

## **Sociology 21: Political Sociology**

Spring 2015

Class: Political Sociology (Sociology 21)  
Meeting: MWF 11:15-12:20 Location TBD  
X-hour: Tu 12:00-12:50 Location TBD  
Canvass Site: TBD

Instructor: Joe DiGrazia  
Office: 109 Silsby Hall  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00 (or by appointment)  
E-mail: [Joseph.p.digrazia@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Joseph.p.digrazia@dartmouth.edu)

### **Course Description**

Political sociology is the study of how groups of people solve problems, that is, how they cooperate and engage in conflict over the distribution of power and resources. This course will serve as an introduction to the field, focusing on both theory and its application to real life cases. We will examine nation states and their relationships with their citizens, social movements; how they emerge and why they may succeed or fail, as well as individual-level political behavior, beliefs and attitudes.

### **Course Objectives**

Students who successfully complete Socy 21 will be able to:

- Think about political issues from a sociological perspective.
- Apply the concepts learned in class to current political events and policy debates.
- Consider controversial topics in a respectful manner that incorporates multiple viewpoints and synthesizes complex information.
- Construct articulate, thoughtful and effective arguments in writing.

### **Required Texts**

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

All additional required readings will be available on Canvas. All readings must be completed before coming to class.

### **Course Requirements**

#### *Class Participation*

Students are required to attend class sessions and to actively participate in class discussions and activities. What does class participation entail? It means you must be an *active* participant in the class. This includes: 1) contributing to class discussion; 2) demonstrating that you have read and made an effort to seriously engage with the material. If you come into class, sit quietly every day, and do not contribute to class discussion you will receive a 0 for class participation.

### *In Class Group Assignments*

Throughout the quarter we will often have small in-class assignments which you will be asked to complete in groups. These assignments will ask you to engage with the reading material and lecture content within your groups. It is important that you keep up on the readings so that you can fully participate and contribute to the group. You may miss one group assignment without adversely impacting your grade for this component, however you will not be able to make-up missed group work.

### *Take Home Exams*

There will be two take-home essay exams. These are open book and open note, however you should not discuss your answers with anyone else. The exam dates are listed in the course outline.

### *Book Review*

Students will be required to write a short book review (approximately 5 pages) on a book manuscript of your choice. I will distribute a list of books to choose from during the first week of class. We will discuss the details of the book review in more detail in class.

### *Reading Response Questions*

Students will be required to submit at least two questions on the required readings to the class *Canvas* site each week. There is no limit to the number of questions you can submit, but your questions should pertain to at least two different readings each week. Questions should be submitted by 8am the morning of the class to which the reading pertains. Questions can address the argument, methods or findings in the reading as well as how the piece is connected to the broader themes and concepts we will be discussing over the quarter.

### **Grading**

Your final grade for the class will be based on the course requirements listed above, as shown in the table below. Please note the following about grades: 1) I do not round grades; 2) I **do not negotiate final grades** unless an error was made.

| <u>Component</u>    | <u>Total Percentage</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Participation       | 5%                      |
| Group Assignments   | 10%                     |
| Reading Questions   | 15%                     |
| Book Review         | 20%                     |
| Take Home Exams (2) | 50%                     |
| Total               | <u>100%</u>             |

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

|    |          |    |          |
|----|----------|----|----------|
| A  | 100-93%  | C+ | 79.9-77% |
| A- | 92.9-90% | C  | 76.9-73% |
| B+ | 89.9-87% | C- | 72.9-70% |
| B  | 86.9-83% | D  | 69.9%-60 |
| B- | 82.9-80% | E  | <60      |

## Guidelines and Policies

### *Honor Principle*

All academic work is to be conducted in accordance with Dartmouth's principles of academic honor (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/honor/>). It may also be helpful for students to read Dartmouth's statement on sources and citations: <https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>

### *Religious Observances*

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 before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

### *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.

## Outline of Topics Covered in Class

Below is an outline of the topics to be covered during the course along with the readings for each class. The schedule should be considered tentative and potentially subject to change should the need arise.

| Topic                                  | Associated Readings  |
|--|--|
|  | <b>1. Introductory Concepts: Power, Conflict, and Collective Action Problems</b>   |
| 3-30: Introduction                     |  |
| 4-1: Power and Conflict                | Domhoff, "Class and Power in America" <i>Canvas</i><br><br>Gamson, "The Permeability of the Political Arena" <i>Canvas</i> |
| 4-3: The Problems of Collective Action | Olson, <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i> (pg 1-22; 33-52)  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <b>2. The State</b>   |
| 4-6: The State: Producer of Public Goods, Arena for Conflict, and Instrument of Domination | Skocpol, et al. "States as Promoters of Economic Development and Social Redistribution" <i>Canvas</i><br><br>Domhoff, "Social Networks, Power, and the State" <i>Canvas</i>   |
| 4-8: What does the state do and why?   | Quadagno, "Race, Class, and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State: Nixon's Failed Family Assistance Plan." <i>Canvas</i><br><br>Block "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes Toward A Marxist Theory of the State" <i>Canvas</i> |
| 4-10: Race, Public Opinion and Policy  | Gilens, <i>Why Americans Hate Welfare</i> (Canvas)  |
|  | <b>3. Political Parties, Organizations, Firms and Unions</b>  |
| 4-13: Pressure Groups and Politics   | Olson, <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i> (pg. 53-65, 111-131)<br><br>Bone, "Political Parties and Pressure Group Politics" (Canvas)   |
| 4-15: Corporate Lobbying   | Walker, "Privatizing Participation" <i>Canvas</i>   |
| 4-17: Labor Unions   | Pearson, "What's the 'right-to-work' battle all about?" (Canvas)  |
| <b>Receive First Take Home Exam</b>  | Olson, <i>The Logic of collection Action</i> (pg 66-97)   |
|  | <b>4. Social Movements and Collective Behavior</b>  |
| 4-20: Social Movements and Politics  | Tilly, <i>Social Movements, 1768-2004 Canvas</i><br><br>Begin Reading for book report   |
| 4-22: Resource Mobilization  | McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory" <i>Canvas</i><br><br>Continue Reading for book report   |
| 4-24 : Political Opportunities   | McAdam, <i>Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency</i> (Canvas)   |
| <b>First Take Home Exam Due</b>  | Continue Reading for book report  |
| 4-27: Social Networks and Recruitment  | McAdam, "Recruitment to High Risk Activism" (Canvas)<br><br>Continue Reading for Book Report  |
| 4-29: Narrative, Identity and Culture  | Polleta, "It Was Like a Fever..." (Canvas)<br><br>Continue Reading for Book Report  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 5-1: Impact on Policy                        | Soule and King, "The Stages of the Policy Process and the Equal Rights Amendment, 1972–1982" (Canvas)<br><br>Continue Reading for Book Report                            |
|  | <b>5. Terrorism, Political Violence and Reactionary Politics</b>   |
| 5-4: Theories of Threat                      | McVeigh, <i>The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan</i> , Canvas<br><br>Van Dyke and Soule "Structural Change and the Mobilizing Potential of Threat" <i>Canvas</i>                 |
| 5-6: Terrorism                               | Jurgensmeyer, "Terror in the Name of God" <i>Canvas</i><br><br>Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" <i>Canvas</i>  |
| 5-8: Riots<br><br><b>Book Reports Due</b>    | Olzak et al. "Poverty, Segregation and Race Riots 1960 to 1993" <i>Canvas</i>  |
|  | <b>6. Political Opinions, Attitudes and Behaviors</b>  |
| 5-11: Public Opinion                         | Zaller, <i>The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion</i> (Chapters 1-2), (Canvas)   |
| 5-13 Elites and Public Opinion               | Zaller, <i>The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion</i> (Chapter 12), (Canvas)   |
| 5-15: Political Participation and Voting     | Brady, et al. "Beyond SES: A resource Model of Political Participation" (Canvas)   |
| 5-18: Misinformation                         | Clay et al, "Misinformation and the 2010 Election" (Canvas)<br><br>Kloor, "GMO Opponents Are the Climate Skeptics of the Left" (Canvas)                                  |
| 5-20: Misinformation and Motivated Reasoning | Nyhan and Reifler, "When Political Corrections Fail," (Canvas)   |
| 5-22: Conspiracy Theories                    | Uscinski and Parent, <i>American Conspiracy Theories</i> (Canvas)  |
| 5-25:  | Memorial Day, no class   |
|  | <b>The Internet and Politics</b>   |
| 5-27: Online Organizing and Participation    | Bennett and Segerberg, "The Logic of Connective Action" (Canvas)   |
| 5-29: Twitter Revolution?                    | Grossman, "Iran's Protests: Why Twitter is the Medium of the Movement" (Canvas)<br><br>Christiansen, "Twitter Revolutions? Addressing Social Media and Dissent" (Canvas) |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Receive Second Take Home Exam</b>       | Alterman, "The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted" (Canvas) |
| 6-1: Recap                                 |   |
| 6-5: Take home exam due                    |   |
| <b>Second Take home Exam Due by 4:00pm</b> |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |