Political Sociology —

Professor Jamie McCallum: mcallum@middlebury.edu

SOAN 365 / T TH 1:30 - 2:45 / Axinn 220  Office Hours: TH 3-4:30, F 9-10:30
Course Description

This course introduces students to the sociological study of power and politics. We explore power itself, roughly the ability of some to realize their interests while others cannot. Why are some groups of people able to exercise and maintain power over others? How is the modern state related to or a result of the development of modern capitalism? To what degree are politics and the state an expression of class interests? Do individuals hold power in policymaking? Why do the powerful sometimes lose? Answers to these questions—wide-ranging and sometimes contradictory—will emerge through engagement with a mixture of both classic texts and those openly critical of the canon. Because the field is so broad, this class will necessarily focus on a set of particular issues that constitute some of its central concerns. The course begins with a series of theoretical readings that establish a framework for analysis of a number of related themes: political philosophy, the nature of the state and national identity, ideology and belief, political processes, social movements and revolutions, domination and violence, and historical periods of upheaval. We will engage deeply with current events, so readings and class discussion will also reflect the changing world around us. Overall, you should leave this course with a view of the world ruled by power—one of conflict, contestation, and change.

Class Environment and Etiquette

You are expected to come to every class and out-of-class event. Come prepared to discuss readings but also to join group discussions. You are encouraged to have an opinion, be audacious, act out, and risk your pride. Class participation means you regularly attend class and take part in meaningful ways. Since critical dialogue is probably where most learning happens anyway, this should be in our mutual interests. Learning is a conspiracy, a group activity where we work, play, plot, and debate together. Students should be prepared to take notes without laptops. Cell phones and all other non-airplane-approved devices must be switched off.

Assignments

You will write three short analytical papers in response to particular readings and themes, co-create and present a political manifesto, and complete a midterm and final exam. I will give you more specific information on the details of each of these assignments when the time comes.
A Note on Written Work
Written work is the primary way you will be evaluated, and your writing will be graded according to its readability, grammatical accuracy, and creativity, in addition to the substantive ideas it conveys. We will discuss the challenges posed by sociological writing, but if you have any concerns about your ability, please see me and consider visiting the CTLR: http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/resources/ctlr. All written work should be turned in as a Word document (.doc or .docx) attachment by email.

Grades
Your grades come from the assignments stated above, plus class participation. Class participation is derived from a combination of attendance, frequency and quality of participation in class discussions, the competency of your five minute introduction, and observed struggle to engage the material. Late work is lowered half a grade for the first week late, and is not accepted thereafter. You may choose to do an alternative project in place of the standard assignment. Talk to me well in advance to discuss your proposal. The grade breakdown is as follows:

- Three papers 50%
- Manifesto Project 30%
- Final 10%
- Class participation 10%

Most students can expect to receive a grade in the B range. Typically, A’s at Middlebury are reserved for outstanding work above and beyond what is average and expected. If you object to a grade you receive, email me a detailed explanation as to why you think the grade should be changed. In that email, also include a few times when you can meet me as soon as possible to discuss the matter further.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity
The Middlebury Honor Code forbids cheating and plagiarism. For details on what constitutes these breaches of conduct, please see Middlebury policy here: http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/administration/newfaculty/handbook/honorcode
Failure to abide such regulations will result in my notifying the proper college authorities. The academy is not known for its sense of humor, but plagiarism is truly no joke. For information on how to avoid plagiarizing, see Ear Babbie’s article: http://www.csub.edu/ssric-trd/howto/plagiarism.htm

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY - SOAN 365
COURSE CONTENT

Note: The course schedule that follows may be revised as the course progresses


All other texts are available through the course website: http://sites.middlebury.edu/soan365/

Week 1—


Week 2—

9/19: Karl Marx. 1848. The Communist Manifesto. (Preamble, Bourgeois and Proletarians, pgs 1-8):

Event! Immigration and Milk with Dignity Campaign in the Age of Trump: Justicia Migrante and Jamie McCallum / 4:30, Axinn 229

9/21: James Scott, “False Consciousness or Laying it on Thick?” in Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts

Week 3—


Paper 1 Due by midnight

Week 4—


Week 5—


Week 6—

10/17: Nagle, Angela. 2017. *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars From 4Chan And Tumblr To Trump And The Alt-Right.* Zero Books

10/19: Nagle, Angela. 2017. *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars From 4Chan And Tumblr To Trump And The Alt-Right.* Zero Books

Week 7—

10/24: FALL RECESS NO CLASS


Week 8—

10/31: Gayle Rubin—*Thinking Sex: Towards a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality*

Jasbir Puar—*Rethinking Homonationalism*

Eva Illousz—*Sadomasochism as Romantic Utopia*
11/1: Second Paper Due at Midnight


Week 9—


11/9: Manifesto Project Work Day During Class Time

Week 10—

11/14: Manifesto Project Synopsis Due by Midnight

11/15: Debate Cafe with Sarah Stroup’s Class 6-8:00. On Speech and nonviolent protest


Week 11—
10/21: Manifesto Group Meetings
10/23: THANKSGIVING NO CLASS. Be Thankful, y'all!

Week 12—

11/28: Manifestivity! Group Presentations!
Written Manifestos Due
11/30: Manifestivity! Group Presentations!

Week 13—

12/5: Semester in Review
12/7: Course Response Forms
12/12: Finals Due