

Department of Sociology
Dartmouth College
Winter 2002

Course: Power, Politics and the State (Sociology 53) (This course fulfills the introductory requirement for the Public Policy Minor.)

Time: MWF 2:00 Thursday 1:00 (X-hour)

Instructor: John Campbell
102 Silsby Hall
Office phone: 646-2542

Office Hours: Monday 3:15-5:00 (and by appointment)

E-Mail: I will try to answer e-mail queries as soon as I can. However, given the rather large amount of e-mail that I receive, I can make no guarantees how fast that will be. For the same reason, my responses may be rather short. Please do not take offense.

Course Description: According to many observers, the United States faced several problems during the 1980s and 1990s that required serious attention from policy makers in Washington. These included increased economic competition from abroad associated with globalization, too much “big government,” social inequality, distrust of government, politically apathetic citizens, and more. The result were calls for a variety of tax and budget cuts, welfare reform, and a reduced role for government in the economy—a political program that has come to be known as “neoliberalism.” This course explores the roots of these concerns, the call for neoliberal reform, and the political struggles that have emerged around these policy issues and that have persisted into the 21st century. We will study several theoretical perspectives and research findings that show how business, labor, citizen groups, political elites, political action committees, political parties, and political institutions have affected the situation, and how their influence has changed during the last 25 years. We will focus on reforms in tax policy, social policy, and industrial policy. While the course is largely concerned with the United States, comparisons to other advanced capitalist countries will be explored occasionally to highlight important features of the U.S. case.

Required Texts: Listed below are the required books for the course. With one exception, they are available at the Dartmouth Bookstore and on reserve in Baker Library.

- Dan Clawson, Alan Neustadtl and Mark Weller. 1998. Dollars and Votes: How Business Campaign Contributions Subvert Democracy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Thomas Edsall and Mary Edsall. 1991. Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Christopher Howard. 1997. The Hidden Welfare State. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Theda Skocpol and John Campbell, editors. 1995. American Society and Politics: Institutional, Historical and Theoretical Perspectives. New York: McGraw-Hill. (*On reserve only!*)
- Theda Skocpol. 2000. The Missing Middle: Working Families and the Future of American Social Policy. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Linda Weiss. 1998. The Myth of the Powerless State. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Reading Assignments: The reading assignments for the course are listed below in the course outline. It is expected that you will have done the reading by the time class meets on the date for which the assignment is

due. *There is a lot of reading for the course so it is in your interest to keep up!*

General Course Requirements: All students are expected to attend lectures and discussions, take two examinations, and write a 15 page research paper. You are also expected to participate in class discussions.

Examinations: There will be two take-home exams including the final. Dates are listed below in the syllabus.

Deadlines for Exams and Papers: Exams and papers turned in late will be penalized by having their grades lowered. In extraordinary circumstances you may turn in an exam or paper late without penalty, if you can 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. Being away for college related activities, i.e., athletics, social service trips, etc., is not a valid excuse for turning in your work late.

Honor Principle: Examinations and the paper assignment will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses.

Students with Disabilities: I encourage students with disabilities, including “invisible” disabilities like chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities, to discuss with me after class or during my office hours appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to you. If your disability requires special test-taking arrangements, you must bring this to my attention before the exams are given.

The Paper: Each student will be required to write a paper of roughly 15 pages in length. See the attached "Term Paper Guidelines" for details. **Papers are due in class March 1.**

Grading: Grades will be based on the exams and a paper as follows:

Midterm Exam 25% (50 points)

Final Exam 25% (50 points)

Paper 40% (80 points)

Discussion 10% (20 points)

TERM PAPER GUIDELINES

Due Date: Papers are due ***March 1*** in class without exception.

Paper Requirement: You are required to write a research paper (about 15 pages in length) on any topic of your choosing as long as it is directly relevant to the material covered in this course AND your topic is approved by the instructor. Not everything is directly relevant to the course. For instance, papers on international relations, arms control, the demise of the USSR, or U.S. foreign policy probably do not fit! That is why you must get your topic approved by the instructor. To write a paper that is not directly relevant to the course could be a grave error!

Purpose: The purpose of the paper is to give you the chance to spend some time thinking about something of political relevance that interests you.

Paper Topics: There are many types of papers and topics you could select. Regardless of what you write about, your paper must involve some sort of comparison. Comparisons can be of a theoretical and/or empirical nature. For example...

1 **You could compare and contrast different positions on a particular policy debate** paying attention to who stands to lose and gain from different outcomes; who is advocating and opposing a policy; who is likely to win and lose the policy debate. This could involve following the development of a particular piece of legislation or policy through the news over the course of the semester as well as research in the library. Of course you could also study a policy that has already unfolded, such as the environmental legislation of the late 1960s, that has been in effect for years.

2 **You could compare a policy that interests you on a "before and after" basis.** That is, examine what the policy was originally intended to do and then look at what it actually did do, or how its effects changed over time. There are often big differences between policy formation and later implementation. Similarly, you could develop an historical analysis of changes in the political influence of organized labor, organized business, a political party, or some other important political actor in the U.S.

3 **You could compare how two different national, state, or local governments have developed policy to deal with a similar problem.** For example, you could compare the French and American approach to health care policy or income assistance for the poor. This kind of paper would involve an analysis of why the two governments differ (or not) on a particular policy.

4 **You could compare different theories on a topic of interest.** For example, you could read more on different theories of the state or power and read studies about community power to help you evaluate which theory you feel is best and why.

5 **You could test a theory with some data.** For instance, you could determine whether pluralist, elite, class, or another theory of the state best explains a particular policy-making episode in the United States or elsewhere. Or you could test the theory that PACs give equally to Republican and Democratic candidates by examining campaign contributions as listed by the Federal

Election Commission (www.fec.gov) or the Center for Responsive Politics (www.crp.org).

Consulting the Instructor: The sooner you and I sit down to discuss your paper the better. Even if you have only a very vague idea of what you think you might like to write about, i.e., "women in politics" or "the New Deal," come and see me so we can clarify the topic and get you pointed in the right direction. Indeed, most students start with incredibly vague ideas, so don't feel ashamed or bashful about it. I will help to direct you to useful references to start you off. **START THINKING ABOUT A TOPIC NOW!**

Format: Papers must be word-processed, double-spaced, using a font size no smaller than 11, and stapled in the upper left hand corner (please do not put them in a plastic folder). They should use appropriate footnotes and/or citations. You should formally cite a reference any time you mention someone else's ideas or use someone else's data or research findings. Footnotes may also be used if there is something you want to say to clarify a point, but you feel it is not absolutely necessary to include the clarification in the body of the paper itself. While any common citation or footnote format is acceptable, you might consider the style used in the American Sociological Review (found in the library and the main office of the Department of Sociology) since that is a very easy one to use. Proper citations and footnotes are important for avoiding the appearance of plagiarism!

References: You should provide a list of references at the end of your paper including appropriate names of authors, dates of publication, titles, and all other appropriate information. A list of references includes only those articles and books that you actually refer to in the paper. Only list those sources you have cited in the text.

Grading: Papers will be evaluated largely on the basis of...

1 **Research:** Evidence that you have done a substantial amount of leg work researching the topic.

2 **Thinking/Analysis:** Evidence that you have thought critically about what you have read and discovered, rather than just repeating what the articles and books said. This is very important. The paper should involve your assessing and evaluating the merits of the information at your disposal. You should draw some conclusions about the topic at hand. Your paper should provide more than just description of policy change, episodes or effects; it should provide some *analysis* of why something changed or happened—or why it didn't!

3 **Comparisons:** Papers should involve some sort of clear comparison of a conceptual, theoretical, or empirical nature that contributes to an overall argument.

4 **Writing:** The paper should be clearly written and well organized. The use of subheadings within the text of the paper is strongly encouraged. These help the reader to identify different parts of the paper, such as the introduction/research question, analysis, and conclusions. They also help the writer to better organize the paper and its arguments. (See the American Sociological Review for examples of how subheadings are used to help organize a paper.)

Course Outline:

Part I. POLITICAL POWER

What is power? How is it defined? How has the concept been used in empirical studies? What are the methodological problems in studying power?

Jan 4 Introduction to the Course: Power, Conflict and Agenda
Setting Theda Skocpol and John Campbell. 1995. "Power and Democracy." Pp. 6-8 in Skocpol and Campbell. Nelson Polsby. 1960. "How to Study Community Power: The Pluralist Alternative." Pp. 9-14 in Skocpol and Campbell.

Jan 5 The Structural Roots of Power John Gaventa. 1980. "Power and Participation." Pp. 14-27 in Skocpol and Campbell.

NOTE: Special Day of Class. Class Meets at 11:45 am.

Jan 7 Star Power Simulation Game
(Try to show up a few minutes early so that we can start precisely on time.)
Begin reading ahead for Jan 11-17.

Jan 9 Discussion: What sorts of power operated in Star Power?
Continue reading ahead for Jan 11-17.

Part II. STATE THEORY

What is the state? To what extent is state policy determined by pluralist, elite, institutional, or class forces? To what extent does the state have a life of its own, an autonomy or independence apart from the rest of society? To what extent are political elites motivated by rational self-interest or loftier ideals?

Jan 11 Pluralist and Elite Theory Theda Skocpol and John Campbell.
1995. "Thinking About Politics in the United States and Beyond." Pp. 1-5 in Skocpol and Campbell. Herbert Kitschelt.
1986. "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies." Pp. 320-338 in Skocpol and Campbell.

Jan 14 Class Theory

G. William Domhoff. 1993. "Who Rules America?" Pp. 32-47 in Skocpol and Campbell.
Theda Skocpol. 1980. "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal." Pp. 48-73 in Skocpol and Campbell.

Jan 16 Institutional Theory and the Rationalities of Political Elites Sven Steinmo. 1989. "Political Institutions and Tax Policy in the United States, Sweden, and Britain." Pp. 477-497 in Skocpol and Campbell.
James Buchanan. 1988. "The Economic Theory of Politics Reborn." Pp. 111-118 in Skocpol and Campbell.

Paul Quirk. 1990. "Deregulation and the Politics of Ideas in Congress." Pp. 118-128 in Skocpol and Campbell.

Jan 18 Discussion: Which state theory best characterizes the United States?
Begin reading ahead for Jan. 23-25.

Jan 21 **No Class: MLK Holiday**
Begin reading ahead for Jan. 23-25.

Part III. STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

What are the relationships of business, labor, and citizens in general to the U.S. state? How have they changed in the last 25 years? What are the historical processes that have shaped these relationships?

Jan 23 Business-Government Relations: Normative and Empirical Views
Thomas and Mary Edsall. 1991. Chain Reaction (Begin reading).

Jan 24 Labor-Government Relations: The Weakness of Organized Labor
Thomas and Mary Edsall. 1991. Chain Reaction (Continue reading).

NOTE: This is an X-Hour period beginning at 1:00 pm.

Jan 25 Citizen-Government Relations: The Convergence of Party Politics
Thomas and Mary Edsall. 1991. Chain Reaction (Finish reading).

Jan 28 Citizen-Government Relations: The Disappearing American Voter
Dan Clawson et al. 1998. Dollars and Votes. (Begin reading).

NOTE: TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAMINATION DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS!

Jan 30 Movie: Washington's Other Scandal.
Dan Clawson et al. 1998. Dollars and Votes. (Continue reading).

Feb 1 Discussion: Are state-society relations democratic in the United States?
Dan Clawson et al. 1998. Dollars and Votes. (Finish reading).

Part IV. POLITICS AND CRITICAL POLICY ISSUES IN THE UNITED STATES

What are some of the critical policy issues in the United States today? How did they emerge? To what degree are they the result of the unique set of pluralist, class, elite, institutional, ideological, or other forces? How have these issues been resolved? To what extent have other countries experienced these problems and how have they handled them?

Feb 4 Tax Policy: International Comparisons
Christopher Howard. 1997. The Hidden Welfare State. (Begin reading.)

NOTE: TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE IN CLASS!

Feb 6 Tax Policy: The United States Experience
Christopher Howard. 1997. The Hidden Welfare State. (Continue reading.)

Feb 7 Tax Policy: Globalization and the "Race to the Bottom."
Christopher Howard. 1997. The Hidden Welfare State. (Finish reading.)

NOTE: This is an X-Hour period beginning at 1:00 pm.

Feb 8 **No Class: Winter Carnival**
Theda Skocpol. 2000. The Missing Middle. (Begin reading).

Feb 11 Social Policy: The Welfare State Debate
Theda Skocpol. 2000. The Missing Middle. (Continue reading).

Feb 13 Social Policy: The United States in the 1980s and 1990s
Theda Skocpol. 2000. The Missing Middle. (Continue reading).

Feb 15 Discussion: Should taxation and social policy be changed in the 21st century?
Theda Skocpol. 2000. The Missing Middle. (Finish reading).

Feb 18 Industrial Policy: European and East Asian Approaches
Linda Weiss. 1998. The Myth of the Powerless State. (Begin reading.)

Feb 20 Industrial Policy: The United States in the 1980s
Linda Weiss. 1998. The Myth of the Powerless State. (Continue reading.)

Feb 22 Industrial Policy: The United States in the 1990s and Beyond
Linda Weiss. 1998. The Myth of the Powerless State. (Continue reading.)

Feb 25 Discussion
Linda Weiss. 1998. The Myth of the Powerless State. (Finish reading.)

Part V. DEMOCRACY, CAPITALISM, AND PROBLEMS OF LEGITIMATION

Why do people consent to the political power of democratic states in advanced capitalist countries? How do politicians justify their policy choices? How do symbols, sound bites and the media affect politics and political legitimacy? What impact do “ideas” rather than “interests” have on policy making legitimacy? What is the relationship between democracy and capitalism?

Feb 27 Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy

Mar 1 Movie: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Sleaze

NOTE: TERM PAPERS DUE IN CLASS TODAY!

Mar 4 Why Do People Consent to Political Authority?

Mar 6 Discussion: What is the relationship between democracy and capitalism?

NOTE: TAKE-HOME FINAL DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS

Mar 11 TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE IN 102 SILSBY HALL BY 12:00 PM (NOON).