Themes and purpose of the course

This is an intensive lecture and discussion course in Political Sociology at an intermediate level. The purpose of the course is to provide you with a basic knowledge of central issues in political sociology. The course is divided into four main sections. In the first section, we will explore processes of state formation, focusing on the role of warmaking, capital accumulation, religion and family networks. This section will conclude with an analysis of the welfare state. The second section will focus on political and social revolutions. We will compare the comparative merits and disadvantages of class-based models, state-centered explanations and structuralist accounts of revolutions. In the third section, we will study the relationship between political attitudes, ideological representations and political behaviors. We will focus on the role played by ideology in crisis situations and on the impact of political attitudes on democratic outcomes. The fourth section will be devoted to processes of political mobilization. We will contrast alternative models of mobilization (selective incentives, critical mass, frame alignment, recruitment through social ties).

Requirements

1. Class participation.

The class format is lectures and in-class discussions. All students are expected to attend weekly class meetings and to participate actively in discussion throughout the semester. Readings within each subsection should be read in the order listed in the syllabus. Books and the course packet are on reserve in College library (H. C White).

2. Classroom presentations and presentation memos.

During the semester, you are required to give two classroom presentations and to write one memo for each one of your presentations. These memos must summarize the main points of your presentations and should be e-mailed to all participants on the preceding Tuesday no later than 5:00 p.m. For this purpose, you will use the Class List: soc724-1-f06@lists.wisc.edu. You are requested to distribute your memos two days in advance of the session so that the other participants have the opportunity to engage your comments and to reflect on the readings further.

Each presentation will be on one or more required readings assigned for the session. The two presentations must be on different sections of the course. For instance, if your first presentation discusses a reading from Part III (Ideology and Political Culture), your second presentation will need to be on a reading from Part IV (Political Mobilization). In the first session, I will distribute a sign-up sheet for these presentations.

The presenter should assume that everyone has carefully read the material. The main purpose of the presentation is not to offer a detailed summary of the reading(s), but to engage the reading(s) and to launch the discussion by evaluating the main issues and arguments under examination. Therefore, the “summary part” of your presentation should remain brief. Presentations should not exceed ten
In your memos you will synthesize the main points of your presentation. These presentation memos should be no longer than five double-spaced pages.

3. Five memorandums (comments or questions) on the reading(s).

In addition to your two presentation memos, you will need to prepare comments about the readings for five of the sessions. These comments must be brief (no more than 200 words). You will e-mail them to the class using Class List: soc724-1-f06@lists.wisc.edu on Wednesdays no later than noon. Please number your memos.

4. Term paper.

You will be expected to write a term paper on any topic connected to the themes of the course. This can be a research proposal or a paper addressing a clearly defined substantive problem. The length should be in the 15-20 page range.

A prospectus for this paper is due in class for Thursday, October 12. The term paper is due no later than December 14. I will not accept late papers.

Grades

The grade will be based on the following breakdown:

quality of participation in class discussion = 20 points

classroom presentations = 20 points

five memorandums (comments or questions) on the readings = 20 points (each memo is worth up to 4 points)

term paper = 40 points

Reading materials

The readings in each section are grouped under two categories: required and recommended. All participants should be prepared at class time to comment and critique the required readings. Additional readings are recommended for delving deeper into a topic and preparing for preliminary examinations.

The required readings have been ordered at the Rainbow Book Store Co-operative (458 West Gilman, one block off of State Street).


Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


George Steinmetz’s *Regulating the Social* is available only as an electronic book. You can see it at: [http://pup.princeton.edu/titles/5289.html](http://pup.princeton.edu/titles/5289.html) and can purchase it for $14.95 from Princeton University Press.

In addition, I have prepared a course packet of photocopied reading material required for the course. This course packet is available at the Social Center Copy Center (6120 Social Science Building).

The readings in this course packet are on electronic reserve.

Both the required and the recommended readings are available on reserve at the College Library.
Week 1. Introduction

I. State formation

Week 2. War and state


Recommended readings:


Week 3. Cultural and institutional foundations


Recommended readings:


Week 4. The Welfare State


**Recommended readings:**


II. Collective Upheavals and Revolutions

Week 5. Deprivation and contention


**Recommended readings:**


Week 6. Class conflicts


**Recommended readings:**


Week 7. State breakdowns (1)


**Recommended readings:**


Week 8. State breakdowns (2)


Sohrabi, Nader. 1995. “Historicizing Revolutions: Constitutional Revolutions in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Russia, 1905-1908,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 100: 1383-1447. [Coursepack]

Recommended readings:


### III. Ideology, hegemony, political culture

#### Week 9. Conceptualizing ideology


Recommended readings:


#### Week 10. Crises and ideology


Tackett, Timothy. 1996. *Becoming a Revolutionary. The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. chapters 1, 4 & 5. [Coursepack]

**Recommended readings:**


**Week 11. Culture and political outcomes**


Laitin, David D. 1986. *Hegemony and Culture: politics and religious change among the Yoruba*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press. **Chapters 1, 4, 5 & 7.**

**Recommended readings:**


**IV. Political mobilization**

**Week 12. Rational Choice and collective action**


Recommended readings:


Week 13. Resources and opportunities


Recommended readings:


Week 14. Frames


Recommended readings:

