

SOC340H1S
Comparative Political Sociology
University of Toronto
Class hours: Thursdays, 18:10-21:00
Location: SS1088

Instructor: Sébastien Parker

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Statement of Acknowledgement

We acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. [*Council of Aboriginal Initiatives, 2014*]

Course Description

The study of comparative (historical and cross-national) variation in outcomes that are the subject of research by political sociologists. This is a program-only course and is restricted to sociology majors and specialists.

Prerequisites: SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 & 1.0 FCE from SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1

Learning Objectives

There are 5 learning objectives in this course:

- 1) To critically read, analyze and write about comparative political sociology
 - 2) To understand and explain key ideas in comparative political sociological research
 - 3) To draw connections between major findings and concepts
 - 4) To apply insight from research in political sociology to pursue independent research on a self-chosen topic
 - 5) To engage in ongoing discussions on contemporary issues related to political sociology
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Evaluation Components

Type	Due Dates	Weight
Participation engagement	Ongoing	15%
First test	February 17	30%
Research paper	March 24	30%
Second test	April 7	25%

Grading Descriptions

Ongoing participation engagement

Students will have to submit written participation assignments (each worth 3%) to showcase active and ongoing engagement with course content. There will be, in total, six (6) assignment opportunities. Meaning, students can still receive the full 15% mark even if they are unable to submit one (1) of the participation assignments.

Participation assignment prompts will be assigned at the end of selected lectures and are due by midnight on Sunday. The prompts will vary: some might ask students, for example, to summarize portions of the readings and forward questions, while others might ask to reflect on more practical components and research implications.

Please note that no late participation assignments will be accepted for any reason. If you anticipate this being a problem (e.g., you receive academic accommodations that allow for the submission of late work), please reach out to the Course Instructor as soon as possible.

Take-home tests

The tests are non-cumulative. The first test will cover material from lecture and readings up to the date administered, while the second test will cover the remaining course content. For each test, students will be required to answer three (3) questions (each question answered in 2 pages, single-spaced). Details regarding the tests will be communicated in advance.

Research paper

For the research paper (5 to 6 pages, single-spaced), students must provide a comparative analysis of two cases. The chosen cases can be contemporary or historical examples drawn from either proximate or distant regions, as long as they are of similar scales (e.g., comparing two movements, cities, states, or countries). The main objective is to forward an argument, anchored in a theoretical framework to provide insight relative to the comparative empirical assessment of the two cases. More detailed guidelines will be shared on Quercus and discussed during lectures.

Late and Missed Test Policies

Handing in assignments

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus. The instructor and TA will not accept electronic copies of assignments via email.

Deadlines

The assignments are due online via Quercus by 23:59 (11:59 p.m. EST) for the stated date. Please refer to the Due Dates stated on page 1 of the Syllabus and the Course Schedule.

Late tests and assignments

If a student misses a test or submit assignments later for medical reasons, the student must contact me (not the TA) within 2 days of the missed test or assignment and also declare their absence on ACORN. For other reasons, such as family emergencies or personal reasons, they must have the college registrar email me.

Accessibility

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Email Policy

I will respond to your email within two business days (48 hours, except weekends and holidays). In an email exchanges, you must use your official University of Toronto email. Please also include the course code (SOC340) in the subject line and your full name and student number in your message. Please do not send a repeat email (e.g., “did you get my email?”).

In general, please treat emails as you would any other professional communication. You should be respectful in the way you address the instructor and the TA. Email is most suitable for questions that are clear, concise, and easily answerable. If you need help on course material, I strongly encourage you to attend office hours or make an appointment. For all general inquiries, please refer to the course syllabus.

Help from your Teaching Assistant

Your T.A. will hold scheduled office hours and respond to your emails. Please be judicious in your use of email. Use it only for questions that are brief and specific. Before sending a question by email, be sure to check the course outline to see if an answer is already available. Emails should not be seen as an alternative to doing the assigned reading or attending lectures. Expect to receive a response from your T.A. within two working days. For more in-depth discussions of the lectures, readings, tests and position papers, take advantage of your T.A.’s office hours.

Grade Appeals

The instructor and teaching assistants do their best to mark work fairly, consistently, and accurately. Nevertheless, one of us may unintentionally err in our marking duties. For basic mathematical errors, simply alert the TA of the error. In the case of more substantive appeals, you must wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark. If you wish to appeal, please submit a thorough written explanation to your Instructor of why you think your mark should be altered. If your appeal is deemed appropriate, the entirety of your test/assignment will be re-graded. Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up. You have 7 days after receiving a mark to appeal it.

Academic Integrity

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 you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules.

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 your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Course Schedule

Required readings

All course readings are accessible electronically. Unless otherwise noted, course readings will be uploaded on Quercus. Please refer to the proper week in the Modules tab.

Week 1 (January 13)

Course overview & introduction

Part 1.**Week 2 (January 20)**

Nation-state building and state formation

Readings:

Gorski, P.S., 1993. The Protestant ethic revisited: disciplinary revolution and state formation in Holland and Prussia. *American Journal of Sociology*, 99(2), pp.265-316.

Wimmer, A. 2018. *Nation Building: Why Some Countries Come Together While Others Fall Apart* [selection].

Week 3 (January 27)

Social revolutions and counterrevolutions

Readings:

Skocpol, T., 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia and China* [selection].

Slater, D., and Smith, N.R., 2016. The power of counterrevolution: Elitist origins of political order in postcolonial Asia and Africa. *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(5), pp.1472-1516.

Week 4 (February 3)

Cultural vs. institutional

Readings:

Putnam, R., 1993. *Making Democracy Work* [selection].

Acemoglu, D., and J. Robinson, 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty* [selection].

[optional]. Ruck, D.J., Matthews, L.J., Kyritsis, T., Atkinson, Q.D. and Bentley, R.A., 2020. The cultural foundations of modern democracies. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4(3), pp.265-269.

Week 5 (February 10)

Top-down and bottom-up transitions

Readings:

Haggard, S. and Kaufman, R., 2016. *Dictators and Democrats: Masses, elites, and regime change* [selection].

Moghadam, V.M., 2018. Explaining divergent outcomes of the Arab Spring: The significance of gender and women's mobilizations. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 6(4), pp.666-681.

Week 6 (February 17)

Test 1 (30%) due at 11:59 pm EST

Week 7 (February 24)

Reading Week

Part 2.

Week 8 (March 3)

The autocratic, allegiant, assertive, and alienated

Readings:

Dalton, R., and C. Welzel, 2014. *The Civic Culture Transformed: From allegiant to assertive citizens* [selection].

Rosenfeld, B., 2020. *The Autocratic Middle Class: How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy* [selection].

Marthaler, S., 2008. The paradox of the politically-sophisticated partisan: The French case. *West European Politics*, 31(5), pp.937-959.

Week 9 (March 10)

The 'rise' of authoritarian populism

Readings:

Pappas, T.S., 2019. *Populism and liberal democracy: A comparative and theoretical analysis* [selection].

Norris, P., and Inglehart, R., 2019. *Cultural Backlash. Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* [selection].

[optional]. Schäfer, A., 2021. Cultural Backlash? How (Not) to Explain the Rise of Authoritarian Populism. *British Journal of Political Science*, pp.1-17.

Week 10 (March 17)

Socio-Political cleavages

Readings:

Ford, R. and Jennings, W., 2020. The changing cleavage politics of Western Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23, pp.295-314.

Gethin, A., Martínez-Toledano, C. and Piketty, T. eds., 2021. *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities: A Study of Fifty Democracies, 1948–2020* [selection].

[optional]. Abou-Chadi, T. and Hix, S., 2021. Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right? Education, class, multiparty competition, and redistribution in Western Europe. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 72(1), pp.79-92.

Week 11 (March 24)***Research paper (30%) due at 11:59 pm EST****The polarization debates: online and offline*Readings:

DellaPosta, D., 2020. Pluralistic collapse: The “oil spill” model of mass opinion polarization. *American Sociological Review*, 85(3), pp.507-536.

LeBas, A., 2018. Can polarization be positive? Conflict and institutional development in Africa. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(1), pp.59-74.

Barberá, P. 2020. “Social Media, Echo Chambers, and Political Polarization.” In *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field*, edited by N. Persily and J. Tucker, 34–55.

Week 12 (March 31)*Civil Society and voluntary associations*Readings:

Diani, M., 2015. *The Cement of Civil Society* [selection].

Compion, S., and Janoski, T., 2020. “The Good, the Bland, and the Ugly.” In *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by T. Janoski, C. de Leon, J. Misra and I. W. Martin, 681 – 714.

Week 13 (April 7)***Test 2 (25%) due at 11:59 pm EST***