

**POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**  
**Sociology 920:290**  
**Paul McLean**

**Department of Sociology**  
**Rutgers University**  
**Fall 2007**

Location and time: Lucy Stone Hall, room A142; MTh 10:20-11:40  
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Political sociology encompasses a truly vast and disparate variety of topics and theoretical perspectives. As a result, it is hard to find much agreement about just what does or does not belong in a political sociology course. The areas studied by political sociologists, for example, include political parties, pressure groups, voting behavior, comparative political systems, warfare, democracy and economic development, political elites, political culture, the nature of the state, and the nature of power itself. Political sociologists today may draw on the conflict- and economy-based view of politics articulated by Marx and his followers, the elite- and organization-based political sociology of Max Weber and Robert Michels and their followers, the political culture- and institution-based view of politics articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville, or any of these perspectives in combination. Indeed, the lines between these perspectives are blurry. Furthermore, although many political sociologists focus on political structures and political power in the United States today, in fact any number of contemporary or historical cases have been studied to deepen our understanding of how politics works and how political institutions function. This class is designed as an overview of some of the different perspectives and key arguments comprising the field, including both classical texts and contemporary books and articles.

As a discipline, political sociology is close to political science, because both disciplines address issues related to politics. However, political sociology does differ from political science in a variety of imprecise yet substantial ways. First, political sociologists often emphasize the relationships between political institutions and other social institutions and groupings—whether kinship, social classes, prestige groupings, gender groups, or ideologies—rather than study political institutions on their own. Second, political sociology often tends to have a broader (especially historical) sweep than political science. Third, political sociologists tend to adopt more narrative and comparative methods of analysis, rather than formal or mathematical ones. Finally, political sociology is often (though not always) *political* in a normative and occasionally partisan way—something that is not seen as typically in political science. Thus political sociologists aim not only to understand political structures, ideas, and processes, but also to critique them.

### **Grading and Class Format**

Your grade in this course will be based on the following requirements: 1) a midterm test to be held in mid-October (worth 25% of the final grade); 2) one 5-7 page paper, due around the ninth week of the semester (20% of the final grade); 3) a short written assignment based on a visit to the Zimmerli museum around the eleventh week (15%); 4) participation in class (10%); and 5) a final exam (30%). Failure to take the midterm, hand in the paper, or take the final exam, will result in automatic failure of the course.

I have ordered the following books for this course through the Livingston campus bookstore:

- 1) Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Penguin, 2003, trans. Bevan)
- 2) G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?: Power, Politics, & Social Change* (McGraw-Hill, 2006)
- 3) Tom Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (Metropolitan, 2004)
- 4) Javier Auyero, *Poor People's Politics* (Duke, 2001)

There are MANY other required readings, but these are available either through: 1) electronic reserve at Kilmer library; 2) my website (<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~pmclean/>), which should duplicate the electronic reserve holdings; or 3) JSTOR, the electronic journal article retrieval system. I will provide more detailed instructions on retrieving these materials as the occasion arises. **You should note, however, that many reserve readings are used in the first few weeks of the course.**

## Lecture Schedule and Weekly Reading Schedule

Week 1                      Introduction to the Course

September 6: Syllabus distribution, special permission number requests, etc.

### Part 1: Some Preliminary Considerations Concerning Power

Week 2 of RU Semester

September 10: The Three Faces of Power

Read: John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*, pp. 3-29 (reserve/my website)

September 13: Hobbes' Atomistic Vision of Power and Its Consequences

Read: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, author's introduction, and chs. 10, 11, 13, and 17 (reserve/my website)

Week 3 of RU Semester

September 17: The Second, and Especially, Third, Faces of Power: Michel Foucault

Read: Michel Foucault, "Lecture Two: 14 January 1976," pp. 92(bottom)-108 in his *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (reserve/my website)

September 20: Power as a Social Network Concept

Read: Richard M. Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," *American Sociological Review* 27,1 (February 1962): 31-41 (reserve/my website/online through JSTOR)

Read: Georg Simmel, "The Triad," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, pp. 145-169 (reserve/my website)

Read: Domhoff, *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, & Social Change*, pp. 217-220

## Part 2: Classical Political Sociology

Week 4 of RU Semester

September 24: Marxism and Neo-Marxists on the State

Read: Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Tucker, pp. 594-617 (reserve/my website)

Read: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 144-53, 167-68, 180(bot)-182(mid), 242-247, and 260-64 (reserve/my website)

September 27: The Shift from Power to Domination and Authority: Max Weber

Read: Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 53-54, 941-954. Continue into the second chunk of reading if possible: pp. 212-30, 241-54 (reserve/my website)

Week 5

October 1: Weber on the Types of Legitimate Domination

Read: Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 212-30, 241-54 (reserve/my website)

October 4: Tocqueville on American Institutions and Political Mores

Read: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, **Volume I**: Part I, author's introduction and chapter 3; and Part II, chapters 7-8

Week 6

October 8: Tocqueville on Race, Politics, and the Future in America

Read: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, **Volume I**, Part II, ch. 9; pp. 370-6, 398-426, 438-42, 464-70; and conclusion (pp. 479-85)

October 11: Tocqueville on American Political Culture and Moral Sentiments

Read: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, **Volume II**, Part I, author's preface, chapters 5, 9-13; Part II, entire; and Part III, chapters 1-4, 8, 11-12, 17-19

Week 7

October 15: **Midterm Examination**

### Part 3: The American Polity

October 18: The Ruling Elite in American Democracy

Read: G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America: Power and Politics*, Introduction, and chapters 1, 8 and 2

Week 8

October 22: Mechanisms and Arenas of Control in the American Political System

Read: Domhoff, *Who Rules America?*, chapters 3, 4, and 5

October 25: Electoral Politics and Recent Voting Patterns in American Politics

Read: Domhoff, *Who Rules America?*, chapters 6 and 7

Week 9

October 29: Contemporary Conservatism in America

Read: Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*, Introduction and chs. 1, 2 (pp. 43-59 and 62-7 only), and 5

November 1: More on Conservatism, and Thinking about Wedge Issues

Read: Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*, chs. 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, and Epilogue

#### **5-7 PAGE PAPER DUE TODAY, NOVEMBER 1!**

Week 10

November 5: Bringing Tocqueville Up to the Present, and Back to the Past: Social Capital, and 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Associations

Read: Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6,1 (1995):65-78 (reserve, or [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v006/6.1putnam.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v006/6.1putnam.html))

Read: Jason Kaufman, *For the Common Good? American Civic Life and the Golden Age of Fraternity*, introduction and chapter 4 (reserve/my website)

November 8: The Idea of Political Culture

Read: Nina Eliasoph, "'Close to Home': The Work of Avoiding Politics," in *Cultural Sociology*, edited by Lyn Spillman, pp. 130-140 (reserve/my website)

## Part 4: Looking Beyond America for Critical Political Dynamics

### Week 11

#### November 12: Culture and Politics: Propaganda

Read: Howard Woolston, "Propaganda in Soviet Russia," *American Journal of Sociology* 38, 1 (July 1932), pp. 32-40 [JSTOR/my website]

Read: Dinko Tomasic, "Interrelations Between Bolshevik Ideology and the Structure of Soviet Society," *American Sociological Review* 16, 2 (April 1951), pp. 137-148 [JSTOR/my website]

Read: Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, "Social Bases of Independent Public Expression in Communist Societies," *American Journal of Sociology* 83, 4 (January 1978), pp. 920-939 [JSTOR/my website]

#### November 15: Propaganda and Resistance

Note: There is no assigned reading for this class session. Instead, today we will visit the Zimmerli Art Gallery at the corner of Hamilton and George Streets on the College Avenue campus for a walk-through of some galleries featuring works with political or more broadly, social themes.

### Week 12

#### November 19: Clientelism as a Form of Organization in Urban Politics

Read: Javier Auyero, *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks & the Legacy of Evita*, pp. 1-13, 89-110, 119-136

#### November 20: The Client's Point of View in Urban Politics

Read: Auyero, *Poor People's Politics*, chapter 5 and "Conclusions"

### **NOTE—RUTGERS FOLLOWS A THURSDAY SCHEDULE ON 11/20/07!**

### Week 13

#### November 26: Democracy and Development: Is There a Connection?

Read: Adam Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Material Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, selections (reserve)

#### November 29: Nationalism as National Character, Nationalism as Discourse

Read: Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Introduction and chapter 4 (reserve/my website)

Read: Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, pp. 13-21 (reserve/my website)

**3-PAGE ZIMMERLI ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY, NOVEMBER 29!**

Week 14

December 3: Thinking About Political Violence

Read: Roger D. Peterson, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, chapters 2 and 6 (reserve/my website)

December 6: Some Recent Sociological Thinking about Terrorism

Read: Charles Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory* 22,1 (March 2004):5-13 [JSTOR/my website]

Read: Donald Black, "The Geometry of Terrorism," *Sociological Theory* 22,1 (March 2004):14-25 [JSTOR/my website]

Week 15

December 10: review, overflow from previous periods, etc.

**FINAL EXAM:  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 12:00-3:00 p.m., LUCY STONE HALL, A142**