Given the structured content of the University of Oxford's Political Sociology course, the following is a natural representation of the document:

**University of Oxford**
*Department of Sociology*

Optional Paper for the MSc and MPhil in Sociology and the MPhil in Politics

**Political Sociology**
*2013-2014 (Hilary Term)*

Course Provider: Dr. David Pettinicchio, Nuffield College/Sociology Department
*([david.pettinicchio@sociology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:david.pettinicchio@sociology.ox.ac.uk))*
*www.davidpettinicchio.com*

Time and Location: Weeks 1 & 4, Thursday, 14:15-16:15, Seminar Room C (Manor Road)
All other weeks: Thursday, 14:00-16:00, Seminar Room F (Manor Road)

**Rubric:**

“The social circumstances of politics and the impact of politics on society: the organization and representation of interests; the formation and change in political identities, attitudes and social cleavages, and their relationships with the political process, the nature of the state and of democracy (or the process of democratization). Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the main theoretical approaches to political behaviour, and must show knowledge of more than one major industrial society.”

**Aims and Objectives:**

This course is designed to introduce students to advanced research in political sociology and to prepare students for doctoral research in this area. The course encourages students to become familiar with and capable of engaging with the current research issues and debates in the field. Note that the reading list is designed to include a selection of both classical and contemporary readings (contemporary as in published between 2010-2013).

**Content and Structure:**

This option begins with the theoretical foundations in political sociology, especially theories of power, the modern state, political participation, civil society and challenges to the state. The paper covers research on the social bases of politics, such as the roles of class, religion, gender and ethnicity, particularly as these create important social cleavages in established and developing democracies. We investigate the various ways in which citizens interact with the political process – through electoral participation, involvement in civic associations, and mobilization via social movements. The option concludes with a focus on how social attitudes change over time and how this in turn can affect policy outcomes, especially considering the institutional processes that also shape issue attention, agenda setting and policy outcomes.

There will be eight classes covering the following topics:

- Theory
• Democratization
• Social Cleavages
• Civil Society
• Social Movements
• Public Opinion
• Agenda Setting

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should:
• Be familiar with the major theoretical approaches in political sociology.
• Be able to analyze and interpret empirical research in political sociology.
• Be prepared to undertake doctoral research in this area.

Teaching Arrangement:

This course meets eight times (weekly) on Thursday in Hilary term. This option is designed as a seminar and not a lecture. While I will make general introductory remarks about the weekly topic, students will be expected to actively participate in discussion. Required weekly memos (see course assessment below) should be written so as to facilitate class discussion.

Course Assessment:

• Short weekly reading memos (2-3 double spaced pages) covering the core readings and at least one recommended reading, and one contemporary reading of the student’s choice (from the extensive list on the syllabus). Memos should only briefly summarize the readings and should focus more on critical analysis/thought. Since memos are also meant to generate in-class discussion, students should provide at least two discussion questions they would like to share with the class.
• To prepare for the examination, students will also write a longer (2000 word) essay on one of the weekly topics of their choosing. Remember that the more one reads, the better the quality of the examination essays. I would also encourage students to become familiar with past exam questions which serve as a guide for preparing for the current exam.
• One three-hour unseen examination in Trinity term.

Week 1: Theoretical Foundations in Political Sociology

Main Readings:

**Recommended/Additional Readings:**


**Contemporary Readings:**


**Week 2: Democracy and Democratization**

**Main Readings:**

Recommended/Additional Readings:


Contemporary Readings:


**Week 3: Social Cleavages I (Class and Religion)**

Main Readings:


Recommended/Additional Readings:


Contemporary Readings:


Week 4: Social Cleavages II (Race, Ethnicity, National Identity)

Main Readings:

Recommended/Additional Readings:

Contemporary Readings:

Week 5: Social Capital & Civil Society

Main Readings:

Recommended/Additional Readings:

Contemporary Readings:

Week 6: Public Preferences and Social Attitudes

Main Readings:
Recommended/Additional Readings:


Contemporary Readings


Week 7: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Organized Advocacy

Main Readings:


Recommended/Additional Readings:

Contemporary Readings:


Week 8: Institutional Change, Agenda-Setting and Issue Attention

Main Readings:


Recommended/Additional Readings:


Contemporary Readings:

