

GOV 355M / SOC 320K: Political Sociology
Fall 2010

Instructor: Prof. John Higley, Government & Sociology
Teaching Assistant: Huseyin Alptekin, Government
Unique #'s: GOV 38555 / SOC 45485
Time & Place: 11.00-12.30 TTH, Parlin 301
Office hours: Higley: Wednesdays 2:30-5:00 pm in Batts 4.154,
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Description: Political sociology relates major political continuities and changes to three principal determinants: (1) relatively autonomous and contingent actions of political elites; (2) changing political orientations and proclivities of mass publics; (3) ideologies and beliefs that shape elite and mass views of political possibilities. In the context of a general theory of elites, mass publics, and beliefs, Part I examines elite foundations of stable and unstable democratic regimes and takes stock of democratic advances and setbacks in today's world; Part II focuses on revolutions, especially fascist revolutions, and their possible future occurrence; Part III concentrates on how political projects of Western, especially American, elites and mass publics have been molded by secular utopian beliefs and what the "death of utopia" may portend. The course seeks to provide students with a broad overview of modern historical and contemporary politics that will enable them to better assess political possibilities during their adult lives.

Requirements: Three in-class hour examinations, each worth 33.3% of the final grade. *There will be no final examination.* The hour examinations will be essay, short-answer, and multiple-choice in format. Though voluntary, class attendance will be crucial for examination performance; to encourage attendance, PowerPoint slides in lectures will not be posted on Blackboard. The instructor reserves the right to curve hour examination and final course grades in order to secure a reasonable grade profile for the course.

Required Texts (on 24-hour Reserve in PCL)

John Higley and Michael Burton, *Elite Foundations of Liberal Democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2006 (paperback).

Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*. Vintage Books 2005 (paperback).

John Gray, *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*. Farrar Straus Giroux 2008 (paperback).

Required University Notices and Policies

All faculty are required to provide students with a course syllabus by the first meeting day of all classes.

□ **University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

□ **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

□ **Documented Disability Statement**

If you require special accommodations, you must obtain a letter that documents your disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss the accommodations you need. No later than five business days before an exam, you should remind me of any testing accommodations you will need. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/dcce/ssd/>.

□ **Religious Holidays**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

□ **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

□ **Emergency Evacuation Policy**

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Schedule of Lectures and Examinations

08/26 Introduction

Political Sociology's broad determinants: political elites; mass political orientations; ideologies and beliefs. Are we transitioning between eras?

Part I: Elite Determinants of Political Regimes

08/31 Theories of Elites and Politics

Classical elitist theories: Mosca, Pareto, and Michels on the elite bases of politics. Weber and Schumpeter on elites and democracy. Today's confusions about elites.

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 1-15

09/02 Elites and Regimes

Propositions: (1) all political regimes are created and sustained by elites; (2) basic changes in regime type depend upon prior or accompanying elite transformations; (3) elite transformations are rare and take only a few forms. Possibilities for basic political regime change are thus much more limited than customarily assumed. Case in point: Iraq.

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 15-32

09/07 The Modal Pattern of Politics

The ubiquity of disunited, warring elites and unstable, usually authoritarian regimes in modern world history. Cases in point: Latin America historically, Middle East today.

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 33-54

09/09 Elite Origins of Stable Democracy: Historical Settlements

Dynamics of elite settlements, with special attention to watershed settlements in England 1688-89, Sweden 1808-09, Switzerland 1848, Mexico 1928-29, Spain 1976-78; other elite settlements in Latin America. But is there too great a distance between cup and lip?

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 55-83

09/14 Are Elite Settlements Irreversible?

Recent challenges to “roundtable” elites in Poland and Hungary; breakdown in Venezuela; Mexico’s trauma; elite slugfests in South Korea and Taiwan.

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 83-106

09/16 Elite Origins of Stable Democracy: Colonization

Anglo-American elites during colonialism’s first era. Few replications during its second era. Contrasting second-era cases in point: India and Pakistan.

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 107-138

09/21 A Possible Third Elite Origin of Stable Democracy: Convergence

How else did France and Italy stabilize, 1960-1980? Consequences of World War II in West Germany and Japan? Consequences of the Cold War, NATO, and European integration in Belgium, Greece, Portugal? Reactions to military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay? How stable are all these democracies today, really?

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 139-179

09/23 Prospects for Elite-Based Stable Democracy in the 21st Century

Will disunited elites and unstable regimes continue to be endemic? Case in point: Russia. Will ideologically united elites and strongly authoritarian regimes break down? Case in point: China. Will consensually united elites fragment irreparably? Cases in point: the Anglo-American countries.

Read: Higley & Burton, *EFLD*, 181-206

09/28 Review of Part I

09/30 FIRST HOUR EXAMINATION

Part II: The Fascist Extreme: Past, Present... and Future?

10/05 Social Leveling

Dynamics and legacies of leveling revolutions historically: peasants and industrial workers with nothing to lose. England 1640s, France 1789-94, Russia 1917-21

Recovery from first hour exam; no reading assigned

10/07 Fears of State Socialism

What was state socialism? The industrial workforce cauldron. Searing effects of World War I and the Russian Revolution.

Read: Paxton, *Anatomy*, 3-54

10/12 Interwar Upheavals and Fascism's Rise

Virtual civil war in northern Italy and deep elite disunity in Weimar Germany. Mussolini's consolidation of power 1922-25. Who voted for Hitler and why?

Read: Paxton, *Anatomy*, 55-118

10/14: Fascism's Brutal Face: The Mussolini and Hitler Regimes

Ideologically united elites and stable unrepresentative regimes? Totalitarianism? Cults of personality? *Der untergang* in Hitler's Germany and collapse in Italy.

Read: Paxton, *Anatomy*, 119-171

10/19: What Was and Is Fascism?

Its principal characteristics. Was it an aberration peculiar to the circumstances of interwar Europe or does it still have legs? Dr. Strangelove: "Mein Führer, I can walk!"

Read: Paxton, *Anatomy*, 172-220

10/21: Work Insecurities and Downward Mobility in Postindustrial Societies

The nebulous character of much work and diminishing need for labor.. Work insecurities of "insiders" and the "outsider" apparition.

No assigned reading, but review Paxton, 172-220.

10/26: Review of Part II

10/28: SECOND HOUR EXAMINATION

PART III: The Religious Extreme: Past, Present... and Future?

11/02: The “Age of Ideology”, 1700-2000

Secular ideology and apocalyptic eschatology. Pursuits of the millenium before 1700; pursuits of secular utopias 1700-2000: liberalism, socialism, and their offshoots.

Read: Gray, *Black Mass*, 1-35

11/04: Neo-Liberalism: A Last Secular Utopia?

Thatcherism, Reaganism, and their legacies: a cycle of leonine elite degeneration á la Pareto?

Read: Gray, *Black Mass*, 74-106 (Note: Gray’s second chapter, 36-73, is omitted because much of its material was covered in Part II of the course, albeit with a somewhat differing interpretation, so his Chap. 2 is well worth reading.)

11/09: The Neo-Conservative Mission

Cumulative blunders and miscalculations by ascendant elites. Did the 2008-09 (and ongoing) crisis signify the end of an elite cycle? Of an era? Do Barrack Obama and David Cameron embody the start of an elite cycle and troubled era?

Read: Gray, *Black Mass*, 107-145

11/11: Whither the “War on Terror”?

Al Queda et al.: mortal threat or long-term nuisance? The mountains and deserts of Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, etc., and, eventually, Pakistan?

Read: Gray, *Black Mass*, 146-183

11/16: An Excursus on Iran and Turkey

The ‘core’ Middle Eastern states. Iran: theocratic despotism works, but for how long? Turkey between secular and religious modes of rule;

11/18: An Intractable 21st Century World?

Who was Machiavelli and what did he teach? Can today's confusions about elites be rectified, and can American and other elites become more self-conscious about their responsibilities and statuses?

Read: Gray, *Black Mass*, 184-210

11/23: No class scheduled, though a class meeting will be held if students desire.

11/25: Thanksgiving Day

11/30: Review of Part III and Course Evaluation

12/02: THIRD HOUR EXAMINATION

Annotated Supplementary Readings and Reference Sources

T. Janoski, R. Alford, A. Hicks, & M. Schwartz, eds., *The Handbook of Political Sociology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005 (paperback). This is the most comprehensive survey of recent work in Political Sociology.

K. Leicht and C. Jenkins, eds., *Handbook of Politics: State and Society in Global Perspective*. New York: Springer 2010. This is a still more recent survey of work in Political Sociology, and the Higley chapter on "Elite Theory and Elites" covers a fair amount of this course's ground.

H. Best and J. Higley, eds., *Democratic Elitism: New Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*. Boston: Brill 2010. Higley's two chapters contain musings about elites and democracy that are a leitmotif in this course.

G.L. Field and J. Higley. *Elitism*. New York: Routledge 1980. Chapter 2 offers a succinct treatment of the general theory that is backdrop for this course. Chapters 3-6 ruminate on problems of elite action and self-consciousness.

S.M. Lipset, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Democracy*. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1995 (4 vols.). A standard reference source.

J. A. Goldstone, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Political Revolutions*. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1998. Another standard source.

I. Buruma. *Taming the Gods: Religion and Democracy on Three Continents*. Princeton University Press, 2010. A provocative treatment of current ructions with largely immigrant Muslim populations in The Netherlands and elsewhere.

L. Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*. Times Books, 2008 (paperback). A comprehensive stocktaking of attempts to promote democracy around the world, albeit with too little attention to elites.

E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*. New York: Pantheon, 1994 (paperback). A magisterial treatment of the “short” twentieth century by one of its most learned historians.

S.P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*. Norman OK: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1991 (paperback). A seminal but overly optimistic assessment, 20 years ago, of prospects for democracy worldwide. Huntington was one of the most respected, but also controversial, political scientists.

S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. Huntington’s most controversial book, the thesis of which is endlessly discussed, perhaps never more so than today. The Council on Foreign Relations (*Foreign Affairs*) has just published a compendium of responses to his book.

T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. New York: Penguin, 2004 (paperback) The definitive treatment of Europe’s struggles during the 20th century’s second half. Judt died in early August 2010, of Lou Gehrig’s disease, and the essays he wrote for the New York Review of Books, as he lay paralyzed in New York, are truly heroic.

D.S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*. New York: Norton, 1998. This is one of the most authoritative treatments of how and why the West developed and just about no other part of the world did.

J. Linz, *Robert Michels, Political Sociology, and the Future of Democracy*. New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Books, 2006. An authoritative treatment of Michels’ life and work by one of the most eminent political sociologists of our time. Fascinating insights into the political and academic worlds of Germany and Italy in the early 20th century.

J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000 (paperback). A standard work, with the delineated characteristics of authoritarian regimes now widely accepted.

J. Linz & A. Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995 (paperback). The best work on this topic by two leading scholars, one a sociologist (Linz) and the other a political scientist (Stepan).

M. Thompson. *The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Front 1915-1919*. London: Faber & Faber 2008 (paperback). A magnificent study of the gross ineptitude of Italian political and military elites at the time of World War II and its cost of 700,000 Italian lives. Sheds much light on why the Fascists were able to advance three years later.

N. Machiavelli, *The Prince and Other Writings*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003 (paperback). Timeless.

R. Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. New York: Collier Books, 1915/1962. A key text proffering the “iron law of oligarchy”.

G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1923/1939. A famous and seminal work on elites and politics by an Italian scholar often considered the father of modern political science.

J. Mueller, *The Remnants of War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004 (paperback). An intriguing thesis that wars fought by mass armies have passed into history.

D. C. North, J. J. Wallis, and B.R. Weingast. *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009. This recent work essentially offers an elite-centered interpretation of world political history and movements toward “equal access orders” (aka representative democracies).

V. Pareto. *The Mind and Society: Treatise on General Sociology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1916/1935 (4 vols.). The classic work by Vilfredo Pareto, written between 1907-1911, but only the most dedicated sociologists have ever read its one million words.

J. Femia. *Pareto and Political Theory*. London: Routledge, 2006. A penetrating and accessible analysis of Pareto’s theory, together with discussions of Mosca and Michels. Probably the best entry in the secondary literature about Pareto and elite theory.

G. Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*. Chatham NJ: Chatham House, 1987 (paperback). By general agreement, the most sophisticated treatment of modern democratic theory, distinguishing its “horizontal” (mass) and “vertical” (elite) axes and arguing that enthusiasts of democracy have placed way too much emphasis on horizontal inputs and paid much too little attention to vertical guidance, leaving most of modern democratic theory impoverished and irrelevant to what is actually happening.

F. Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*. New York: Pantheon Books 2003 (paperback). An astute popular commentary on democracy that, like Sartori’s more precise and scholarly analysis, emphasizes the centrality of elites.

