

History 39917 (cross-listed with Sociology) Instructor: Chad Alan Goldberg  
Second semester 2008 E-mail: [cgoldber@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:cgoldber@ssc.wisc.edu)  
Sunday/Tuesday 16:30 - 18:15 <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~cgoldber/>  
Classroom: 2401 Hum. Faculty Bldg. Offices: 5-32 Rothberg  
6513 Humanities  
Office hours: By appointment

## **CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA SINCE 1890**

“History is vital or dead ... according as it is or is not presented from the sociological standpoint. When treated simply as a record of what has passed and gone, it ... no longer has existence and simply as past there is no motive for attending to it. The ethical value of history teaching will be measured by the extent to which it is treated as a matter of analysis of existing social relations – that is to say as affording insight into what makes up the structure and working of society.... Only a mind trained to grasp social situations ... can get sufficient hold on the realities of this life to see what sort of action, critical and constructive, it really demands.”

John Dewey

### **Overview**

This course was previously taught at the University of Wisconsin by the great labor historian Selig Perlman and then by the famous emigré sociologist Hans Gerth. Perlman’s lectures for the course have been published as *Selig Perlman's Lectures on Capitalism and Socialism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976).

We pursue three main goals in the course: (1) to critically examine the development (or under-development) of capitalism, socialism, and democracy in the United States; (2) situate these concepts in their historical and social context; and (3) investigate how the past shapes contemporary politics and policy outcomes. Throughout the semester, we will try to see what social and political theory have to say to American history and vice versa. The course is organized chronologically in several parts, including the Progressive era; the New Deal; postwar challenges to and criticisms of the New Deal, from the left and the right; the Great Society, the civil rights movement, and the New Left; and the rise of the New Right since the 1970s. As the course moves forward in time, we revisit some general questions that help to give the course thematic unity and coherence. These include questions about the changing and contested meanings of democracy, the relationship between capitalism and democracy, why there has been no significant socialist movement or labor party in the United States, and how the meaning and boundaries of American citizenship have changed over time.

There are no prerequisites for the course, but some basic familiarity with twentieth-century American history will be helpful. For students who need to review this history, I recommend consulting a good textbook such as *Inventing America* (New York: W. W. Norton).

## Course Requirements

1. Reading and participation. Class time will be devoted to discussion of the assigned texts. I expect everyone to complete each reading assignment before class and bring it to class, arrive on time, and participate in an informed way in discussions. You are encouraged to raise questions in class, which counts as participation. I have tried to keep reading assignments within manageable limits (about 41 pages on average).
2. Term paper: You are required to write a 10-15 page term paper, which is due at the end of the semester. You may write on any course-related topic of your choice. The paper must have a clear thesis, be well organized, engage at least two assigned authors, and be typed and double-spaced. For additional guidance, please consult *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, edited by Judith Richlin-Klonsky and Ellen Strenski, available at Bloomfield Library. I strongly encourage you to speak with me about your ideas before you write your paper.

Any instance of plagiarism or other academic misconduct will be dealt with strictly according to the policy of the Hebrew University. You are expected to be familiar with this policy before you submit any written work in the course; lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct.

Your overall grade for the semester is calculated as follows:

Attendance and participation: 40%  
Term paper: 60%

A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, etc.

## Reading Assignments

The following three books are on reserve at Bloomfield Library and may be purchased at the Academion.

Steve Babson, *The Unfinished Struggle: Turning Points in American Labor, 1877-Present* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

David Held, *Models of Democracy*, third edition (Malden: Polity Press, 2006).

Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

All other required reading assignments are in PDF format on a CD available from the instructor.

## I. HISTORICAL LEGACIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

### Sunday 11 May - Introduction to the course

#### Tuesday 13 May – The liberal tradition in America

Held, *Models of Democracy*, third edition, 56-60, 62-65 (Citizenship and the constitutional state), 70 (The idea of protective democracy), 70-75 (The problem of factions), 79-81 (Liberty and the development of democracy), 92-95 (Summary remarks). The rest of the chapter is recommended.

Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* 87 (1993): 549-66.

Recommended:

Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Clayton Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy: A Political History of the American Labor Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1-16.

Alan Wolfe, "Nobody Here But Us Liberals," *New York Times*, June 3, 2005.

#### Sunday 18 May – The Knights of Labor and American exceptionalism

Babson, *Unfinished Struggle*, 1-18.

Kim Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 231-249.

Recommended: Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy*, 17-49.

#### Tuesday 20 May – Why no socialism in America?

Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 261-294.

Recommended: 15-41.

#### Sunday 25 May – America's "precocious social spending regime"

Ann Shola Orloff and Theda Skocpol, "Why Not Equal Protection? Explaining the Politics of Social Spending in Britain, 1900-1911, and the United States, 1880s-1920," *American Sociological Review* 49, no. 6 (Dec. 1984): 726-750.

Recommended: Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), especially 102-130, 261-285.

## II. THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1890-1920

#### Tuesday 27 May – Labor in the Progressive era

Babson, *Unfinished Struggle*, 19-49.

Recommended: Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy*, 50-109.

#### Sunday 1 June – The rise of interest-group politics

Elisabeth S. Clemens, "Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change: Women's Groups and the Transformation of U.S. Politics, 1890-1920," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 4 (Jan. 1993):755-798.

Recommended: Elisabeth S. Clemens, *The People's Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890-1925* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

### **Tuesday 3 June – New modes of political participation**

Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy during the Progressive Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 48-67. Recommended: 1-13.

Thomas E. Cronin, "Direct Democracy," in *Direct Democracy: The Politics of Initiative, Referendum, and Recall* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 38-59.

### **Sunday 8 June – NO CLASS (SHAVUOT VACATION)**

### **Tuesday 10 June – Participatory or elite democracy?**

Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public*, 105-127. Recommended: 129-135.

Held, *Models of Democracy*, third edition, 125-126, 129-138 (Bureaucracy, parliaments and nation-states), 141-144 (The last vestige of democracy?), 146-152 (Classical v. modern democracy). The rest of the chapter is recommended.

Recommended: Cronin, *Direct Democracy*, 207-222.

### **Sunday 15 June – Restricting political participation**

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Why Americans Don't Vote* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 28-41, 54-63, 64-95.

### **Tuesday 17 June – A "maternalist" welfare state for women and children?**

Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 314-320, 424-428. Recommended: 525-539.

Felicia A. Kornbluh, "The New Literature on Gender and the Welfare State: The U.S. Case," *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 171-197.

## **III. THE NEW DEAL, 1932-1941**

### **Sunday 22 June – Great Depression and New Deal**

Babson, *Unfinished Struggle*, 51-111.

Recommended: Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy*, 110-163.

### **Tuesday 24 June – Explaining the New Deal**

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, updated edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 61-77, 84-117. Recommended: 45-61, 80-84.

### **Sunday 29 June – Explaining the New Deal**

Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," *Politics and Society* 10, no. 2 (1980): 155-201.

**Tuesday 1 July – The New Deal as an expansion of citizenship rights**

T. H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 65-122.

**Sunday 6 July – The New Deal and divided citizenship**

Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 1-27, 211-231.

**IV. CONSOLIDATING, TRANSFORMING, AND CHALLENGING THE NEW DEAL, 1941-1968**

**Tuesday 8 July – Labor’s growth and accommodation**

Babson, *Unfinished Struggle*, 113-153.

Recommended: Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy*, 164-223.

**Sunday 13 July – Pluralism, corporate capitalism, and the state**

Held, *Models of Democracy*, third edition, 158-184.

**Tuesdays 15 July – Democracy and the welfare state**

Claus Offe, “Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State,” chap. 8 in *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, ed. John Keane (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 179-206.

Recommended: Friedrich A. von Hayek, chap. 3 and 5 in *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), 32-42, 56-71.

**Sunday 20 July – The civil rights movement and the War on Poverty**

Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 17-31, 33-59, 187-197.  
Recommended: 61-87.

**Tuesday 22 July – Postwar stability to political crisis**

Held, *Models of Democracy*, third edition, 185-216.

**V. THE RISE OF THE RIGHT**

**Sunday 27 July – Culture: The religious right**

Himmelman, *To the Right*, 1-10, 13-27, 97-128.

**Tuesday 29 July – Economics: The changing nature of American capitalism**

Himmelman, “The Mobilization of Corporate Conservatism,” *To the Right*, 129-164.  
Babson, *Unfinished Struggle*, 155-178.

Recommended: Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy*, 224-231.

**Sunday 3 August – Politics: De- and re-alignment of voters**

Himmelman, “The New Republican Edge,” *To the Right*, 165-197. Recommended: 199-211.

**TERM PAPER DUE**