Political Sociology

This course is intended as an introduction to a major sub-field of sociology, the sociology of politics. We will begin with an examination of basic concepts, traditional authority relations and the birth of the modern state and citizenship in the Western world. We will then explore such problems as the social conditions of democracy, class conflict and the Marxist theory of the state, bureaucratization and the elitist critique of democracy, the weakness of American socialism and the nature of class/elite power in the United States. In the concluding part of the course we will concentrate on the rise of Nazism in Germany in an attempt to isolate some of the factors which can lead to democratic breakdown.

Course Requirements and Grading

There will be a mid-term quiz, two papers (5-7 pages each) and a final exam. The mid-term quiz will consist of 6 short definitions of concepts and will be in class (30 minutes). The final exam will consist of 6 definitions on the mid-term pattern plus two broader questions. The two essay topics will be determined by the instructor and will require students to synthesize course material (no additional reading required).

Mid-term quiz: 15%  
2 Essays (5-7 pages): 25% x 2 = 50%  
Final Exam 25%  
Class Attendance and Participation 10%

Week One (September 2). Introduction to the Field of Political Sociology

Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man, 1-24.

Week Two (September 6-13). The Evolution of the State and Modern Politics in the West


Week Three (September 13-20). From Traditional Authority Relations to Modern Citizenship

Week Four (September 20-27). Social Class, Politics, and the State

Karl Marx, “Marx on the History of His Opinions,” pp.3-7;
“The German Ideology,” 148-163; 172 (from top of page)-200;
“The Communist Manifesto,” 473-491;

all in Robert Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*.


Week Five (September 27-October 4). The Social Conditions of Liberal Democracy

Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man*, pp.25-86.


Mid-term quiz (half-hour in class, Thursday, September 30)

Week Six. Classes, Status Groups, and the Democratic Class Struggle (October 4-11)


Week Seven. Bureaucracy and Democracy (October 11-16)


First essay due (Thursday, October 14).

Fall Break (October 16-24)

Week Eight (October 25-November 1). Elite Theory


**Week Nine (November 1-8). Liberal Democracy and the Pacification of Class Struggle: American Exceptionalism?**

Werner Sombart, *Why is There no Socialism in the United States?*


**Week Eleven (November 15-23). Charisma and the Social Base of Extremist Politics**

*Second essay due (Tuesday November 23)*


**Week Twelve. (November 29-December 6). Democratic Breakdown in Weimar Germany**


**Week Thirteen (December 6-14). Nazism as a Social Movement**

Abel, *Why Hitler Came into Power*, pp.113-289.

*Final Exam as Scheduled*