

SEMINAR IN POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

***SOC 776
Fall 2016***

Course Description

Politics goes far beyond the endless battles between Republicans and Democrats. Political power in contemporary society entails a complex interplay of social relations far beyond what we traditionally think of as political arenas. This course will explore current perspectives on the social contexts of the contemporary state and political power including machinations of class, race, gender and sexual power.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop an understanding of the classical and current theoretical debates within political sociology applicable to understanding the relation between politics, policy and society. These debates include classical liberalism, Marxist and Weberian foundations of contemporary debates, and the current class, institutionalist, and cultural debates.
- Situate contemporary U.S. politics and policy in an historical frame, specifically with reference to class, racial, gender, and sexual politics.
- Examine some of the most important sites of political contestation in the U.S. today, including the institutions of power/government as well as the boardrooms and the bedrooms.
- Understand power, including that wielded by social and economic elites, the masses and social movements and social structures in influencing social and economic policies.
- Narrow the distance between theories of politics and the everyday functioning of it by situating the theories, theorists and researchers we study, as well as our own role as researchers and students, within these institutions and contestations of power.

Required Readings

Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*, 2nd edition. MA: Wiley-Blackwell 2010 ISBN-10: 0631206612 ISBN-13: 978-1444330755

Additional articles will be available through <https://webcampus.nevada.edu/webct> at our class website.

Requirements

Class participation	20 pts	5%		Contract	10 pts	2.5%
Discussion leader	20 pts	5%		Public sociology	70 pts	17.5%
Weekly writing	70 pts	17.5%		Rough Drafts	20 pts	5%
Reviewing	40 pts	10%		Final class project	150 pts	37.5%
				Total	400	100.0%

Class participation

1. **Attend class:** Attendance means on-time arrival. If you are unable to attend class, please call in advance. Even with a phone call, more than two absences will count against your grade. You are responsible for material covered and due at classes that you miss.
2. **Read** all class assignments.
3. **Participate** in all class discussions. Participation means the contribution of insightful comments on the basis of the assigned readings.

Discussion leader

You each will be assigned readings for which you will initiate class discussion, highlight main points, raise critical issues, etc. The point is not to make a lengthy presentation, but spark discussion and facilitate understanding of the issues raised in the readings.. You should also address relevant questions on the weekly reading (see below). Handouts are helpful, and if you do one, please post it to the discussion for that week before class. Expect to do two or three of these throughout the semester.

Weekly writing

In about a half page, write at least one sentence capturing the main point of each reading and at least one question for class discussion each week that arises from the readings. This question should integrate readings for the entire week. Add a few notes explaining the context of your question. You may want to use the class goals at the beginning of this syllabus to guide your questions. Post your question to the discussion board in WebCampus by noon the day of class. Make sure you read questions from other students before class. Be prepared to raise your questions and stimulate discussion. Late questions will not be accepted.

Class project

The majority of your grade will be based on a research project of your choosing. The project must be relevant to this class, incorporate ideas from the class, and be relevant to your own graduate research. I encourage you to think about your own learning objectives and creative ways to accomplish these. You could do one big paper, a series of smaller projects. If you are interested in getting a sampling of topics and research skills, you may want to do a mini power structure study, and/or a mini analysis of a social movement. If you want to do an extended analyses of the readings in preparation for a comprehensive exam in political sociology or do an extensive literature review. If you are interested in social change, you may want to do a practical project for a local political group (which will include a written report to me). You could even do an art or film project. You should first decide what your own goals are for the class, and then come up with some ideas on the best way to meet these. I have plenty of ideas as well. Because of the size of the class this semester, I **strongly** encourage collaborative projects for part or all of your project.

Component 1: Contract

The third week of the semester you must submit a "contract" for your project. The contract should contain the following components:

1. Topic
2. Key research question

3. Description of what you are going to do in as much detail as you can say right now, including sources, methods and as much focus as you can give it.
4. Include specific information on what you will be providing for each stage of your project, including the review stage, public sociology stage, and final stage.
5. Include criteria for which you wish to be graded. I will expect graduate level work, of course. But you may wish to specify this if you are doing a group project, review of literature, social action research, etc.

Both you and your classmates will give you feedback and I will likely ask for revisions. These revisions will be due the following week. Your project may likely change and shift during the first months of the semester. Please discuss with me any shifts or amendments you would like to make. You will be held to your contract when it comes to grading, so don't neglect this step. Your grade will be based on including all the steps and turning in initial draft and revisions on time.

Component 2: Public sociology

Because UNLV will enjoy 5 minutes in the national spotlight this semester, we will be taking advantage to put important research findings into the public sphere.

1. Write a blog or letter to the editor on your chosen topic and submit it.
2. Your grade will be based on thoroughness, and timely completion of all steps.

Component 3: Rough Drafts

1. You must turn in at least one draft of your blog or letter to the editor for review.
2. You must turn in at least one draft of your project. This draft can be a zero draft (very rough early draft), but must have sufficient content and literature review so we can give you meaningful feedback. You must respond to the feedback of your reviewers.

Component 4: Project presentation:

Do a class presentation of your final research project.

Component 5: Written project

Reviewing others

I can't stress enough that research and writing is a collaborative process. A key component of your work will be providing to and receiving from you classmates constructive feedback.

1. Review the contract, public blogging draft, rough draft of project and presentation of your fellow classmates. The details on this will be provided.
2. Respond to the feedback of others through drafts of your blog, final paper and presentation.
3. Rough Drafts:
 - a. You must turn in your contract for review by others and respond to that feedback.

Your grade will be based on thoroughness and timely completion of reviewing tasks.

Additional Notes

Academic Misconduct— Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)— **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy— Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The **Academic Success Center (ASC)** provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other

academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Library statement:

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.

Gender and Sex Discrimination

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at <http://www.unlv.edu/diversityinitiatives/titleix>.

Tentative List of Topics

- Aug 29** Introduction, Foundations
- Sept 5** No class, Labor day
- Sept 12** Foundations – Liberalism and Marxism
- Scott, John. Chapter 7, Studying Power in Amenta, E., Nash, K., & Scott, A. (2012). *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to political sociology* (Vol. 33). John Wiley & Sons. Read this chapter in the book available through the UNLV library online at <http://ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/unlv/Doc?id=10538670>
- Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000. Preface
- Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000. Ch. 1, p. 1-9
- Smith, Adam, *The Wealth of Nations*, NY: Penguin 1974 (1776) Book 1, Chs 1-3 pp. 109-126.
- Sept 19** Foundations – Marxism and Weber
- Contracts are due!**
- Reviews of contracts due Thursday, Sept 22, midnight**
- Marx, Karl, "18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," pp. 276-284 in Jon Elster, *Karl Marx: A Reader*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986
- Marx, Karl, "Communist Manifesto," pp. 259-266 in Jon Elster, *Karl Marx: A Reader*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Domhoff, G. William, *Who Rules America?: The Triumph of the Corporate Rich* University of California Press, 2013. Read the summary of this book on http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/class_domination.html and read the section on Alternative theories of power at http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/theory/alternative_theories.html
- Also explore that site for a rich resource on power elite theory and doing power structure research <http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/>
- Harvey, David. "Neoliberalism as creative destruction." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 610.1 (2007): 21-44.
- Recommended:
- Harvey, David. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2007.
- Sept 26** Foundations– Weber and Institutionalism
- Final drafts of contracts due!**
- Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000. Ch. 1, pp 9-20
- Weber, Max, Excerpts from "Politics as Vocation."
- Weber, Max, "Class, Status, Party," Excerpts from "Politics as Vocation" in Bernard E. Brown, Roy C. Macridis, (editors), *Comparative politics: notes and readings*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996, pp. 180-195.
- Skocpol, Theda, "Bringing the State Back In," pp. 3-37 in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Oct 3** The Cultural Turn
- Rough drafts of blogs, letters to editor due!**
- Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000. Ch. 1, pp 20-41.
- Michel Foucault, "Governmentality." Pp. 87-104 in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, London, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.
- Lemke, Thomas, "'The birth of bio-politics': Michel Foucault's lecture at the College de France on neo-liberal governmentality" *Economy and Society* 30(2):190-207, May 2001.
- Recommended

Lemke, Thomas. *Biopolitics: An advanced introduction*. NYU Press, 2011.
Brown, Wendy. *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. MIT Press, 2015.
<http://ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/UNLV/doc/Detail.action?docID=11031965>

Oct 10

Elections

Final drafts of blogs, letters to editor and evidence of submission are due!

Special Section: Voting Behavior and Elections in Context 55(4) 2014 of The Sociological Quarterly Fall 2014

Brooks, C. (2014). INTRODUCTION: Voting Behavior and Elections in Context. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 55(4), 587-595.

Hellwig, Timothy. "The Structure of Issue Voting in Postindustrial Democracies." *The Sociological Quarterly* 55.4 (2014): 596-624.

Perrin, A. J., Tepper, S. J., Caren, N., & Morris, S. (2014). Political and Cultural Dimensions of Tea Party Support, 2009–2012. *The sociological quarterly*, 55(4), 625-652.

Logan, Enid. "Barack Obama, the New Politics of Race, and Classed Constructions of Racial Blackness." *The Sociological Quarterly* 55.4 (2014): 653-682.

Wurgler, E., & Brooks, C. (2014). Out of Step? Voters and Social Issues in US Presidential Elections. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 55(4), 683-704.

Oct 17

NO CLASS US Presidential Debate at UNLV on Oct 19

Oct 24

From the Welfare State to Neoliberalism to the Carceral State

Manza, Jeff. "Political Sociological Models of the U.S. New Deal." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26:297-322

Jenkins, J. Craig and Craig Eckert, "The Right Turn in Economic Policy: Business Elites and the New Conservative Economics." *Sociological Forum* 15(2):307-338, 2000.

Wacquant, Loic. "Crafting the Neoliberal State: Workfare, Prisonfare and Social Insecurity." *Sociological Forum* 25(2): 197-220.

Bernstein, Elizabeth. "Carceral politics as gender justice? The "traffic in women" and neoliberal circuits of crime, sex and rights." *Theory and Society* 41:233-259.

Recommended:

Wacquant, Loic. *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2009.

Oct 31

Identity politics and citizenship

Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000. Ch 4, pp 131-192

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation" pp. 371-382 in in Seidman, Steven and Jeffrey Alexander, *The New Social Theory Reader*, NY: Routledge 2001. XXINTRO 2014 edition

Beisel, Nicola and Tamara Kay, "Abortion, Race and Gender in 19th Century America," *American Sociological Review* 69(August):498-518, 2004.

Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality*. Ch 1 "Downsizing Democracy," Beacon Press: Boston 2003.

Stryker, Susan "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity," *Radical History Review*, Issue 100:145-157, Winter 2008.

Recommended:

MacKinnon, Catherine, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State," *Signs*, 7(3): 515-542, 1982.

Connell, R. W., "State and Gender in Sexual Politics" *Theory and Society* 19(5):507-544, 1990.

Margot Canaday, *The Straight State*, Introduction. Princeton University Press 2009.

Nov 7 Social Movements

Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000, Ch. 3, pp. 100-155.

- Hetland, Gabriel and Jeff Goodwin. "The Strange Disappearance of Capitalism from Social Movement Studies," PP 83- in Colin Barker, Laurence Cox, John Krinsky and Alf Nilsen (eds) *Marxism and Social Movements*. Brill Academic Press.
- Ward, Matthew. *Opportunity, Resources, and Threat: Explaining Local Nativist Organizing in the United States*. Sociological Perspectives 2016 online first.
- Rory McVeigh,^a David Cunningham,^b and Justin Farrell *Political Polarization as a Social Movement Outcome: 1960s Klan Activism and Its Enduring Impact on Political Realignment in Southern Counties, 1960 to 2000* *American Sociological Review* 2014, Vol. 79(6) 1144–1171
- Recommended:
- McAdam, Doug. *Freedom Summer*. NY: Oxford University Press. 1988.
- Jenkins, J. Craig, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," pp. 289-305 in Skocpol & Campbell, *American Society and Politics*, NY: McGraw 1995.
- Kitschelt, Herbert P., "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies," pp. 320-338 in Skocpol and Campbell, *American Society and Politics*, NY: McGraw Hill 1995.
- Taylor, Verta and Nancy E. Whittier, "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," pp. 344-357 in Skocpol and Campbell, *American Society and Politics*, NY: McGraw Hill 1995.

Nov. 14 Globalization

- Nash, Kate. *Contemporary Political Sociology*. MA: Blackwell 2000, Ch. 2 pp. 47-99.
- Giddens, Anthony, "Dimensions of Globalization" pp. 245-252 in Seidman, Steven and Jeffrey Alexander, *The New Social Theory Reader*, NY: Routledge 2001.
- Ohmae, Kenichi, "The End of the Nation State," pp. 207-211 in Lechner, Frank J. and John Boli, *The Globalization Reader*. MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Stiglitz, Joseph, "The Post Washington Consensus Consensus," speech at Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University, 2004.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Wayne E. Baker. "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values." *American Sociological Review*: 65: 2000. Available online: http://wvs.isr.umich.edu/papers/19-51_in.pdf
- Michalis Lianos (2016) *Brexit: should refusal (or even plate-smashing) be a sociological category?*, *European Societies*, 18:4, 291-294,

Recommended:

- Wonders, Nancy A. and Raymond Michalowski, "Bodies, Borders and Sex Tourism in a Globalized World: A Tale of Two Cities—Amsterdam and Havana" *Social Problems* 48(4):545-571, 2001.
- Lechner, Frank J. and John Boli, "Introduction, Part V Political Globalization I: The Demise of the Nation State," p. 195-198 and "Introduction, Part VI Political Globalization II: Reorganizing the World," P. 243-254 in Lechner, Frank J. and John Boli, *The Globalization Reader*. MA: Blackwell, 2000.

- Nov. 21** No class Thanksgiving
Nov 28 **Presentations**
Dec. 5 **Presentations**
Dec 12 **All Final Projects Due!**