

SOC371H1S COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY
University of Toronto, St. George Campus
Winter 2017

Time: Wednesday 10am-12pm

Classroom: MS 2170

Office hours: By appointment

Teaching assistant: Angela Xu

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Office hours: Wed 12-2pm (Jan 11-Apr 5)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to comparative political sociology, one of major theoretical fields in sociological inquiry. The focus is placed on understanding the evolution of modern states, the social origins of political regimes, the varieties of capitalist institutions, and the agency of social actors in the making of state-market relations. The class will critically engage with both classical and contemporary studies in political sociology to highlight the divergent trajectories and configurations of state institutions and capitalist systems. This course is intended to offer a comparative understanding of the societal forces that make politics and political economy and of the political decisions that shape social structures and inequality outcomes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students are expected to achieve the following

- (1) To understand the basic concepts and debates in political sociology by critically engaging with readings, lectures, and class discussions
- (2) To gain knowledge on the historical, social, and economic sources that make contemporary state institutions and capitalist economies
- (3) To appreciate a comparative approach to political sociology by recognizing various trajectories and diverse socioeconomic outcomes
- (4) To demonstrate and articulate students' understanding of course materials in oral and written assignments.

PREREQUISITE

To enroll in this course, students should have taken at least .5 at the 200-level sociology. Students without the fulfillment of this pre-requisite will be removed from this class at any time discovered and without notice.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no required textbook. All readings are available on Blackboard (Course Materials). Important announcements, course materials, and any additional learning aids will be posted here, so please check the website regularly.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

1. Attendance and discussion participation: 10%

Regular attendance is a must for this class. If students have inevitable reasons for their absence, they have to inform the professor in advance. In case of absences, students are required to provide legitimate reasons and supporting documentation. Frequent missing of the class will result in a low grade in attendance and participation.

Tutorials

Tutorials are offered to provide an opportunity for students to brainstorm, discuss, and develop ideas for the country study paper. Tutorial time may also be used for answering any other questions students might have about class materials. Please sign up for one session of the tutorials scheduled as follows:

Tutorial 1: February 16, 12-1pm, Lash Miller Chemical Labs 158

Tutorial 2: March 17, 12-1pm, Lash Miller Chemical Labs 158

Tutorial 3: March 16, 12-1pm, Lash Miller Chemical Labs 158

2. Mid-term test (in-class): 30%

There will be a mid-term test to assess students' understanding of the key concepts and arguments discussed in lectures and assigned readings (no multiple choice). **March 8.**

3. Country study paper: 50%

Students choose a country from a list provided by the professor and write a case study paper focusing on one of suggested themes as follows.

Suggested countries:

Brazil, Chile, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, and Turkey

Suggested themes:

(1) Social origins of the state: Who were the key actors that made the modern state? Who were the opponents? What were their interests? What kind of political institutions did they create? Are the key actors still influential in contemporary politics?

(2) Configurations of the economic system: What are the key economic sectors and industries? What are the basic features of the economic system? From where do they originate? How does the economic system affect political dynamics?

(3) The welfare regime: What are the public policies related to social welfare? Is the welfare regime parochial or universal? Who are the proponents of or opposition to the welfare state? Who are the beneficiaries and who are excluded? Do the policies contribute to socioeconomic equality?

(4) Social actors and political change: Are there examples in which collective actors mobilized to bring about a drastic political change? If yes, who mobilized and why? How were they successful? If not, why were they unable to mobilize? What are the consequences of weak political opposition?

Country study paper development:

A. After choosing your country and focused theme, write up a one-page description/outline of your paper. Submit a hard copy to the teaching assistant in class on **March 1**. The outline will be returned with comments, which are expected to be reflected in the development of the paper **(10%)**.

B. Do more research and develop the paper. The paper will be evaluated for (1) fully addressing the basic questions posed for each theme, (2) discussing the country case in relation to class materials (by adopting analytical concepts or theoretical approaches, engaging in implied comparisons with cases discussed in class, or critiquing existing frameworks), (3) showing evidence of substantial independent research on the subject, (4) providing reasoned arguments and writing clearly and succinctly. The final paper is due on **April 12**. **Word limit: 2000 (+ 100) words (about 7 pages) (40%)**

4. Final response paper (700 words or 2 pages): 10%

Students write a short paper that summarizes their learning experience in class. The paper needs to discuss the most interesting/unexpected/out-of-box thing they learned in class and how it contributed to their understanding of comparative political sociology.

Recommended format

All written assignments should be within the word/page limit set for each assignment, excluding tables, figures, and bibliography. Font 12 and double-spacing recommended. Full citations (in-text and bibliography) of all the sources used in the writings should be provided in appropriate formats.

Rules for grading and evaluation

Grade scale:

A: Above 94	B+: 87-90	C+: 77-80	D: Below 70
A-: 91-93	B: 84-86	C: 74-76	F: Below 60
	B-: 81-83	C-: 71-73	

Late submissions: Assignments that fail to meet the deadlines will result in losing one third of a letter grade for every 24-hour tardiness from the original due date.

Incomplete: No incomplete will be granted in this course unless the student provides evidence of emergencies such as family bereavement or medical treatment.

Missed tests: Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero. Students who miss a test due to a medical or family crisis will be given the opportunity to write a make-up test if **within three days** they provide **the teaching assistant** with a written request for special consideration by explaining why the test was missed and accompanying proper documentation from a physician or college registrar. The request should include the student's contact information (telephone number and email address) to communicate about the date, time, and place of the make-up test. In case of illness, students must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor's note is not acceptable. In case of a family crisis, students must get a letter from the college registrar.

ACADEMIC HONESTY and CLASS ETHICS

Academic integrity/Plagiarism: Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that students earn will be valued as a true

indication of their individual academic achievement. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work;
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind students of these expectations and help them avoid accidental offences, I will ask students to include a signed Academic Integrity Checklist with every assignment. Assignments without the inclusion of such a statement will not be graded.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on the student's transcript. If students have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from the professor, or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website. If students are experiencing personal challenges that may impact their academic work, please inform the professor or seek the advice of the college registrar.

Turnitin: By taking this course, students agree that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %) unless a student instead provides, along with their paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS

Writing skills: The quality of writing will greatly impact the grade. Writing skills (clarity, logic, parsimony, organization) are probably the most important skills students need to develop in university. Students in need of improving their writing skills can be assisted by various services and workshops offered by the Academic Success Centre, the Career Centre, and UofT Libraries. <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/news/writing-plus>

Electronic devices: Cell phones should be turned off during class. Laptops can be used in class for note-taking purposes only. No web browsing is allowed as it inhibits learning and disrupts class discussion. If it is found, points will be deducted from class attendance.

Taping, recording, photographing lectures: Lectures and course materials prepared by the professor are the professor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record lecture or other course material are required to ask the professor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Blackboard materials, etc. Once obtained, such permission is only for that individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish the professor's notes to a website or sell them in other form without formal permission.

Accessibility needs: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if students have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach the professor and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978-8060 or visit: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

Contacting the professor: If students feel overwhelmed by the course materials or encounter other personal difficulties that may affect their performance in class, they should immediately contact the professor and seek consultation EARLY in the semester. I will be happy to offer any additional guidance that might be needed for each student.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1. January 11: Introduction and overview

Week 2. January 18. Political sociology and the study of state

Max Weber, "Politics as a vocation" in Weber: Selections in Translation (Cambridge University Press 1978) 212-225

Sartori, Giovanni, "From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology" *Government and Opposition* 4-2 (1969): 195-214

Theda Skocpol, Chapter 1 in Peter Evans et al (eds) *Bringing State Back In* (Cambridge University Press 1985) 3-43

Week 3. January 25. Political regimes and social actors 1

Barrington Moore, Chapters 7-9 in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press 1966) 413-483

Week 4. February 1. Political regimes and social actors 2

Ruth Collier, Introduction in *Paths towards Democracy* (Cambridge University Press 1999) 1-32
Kellee Tsai, Chapters 1-2 in *Capitalism without Democracy* (Cornell University Press 2007) 1-43

Week 5. February 8. Varieties of modern states 1

Sven Steinmo, Chapters 1-2 in *The Evolution of Modern States* (Cambridge University Press 2010) 1-87

Week 6. February 15. Varieties of modern states 2

Meredith Woo-Cumings, Introduction in *The Developmental State* (Cornell University Press 1999) 1-31

David Harvey, "The neoliberal state" in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press 2005) 64-86

February 22: No class: Reading period

Week 7. March 1. Varieties of capitalism 1

Peter Hall and David Soskice, Introduction in *Varieties of Capitalism* (Cambridge University Press 2001) 1-68

Wolfgang Streeck, "The crisis of democratic capitalism" *New Left Review* 71 (2011) 5-29

Week 8. March 8. Midterm test

Week 9. March 15. Varieties of capitalism 2

Gosta Esping-Andersen, Introduction and Chapter 1 in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton University Press 1990) 1-34

Christian Aspalter, "The East Asian welfare model" *International Journal of Social Welfare* 15 (2006) 290-301

Week 10. March 22. Structural inequalities and contemporary politics

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, Part I in *Winner-Take-All Politics* (Simon and Schuster 2010) 11-160

Week 11. March 29. Social movements and political change

D. Della Porta and M. Diani, "The study of social movements" in *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell 2006) 1-29

Jack Goldstone, Introduction in *States, Parties, and Social Movements* (Cambridge University Press 2003) 1-24

Week 12. April 5. Last class: Wrap-up