

Soc 21 - Introduction to Political Sociology

Spring 2026: March 30 – June 3

Lev Grinberg

Course Description: Politics exists everywhere when certain decisions affect two or more human beings. Immediately emerge political questions: who makes the decision, and how? Is it a result of dialogue and negotiations, or a unilateral imposition by the most powerful? Who benefits? Who loses? Political Sociology studies processes of decision making and power relations at larger levels of society. In this introductory course we will study basic questions of political processes, starting with the historical formation of states in Europe during centuries of Wars, their violent expansion overseas by colonialism and settler societies, and the emergence of nationalism and democracy. We will study democratic decision-making processes, theories of power elites, pluralism, and class domination. We will examine how democratic processes represent classes, ethnic groups, and race, and how civil society, social movements, and trade unions organize and demand representation, at local and global levels. Finally, we will discuss how globalization impacts democratic processes.

General Course Requirements: All students are expected to attend lectures, do the reading, participate in class discussions; they will write three short reports commenting on the readings, do one mid-term take home exam and one final take home exam. All the reading items will be on Canvas, and the students' assignments must be uploaded to Canvas.

Grading: Participation in class and each one of the reading reports will be 5% of the final grade. The mid-term exam will be 30 % and the final exam 50%.

I grade assignments and exams with numbers, using the following scale:

95%-100%: A	81%-84.9%: B	69%-72.9%: C	Below 60%: E
90%-94.9%: A-	77%-80.9%: B-	65%-68.9%: C-	
85%-89.9%: B+	73%-76.9%: C+	60%-64.9%: D	

Honor Principle: Examinations and the research paper will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in Dartmouth's *Organization, Regulations and Courses* and in the *Student Handbook*.

Use of Artificial Intelligence: It is limited to very specific purposes and forbidden for others. You can use AI for grammar and spelling corrections, for better organizing your text, and for searching resources. You are not allowed to use AI for summarizing the readings or comparing them, for writing your essays or any part of them. For more detailed explanations on the use of AI you can read [here](#) the Dartmouth guidelines.

Students with Disabilities: I encourage students with disabilities, including "invisible" disabilities like chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities to discuss with me after class or during my office hours by the end of the second week of the term appropriate academic adjustments or accommodations that might be helpful to you. All

discussions will remain confidential, although the Academic Skills Center may be consulted to verify the documentation of the disability.

Week 1 – What is Politics?

- * Weber, M. (1946) *From Max Weber* ed by HH. Gerth and CW. Mills (1969 reprint) Oxford University Press, New York. Pp. 77-128. “Politics as Vocation”
- * C.W. Mills, "On Politics" in *The Sociological Imagination*, Penguin Books.

Week 2 - Classical Theories

- * Marx, K. (1977). Karl Marx, Selected Writings, (2nd Edition) ed. by McLellan, Oxford University Press: Oxford. Chapters 18 (The Communist Manifesto), 23 (The Class Struggles in France) and 30 (Preface to A Critique of Political Economy).
- * Weber, M. (1946) From Max Weber ed by HH. Gerth and CW Mills (1969 reprint) Oxford University Press, New York. Pp. 180-195 (Class, status party).

Week 3 – Domination and Power

- * Weber, M. (1968). “The Types of Legitimate Domination”, *Economy and Society* (ed. By) Roth and Wittich, Bedminster Press: New York. (vol. 1) Pp 212-245
- * Michels, R. (2019) "The iron law of oligarchy." *Power in Modern Societies*. Routledge. 111-124.
- * C.W. Mills, (1958) "The Structure of Power in American Society", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 9:1, 29-41.

Week 4 - Democracy

- * Moore, Barrington, Jr. (1966) *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Penguin Books: Narmondsworth. Capters 7-8, pp. 413-452.
- * Rustow, D.A. (1970) "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model". *Comparative Politics*, 2:3, pp. 337-363.
- * Tilly, C. (2018) "Where rights come from?" in Skocpol, T. (ed) *Democracy, Revolution and History*, Ithaca: Cornell UP.
- * Linz and Stepan (1996) *Problems of Democratic Consolidation and Transition*, John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, Chapters 1-2, pp. 3-37.

Week 5 - Representation Crisis and Protests

- * O’Donnell, G. (1996) "Illusions about Democracy", *Journal of Democracy*, 7: 34-51.
- * Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat, the New Dangerous Class*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academy, Pp. 1-25.
- * Castells, M. (2012) *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, Cambridge, Polity Press. Pp. 1-19, “Opening”, 156-217 “Occupy Wall Street”.
- * Della Porta D (2015) "Lo Llaman la Democracia Pero no lo es: A Crisis of Political Responsibility" in *Social Movements in Times of Austerity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Week 6 – Social Movements and Political Processes

- * McAdam, D. (1982). *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 36-59, 230-235.
- * Tarrow S. (1994) Power in Movement. Chapters 3-4. Cambridge University Press.
- * Melucci, (1995) "The Process of Collective Identity" in *Social Movements and Culture*. Ed by Johnston and Klandermas Minnesota University Press.
- * Gamson, WA (1995) "Constructing Social Protests" in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed by Johnston and Klandermans, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 85-106.

Week 7 - Resistance and Violence

- * Fanon, F. (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth*, Harmondsworth: Penguin. Ch. 1-2
- * Arendt, H. (1970), *On Violence*, HBJ Book, New York (Ch. 1-3).
- * Bourdieu, P. (1992) "Delegation and Political Fetishism", *Language and Symbolic Power*, Maden MA: Polity Press, Pp. 203-218.
- * Grinberg, L. (2014) *Mo(ve)ments of Resistance*, Albany: Academic Studies Press, Ch. 9

Week 8 - Military Power and War

- * Tilly C. (1985) "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in Evans P., Rueschemeyer D. and Skocpol, T. (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- * Mann, M. (2005) *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Ch. 1-3. 4
- * Stepan, A. (2001) *Arguing Comparative Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch. 4 "Military Politics in Three Polity Arenas"
- * Grinberg, L.L. (2010) *Politics and Violence in Israel/Palestine*, London: Routledge. Ch 9.

Week 9 - National identity, Colonialism and Race

- * Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition ed. London and New York: Verso. Ch. 2-4
- * Brubaker, R. (1996) *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, London: Cambridge UP. Ch. 4.
- * Rex, J. (1970) *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, London: Weinfeld and Nicolson, Ch.2
- * Fredrickson, G. M. (1988). *The arrogance of race: Historical perspectives on slavery, racism, and social inequality*. Wesleyan University Press. Ch-15, 17.