



# SOCI 297:10

## Introduction to Political Sociology



### **Instructor:**

Dr. Joel Z. Garrod  
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### **Location:**

MULH 3030:36  
W7/W8

### **Office Hours:**

Online, by appointment

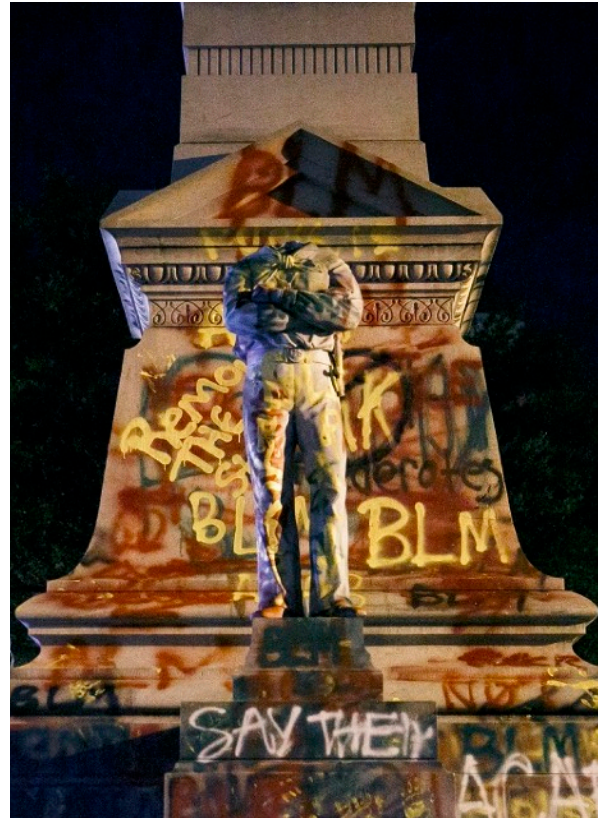
This course provides an introduction to political sociology. Unlike political science, which deals mainly with the machinery of government, the mechanisms of public administration, and the formal political realm of elections, public opinion, pressure groups, and political behaviour, political sociology is more concerned with power; that is, the given power distributions within or between societies, and the various social and political conflicts that lead to changes in this distribution.

While most of the course will be taken up with the description, analysis, and explanation of the modern state, we will also look at issues relating to the sources and utilization of power, authority, and influence. In this course, we will not merely describe political institutions, but try to explain how and why they emerged, how they function, and on whose behalf they operate.

# Course Objectives & Textbook

By the end of this course, you should have:

- A general knowledge of the history of the state and state power
- A broad grasp of the politics, history, and meaning of key concepts such as democracy, nationalism, and neoliberalism
- A critical view of the transition away from welfare policies
- An understanding of the contemporary transformation of the nation-state



*The Modern State* (3rd edition), by Christopher Pierson (2011)

One sci-fi novel of your choice (list on moodle)

All other readings are on moodle

I truly believe that this course is relevant to your lives. If, at any time during this course, you feel that what we're learning isn't useful, I urge you to ask me: "Why should I give a damn?"

I'll gladly take time to explain why I believe what we're learning is important for you to know. And if I can't explain why, I'll amend that section of the course.



# Requirements

**Attendance** is absolutely vital to this course, and will likely be a necessary part of getting a good grade. In return for attending, I promise to make the course interesting, and worthwhile. If you are unable to attend regularly, please contact me to discuss alternative options.

The **Film Review** will assess your ability to review and critique one episode of Adam Curtis' documentary series, *The Trap*. Your review is due two classes after the date of the episode listed on the syllabus.

### Multiple due dates

The **Theory Chart** or **Podcast** is intended to get you familiar with popular sociological theories of the state. You will be asked to produce either: (1) a chart that outlines how each theory sees the state; or (2) a fictional interview with one of the major state theorists. **Due October 28**

The **Final Paper** will assess your understanding of the course material from the entire term. In a short paper, you will be asked to describe and explain how the distribution of power works in your chosen sci-fi novel. **Due November 30**

## Grading

✓ Attendance:	10%
✓ Film Review:	20%
✓ Podcast/Theory Chart:	30%
✓ Final Paper:	40%

All citations in  
APA Style

Double-spaced,  
12 point, Times  
New Roman font

Late items lose 5  
marks per day



# Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Sept 14	Introduction	Syllabus
Sept 16	What is the Modern State?	Pierson, "Introduction," and "Modern states"
Sept 21	The Earliest States	Scott, "A narrative in tatters," and "Agro-ecology of the early state"
Sept 23	The History of States	Pierson, "Placing the state in modernity"
Sept 28	States and Societies	Pierson, "States and societies"
Sept 30	Marxist State Theory	Miliband, "The state system and the state elite"  Poulantzas, "Fundamental characteristics of the capitalist state"
Oct 5	States and Economies	Pierson, "States and economies"
Oct 7	<b>Film: The Trap, Part 1: "F**k You Buddy"</b>	No readings
Oct 12	Thanksgiving	No readings
Oct 14	Weberian State Theory	Weber, "Politics as vocation"  Mann, "The autonomous power of the state"
Oct 19	States and Citizens	Pierson, "States and citizens"

Date	Topic	Readings
Oct 21	Foucault and Governmentality	Foucault, "31 January 1979" Lemke, "An indigestible meal?"
Oct 26	<b>Film: The Trap, Part 2: "The Lonely Robot"</b>	No readings
Oct 28	Nationalism and Post-Colonialism  <b>Podcast/Theory Chart due</b>	Calhoun, "Nations matter" Fanon, "On national culture"
Nov 2	States and the International Order	Pierson, "States and the international order"
Nov 4	The Actor-Network State	Latour, "The strange entanglement of jurimorphs" Passoth and Rowland, "Actor-network state"
Nov 9	Liberal Democracy and Totalitarianism	Macpherson, "Liberal-democracy as a system of power" Arendt, "The so-called totalitarian state"
Nov 11	Remembrance Day	No readings
Nov 16	From the Welfare State to the Neoliberal State	Harvey, "Freedom's just another word..." Finkel, "The welfare state since 1980"
Nov 18	<b>Film: The Trap, Part 3: "We Will Force You to Be Free"</b>	No readings
Nov 23	Feminist and Multicultural Politics	Bannerji, "On the dark side of the nation" Vickers, "Gendering the hyphen"



Date	Topic	Readings
Nov 25	States of the Twenty-First Century	Pierson, "States of the twenty-first century"
Nov 30	<b>Film: What is democracy?</b>	No readings
	<b>Final Paper due</b>	
Dec 2	Concluding Thoughts	Pierson, "Conclusion"  Butler, "A few rules for predicting the future"



# Additional Information

## COVID-19

The 2020–2021 academic year is taking place during an exceptional—and stressful—period of human history. As the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, we may have to quickly adjust the course assessment plan and/or delivery method with little or no notice. You may also have to stay home from class for various reasons related to COVID-19 (such as simply feeling ill). If this happens to you, please contact me so that we can discuss an alternative to your attendance grade for that class. Lastly, it is important that you take care of yourself by getting adequate amounts of sleep, and by taking appropriate mental health breaks. The university website on COVID-19 provides more information and links (<https://www.stfx.ca/coronavirus>).

## Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

As this course involves the production of written work, you should familiarize yourself with the standards for proper referencing of all cited materials, such as books, journal articles, newspaper articles, websites, and so on. Students that attempt to pass off someone else’s work as their own (i.e., plagiarism) will be dealt with through the university policy on academic honesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this policy (see section 3.8 of the academic calendar, found at: <https://www2.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/academic-calendars>). Resources for avoiding plagiarism can be found on the library website (<https://www2.mystfx.ca/library/plagiarism>).

## Writing Assistance

This is a writing-intensive course, although we will not spend much time on the craft of writing as we will be busy focusing on sociology. If you need assistance with your writing, I recommend booking an appointment with me or visiting the Student Success Centre (<http://www2.mystfx.ca/student-success/>).

## Accommodations

If you have an injury, develop an illness, or encounter a personal crisis that will impact your progress in this course, please email me as soon as you are able. This will ensure that we find a way for you to complete the course. The Health and Counselling Centre is another resource available to you (<http://www2.mystfx.ca/health-and-counselling/>).

If you have any disabilities that require an accommodation in teaching style or evaluation, please speak to me as soon as possible so we can implement those accommodations. You may also want

to contact the Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning (<https://www2.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/tramble-centre-accessible-learning>).

## **Equity and Discrimination**

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe, and equitable learning environment free from discrimination or harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. These values and practices are in accord with the StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy which can be found at (<https://www2.mystfx.ca/equity/policies>). Please feel free to discuss with me any questions or concerns you have about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor.

## **Copyright**

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## **Grade Scale**

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			