Objectives
The goal of this course is to introduce students to core concepts in political and historical sociology through a broad overview of American political history from the revolutionary period to the present. Drawing on a wide range of empirical research, we will focus on large scale processes such as state formation and the rise of capitalism, as well as the ways in which distinctions related to factors such as race, class, and gender have influenced patterns of political contention over time. In doing so, we will address topics including social networks, class formation, political opportunity structures, movement dynamics, civic engagement, public opinion, and state-centered accounts of political behavior.

Required texts
Historical sociology tends to be a book-oriented subfield. Books, unfortunately, can be expensive. Consequently, I have tried to make use of articles as much as possible. The following texts are required:


- Chad Alan Goldberg, *Citizens and Paupers: Relief, Rights, and Race, from the Freedmens Bureau to Workfare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)


Reading
All of the texts listed above can be purchased through Labyrinth Books. Copies have also been placed on reserve at Firestone Library. The remaining readings are available through either e-reserve or Blackboard depending on the reading in question. Selections should be read in the order listed.

Course requirements
This class is designed to be a seminar which means that the quality of the course is a function of the quality of participation. Good discussion requires that we all be on roughly the same page, so to speak, at the start of any class meeting. Consequently, perhaps the most fundamental requirement of this course is that you keep up with the assigned reading. I will typically try and keep required readings to around 100 pages per week. In practice, your actual reading load will likely be somewhat higher than this given the need to draw on additional sources for the purposes of writing mid-terms and finals. Learning to digest large quantities of material is a real skill and should be learned sooner rather than later.

As a means of facilitating group discussion, students will be asked to submit weekly response papers no later than 5PM the day before class meets (i.e. no later than 5PM on Monday). Response papers should be no more than roughly 300 words in length. While your ideas should be clear, I don’t expect these to be polished papers. The purpose of this assignment is to give you a chance to critically engage with the material and generate potential discussion points. A good response paper should have more in the way of original thoughts and less in the way of summary, though clear exposition with respect to the former may necessitate some of the latter.

In lieu of a mid-term and final exam, students will be asked to write two 7–10 page papers, each of which will focus on a specific theme. The mid-term paper will address Alexis de Tocqueville’s contribution to historical and political sociology by discussing the way in which the arguments set out in Democracy in America have been used to inform discussions of civic engagement in American society. A good paper should incorporate the work of both Tocqueville (if only briefly), as well contemporary Tocquevillian’s and their critics. The final paper will address the so-called “culture wars” hypothesis. In this context, a good paper should both define the concept in question, as well as present secondary evidence for and against the argument that Americans have become increasingly divided. Students will be required to submit a working bibliography for each paper at least two weeks prior to the final due date.

Grading
Your grade for this course will be based on weekly participation plus two papers. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term paper</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>38%</td>
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</tbody>
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Weekly response papers will be factored into the participation grade while working bibliographies will be factored into each of the corresponding paper grades.

Class Schedule

Note: ER = e-reserve; BB = Blackboard

Week 1 (2/7): American Exceptionalism


Richard W. Stevenson, “‘Exceptionalism’ Argument May Prove Potent for Republicans” (selection from the *New York Times* online from November 18, 2011). [BB]

Week 2 (2/14): The Formation of the American State


Week 3 (2/21): Class Coalitions and the Civil War


Week 4 (2/28): Race, Citizenship, and Reconstruction


***WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR MID-TERM PAPERS DUE***

***GUEST SPEAKER: CHAD GOLDBERG***

Week 5 (3/6): Class Formation and the American Labor Movement


Week 6 (3/13): Race, Class, and the Populist Moment


***MID-TERM PAPERS DUE***

Week 7 (3/20): SPRING BREAK

Week 8 (3/27): Political Repertoires and Progressive Reform

Week 9 (4/3): The New Deal and American Social Policy


Week 10 (4/10): Social Movements and the Struggle for Civil Rights


Week 11 (4/17): The Tax Revolt


Week 12 (4/24): Movement Dynamics and LGBTQ Rights


Week 13 (5/1): The Political Foundations of the Fiscal Crisis