



LH – E – 629 --- Political Sociology
Programme – Spring Semester 2026

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 weeks – 4 credits
Credit Hours: 45 hours
Location: TBC

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Rashmi Singh
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Office Hours: TBC

1. Course Description

Politics everywhere is deeply rooted in the societies in which it takes different and complex forms. With the rise of the modern state and the parallel rise of democracy, politics has come to take different and interesting shapes in different countries. Despite this diversity, it is possible to ask – **where do politics and society meet?** And what makes modern political life so difficult to understand?

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the basics of political sociology. This includes understanding how the modern state and democracy has taken root in the global world, and what are the different ways in which people participate (as well as rebel against) the modern state. We will study these aspects of politics through an inter-disciplinary lens of sociology, politics, history and anthropology.

The course will start by introducing the students to the theoretical questions of political sociology. The course will then discuss the rise of nationalism, democracy and modern politics before looking at the different ways in which democracy develops – and also how democracy weakens. The course will also delve into social movements and protests – what are they and what makes people come together for different causes. Finally, we will look at the nature of modern political life, the alienating side of modern politics and bureaucracy, and how politics looks like in the post-colonial world.

The students will be expected to keep up with the readings, and the assessment will be a combination of written exams and short papers and presentations on social movements, as well as a final end-term written exam (closed).

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives(Aim)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
Appreciate the social bases of political ideas and institutions.	Close reading of sociological and anthropological texts	Written exam/Assignment
Understand qualitative methodologies drawn from other disciplines that could be used to study politics	Discussion of research methods outside of the discipline of political science	Class Presentations

3. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading Evaluation breakup

Internal breakup: Mid-term exam/term-paper (1200-1800 words): 30 marks
Presentations and related write-up (10 minutes) (2000 words): 20 + 20 marks

External breakup: Final Exam: 30 marks – TBC (The above breakup is subject to changes by instructor depending on strength of class)

4. Academic Integrity

Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism: In line with JGU policy, JSLH operates a zero tolerance approach to Plagiarism. The unacknowledged use of material by others within your work is a violation of academic integrity and all reported cases will be investigated before potential disciplinary action (this includes AI and other forms of plagiarism).

Participation/Attendance Policy: JSLH conducts all classes on a foundation of professionalism. It is expected that students be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. Please show courtesy to your instructors and co-learners by observing punctuality. Please also note that the seminar room is a place for free expression and critical thinking and this comes with a responsibility on the part of students to respect opinions expressed and actively participate in the work of the classroom discussion.

5. Keywords: social bases of politics, state, power, democracy

6. Course Material

Readings will be made available online as pdfs through a class folder. Reading load is going to be heavier in the initial few weeks of the course, it would be helpful if students can use the time in the winter break to start on the reading.

7. Session Plan

Session	General Topic	Readings	Optional extra Readings
Week 1 & 2	Introduction to Political Sociology: Approaches and Debates	John Gledhill, “Locating the Political: A political anthropology for today”, in <i>Power and Its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics</i> .	
Week 3	The Modern State and its historical context	Gianfranco Poggi, <i>The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects</i> (Chapter 1 and 2) Max Weber, <i>Economy and Society</i> (Volume 2), Pierre Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field”	

		(Chapters 9 “Political Communities”)	
Week 4	The rise of Nationalism and nationalist movements	<p>Benedict Anderson, <i>Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism</i>, (Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2)</p> <p>Partha Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Community?” in <i>The Nation and Its Fragments</i> (Chapter 1 & 2)</p>	<p>Additional Reading (optional): Partha Chatterjee, <i>Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse</i> (Chapter 1)</p>
TBC		[Midterm]	
Week 5	Power and politics	Steven Lukes, “Introduction” and “Power: A Radical View,” (Chapter 1) in <i>Power: A Radical View</i> (2 nd Edition).	
Week 6	Democracy	<p>Anthony Arblaster, <i>Democracy</i>, third edition.</p> <p>Julia Paley, “<i>Towards an Anthropology of Democracy</i>”</p> <p>Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> (selections)</p>	
Week 7 and 8	Democratic Reversals	<p>Jan-Wener Muller, “What is Populism?”</p> <p>Gianpietro Mazzoleni, “Populism and the Media”</p>	

		Umberto Eco, “Ur-Fascism”	
Week 9	Social Movements and protest (I)	<p>Donatella della Porta & Mario Diani “The Study of Social Movements,” in <i>Social Movements: An Introduction</i></p> <p>Sidney Tarrow, <i>Power in Movement</i></p> <p>Libcom blogpost, “Talking ‘about a Revolution?’”</p>	
Week 10	Social Movts. (II)	Documentary Screening on social movements	
Week 11 - 13		Student Presentations (on social movements and related topics)	
Week 14	Everyday political life and the modern state (TBC)	<p>Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State”</p> <p>Philip Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State”</p> <p>Akhil Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries”</p>	<p>Iris Marion Young, “Five faces of oppression”</p>
Week 15	<i>End term (to be confirmed)</i>		