Political Sociology: SOC 468
Winter 2013
5:30-9:10pm in NH 222

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COURSE OBJECTIVES
Students who successfully complete this course should:

- Have a basic understanding of sociological theories of the state
- Be familiar with the interlocking systems of oppression that are by-products of contemporary social arrangements and structures
- Clearly understand the fundamental components of neoliberal political and economic structures
- Have a nuanced understanding of the 2012 Presidential election
- Possess a greater understanding of contemporary social movements from a sociological perspective

REQUID MATERIALS

*All other materials will be posted online on D2L and are also required reading.

CLASS POLICIES
In order to ensure a fair academic environment, please note that no exceptions will be made regarding the course guidelines as well as the methods of student evaluation. Late assignments will be graded one grade down with each day that it is late. Make-up quizzes will not be granted except in cases of emergency (with documentation).

University rules on academic misconduct will be strictly enforced. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty please consult the student handbook. Papers may be subject to online anti-plagiarism review.

**Laptop Policy:** Laptops and iPads or other smart notebooks will not be permitted in class. The use of such devices is distracting, and as all lecture notes will be posted online, there is minimal need for electronics in the classroom. If your success in this class is dependent upon your use of a laptop, please see me to make other arrangements. Please also note that cell phone usage
during class time will not be permitted.

**Classroom Climate:** As scholars at Portland State, the free and open exchange of ideas in classrooms is expected and considered necessary for learning. Students are free to express either agreement or disagreement without fear of consequences. This does not mean of course, that the instructor or other students may not challenge your views or disagree with them, but it does mean that you will experience no consequence for disagreeing with anyone especially the instructor.

Additionally, class discussions can easily be environments that are unfair to some students. Thus, we must all be sensitive in our participation by not talking too much or too loudly. This does not mean that people cannot disagree or have emotions connected to their words. What this does mean is that we all need to be sensitive, appreciative, and respectful no matter how strongly we might agree or disagree. The goal is to create a psychologically safe space in which everyone feels that they can participate in the discussion.

This class makes every effort to make this subject come alive, especially through drawing upon eclectic readings, films, and guest speakers. We will work together to merge theory and practice and to engage in a dialogue that is intelligent and meaningful. While some of the topics we will be discussing have the potential to disrupt or upset your personal comfort zone, it is my hope that we can thoughtfully consider these issues in a supportive environment. Do not hesitate to communicate directly to me your thoughts or concerns throughout the term.

**Student Evaluation:** Students are expected to actively participate in classes. This course will be arranged in such a way as to maximize class participation. Success in this class will be dependent on your preparation and attendance in class. Reading the assigned readings before the scheduled lecture is preferred. Although the instructor utilizes similar concepts, the majority of the class lectures will not directly replicate the required reading.

**Late Assignments:** Late penalties will apply to all late assignments. You will lose 5 points for each day your assignment is late. **On the fourth day, you will be given a zero on the assignment.**

**Extra Credit:** The only opportunity for extra credit that is available to you is the option to use the 5th in class quiz to replace a low grade or missed test.

Final letter grades will be determined on the following scale:

- 93-100 = A
- 90-92 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 83-86 = B
- 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 63-66 = D
- 60-62 = D-
- 59 > = F
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

* Please note that NO email Submissions of any assignments will be accepted. Hard copies of all materials are required.

| Reading Quizzes = 40% | In-class Reflection Papers = 30% | Research Paper (3 parts) = 30% |

Reading Quizzes (4 quizzes, 40% total)
In class on January 28; February 11; February 18, March 4, March 18
- There will be no make-up quizzes, however, a 5th optional quiz will be given. You may use that quiz to replace a missed quiz, or you can elect to take the quiz to replace your lowest quiz grade.

In-Class Reflection Papers (3 out of 4 must be completed, 30% total)
- I will provide four opportunities in class to write a short reflection on the day’s topic, a film we view in class, or on a course reading.
- You are required to complete three out of four such reflections.
- Completing the fourth does not count as extra credit or as a quiz grade.

Research Paper (3 parts, 30% total)
- Part 1: Paper Prospectus (5%) Due, In class, on January 28th
- Part 2: Sources and Introduction (5%) Due, In class, on February 25th
- Part 3: Final Paper (20%) Due, In class, on March 18th

Details for this assignment will be handed out in class and posted on D2L.

Assignments should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and with one-inch margins on all sides. Proper credit should be given to source information and ideas that are not your own. Use proper citation format in the text that includes author, year, and page when necessary. Be sure to include a works cited page.

Plagiarism, whether it be from your fellow student’s work or professional publications, in any form for the research paper and exams will result in an automatic F for that assignment and appropriate institutional action will be taken.
Tentative Schedule
I reserve the right to make necessary changes to this schedule.

Week 1 (1/7): Oppression, Resistance and the State
• Glasberg and Shannon, Chapter 1 (p. 1-13)
• D2L: Alexander, The New Jim Crow or listen online:
  http://www.democracynow.org/2010/3/11/legal_scholar_michelle_alexander_on_the

Week 2 (1/14): Sociological Theories of the State
• D2L: Overviews of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, DeToqueville & Polanyi

No Class on 1/21: MLK Jr. Day

Week 3 (1/28): Power, Oppression, Socialization Quiz 1 & Paper Prospectus Due
• Glasberg and Shannon:
  Chapter 2 (p.15-45) and Chapter 3 (p.47-90)
• D2L: Mills, “The Power Elite”
• D2L: Domhoff, “Interlocking Directorates”
• D2L: Connell, “The State, Gender and Sexual Politics”

Week 4 (2/4): States, Neoliberalism and Globalization
• Chomsky, Chapter 1 (3-38); Chapter 5 (121-148); Chapter 9 (207-250)

Week 5 (2/11): Civic life and Political Participation Quiz 2
• D2L: Frank, “What’s the Matter With Kansas?”
• D2L: Civic Youth Vote
• D2L: Mauer, “Voting Behind Bars”
Week 6 (2/18): Presidential Politics

- Glasberg and Shannon, Chapter 4 (p. 91-128)
- D2L: Wiist, “Citizens United, Public Health, and Democracy”
- D2L: NY Times 2012 Elections: The Aftermath
- D2L: The Indefensible Electoral College
  http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2004/10/indefensible-electoral-college
- D2L: In Defense of the Electoral College:
  http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/view_from_chicago/2012/11/defending_the_electoral_college.html

Week 7 (2/25): Elections & the Mass Media

- D2L: Smith, “America is a Joke”
  http://nymag.com/print/?/arts/tv/profiles/68086/
- D2L: London, How the Media Frames Political Issues
  http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/frames.html
- D2L: Internet Gains As Campaign News Source:
  http://www.journalism.org/commentary_backgrounder/social_media_doubles_remains_limited
- D2L: Lessons learned from 2012 Election: http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2012/11/06-election-communications-west

Week 8 (3/4): Social Movements

- Glasberg and Shannon, Chapter 6 (p. 149-169)
- Piven, Chapters 1-2 (p. 1-35)

Week 9 (3/11): Social Movements

- Chapters 3, 5 in Piven (p. 37-54; 81-108)
- Piven, Chapter 6 and Epilogue (p. 109-146)

Week 10 (3/18): Political Possibilities

WE WILL MEET FOR CLASS DURING THE SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM TIME 5:30-7:20pm

- Glasberg and Shannon, Chapter 7 (p. 171-210)
- D2L: Hardt and Negri, “The Problem of Transition”
- D2L: Tarrow, “Why Occupy is Not The Tea Party”
- D2L: Alperovitz and Williamson, “A Top Ten List of Bold Ideas”
- D2L: Zinn, “The Optimism of Uncertainty”