Political Sociology: Graduate Seminar
Sociology 811
Fall 2012

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Schedule: Friday 9:00-11:30
Room: Hamilton 151111
Office Hours: TH 2:30-3:30 and by appointment
Course website: https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/political_sociology

Course Description
This course examines the field of political sociology including programmatic statements of theorists and recent debates in the field. In this class we will examine major theoretical questions about power, politics and the state from a sociological perspective. The course will introduce you to the major theories, methods and analytic strategies within the field of political sociology as a basis for conducting your own research. We will read a wide range of important research on the dynamics of political institutions and processes. We begin the course by analyzing theories of power and the state. In the second section we examine macro-political questions concerning the development and transformation of modern states. The main cross-national and historical topics included in this section are state formation, democratization, and globalization. In the third sections of the course we will examine policy regimes and policy formation. Major topics include welfare systems, economic policy and regulation, and social policies. Finally, in the fourth section, we will focus on political culture and civic actors. Major topics include ritual and performance, political discourse and public opinion, voting, political parties and social movements. Throughout the course, a wide range of empirical cases will be covered including the state and economy, revolution and warfare, the welfare state, social inequality and policy, democracy and political participation, social movements and interest groups. The primary writing assignment will be a well-developed research proposal for a major project in political sociology suitable for submission for funding support.

Course Requirements
Class meetings will be organized as discussions. I will circulate reading questions for each class session. For class meetings, two students will be responsible for preparing a brief set of comments responding to those questions to get discussion started. Typically, I will take a few minutes at the beginning of class to comment on the week’s themes and topics with an eye toward locating our reading in the broader field. Discussion leaders will then have an opportunity to reflect on the readings. These comments might include critical observations about the reading, identification of further questions to pursue, reflections on the applicability of concepts and theories in the reading to other cases, and so forth. Your comments should focus attention on key analytic questions and areas for debate and discussion. Each student will comment on readings for two class sessions during the semester.
In addition to the class presentation(s) and discussions, the other major requirement is a research proposal. Your proposal will be developed through an initial statement of your research question and empirical case (due Monday, September 17th), an initial draft on October 22nd, and a final version due at the end of the semester. If appropriate, this paper should include the findings of preliminary research. The goal for this assignment is a proposal suitable for a master’s paper, grant/fellowship application, or dissertation. Over the semester, everyone will have a chance to present on their project and research plans and gain feedback from the class two times. Presentations will be spread out over the semester and occur during the final 30 minutes. The first presentation will focus on your research question and theoretical agenda, and the second will focus on the research design and substantive contribution your project will make.

Course grades will be based on class participation throughout the semester, presentations, and the research proposal.

Reading

### SCHEDULE

#### Power and States in Sociological Perspective

**Aug 24**
Introduction to Political Sociology

**Aug 31**
Power, Authority, Coercion, and States
State Formation and Transformation

Sept 7  
State Formation  

Sep 14  
Postcolonial States  
James Mahoney. 2010. *Colonialism and Postcolonial Development* Cambridge University Press. (Chs. 1-4, 8)

Sep 21  
Global Institutions and Processes  

Sep 28  
Democratization  

Social Welfare, Markets and the Policy Process

Oct 5  
Welfare States  

Oct 12  
Economic Policy and Regulation  

Oct 19  
Mid-Term Break
Oct 26  Policy Process

**Civil Society, Culture and Actors**

Nov 2  Culture and Civil Society

Nov 9  Public Opinion and Political Communication

Nov 16  Voting, Interest Groups and Civic Engagement

Nov 23  Thanksgiving Break

Nov 30  Protest, Social Movements and Revolution