

SYO 4300-5786, Fall 2008
Political Sociology

Prof. Alin Ceobanu

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Office hours: Mon, Wed 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
 Fri 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
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Classes:

Mon, Wed, Fri period 7 (1:55 – 2:45 p.m.)
Turlington Hall, room 2342

Course Objectives, Topic and Goals:

This course satisfies three credits of (S) Social and Behavioral Sciences Education. In this course, students will learn key theoretical and conceptual themes used by political sociologists to understand and interpret the interplay between social and political phenomena in the United States and around the globe. Thus, students will learn how basic social processes and structures affect the political realm, and, reciprocally, how dynamics within politics have an impact on the society at large. The first objective of this class is to introduce students to a variety of theories, approaches, perspectives and debates on the social contexts in which power structures and processes are manifest. The second objective is to comparatively analyze the political embeddings of the societal spheres (the government, the state, the economy, the military, the media, and the civil society). We will look at several important theoretical problems (for example: the bases of power and legitimacy, ideology as a form of propaganda and control, political participation and elite domination, media content and political interests, representation via social movements, etc) and case studies (e.g., Western pluralist societies, the American military-industrial complex, elite-negotiated political transitions in the former communist countries of Europe, supra-national political institutions, expansion of the European Union, and globalization). Regarding specific learning outcomes for this course, by the end of this class students will be able to: (a) identify the main issues related to power structures and the diffusion of power within the society; (b) critically evaluate the Political Sociology models; (c) incorporate these models into the analysis of institutions and states as systems of control; (d) assess the various uses of political power from the perspective of globalization; (e) evaluate the socio-political impact of the new social movements; and (f) apply the concepts and perspectives encompassed by Political Sociology when interpreting contemporary socio-political phenomena.

This course also satisfies three credits of (N) International General Education. Students will be instructed on the values, attitudes of norms that are prevalent in the United States and around the globe. This will enable students to develop an understanding of how geographies and societal arrangements have a different impact on political cultures. Through a comparative understanding and analysis of the American values and norms relative to those of other countries, students will be able to achieve a cross-national understanding of the dynamics in our 'global village.' Thus, we will see that Political Sociology is a growing field of study within social sciences; it covers, from a sociological perspective, a multitude of topics about power, state formation, political participation, electoral outcomes, voting behavior, revolutions, or globalization. Because power is omnipresent in human societies, the examination of power structures and processes constitutes the focus of this course. Some of the questions we will try to answer comparatively during this semester include: Who has the power? How is power acquired and for what purposes? What are the social bases of power? How is power used or administered? The course will therefore give you the tools needed to critically

evaluate/analyze contemporary socio-political events. Student learning outcomes include the following: (a) helping understand the changing theoretical and empirical context that is used in the interpretation of power structures in the United States and in other countries; (b) helping you assess the relevancy of (or discrepancy between) the perspectives offered by political sociologists and your own interpretations of the Political Sociology topics (based on your own experiences and background); and (c) helping you understand the diverse manifestations of socio-political processes in the American society, as well as in other societies around the world.

Required Texts:

- Kourvetaris, George A. 1997. *Political Sociology: Structure and Process*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. (**hereafter GK**)
- Tarrow, Sidney. 1998. *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 2nd ed. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. (**hereafter ST**)

The Format of the Course and Evaluation:

Classes will be conducted in a mixed, lecture-discussion format. The professor will provide a short, context-setting lecture and students should come prepared with questions from readings -- the two will form the basis of a structured discussion. Students must do the assigned readings each week before coming to class. Material presented in class (such as PowerPoint slides) will not be posted on the web.

Attendance and Class Participation: Each student is required to attend every class since learning will be through presentation and discussion. You are in charge of keeping track of your attendance, so students are encouraged to mark their calendar. Attendance sheets will be circulated in class (your signature is needed!) for professor's records. Skipping classes on a habitual basis (e.g., 7 absences) will result in a drop of the final grade (and even possible failing the course) -- no negotiations. Medical conditions must be documented and only original physician's form (no copies) will be considered. Good class participation depends on active contribution to discussions: for the most part of this course, students are required to bring with them a 3" x 5" index card with two questions from the daily assigned readings (make sure you put your name and date), which the professor will be collecting in class.

Exams: The dates of the two in-class (regular) and closed-book exams are included in the syllabus. It is your responsibility to be on time for the exams. Exams will typically consist of three parts: multiple choice questions, identifications (definitions), and short essays. Both exams will test you on the lectures and reading materials. The second in-class exam is non-cumulative. There will be no regularly scheduled make-up exams. Those who will miss an exam for reasons of religious observation must contact the professor during the first two weeks of the semester -- otherwise I will assume that all students can make the currently scheduled examination dates. Acceptable excuses for missing an exam include your own illness/injury on the day of the exam or a tragic event in the family. Make-up exams for reason of illness will be given to students if your professor is notified via email or telephone before the exam time (not after) and an original doctor's note (stamped by a physician) is provided. Attending a wedding (even your own), job interviews, or early vacation plans (such as a purchased plane ticket or vacation cruise) will not be considered as valid excuses for missing an exam. A missed exam earns zero points, so mark your calendars now and plan around these dates.

Quizzes: There will be six quizzes in this course. Quizzes will be conducted during the first ten minutes of the class, so try not to be late. There are no make-up quizzes. The lowest quiz score is dropped.

Academic Honesty: All coursework must reflect your own individual effort. Cheating or plagiarism, including inappropriate use of copyrighted materials, is unacceptable and will result in a failing grade and disciplinary action by the University. For more information, refer to the UF's *Student Honor Code* (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>).

Classroom Accommodation: Students requesting special accommodation should provide documentation from the Dean of Students Office during the first two weeks of classes. You are encouraged to make an appointment with the professor to discuss how to best address your needs.

Grading Policy: The course grades will be based on individual performance and are determined by curve (your ranking in the class). Nearly 40% of students in a typical class of the past got a letter grade of A or B+, though exceptionally performing classes are usually awarded with generous distributions. No extra credit work is available in this class.

Here is the grading scheme that will be used in this class:

Class attendance	10%
Class participation.....	15%
First in-class exam	25%
Quizzes	25%
Second in-class exam (non-cumulative)	25%

The following grading scale is used to evaluate students' performance:

A	91 and above
B+	86-90
B	81-85
C+	76-80
C	71-75
D+	66-70
D	61-65

Cellular Phone Policy: To prevent any kind of disruptions during exam time or otherwise, students are required to turn cell phones off and place them in their bags/backpacks before coming to class. If their cell phone rings in class, students will be asked to leave the room (and will get no credit for the day) – the kind of embarrassment they may wish to avoid.

Laptop and Other Electronic Gadgets Policy: Since there are no in-class assignments which would require internet access, this is a no-laptop class. Also, you are asked to be courteous to your classmates and the professor, so please turn off your iPods, mp3 players, GPS devices, etc. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in little or no points for class attendance and participation.

Students' Responsibilities:

- Attend class regularly
- Complete readings by or on the date indicated in the syllabus
- Bring cards to class
- Participate in discussion
- Complete the first in-class exam
- Take the quizzes
- Complete the second in-class exam

Critical Dates:

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| ➤ Sep 1 (M) | Labor Day Holiday, no class |
| ➤ Oct 13 (M) | <u>First in-class exam</u> |
| ➤ Oct 24 (F) | UF Homecoming, no class |
| ➤ Nov 28 (F) | Thanksgiving Holiday, no class |
| ➤ Dec 10 (W) | <u>Second in-class exam</u> |

Schedule and Assigned Readings:

Aug 25 (M) Introduction, no reading

Introduction to Political Sociology

Aug 27 (W) GK 1-8

Major Models in Political Sociology

Aug 29 (F) GK 9-20

Sep 1 (M) Labor Day Holiday, no class

Sep 3 (W) GK 20-24; GK 28-33

Sep 5 (F) GK 24-28; ST 11-13

Power and Authority

Sep 8 (M) GK 37-46

Sep 10 (W) GK 46-55

Nations and States

Sep 12 (F) GK 58-67

Sep 15 (M) GK 67-76

U.S. Elites

Sep 17 (W) GK 79-87

Sep 19 (F) GK 87-95

Media and Power

Sep 22 (M) GK 99-113

Civil-Military Relations

Sep 24 (W) GK 115-130

Political Participation and Voting

Sep 26 (F) GK 134-144

Sep 29 (M) GK 144-154

Political Parties

Oct 1 (W) GK 158-166

Oct 3 (F) GK 166-177

Political Ideology

Oct 6 (M) GK 180-190

Social and Political Movements

Oct 8 (W) GK 200-214

Oct 10 (F) *Revision for the first in-class exam*

Oct 13 (M) **First in-class exam**

Political Opportunities and Constraints

Oct 15 (W) ST 71-80

Oct 17 (F) ST 81-90

Acting Contentiously

Oct 20 (M) ST 91-98

Oct 22 (W) ST 98-105

Oct 24 (F) UF Homecoming, no class

Framing Contention

Oct 27 (M) ST 106-114

Oct 29 (W) ST 114-122

Mobilizing Structures and Contentious Politics

Oct 31 (F) ST 123-131

Nov 3 (M) ST 131-138

Cycles of Contention

Nov 5 (W) ST 141-150

Nov 7 (F) ST 150-161

Reforming Social Movements

Nov 10 (M) ST 161-169

Nov 12 (W) ST 169-175

Nov 14 (F) ST 176-184

Transnational Contention

Nov 17 (M) ST 184-195

Nov 19 (W) GK 217-224

Democratization

Nov 21 (F) GK 225-230

Nov 24 (M) GK 234-239

Conflict and Ethnic Nationalism

Nov 26 (W) GK 239-245

Nov 28 (F) Thanksgiving Holiday, no class

Dec 1 (M) GK 245-254

Politics and Society in the Post-Cold Era

Dec 3 (W) GK 254-259

Dec 5 (F) GK 259-263

Dec 8 (M) *Revision for the second in-class exam*

Dec 10 (W) Second in-class exam