

POLS 501: The Scope of Political Science

Washington State University, Fall 2014
Wednesdays, 2:10-5 p.m., Murrow 307

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Introduction

This graduate seminar is intended to give you a sense of the epistemological origins, intellectual history and state of political science as an academic discipline. It has been collectively developed over the years by the political science faculty at WSU who have taught the course. Accordingly, we will examine the philosophy of social science, the emergence of political science as an academic endeavor distinct from others in the social sciences, and the contours of the discipline as it exists and is practiced today.

This course will be divided into four parts. By way of introduction, we will open with a discussion of the so-called Perestroika movement within the American Political Science Association and examine the claims made by its detractors and defenders. We will also discuss the APSA itself and the structure of the discipline. In doing so, we will set the stage for the next part of the course, which consists of an historical overview of the core identity (identities?) and epistemologies, approaches and paradigms of political science. In the third part of the course, we will cover some of the dominant paradigms and scholarly research approaches within our discipline. These are not fields of study, as such, but are entire systems of thought that encompass core assumptions about human behavior, about modes of observation and data-gathering, about tools of analysis, and about inference, meaning, and knowledge. In the latter part of the semester, we will probe some diverse questions that naturally arise from our preceding discussions. We should not pretend that we will cover all – or even most – of the “grand questions” that the most accomplished members of the academy continue to wrestle with; but the course materials should give you a sense of some of the debates that face each practicing member of the political science community in the context of our everyday work.

Readings

There are five books available to purchase:

Henry Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 2nd edition. Rowman & Littlefield.

Donald Green and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice*. Yale University Press.

Gary King, Robert Keohane, Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press.

Kristen Renwick Monroe, editor. 2005. *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*. Yale University Press.

Sanford S. Schram and Brian Caterino. 2006. *Making Political Science Matter: Debating Knowledge, Research and Method*. New York University Press.

There will also be several other readings that I will place in the main office. Please DO NOT remove them from this room. The only exception is for the brief time you might need to make scans or photocopies.

Grading

Your final grade in this course will depend on your success in five areas:

1. Discussion Leadership (15%). Each of you will lead one seminar discussion starting on September 17, which you will sign up for on September 3. You will be required to write a short (3-5 pages) synthetic and critical analysis of the readings, and email it to the class list by noon on Tuesday of the relevant week; all students will be responsible for reading the essay as well. Your discussion paper should conclude with at least three formal questions that you wish the seminar to pursue during our class discussion. You will be graded on how well you cover the readings in class and stimulate discussion.
2. Four response papers (25%). You will write 4 response papers for this course, each in the range of 3-4 double-spaced pages in length. Each paper should express your reaction to the readings for the week. These papers should NOT simply be a summary of the readings. Instead, you might raise questions provoked by the readings, compare the arguments of different authors, critique the authors' methodology, or propose alternative explanations for the authors' findings. These papers are due to me by 9 a.m. the day of class. You may submit them to me at my office or send them to me via email.
3. Epistemological analysis essay (20%). Read through the pages of the *American Political Science Review* and select four articles; one from before 1950, one published in either the 1950s or 1960s, one from the 1970s or 1980s, and one from post-1989. The articles should be drawn from the same sub-field, although which subfield is up to you. You must summarize each article and write an *epistemological analysis* of the chosen articles, showing how (if at all) the disciplinary foundations have changed over time. This paper should be approximately 10 pages long, and is due in class November 19.
4. A final exam (20%). This take-home final exam will consist of four questions similar to the type that would appear on a matriculation or preliminary exam. You will choose to answer two of the four in no more than 4 pages each (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times font).

You may NOT use your notes or other sources when taking the exam. You will have 8 hours to take the exam. I will email you the questions on MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, but do not look at the questions until you are ready to write the exam. You will have until 5 p.m. on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, to return your answers to me.

5. Class participation and attendance (20%). Class participation and attendance are required. Notify me beforehand if you will be absent from class. I also expect that everyone will make contributions to our class discussions. At the graduate level, you should not need any reminders about the importance of coming to each seminar fully prepared. That means, concretely, having completed the reading, having had time to reflect upon that reading, and being ready to engage in meaningful intellectual exchange based on that reading.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes for this course: At the end of this course, students should be able to:	Course Topics/Dates The following topic(s)/date(s) will address this outcome:	Evaluation of Outcome: This outcome will be evaluated primarily by:
Develop oral communication skills	Throughout course	Discussion leadership
Develop graduate-level writing skills.	Throughout course	Four response papers
Synthesize research systematically	Throughout course	Final exam; four response papers; epistemological analysis essay
Understand the development of political science as a discipline	Throughout course	Epistemological analysis essay; final exam
Understand the arguments for against various approaches to producing knowledge	Weeks 6-10	Epistemological analysis essay; final exam

Other information

ELECTRONIC DEVICES. The use of cell phones, smart phones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class. All such devices must be turned off.

USE OF LAPTOPS/TABLETS. Students are permitted to use laptops or tablets during class for note-taking only. I reserve the right to ban the use of laptops/tablets entirely if the use of such devices interferes with the learning environment.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the date they are due or they will be considered late. For each day an assignment is late, I will subtract 10 percent of the assignment's total point value from your score.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student caught cheating on any assignment will **FAIL THE COURSE** and will be reported to the Office Student Standards and Accountability. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION. Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center. For more information contact a Disability Specialist: 509-335-3417, <http://accesscenter.wsu.edu>, Access.Center@wsu.edu.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLAN. Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.

Course Schedule

1. Setting the Stage for Understanding Political Science (August 27)

Class will not meet as I will be attending the APSA meetings in Washington, D.C.

Assignment: First, follow the happenings at the APSA annual meeting through Twitter (#apsa2014). What are some of the big debates taking place this year? Second, familiarize yourself with the website of the American Political Science Association. What is the structure of APSA? What are the divisions/organized sections/ related groups? How do these relate to the major “subfields” of political science (i.e., American, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Public Law, Public Policy, Political Theory and Methodology)? How are these areas/divisions/subfields reflected in this year’s conference program? Finally, take a brief look at the vitas of all political science faculty members at WSU as posted on the PPPA website. How do WSU faculty fit in to these APSA subfields? Who is presenting at APSA this year? Do they have any other roles there? (See conference program.) We will discuss all of these matters on September 3.

2. The Scope and Meaning of the Perestroika Movement (September 3)

Kristen Renwick Monroe (ed.). 2005. *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*. Introduction, all of Part I (Chapters 1-5).

3. How Did We Get Here? The Foundations of the Discipline: Epistemology, Explanation and Meaning in the Social Sciences (September 10)

Thomas Kuhn. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. Chapters 1-2 and Postscript.

Paul Diesing. 1991. *How Does Social Science Work? : Reflections on Practice*. Introduction and Chapters 11-12.

William Riker. 1982. "The Two Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766.

John Z. Dryzek and Stephen T. Leonard. 1988. "History and Discipline in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 82(4): 1245-1260.

4. Political Science as a Social Science (September 17)

"The Nature of Contemporary Political Science: A Roundtable Discussion." 1990. *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 23(1): 34-43

Gabriel Almond. 1988. "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 21(4): 828-842.

APSR Centennial Volume, Special Issue on "The Evolution of Political Science" 2006. *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 463-698 (all)

James Farr. 1988. "Political Science and the Enlightenment of Enthusiasm." *American Political Science Review* 82(1): 51-69.

5. Causation and Inference in Political Science (September 24)

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. (all)

Henry Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Introduction. Chapters 1 and 2.

6. Behavioralism (October 1)

Robert Dahl. 1961. "The Behaviorist Approach." *American Political Science Review* 60(4): 763-72.

David Easton 1969. "The New Revolution in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 63(4): 1051-1061.

James Farr. 1995. "Remembering the Revolution: Behavioralism in American Political Science." In *Political Science in History: Research Programs and Political Traditions*, 198-224

V.O. Key. 1958. "The State of the Discipline" *American Political Science Review* 52: 961-71.

David Papineau. 1978. *For Science in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 7

David M. Ricci. 1984. *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy*. Chapters 1, 4-5, 9

7. The Rise of Rational Choice Theory and Its Critics (October 8)

Mancur Olson 1965. *Logic of Collective Action*. Pages 1-51.

William Riker. 1990. "Political Science and Rational Choice." In *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*, James Alt and Kenneth Shepsle, Eds. Cambridge University Press.

Donald Green and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice*. (all)

Mark Gray and A. Wuffle. 2005. "Vindicating Anthony Downs." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38(4): 737-740.

8. The New Institutionalism(s) (October 15)

James March and Johan Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *American Political Science Review*: 78(3): 734-749.

March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen. 2006. "Elaborating the "New Institutionalism" In Rhodes, Binder and Rockman (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 3-21.

Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2006. "Rational Choice Institutionalism." In Rhodes, Binder and Rockman (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 23-38.

Elizabeth Sanders. 2006. "Historical Institutionalism." In Rhodes, Binder and Rockman (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 39-55.

Colin Hay. 2006. "Constructivist Institutionalism." In Rhodes, Binder and Rockman (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 56-74.

R.A.W. Rhodes. 2006. "Old Institutionalism." In Rhodes, Binder and Rockman (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 23-28.

9. Political Psychology (October 22)

John R. Alford and John R. Hibbing. 2008. "The New Empirical Biopolitics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 183-203.

Martha Cottam, Beth Dietz-Uhler, Elena Mastors and Thomas Preston. 2010. *Introduction to Political Psychology*, 2nd ed. New York: Psychology Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction).

Robert Lane. 2011. "Rescuing Political Science from Itself." In David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Roberts Jervis (eds). *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Chapter 21.

Rose McDermott, 2004. "The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscience Advances for Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics*, 2: 691-706.

Herbert Simon. 1985. "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science" *American Political Science Review* 79(2): 293-304.

John Sullivan, Wendy Rahn, and Thomas Rudolph. 2002. "The Contours of Political Psychology: Situating Research on Political Information Processing." In James Kuklinski (ed.) *Thinking about Political Psychology*. Ch. 1.

10. Interpretivism, Phronesis and Feminist Approaches (October 29)

Amy G. Mazur. 2012. "A Feminist Integrative and Empirical Approach in Political Science: Breaking Down the Glass Wall." *Oxford University Press Handbook on Philosophy of Social Sciences*. Edited by Harold Kincaid. 533-58.

Sanford S. Schram and Brian Caterino. 2006. *Making Political Science Matter: Debating Knowledge, Research and Method*. New York and London. New York University Press. All.

11. The Normative Commitment to Democracy (November 5)

Sonja Amadae. 2003. *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy*. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2, 4.

James Ceaser. 1990. *Liberal Democracy and Political Science*. Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapters 6-8

Ira Katznelson. 2003. *Desolation and Enlightenment: Political Knowledge After Total War, Totalitarianism, and the Holocaust*. Columbia University Press. Chapter 2.

Ido Oren. 2003. *Our Enemies and US: America's Rivalries and the Making of Political Science*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction, Chapter 4, and Conclusion

William H. Riker. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Freeman. Chapters 1 and 10.

12. Political Theory as a Profession and a Subfield in Political Science (November 12)

Mini-Symposium on Political Theory. 2010. *Political Research Quarterly* 63(3).

13. The Quantitative versus Qualitative Debate: What is this Debate and is it Worthwhile? (November 19)

Henry Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Chapter 3-end.

14. Looking Back and Looking Forward: Is Problem Driven Research the Future of the Discipline (and Should It Be?) (December 3)

Amy G. Mazur and Cornell Clayton. 2008. "Sixty Years of Political Science at Political Research Quarterly." *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 3-10.

Kristen Renwick Monroe (ed.). 2005. *Perestroika!* (Section 2).

Larry Laudan. 1984. "A Problem-Solving Approach to Scientific Progress" in *Science and Values : the Aims of Science and Their Role in Scientific Debate*

Bernie Grofman. 2001 *Puzzle-Solving in Political Science*. Introduction.

15. Reforming APSA Governance, Journals and Graduate Education (December 10)

Kristen Renwick Monroe (ed.). 2005. *Perestroika!* (Sections 3-6).