

Introduction to Political Sociology Soc 2206, Fall 2019

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Class meetings: Tuesday/Thursday 1:00-2:15 PM

Classroom: Science Hall 2025

Office: 2245 Faculty/Administration Building (FAB)

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:00 Please sign-up here: <https://duquetterury.youcanbook.me/>

Note: What are office hours? Office hours are the appointment times designated for students enrolled in this course to come talk to me about class readings and assignments. You are not bothering me, I welcome your visits. Please use the sign up link to ensure you secure a spot and have an agenda for our meeting so we make the best use of our time together.

Course Description.

At its core, the field of political sociology seeks to understand the societal determination of political processes, outcomes, and institutions. Political sociology also concerns relationships between states and civil societies, how best to conceptualize power and understand its workings. In this introductory course, we will study how states form and transform society through interventions such as membership and citizenship laws, social welfare policies, and inclusion and exclusion of particular groups in political processes. Students will learn about the structure of democracy and the ways in which civil society groups influence and contest the state through social movements, formal and informal institutions, and the media which may lead to policy change, regime transitions, wars, and revolutions. The field of political sociology covers a lot of substantive territory that we cannot cover in one semester. As such, the course will present students with a broad overview of major themes, theories, and concepts in the field emphasizing breadth over depth. Hopefully, the course will stimulate student interest in the field that may be carried over into independent research or taking more electives that go deeper into a chosen area of study.

Learning Objectives.

- Introduce students to the history and scope of political sociology, some of its key thinkers, theories, and concepts;
- Increase students' awareness of methodological approaches to the study of political sociology;
- Recognize central debates that animate the field and how different theories and methods are deployed to make sense of the social and political change we observe around us;
- Gain proficiency in reading, analyzing, and synthesizing original research articles and book chapters in the social sciences;
- Improve persuasive and critical writing skills through low-stakes writing assignments that nurture improvement over the course of the semester;
- Engage in contemporary debates in the study of political sociology and apply that critical knowledge to current events unfolding daily;
- Help students become critical consumers of information and knowledge and nurture their confidence to formulate arguments and anticipate counterclaims.

Your grade in the course will be based on the following:

- Attendance, participation, and in-class activities (10%)
- Reading marginalia, notes, article summary activity (10%)
- Op-Ed Project (15%)
- Critical Response Memo (15%)
- Compare/Contrast Short Paper (20%)
- Current Events Research Memo and Infographic (30%)

Course Policies.

Formatting for all written assignments. All written papers and memos should be typed, double-spaced, in a traditional font, with 1” margins on all sides, and pages numbered. All grading in this course is done **BLIND**, meaning you will **ONLY** include your Access ID in the top right or left-hand corner of the assignment. No other identifying information is allowed (to wit: your name!). This grading procedure ensures that no unintended bias affects the evaluation of your written work.

Class attendance and participation. You are expected to attend class, complete and critically assess the required readings and contribute to class discussion. Beyond bringing questions into discussion, everyone should join in the dialogue, even those who are naturally shy. The quality of your comments is more important than the quantity. In-class activities are a great way to earn your participation points. Attendance will be taken at random. You are adults and I expect you to attend class and arrive on time. That being said, if you are ill or must attend to an emergency, send me an email and let me know.

Late Paper Policy. You are permitted **ONE automatic** extension to be used for any assignment without explanation. You will be granted 48 hours automatically provided you tell me that you intend to use the extension 2-hours **PRIOR** to when the assignment is due.

Inclusivity and Maintaining Respectful Dialogue. In this course, we read texts and watch documentaries and programming that (sometimes) include explicit language and explore sensitive topics. At times, these materials and our discussions may make you uncomfortable. It is important to be willing to struggle with this material, and its implications, while also treating one another with respect. We will work to create a space in this classroom to think about serious and difficult questions together in a respectful manner. If any of the course material becomes difficult for you, please let me know or feel free to step out of class. We will discuss as necessary to ensure all feel welcome, cared for, and respected while grappling with the challenges that confront us as individuals, members of groups, and society.

Canvas. All students are required to check Canvas several times a week. I will use this method of communication for making important announcements, transmitting readings, assignments, and handouts as well as posting thought questions for class discussion. Canvas is the most effective way for me to send students information for subsequent class meetings as well as confirm information discussed in class.

Email Correspondence. I’m happy to correspond with you about class using email. Please use “Soc 2206” in the subject line of your email correspondence and indicate the subject of your inquiry. I **only** check student email twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening before I leave campus. Please keep this in mind when you email me. I will usually respond within 48 hours. If I do not respond within 48 hours, please feel free to send me a friendly reminder that you await a response. With that in mind, please note that I will not respond to the following:

- Questions that can be answered by checking the syllabus or Canvas.
- A request to know if you missed anything during an absence. (The answer is yes.)
- A request to know what you missed. (Instead of asking this through email, take the appropriate next steps to catch up: ask a classmate for notes, meet with me in my office hours, etc.)

Weekly Reading Schedule. Most readings are available for download on our course website or by searching google scholar or the WSU library online resources. Please see weekly folders for readings and discussion questions and specific folders for course handouts, assignments, and grading rubrics on the Canvas site.

Plagiarism. Don't do it. Cite appropriately. One of the central goals of the course is to help you become a critical consumer of knowledge and produce your own reactions, ideas, and arguments in response to assigned reading materials. My hope is that you begin to find your own voice and be more confident in what you have to contribute. **Your voice matters.** If you are quoting an author directly, use parenthesis and a parenthetical citation with the page number (Author, Year: Page Number). If you are paraphrasing an argument or citing a study, parenthetical citation will suffice (Author, Year). If you have more specific questions, please feel free to reach out to me. Also, I know about the websites that contain my syllabi, course assignments, quizzes, and examples of my former students' work. Do not be tempted to use these materials. I care about your skill development and progress, not that of your peers outside this course.

Assignment Submission. All assignments should be submitted to the digital drop box in Canvas, except for the MNS assignment, which should be handed in during class in hard copy.

Cell Phones, Computers, and Recorders. Please put your phone on vibrate. I will always have a phone on me in the event of an emergency. Please do not text during class or go on social media. It's distracting to me and your colleagues. At present, I will allow laptops in class for note-taking purposes or to reference course readings. If they become a distraction, I retain the right to revisit the policy and amend it. No student is permitted to tape and video record any portion of our class. Doing so (and distributing it) without written consent of the instructor and other students in the class will be considered a violation of classroom policy and subject to disciplinary action.

Student Disability Services. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is [313-577-1851](tel:313-577-1851) or [313-577-3365](tel:313-577-3365) (TTY: telecommunication device for the deaf; phone is for hearing impaired students only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at WSU.

Drop/Add/Withdraw Policy. In the first two weeks of the (full) term, students can drop this class and receive 100% tuition and course fee cancellation. The last day to drop is September 11th. After the end of the second week there is no tuition or fee cancellation. Students who wish to withdraw from the class can initiate a withdrawal request on Academica. This must be done by November 10th, students must have instructor approval, and students will receive a transcript notation of WP (passing), WF (failing), or WN (no graded work) at the time of withdrawal. Students enrolled in the

10th week and beyond will receive a grade. Because withdrawing from courses may have negative academic and financial consequences, students considering course withdrawal should make sure they fully understand all the consequences before taking this step. More information on this can be found at: <http://reg.wayne.edu/pdf-policies/students.pdf>

Course Assignments.

Reading marginalia, notes, article summary activity (MNS). Early on in the semester, I will ask you to annotate 2 articles that we read for class discussion. I want you to print out the two articles for the week and, as you read the articles, I want you to underline key concepts, major and minor arguments, methodological approach, data sources, examples of empirical evidence that supports the author's central claims, key conclusions or take-aways, and anything else that you find particularly noteworthy. In the margins of the print-out, you should jot down notes or questions to yourself and the author. For example, does a concept confuse you? Are there any terms of jargon that the author doesn't define or clearly explain that stumble you? After reading the article, taking notes, and underlining, you should then write one summary paragraph of what you just read. What is the author's research question and central argument? Why is the question important? What kind of methodological approach and data do they use? What evidence do they present to support their claims? What is the main conclusion that they draw from the data presented? Finally, you should include 1-2 sentences saying how you think the two articles diverge or connect. Please bring to class the two articles with your marginalia and turn in to me one paper with the summary paragraphs for each article (this can be typed or handwritten). A guide to reading effectively for class will be posted in the handouts folder of our course site. **Due date: 9/19.**

Op-Ed Project (OEP). For this assignment, you will need to read and assess current political and social events published in newspapers and magazines and write an Op-Ed in response to an article, policy change or proposal, or a newsworthy event. You may write about any topic related to political sociology such as citizenship and immigration policies, the trade war with China, the effects of globalization on the labor market, contemporary social movements including civil uprisings in Hong Kong, the movement for Black Lives, the Arab Spring, and political protest in the NFL. These suggestions are not exhaustive and only a guide. Op-Eds (opinion pieces) should be in appropriate form, tenor, and style (please see letters in the same outlets you are scoping articles as examples) and should be between 500-700 words. A guide is posted on the course website to help you. The Op-Ed Project website is also a helpful guide. <https://www.theopedproject.org/oped-basics>.
Due date: 10/3.

Critical response memo (CRM): This is a written assignment in which you will critically assess a written article I will distribute in class. I want you to analyze the author's central argument in light of relevant readings up to this point in the semester, where appropriate. Your task is to draft a critical response memo to the author (you should feel free to agree or disagree) using the literature you have read and persuasive, logical reasoning and evidence to support your claims. I recommend making no more than two claims in the paper. The response memo should be three pages and adhere to the formatting requirements described in the syllabus. A handout posted on our course site should serve as a guide to writing a successful response memo. A grading rubric is also posted to provide you clear expectations of how I will assess your written work. **Due date: 10/24.**

Compare/Contrast Memo (CCM). Write an essay using TWO theorist in which you compare and contrast a set of specific ideas or concepts (e.g. social cage, social closure, bureaucracy, nationalism,

power). You need to develop a strong thesis statement that allows you to discuss and explain the similarities and/or differences. The essay should include a summary of each author's position, an informed comparison, an analysis of the comparison. Make sure your argument anticipates potential counterclaims from a critic of your thesis. The final essay you submit for evaluation should be one that is well structured, easy to read, free of grammatical and spelling errors, makes proper use of citations and references and only uses texts assigned in this course. The essay should be about 4 pages and adhere to the formatting requirements outlined in the syllabus. **Due date: 11/21.**

Research Mini-proposal and Infographic (CEMO). In the final assignment for this course, all the writing skills you have been improving on over the semester will be brought together to write an essay about a current political event appearing in major headlines. You may choose to expand on your Op-Ed or choose another topic. That is entirely up to you. But students would be best served identifying a topic that corresponds in some way to a set of readings we covered in class (e.g. social movement, globalization and its discontents, social welfare policies, immigration and citizenship). I want you to research the who, what, where, why and how of the event or story and develop a research question that puzzles you in light of what you find. You will formulate a research question, relevant literature in which to situate your question, and identify a possible method and data sources to answer your question. In other words, you will formulate and write a short research proposal based on a contemporary political, social, or economic issue in the news that moves you. This short research prospectus will be 6 pages in length and adhere to the formatting guidelines in the syllabus. To accompany the written assignment, you will also prepare and present to your colleagues an “infographic” that distills 1-3 main points of interest about your research problem using figures, charts, graphs, pictures, maps or some other non-narrative representation of information. More details about the infographic and research proposal will be provided to you in class and uploaded to our course website. **Due date: 12/5.**

Course Schedule.

Week 1: What is political sociology? And the Sociological Imagination.
Week 2: Power, Powerlessness, and Domination
Week 3: Elite Power and Durable Inequalities
Week 4: Grassroots “Interdependent” Power and Rule-breaking
Week 5: States, Empires, and Nation-States
Week 6: Nations and Nationalism
Week 7: Regimes and Revolutions
Week 8: Citizenship, Social Belonging, and Political Membership
Week 9: Democracy, Social Rights, and the Welfare State
Week 10: Voice and Votes in Democratic Politics
Week 11: Political Identity and Civil Societies
Week 12: Social Movements
Week 13: Culture and Contentious Politics
Week 14: Politics of Immigration
Week 15: Globalization and Political Order in Changing Societies