

32600 –Power: Its ambiguities and disguises
Spring 2024
Tuesdays 2pm-4pm
(Except for 24.04.2024: 12pm-2pm (203) and 25.06.2024: 12pm-5pm (Villa))
Room: 340, JFKI (Lansstraße 7-9)

Course Description

This seminar introduces students to the theories of power discussed and applied in the social sciences. A first conceptual block starts from classical theorists such as Hobbes and Aristotle, and moves on to the traditional sociological reading of power by Weber as well as the “faces of power” debate that has influenced the work of social scientists on power since the 1950s. In a second block, we will discuss questions of power in different contexts, including capitalism, race, gender, social systems and the state. The last block of the course focuses on different forms of business power and methodological considerations of the empirical study of power. In terms of practical skills, the seminar will introduce students to the basics of literature research, structuring a coherent argument, and academic writing in the field of sociology and political economy.

Course Objectives

At the end of the term, students should:

- Have a general understanding of different social sciences theories of power
 - Be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different theories of power
 - Be able to discuss empirical phenomena in light of existing theories of power
 - Be able to distinguish between different forms of business power
 - Have a basic understanding of the difficulties regarding measurement and inference when it comes to the empirical study of influence
 - Have the skills to logically structure an argument in a short essay
 - Be able to discuss an argument by embedding it within existing social sciences literature
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Recommended Preliminary Readings and Materials

Literature on Power:

Dennis Wrong. *Power: Its forms, bases and uses*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2017 [1979]

Steven Lukes. *Power: A radical view*. New York: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2 edition, 2005 [1974]

Academic Writing:

Online Guide. Good Essay Writing: A Social Sciences Guide. Fifth Edition. Peter Redman and Wendy Maples

Good Essay Writing: A Social Sciences Guide. Fifth Edition. Peter Redman and Wendy Maples. Chapter 2. (Book Format)

Online resource for how to write social sciences research papers by the University of Southern California

Course Structure & Modes of Teaching

The seminar is a text- and discussion based class. Students are therefore expected to read the mandatory reading and participate in the class discussions. For each session, some students will have prepared questions or theses which will be at the centre of the discussion (up to one page), and these students will also prepare a short ‘session memo’ highlighting the main aspects of class the discussion. We will use different formats (group work, short presentations, fish bowl discussion, mind-mapping, etc.) in order to modify the discussion.

Recording the seminar sessions is strictly prohibited.

Participation and Examination

Students are expected to actively participate in class. While I do not want to force anyone to speak out loud in class, my aim is that everyone participates according their*her*his possibilities.

For participation credit, students have to complete and submit all assignments in time:

1. Prepare **questions/theses for one session based on the mandatory reading** (1/2-1 page, to be submitted via email clara.heinrich@fu-berlin.de **at the day of the session by 10am**) The questions and theses can summarize/address the central arguments of the text, aspects you did not understand or anything else you want to discuss, e.g. how the text relates to present-day phenomena or other readings we discussed in class.
2. Upload a **short session-memo** (no more than three pages, minimum one page) to BlackBoard, summarizing the main points of the discussion for the session you also prepared questions/theses. Deadline: **Five days after the respective session.**

Sign up for one session on BlackBoard (under course materials) by April 20th, 2024.

3. Submit one **excerpt** (no more than two, minimum one page) for one of the mandatory readings from a session which is not the same as the one for which you prepared questions/theses and the memo. An excerpt should summarize the main arguments of the text and critically assess them (Are they convincing? How do they relate to other concepts

or theories? Which questions would you pose the author?) Deadline: **The day of the session (10am).**

Sign up for one session on BlackBoard (under course materials) by April 20th, 2024.

4. Submit a **short essay** on one of the questions provided by me. Questions will be uploaded June 12th, 2024 and **the short essays are due June 24th, 2024.**
5. Every student has to **comment on two term paper outlines by June 18th, 2024** in the BlackBoard discussion forum. Comments should count at least 4 sentences and address issues such as: structure of the paper, coherence of the argument, open questions, additional literature to be included.

For full credit, students also have to prepare an **outline for a term paper** (bullet points, no more than 2 pages or 5 slides plus bibliography) to be uploaded on the BlackBoard discussion forum **by July 9th 23:59**. Term paper questions will be uploaded to BlackBoard by July 3rd, 2024. The **finalized student paper** (MA: 20 pages, 8000 words main text, BA: 12 pages, 5000 words main text) has to be submitted as a PDF via email the latest on **August 31st 23:59**. The student paper should develop a research question and answer it using data and techniques learned in class. Discussing your ideas with me during an office hour (prior to the pitch in class) is mandatory.

Course Materials

All course materials are available on BlackBoard (Folder: Course materials). All mandatory readings and most further readings are uploaded by the start of the term (Folder: Readings), and the slides for each session are made available on the day of the session (Folder: Slides). Session memos have to be uploaded to BlackBoard as well and I will share the memos after reading over them (Folder: Session Memos). Short essays and excerpts have to be submitted via BlackBoard. We also use the discussion forum for sharing notes and comments, especially for the term paper outlines.

Communication

This course is meant to be a space in which we all learn with and from each other. My aim is to create an atmosphere in which everyone feels comfortable to speak, ask questions and comment on others in a respectful manner. Therefore, I rely on your feedback if you feel like the material is too difficult/ inaccessible for you, if you lack basic knowledge of certain terms or topics, but also if there is something else that makes you feel uncomfortable. Moreover, I would appreciate it if you could let me know if you are unable to attend a session, as this makes it easier for me to plan the sessions in order to make them as lively and interesting as possible.

Office Hours

You are invited to come and talk to me whenever you feel like doing so and I am happy to discuss anything from questions on homework, the course content, reading or your term paper. Regular office hours are held Mondays 3-4pm at my office (room 328, JFKI). You need to register for the office hour via email beforehand. To accommodate students with caring responsibilities or other commitments, I try my best to find flexible solutions for those who cannot come to the regular office hours. Please send me an email to discuss possible options.

Class Schedule

Session 1: 16.04.2024, Introductory Session

- Course content
 - Course structure
 - Participation and examination
 - What is power? A first exploration
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Block One: Introducing concepts of power

Session 2: 24.04.2024 (12pm-2pm, room 203) Power and political authority in (pre-) modern times: Some classical perspectives

This week's session takes place on Wednesday (24.04.2024), 12pm-2pm, room 203

Leading questions:

- Which aspects of social life (objects, agents, institutions, rules, norms, organizational principles) are central to Aristotle's understanding of power and political authority?
- What is the main function of government power according to Macchiavelli?
- Which (implicit) assumptions about human nature are featured in the authors' approaches?
- How does Locke define "executive power"?

Mandatory readings:

Harvey C Mansfield Jr. The modern doctrine of executive power. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, pages 237–252, 1987

Sandra Field. Hobbes and the question of power. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 52(1): 61–85, 2014

Further readings:

Niccolò Macchiavelli. *The Prince*. Second edition. London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998 [1532]

James H Read. Thomas Hobbes: Power in the state of nature, power in civil society. *Polity*, 23 (4):505–525, 1991

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Aristotle's Political Theory

Session 3: 30.04.2024, Conceptualizing power

Leading questions:

- On which dimensions do existing definitions of power differ? (Scope, object, actors, qualities, visibility, etc.)
- What are the pros and cons of thinking of power as a resource?
- Which aspects does Wrong highlight as central to conceptual debates about power?

Mandatory readings:

Dennis Wrong. *Power: Its forms, bases and uses*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2017 [1979]
→ Preface 1988, Preface, Chapter 1 (p. xix-21)

Further readings:

Michael Mann. Book review: Dennis Wrong. power: Its forms, bases, and uses. *American Journal of Sociology*, 88(5), 1983

Dennis H Wrong. Some problems in defining social power. *American journal of sociology*, 73 (6):673–681, 1968

Session 4: 07.05.2024, Weberian approaches of power**Leading questions:**

- What is power according to Weber?
- To which empirical phenomena can Dahl's approach of power be fruitfully applied (and where is the account not informative for understanding power dynamics)?

Mandatory readings:

Max Weber. *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*, volume 1. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978

→ Pages 134-138

Robert A. Dahl. The concept of power. *Behavioral Science*, 2(3):201–215, 1957

Further readings:

Steven Lukes. Robert Dahl on power. In *Robert A. Dahl: an unended quest*, pages 115–125. Routledge, 2017

Session 5: 14.05.2024, One-, two- and three-dimensional views of power**Leading questions:**

- What are the different 'faces' of power?
- How are the three 'faces' of power related to each other?

Mandatory readings:

Steven Lukes. *Power: A radical view*. New York: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2 edition, 2005 [1974]

→ Chapter 1 (P. 14-59)

Further readings:

Peter Bachrach and Morton S Baratz. Two faces of power. *The American political science review*, 56(4):947–952, 1962

R. A. Young. Steven lukes's radical view of power. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*, 11(3):639–649, 1978

Jeffrey C Isaac. Beyond the three faces of power: A realist critique. *Polity*, 20(1):4–31, 1987

John Gaventa. *Power and powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980

Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: the birth of a prison*. London: Penguin, 1991

Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings. 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980

Block Two: Power in context

Session 6: 21.05.2024, Power and capitalism

Leading questions:

- What differentiates feudalism and capitalism in politico-economic terms?
- How has the separation of different forms of power changed from feudalism to capitalism?
- What sources of power does capitalism imply?

Mandatory readings:

Ellen Meiksins Wood. *The origin of capitalism: A longer view*. London: Verso, 2002

→ Introduction & Chapter 8, p. 1-11 & 166-182

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Manifesto of the communist party. In Lawrence Wishart Ltd, editor, *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, pages 99–137. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969 [1848]

→ P. 14-34

Further readings:

Rosa Luxemburg. *Reform or revolution*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970

Adam Przeworski and Michael Wallerstein. Structural dependence of the state on capital. *The American Political Science Review*, pages 11–29, 1988

Robert W Cox. *Production, power, and world order: Social forces in the making of history*, volume 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987

Claus Offe. The capitalist state and the problem of policy formulation. In Leon Lindberg, editor, *Stress and Contradiction in Contemporary Capitalism*, chapter 5, p. 125-144. Lexington: Lexington Books, 1975

Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi. *Capitalism: A conversation in critical theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 2018

Session 7: 28.05.2024, Power and identity: On race and gender

Leading questions:

- How are race and gender relevant for understanding capitalism?
- Which power relations do different categories of identity imply?
- What do historical perspectives teach us about racism and sexism in today's societies?
- Do relational/structural accounts of power or any of the 'faces' of power concepts inform an account of power and race; power and gender?

Mandatory readings:

Berch Berberoglu. Class, race and gender: The triangle of oppression. *Race, Sex & Class*, pages 69–77, 1994

Further readings:

Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963

Simone de Beauvoir. *The second sex*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1959 [1949]

Veronica Beechey. On patriarchy. *Feminist Review*, 3(1):66–82, 1979

Judith Butler. Sex and gender in Simone de Beauvoir's second sex. *Yale French Studies*, (72): 35–49, 1986

Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi. *Capitalism: A conversation in critical theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 2018

→ Especially chapter 1

Session 8: 04.06.2024, Power and social systems**Leading questions:**

- What differentiates Luhmann's perspective on power from the 'faces of power' debate or Marxian accounts?
- What does Luhmann's approach imply for questions of inequality and repression?

Mandatory readings:

Christian Borch. Systemic power: Luhmann, Foucault, and analytics of power. *Acta sociologica*, 48(2):155–167, 2005

Further readings:

Talcott Parsons. On the concept of political power. *Proceedings of the American philosophical society*, 107(3):232–262, 1963

Michael Rempel. Systems theory and power/knowledge: A foucauldian reconstruction of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 16(4):58–90, 1996

Paul Konertz. Niklas Luhmann's theory of power. *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie*, 106 (3), 2020. ISSN 0001-2343

Session 9: 11.06.2024, Power and the state**Leading questions:**

- How do states exercise power over their citizens?
- What forms of power unfold on the international level?
- How can we understand different forms of inter-state conflict (armed conflict, trade barriers, hacking/cyberwar)?

Mandatory readings:

Susan Strange. *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*. London: Pinter. Chapter 2 (Power in the World Economy), 1994

Further readings:

Michael Mann. The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives européennes de sociologie*, 25(2):185–213, 1984

Herman Mark Schwartz. American hegemony: intellectual property rights, dollar centrality, and infrastructural power. *Review of International Political Economy*, 26(3):490–519, 2019

Short-essay questions will be uploaded June 12th, 2024.

No session: 18.06.2024

Use the session time to work on your short-essays.

Short essays are due June 24th, 2024.

Block Three: Business power

Session 10: 25.06.2024 (block session, Villa), The power of business in theory and empirics

Part I (12pm-3pm)

Leading questions:

- What is business power?
- Which different forms of business power exists?

Mandatory readings:

Groups will be assigned beforehand

Group 1:

Charles E Lindblom. The market as prison. *The Journal of Politics*, 44(2):324–336, 1982

Group 2:

Cornelia Woll. Lobbying in the european union: From sui generis to a comparative perspective. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13(3):456–469, 2006

Group 3:

Ken Kollman. *Outside lobbying: Public opinion and interest group strategies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998

→ Chapter 1

Group 4:

Marius R Busemeyer and Kathleen Thelen. Institutional sources of business power. *World Politics*, 72(3):448–480, 2020

Group 5:

Pepper D Culpepper and Kathleen Thelen. Are we all amazon primed? consumers and the politics of platform power. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(2):288–318, 2020

Group 6:

Cornelia Woll. Corporate power beyond lobbying. *American Affairs*, 3(3):38–55, 2019

Further readings:

- Charles E. Lindblom. *Politics and Markets. The World's Political-Economic Systems*. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1977
- Mark Blyth. Structures do not come with an instruction sheet: Interests, ideas, and progress in political science. *Perspectives on politics*, 1(4):695–706, 2003
- Pepper D Culpepper. *Quiet politics and business power: Corporate control in Europe and Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011
- Heike Klüver. *Lobbying in the European Union: interest groups, lobbying coalitions, and policy change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013
- Stephen Bell. The power of ideas: The ideational shaping of the structural power of business. *International Studies Quarterly*, 56(4):661–673, 2012
- Stephen Bell and Andrew Hindmoor. The structural power of business and the power of ideas: The strange case of the Australian mining tax. *New Political Economy*, 19(3):470–486, 2014
- Cornelia Woll. *The power of inaction*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2014
- Pepper D Culpepper and Raphael Reinke. Structural power and bank bailouts in the United Kingdom and the United States. *Politics & Society*, 42(4):427–454, 2014
- Kevin Young. Not by structure alone: power, prominence, and agency in American finance. *Business and Politics*, 17(3):443–472, 2015
- Cornelia Woll. Politics in the interest of capital: A not-so-organized combat. *Politics & Society*, 44(3):373–391, 2016
- Eileen Keller. Noisy business politics: lobbying strategies and business influence after the financial crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(3):287–306, 2018
- Anna Tyllström. More than a revolving door: Corporate lobbying and the socialization of institutional carriers. *Organization Studies*, 42(4):595–614, 2021
- Niels Selling. The long shadow of lobbying: Ideational power of lobbying as illustrated by welfare profits in Sweden. *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 10(1):47–67, 2021
- Benjamin Braun and Daniela Gabor. Central banking, shadow banking, and infrastructural power. In Philip Mader, Daniel Mertens, and Natascha Van der Zwan, editors, *The Routledge international handbook of financialization*. London: Routledge, 2019

Part II (3pm-5pm)**Leading questions:**

- What are the empirical imprints of different forms of (business) power?
- What are the pros and cons of different methodological approaches to study business influence?

Mandatory readings:

- Andreas Dür and Dirk De Bièvre. The question of interest group influence. *Journal of Public Policy*, 27(1):1–12, 2007

Further readings:

- David C Hammack. Problems in the historical study of power in the cities and towns of the United States, 1800-1960. *The American Historical Review*, 83(2):323–349, 1978

John Gaventa. *Power and powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980

Matilde Bombardini and Francesco Trebbi. Empirical models of lobbying. *Annual Review of Economics*, 12:391–413, 2020

Milan Babic, Jouke Huijzer, Javier Garcia-Bernardo, and Diliara Valeeva. How does business power operate? a framework for its working mechanisms. *Business and Politics*, 24(2): 133–150, 2022

Session 10: 02.07.2024, Closing discussions

Leading questions:

- How can we make sense of the different perspectives and approaches discusses so far?
- What do the various accounts of power imply for social sciences research on power?

Mandatory readings:

Isaac Ariail Reed. Power: Relational, discursive, and performative dimensions. *Sociological Theory*, 31(3):193–218, 2013

Further readings:

Michael Mann. The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives européennes de sociologie*, 25(2):185–213, 1984

Steven Lukes. *Power: A radical view*. New York: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2 edition, 2005 [1974]

Term paper questions will be uploaded to BlackBoard by July 3rd, 2024.

No Session: 09.07.2024

Students writing a term paper have to upload the term paper outline (bullet points, no more than 2 pages or 5 slides plus bibliography) to the BlackBoard discussion forum **by July 9th 23:59**.

Remote session: 16.07.2024, Discussion of term paper outlines

Every student has to **comment on two term paper outlines by July 18th, 2024** in the BlackBoard discussion forum. Comments should count at least 4 sentences and address issues such as: structure of the paper, coherence of the argument, open questions, additional literature to be included.

Finalized term papers (MA: around 20 pages, 8000 words main text, BA: around 12 pages, 5000 words main text) have to be submitted as a PDF via email (clara.heinrich@fu-berlin.de) the latest on **August 31st 23:59**.
