

# SOC 0106: Political Sociology

Department of Sociology

Tufts University

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**Instructor:** Prof. Anjuli N. Fahlberg

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**Class Meeting:** T/Th 1:30-2:45pm

**Class Location:** 224 Miner Hall

**Office Hours:** Mondays 5-6pm; Tuesdays 3-5pm

## Course Description:

Often when we talk about politics, we think of the formal institutional structures through which elected or appointed officials make and enforce decisions about a country. But are formal government actors the only ones with power to make change? And does decision-making only matter at the national level? No. In fact, politics—or what we will define as contestations for power and resources between groups—is constantly occurring: in debates with friends, on television shows and through Twitter, at the negotiating tables of transnational corporations, among migrant field workers, labor unions, insurgent rebel groups, mothers. The goal of political sociology—and this course—is to examine how all these different groups organize, collaborate, compete, and fight (sometimes violently) to gain and attain power, to establish the “rules of the game,” to set political agendas, and to make (or prevent) social change. We begin by examining major theoretical perspectives and historical processes of nation-making and then dive into several ethnographic accounts based in the US and the Global South to consider how national and global political regimes interact with and shape struggles for power and resources at the regional, symbolic, and local levels. Throughout the course, we will pay critical attention to how gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality, and violence help to produce various forms of exclusions, as well as new political identities. We will conclude by asking ourselves: How will emerging forms of governance and citizenship shape our future—and what power might we have to impact these transformations?

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss core sociological theories on power, politics and the state;
2. Apply these sociological theories to current issues and events in the US and the Global South;
3. Provide a critique of common views of democracy and the contemporary “western” state;
4. Analyze public policies in the US and globally and provide a theoretically-informed critique of these;
5. Identify and discuss forms of power that extend beyond traditional electoral politics.

## Required Texts

1. Auyero, Javier. 1999. *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita*
2. Ong, Aiwah. 2006. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*

## **Classroom Policies**

### **Respect and Inclusivity in the Classroom**

Classrooms are spaces for learning. For this to happen, we must first and foremost respect the humanity of all students, instructors, and anyone else in the classroom. Therefore, no discriminatory remarks towards members of any individual based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, etc will be tolerated. Students are encouraged to treat the classroom as a space for learning about and working through multiple perspectives, and are encouraged to reflect critically on their own views and experiences and the dynamics that engender alternative perspectives.

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions by critically engaging with the material and with key concepts, themes, and stories. Questions or comments that challenge traditional assumptions or normative values are encouraged, though these should always be provided in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

### **Technology in the classroom**

Studies consistently show that the use of technology is distracting and contributes to students' low performance. Therefore, you should refrain from using laptops in class. If your reading materials are on your computer or tablet, you may refer to these during class discussions. However, the use of Facebook, email, Amazon, or any other such sites is NOT permitted. I also reserve the right to look at screens or to ask you to put away your laptop if it appears to be distracting. Cell phones should be on silent at all times, and students should not check their phones during class.

### **Food**

Remaining engaged in class—alert, attentive, and participative—will make the class more interesting and productive for all of us. Students are therefore welcome to bring food and drinks, as these can be helpful to remaining alert. However, please do not be late due to waiting in lines to purchase food.

### **Plagiarism & Academic Integrity**

Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to academic integrity. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in Tufts' Academic Integrity handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask me for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, I must report the situation to the dean.

The general rule on plagiarism is that you should cite any fact that is not widely known and any idea that is not your own—which will be much of what you write! Keep track of what you are reading and where you are obtaining your information, and become comfortable with including the authors' last name(s) and dates of publication after each "borrowed" fact or idea. Citing

what you have read not only prevents you from inadvertently committing plagiarism, but also demonstrates to your reader that your writing is well-researched.

As part of this course, I will utilize TurnItIn in the Canvas learning management system to help determine the originality of your work. TurnItIn is an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of websites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. When papers are submitted to TurnItIn, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work in the TurnItIn database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted works. Students retain copyright on their original course work.

## **Sources**

We now suffer from an over-abundance of information, and it is easy to get overwhelmed by these sources and not know how to find them or which ones are credible. We will discuss this in greater detail in class, but students should be thoughtful about the credibility of each source. As a general rule, these sources are valid: books, scholarly articles, news articles by a mainstream newspaper, and reports issued by the government or major NGOs. You can find many of these on scholar.google.com. Invalid sources include: Wikipedia, blogs, and websites not affiliated with a credible organization.

## **Diversity and Accessibility**

The diversity of students' experiences, perspectives, and abilities is essential to an informed and holistic classroom learning environment. Students with unique learning needs or who require special accommodations should speak to me at the beginning of the semester so provisions can be made accordingly. Please also contact the Student Accessibility Services office at [Accessibility@tufts.edu](mailto:Accessibility@tufts.edu) or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment with an SAS representative to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that, per Tufts University guidelines, accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

## **Communication**

Please email me or stop me after class for any questions or concerns or to talk further about the course material. I will be happy to provide you additional ideas and resources relevant to your areas of interest. While out-of-class communication with me is not required to get a good grade, students who actively email or talk to their instructors are much more likely to understand the assignments, gain greater insights into the topics, and perform well.

I will make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends and holidays. Feel free to email again if I have not responded within that time frame (and you need a response right away), as sometimes things fall through the cracks.

## **Office Hours**

I hold regular office hours and all students are encouraged to attend. If you have class during those times, come speak to or email me and we can find another time.

While it is not necessary to visit all professors all the time, getting into the habit of talking to your professors outside the classroom is very important and will, in the long run, contribute to your

relationships with faculty, your own thinking and reflection, and your overall success as a student. Good reasons to come to office hours include: (a) there was something about the class you didn't understand or have additional thoughts you'd like to discuss; (b) you would like to talk about your class project and brainstorm ideas; (c) you are having personal challenges and are afraid they might impact your participation in the class; or (d) you would like to discuss any other academic/research/work issues that fall within my areas of study or experience.

## **Grades**

Please note that all grades are given with careful consideration, based on the description of the project and the rubric. Comments will also be provided to explain your grade. If, however, you feel like your grade does not reflect your performance, you may request that I review your grade. Please keep in mind that a revision of your assignment could result in your grade staying the same, rising, or potentially even going down. Please note that I will not review your grade because you are applying to Medical or Law school, as I do not give grades: you earn the grade you receive.

Below is the conversion scale I use when calculating final grades. Please note that I will round up for scores that end in 0.5 or higher.

A+ 98-100  
A 94-97  
A- 90-93  
B+ 87-89  
B 84-86  
B- 80-83  
C+ 77-79  
C 74-76  
C- 70-73  
D+ 67-69  
D 64-66  
D- 60-63  
F 59 or below

## **Assignments:**

Attendance and Participation	20%
Take-home Exams (3)	30% (10% each)
Domestic Policy Analysis	25%
Global South Policy Analysis	25%
Total	100%

### **Late Policy**

All written assignments should be uploaded to Canvas BY MIDNIGHT on the due date. **Late assignments will be docked 5% for each day late.**

- Exceptions may be allowed for major issues (severe illness, family emergencies, etc), but only if you get permission at least 24 hours before the deadline. **I will not reply to requests for an extension on the day the assignment is due.**
- Exceptions will NOT be granted for minor illnesses, travel, events, games, etc.
- Please speak to me ASAP if you have ongoing issues (i.e. chronic mental or physical health conditions) so we can put a plan in place BEFORE project deadlines.

### **Attendance and Participation (20%)**

Discussion is critical to our best learning—and “un”learning. You are therefore expected to attend every class and to come prepared. You will be graded on (a) arriving on time, (b) not missing more than two classes, (c) paying attention during class and participating (aim for at least two comments per class), (d) making contributions that demonstrate you’ve done the readings and reflected on them, and (e) completing short class assignments. Please email me before class if you will be absent.

Students must also submit two (2) discussion questions in the Discussion section of Canvas before each class. The first question should focus on clarifying a concept/idea/quote you did not fully understand. The second should aim to expand or apply interesting concepts of the readings to other course readings or to other policy issues.

### **Take-home Exams (3 exams, 10% each= 30%)**

You will complete three take-home exams, which will consist of two essays (selected from three possible questions). You will be expected to write 2-3 pages for each question (double-spaced). Questions will be posted by midnight on Thursday and will be due by midnight on Sunday. The goal of the questions will be to assess your understanding of the key themes of the readings and course discussion. No outside research will be necessary.

Take-home exams will be due on 2/17, 3/31, 4/21.

### **Domestic Policy Analysis (25%)**

For this assignment, you will submit a research paper of 8-10 pages in which you **analyze** a current public policy debate/issue of your choice and combine outside sources, class readings

and concepts, and analysis of relevant social media platforms. The topic must be located primarily in the United States and must be current. Your main objective is to provide a sociological analysis of the issue by applying at least three of the main theoretical perspectives we examined in Weeks 1-9. Your paper should include the following sections:

### **Part 1: Historical Context and Current Issues**

Conduct external research to provide an overview of issue(s) at hand: What has motivated the conversation? What relevant history informs the trajectory of the debate? Who are currently the key actors, including advocacy groups, elected officials, and other formal or informal political leaders? 6-8 outside sources (4 MUST be peer-reviewed articles)

### **Part 2: Social Media Research**

Follow at least three individuals or advocacy groups on social media, particularly Twitter (Instagram, Facebook, etc may also be used if relevant). They must represent different perspectives. What frames are being constructed and debated? What “evidence” is being used to support these? Which social/political groups are being left out of the conversation? What themes are emerging that have not been identified by scholars or journalists?

### **Part 3: Sociological Analysis**

Provide a sociological analysis of your findings. Here you should draw heavily from course readings. You should explicitly discuss three different theoretical frames—how would they make sense of these findings? What questions might they ask and how might they answer these? What predictions or proposals would they offer? In what ways do they offer points of similarity and difference to other views? Reference at least 5 class readings and at least 5 class concepts (these should be underlined).

Your paper should also have a captivating introduction and conclusion and a bibliography in ASA or APA format.

An abstract will be due on 2/10, and the final paper will be due on 3/17.

## **Global South Policy Analysis (25%)**

For this assignment, you will submit a research paper of 8-10 pages in which you **analyze** a current public policy debate/issue of your choice and combine outside sources, class readings and concepts, and analysis of relevant social media platforms. The topic must be located primarily in the Global South and must be current. Your main objective is to provide a sociological analysis of the issue by applying at least two of the main theoretical perspectives we examined in Weeks 10-14 and at least one from weeks 1-9. Your paper should include the following sections:

### **Part 1: Historical Context and Current Issues**

Conduct external research to provide an overview of issue(s) at hand: What has motivated the conversation? What relevant history informs the trajectory of the debate? Who are currently the key actors, including advocacy groups, elected officials, and other formal or informal political leaders? 6-8 outside sources (4 MUST be peer-reviewed articles).

## **Part 2: Social Media Research**

Follow at least three individuals or advocacy groups on social media, particularly Twitter (Instagram, Facebook, etc may also be used if relevant). They must represent different perspectives. What frames are being constructed and debated? What “evidence” is being used to support these? Which social/political groups are being left out of the conversation? What themes are emerging that have not been identified by scholars or journalists?

## **Part 3: Sociological Analysis**

Provide a sociological analysis of your findings. Here you should draw heavily from course readings. You should explicitly discuss three different theoretical frames—how would they make sense of these findings? What questions might they ask and how might they answer these? What predictions or proposals would they offer? In what ways do they offer points of similarity and difference to other views? Reference at least 5 class readings and at least 5 class concepts (these should be underlined).

Your paper should also have a captivating introduction and conclusion and a bibliography in ASA or APA format.

An abstract will be due on 4/7, and the final paper will be due on 5/8.

## Course Readings

\*\*Readings might change throughout the semester. Please check Canvas for announcements on changes.\*\*

Date	Readings and Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
1/17	Welcome
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>America the Great?</b>
1/22	Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1945. <i>Democracy in America</i> . London: Vintage Books. Intro & Chp XIV.  Keane, John. 2015. "Why Read Tocqueville's Democracy in America?" <i>The Conversation</i> , April 27.
1/24	Mounk, Yascha. 2018. "America Is Not a Democracy." <i>The Atlantic</i> , March.  Gilens, Martin and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 12(03):564–81.  Taub, Amanda. 2016. "The Rise of American Authoritarianism." <i>Vox</i> , March 1.
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Seeing Like a State: Technologies of Control</b>
1/29	Scott, James C. 1999. <i>Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed</i> . New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. Ch 2: Cities, People, and Language  Harari, Yuval Noah. 2015. <i>Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind</i> . 1st edition. New York: Harper. Chapter on Industrial Revolution. Chp 18: A Permanent Revolution
1/31	Draper, Robert. 2012. "The League of Dangerous Mapmakers." <i>The Atlantic</i> , September 19.  O'Neil, Cathy. 2016. <i>Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy</i> . 1 edition. New York: Crown. Introduction & Ch 5: Civilian Casualties: Justice in the Age of Big Data.
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Sociological Theories of Power and Politics</b>
2/5	Das, Raju J. 2006. "Marxist Theories of the State." Pp. 64–90 in <i>Alternative Theories of the State</i> , edited by S. Pressman. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.



	Wacquant, Loïc. 2009. <i>Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity</i> . First edition, paperback issue edition. Durham NC: Duke University Press Books. Chapter 4 on Welfare.
2/7	Thompson, Kenneth. 2012. "Durkheim and Durkheimian Political Sociology." Pp. 27–35 in <i>The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology</i> , edited by E. Amenta, K. Nash, and A. Scott. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.  Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 10.  Hochheiser, Harry and Ben Shneiderman. 2010. "From Bowling Alone to Tweeting Together: Technology-Mediated Social Participation." <i>Interactions</i> .
<b>2/10</b>	<b>Abstract for Domestic Policy Paper Due</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Bureaucracy &amp; Governmentality</b>
2/12	Breiner, Peter. 2012. "Weber and Political Sociology." Pp. 15–26 in <i>The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology</i> , edited by E. Amenta, K. Nash, and A. Scott. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.  Lipsky, Michael. 2014. "Street-Level Bureaucracy: An Introduction." in <i>Policy Process: A Reader</i> , edited by M. Hill. Routledge.  Buffat, Aurélien. 2015. "Street-Level Bureaucracy and E-Government." <i>Public Management Review</i> 17(1):149–61.
2/14	Garmany, Jeff. 2009. "The Embodied State: Governmentality in a Brazilian Favela." <i>Social &amp; Cultural Geography</i> 10 (7):721–39.
<b>2/17</b>	<b>Take-Home Exam 1 Due</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Contentious Politics</b>
2/19	Moseley, Mason W. 2018. <i>Protest State: The Rise of Everyday Contention in Latin America</i> . New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chps 1 & 2.
2/21	No class, Monday schedule
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Racializing Politics</b>
2/26	Bracey, Glenn E. 2015. "Toward a Critical Race Theory of State." <i>Critical Sociology</i> 41(3):553–72.
2/28	Carney, Nikita. 2016. "All Lives Matter, but so Does Race: Black Lives Matter and the Evolving Role of Social Media." <i>Humanity &amp; Society</i> 40(2):180–99.

	Smith, Barbara Ellen. 2016. "Across Races and Nations: Social Justice Organizing in the Transnational South." in <i>Latinos in the New South: Transformations of Place</i> , edited by O. Furuseth and H. Smith. Routledge.
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Feminizing Politics</b>
3/4	Extra credit: "I, A Black Woman, Resist." A documentary by Sharrelle Barber and panel on the transnational Black feminist movement
3/5	Hobson, Barbara. 2003. "Feminist Theorizing and Feminisms in Political Sociology." in <i>The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies, and Globalization</i> , edited by T. Janoski, R. Alford, A. Hicks, and M. Schwartz.
3/7	Halley, Janet, Prabha Kotiswaran, Rachel Rebouché, and Hila Shamir. 2018. <i>Governance Feminism: An Introduction</i> . 1 edition. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press. Ch  Zhou, Li. 2018. "It's Official: A Record-Breaking Number of Women Have Won Seats in Congress." <i>Vox</i> , November 7.  Anon. 2018. "Islamic Feminism: A Contradiction in Terms?" <i>Eurozine</i> . Retrieved December 14, 2018 ( <a href="https://www.eurozine.com/islamic-feminism-contradiction-terms/">https://www.eurozine.com/islamic-feminism-contradiction-terms/</a> ).
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Politics in Weak States</b>
3/12	Auyero, Javier. 2001. <i>Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita</i> . Durham: Duke University Press Books. Intro & Ch 1.
3/14	Auyero, Javier. 2001. <i>Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita</i> . Durham: Duke University Press Books. Ch 2 & 3.
<b>3/17</b>	<b>Domestic Policy Paper Due</b>
3/18-3/25	No class, Spring Break
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Clientelism in Latin America</b>
3/26	Auyero, Javier. 2001. <i>Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita</i> . Durham: Duke University Press Books. Ch 4 & 5.
3/28	Auyero, Javier. 2001. <i>Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita</i> . Durham: Duke University Press Books. Ch 6, Conclusion and Epilogue.  Guest Lecture: Javier Auyero
<b>3/31</b>	<b>Take-Home Exam 2 Due</b>

<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Empire, Globalization and Citizenship</b>
4/2	Castells, Manuel. 2008. "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance." <i>The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> 616(1):78–93.
4/4	Linda G Basch. 1994. <i>Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States</i> . Langhorne, Pa.: Gordon and Breach.
<b>4/7</b>	<b>Abstract for Global South Policy Paper Due</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Neoliberalism in Contemporary Asia</b>
4/9	Ong, Aihwa. 2006. <i>Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty</i> . 1st Edition edition. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press Books. Intro, Ch 1
4/11	Ong, Aihwa. 2006. <i>Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty</i> . 1st Edition edition. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press Books. Ch 2, 3
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Technologies of State and Power</b>
4/16	Ong, Aihwa. 2006. <i>Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty</i> . 1st Edition edition. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press Books. Chps 6, 7
4/18	Ong, Aihwa. 2006. <i>Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty</i> . 1st Edition edition. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press Books. Chps 9, 10
<b>4/21</b>	<b>Take-Home Exam 3 Due</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Making Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</b>
4/23	Porta, Donatella Della, Massimiliano Andretta, Angel Calle, Helene Combes, Nina Eggert, Marco G. Giugni, Jennifer Hadden, Manuel Jimenez, and Raffaele Marchetti, eds. 2015. <i>Global Justice Movement: Cross-National and Transnational Perspectives</i> . Routledge. Introduction.  Harlow, Summer. 2012. "Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and an Online Guatemalan Justice Movement That Moved Offline." <i>New Media &amp; Society</i> 14(2):225–43.
4/25	Putting it all together
<b>5/8</b>	<b>Global South Policy Paper Due</b>