dean that you have been ill.

Required Readings:

Students will want to purchase the following books, which are available at the Dartmouth bookstore.

Quadagno, Jill. 2006 (Paperback edition). *One Nation Uninsured*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McAdam, Doug. 1999 (2nd edition). *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fisher, Dana R. 2006. *Activism Inc.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Cunningham, David. 2005 (Paperback edition). *There's Something Happening Here*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Blackboard: Additional required readings are posted on the course blackboard site (marked by BB in the course schedule). In general, students should do the readings in the order they are

listed. I will occasionally update readings or place other documents and announcements on Blackboard for your edification. Check the blackboard course site often.

Course Policies:

Honor Principle: Examinations and assignments will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses. I also encourage students to read Dartmouth's statement on Sources and Citations:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Religious Holidays: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Electronic Devices: I understand that students are increasingly using laptops to take notes, but the internet is also a formidable distraction. I will allow laptops in class, but be warned that I have a pet peeve about students surfing the web in class. If I feel like you are spending most of your time on the internet, your class participation grade will suffer considerably. So, if you can't resist responding to blitzmail, you're probably best off leaving your laptop at home. Also, please turn off your cell phones while in class.

Classroom Etiquette:

I expect everyone to show up to class on time. It is crucial for our class sessions to be comfortable and conducive to learning for all participants. This means listening while other people are talking and taking their ideas seriously. Personal attacks, yelling, or other threatening behaviors are not acceptable. Anyone who violates these guidelines may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

Course Schedule & Assigned Readings:

Part I. Political Power

Power is a central theme in the social sciences but it remains a sticky concept. In this introductory section we will cover the following: What is political power? How is it defined? How has the concept been used in empirical studies? What are the methodological problems associated with studying power?

1 (9-25) *Course Introduction and Overview*

2 (9-30) Readings (all on BB):

William Domhoff, "Power at the National Level" (Browse his website)

John Gaventa, "Power and Participation."

Michel Foucault, excerpts from *Discipline and Punish*.

3 (10-2) Power simulation in class (read ahead for next week)

Part II. The Welfare State and Social Policy in the U.S.

The Welfare State and Social Policy cover a wide range of efforts by states to address economic insecurity and inequality due to risks to regular income. In this section we will assess different theories of the welfare state and where the United States fits relative to other affluent democracies. Retaining our focus on political power, we turn to empirical cases in the Social Security Act of the New Deal and debates over health care reform over the last century. We conclude this section by asking whether or not economic globalization has limited the abilities of states to maintain generous social policies.

4 (10-7) Readings:

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Business Power and Social Policy." (BB)

Begin Jill Quadagno, *One Nation Uninsured* (introduction)

5 (10-9) Readings:

Quadagno, Chapters 1-4

6 (10-14) Readings:

Finish Quadagno.

Examine candidates' health care proposals.

7 (10-16) Readings (all on BB):

Skim William Greider's chapter "The Storm Upon Us."

Read or listen to Anthony Giddens lecture "Globalisation."

Duane Swank, "Withering Welfare? Globalisation...and Contemporary Welfare States"

John Campbell, "Fiscal Sociology in an Age of Globalization."

Part III. Social Movements and Protest Politics

What are social movements? What leads to their emergence? Is protest worth the effort? Does it affect political change? And, are formal social movement organizations effective political vehicles? We take up these questions relative to empirical cases of the American Civil Rights Movement and a host of contemporary national social movement organizations. We conclude this section with student reports on contemporary activism among social movement organizations.

8 (10-21) Readings:

Mario Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement." (BB)

Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, Chapters 1-3

9 (10-23) Readings:

McAdam, Chapters 5-8

Film: At the River I Stand

10 (10-28) Readings:

Finish McAdam

Matt Bai, "Is Obama the End of Black Politics?" (BB)

11 (10-30) **Exam #1 in class**

12(11-4) Readings:

Dana Fisher, *Activism Inc.*, Intro & Chapters 1-3

13 (11-6) Readings:

Finish Fisher

Election 2008, Debriefing and Discussion

14 (11-11) *Group Presentations on Social Movement Organizations*

Part IV. Political Repression and Violence

State repression concerns a range of activities carried out by the state or state agents in reaction to domestic threats, from harassment and surveillance to torture and killings. In this section we examine why some contexts are riper for repression than others, and why certain groups more likely to face the brunt of state repression. The empirical case for this topic is the FBI's counterintelligence program of the 1960s. We conclude by examining social research on terrorism, a form of political violence originating from outside of the state.

15 (11-13) Readings:

David Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here*, Intro and Chapters 1-2

Optional: Christian Davenport, "State Repression and Political Order." (BB)

16(11-18) Readings:

Cunningham, 3-6

Guest Speaker

17 (11-20) Readings:
Finish Cunningham

18 (11-25) Readings (all on BB):
Neil Englehart and Charles Kurzman, "Welcome to World Peace."
Jeff Goodwin, "A Theory of Categorical Terrorism."

19 (12-2) Course Wrap-up and discussion
Take-home final distributed in class

Final Exam
Due by 11:30 AM on Monday, December 8