

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa - Spring 2014

POLS 390 (002) - POLITICAL INQUIRY AND ANALYSIS

Mon/Wed/Fri: 10:30-11:20am | KUY 308

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"His [a writer's] subject matter will be determined by the age he lives in — at least this is true in tumultuous, revolutionary ages like our own — but before he ever begins to write he will have acquired an emotional attitude from which he will never completely escape. It is his job, no doubt, to discipline his temperament and avoid getting stuck at some immature stage, in some perverse mood; but if he escapes from his early influences altogether, he will have killed his impulse to write. (...) It is simply a question of which side one takes and what approach one follows. And the more one is conscious of one's political bias, the more chance one has of acting politically without sacrificing one's aesthetic and intellectual integrity."

Orwell, George. *Why I write*. London: Penguin Books, 1984.

I. Course Description

This course seeks to explore a variety of strategies of political inquiry. The central goal is to provide tools with which to assess the state of a scholarly literature, identify thought-provoking research questions, formulate strategies for addressing them and for expressing research results in written form. Throughout the semester, while touching upon core methodological concepts and examining the various approaches to studying politics – such as quantitative and qualitative methods, experiments, interviews, statistical analyses, causal inference, case studies, etc. – students will be encouraged to maintain a critical stance towards the discipline and the scientific enterprise as a whole, always aware of the relationships between knowledge, truth and power. Therefore, questions such as the following will be kept in the forefront of our studies: Is there such a thing as political knowledge? How is attained or can it be attained at all? How do we assess critically the quality of political analysis and the knowledge obtained from such analysis? What are the political consequences of enacting political science research?

Therefore, the main learning objectives of this course are: to provide students with an introduction to the logics of inquiry and different approaches to the systematic study of political phenomena; to help students assess how these approaches may present different potential contributions to our knowledge and understanding of these phenomena; and to enhance students' ability to understand the scientific enterprise generally and as it is pursued in Political Science. The course will also seek to enhance the ability of students to employ different research methods and approaches and critically evaluate the theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses of research (their own and others).

As you will see below in the Evaluation and Requirements section of this syllabus, writing is taken very seriously. The process of writing can be as difficult and as rewarding as life itself: it can be seen to address, simulate, and work out life's central concerns. Like life, writing requires nothing less than the risk of submitting our unique vision of the world publicly, while presenting that vision so that others will understand and appreciate its value. In turn, this requires understanding and appreciating the value of others' perspectives, their criticisms and contributions to our own work. Writing asks us not only to see the world but also to envision how the world sees us; to be both subject and object to ourselves.

II. Evaluation and Requirements

Your grade in this course will be based on class participation, reaction papers a midterm, and a final take-home exam. The breakdown is as follows:

- Attendance and Participation _____ 20%
- Midterm _____ 20%

- Reaction Papers _____ 30%
- Final exam _____ 30%

At the end of the semester, your grade will be assigned according to the following scale: A (93-100), A- (90- 92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), and F (below 59).

Attendance and In-Class Assignments

This course relies for its success upon your faithful attendance and your regular contribution to our discussion. Extended absences for reasons of illness or family emergency will be arranged on a case-by- case basis. Should there be any circumstance that makes it difficult for you to participate in class discussions, please feel always feel free to approach me about it. We will work together to find a solution.

Midterm and Final Exam

The midterm exam will consist of short-answer identification questions. The final exam will consist of three essay questions (from a choice of five). You will be able to take these questions home and work on them until the day the exam is due. I will distribute a list of possible essay questions at our final class meeting so we are able to review the subjects studied throughout the semester.

Reaction Papers

You must submit two 500-word reaction papers to specific readings assigned during sections II to IV of the course. All papers must be: double spaced, spell-checked, proof-read, edited for punctuation, grammar and coherence and turned in by the dead-line; late papers will be assessed a grade cut. We will hold a pocket reaction paper & writing workshop to assist you in your writing, both for reaction papers and exams.

Late Policy

All assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Serious sanctions may result from academic dishonesty of any sort. Should you have any questions or concerns about plagiarism, please consult the UHM Student Conduct Code: http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code

Citations

When you quote from a text, you must indicate that you have done so (failure to do so constitutes plagiarism), either in the body of the text or in footnotes. Please be consistent with your chosen to cite your sources. For more examples and information on how to cite different kinds of sources, consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers or the Chicago Manual of Style.

Disability Access

If you have a documented disability, please talk with me about how I can make this course more accessible to you. I will be happy to make any appropriate accommodations. You may also wish to contact the KOKUA Program Office at 956-7511 or to visit the office website online at <http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua>

III. Core Reading Material

We will read a number of sections of the following works throughout the course. It would be helpful to own these titles. Please talk to me if you have any problems acquiring these books. I will make the other book chapters and articles available on Laulima.

Gary, King; Keohane, Robert O.; Verba, Sidney. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Shapiro, Michael. *Studies in Transdisciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

IV. Course Schedule

SECTION I: WHAT IS SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HOW 'SCIENTIFIC' IS IT?

Week 1 - Introduction and Overview

Is it possible to study politics scientifically?

Weber, Max. "Science as a Vocation." Max Weber: *Essays in Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, p.129-156.

In addition to talking about the goals and expectations in this class, in this introductory session I will hold a mini-writing workshop so we can work on writing reaction papers and essays.

Politics and methodology

Katznelson, Ira. Millner, Helen V. "American Political Science: The Discipline's State and the State of the Discipline." *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2002, pp. 1-26.

Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.3-33.

SECTION II: RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACHES

Week 2 - Methodology: why, what, how

Scientific Exploration, Description & Explanation, part I

King, Gary, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 34-74.

Brady Henry. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science". Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.217-269.

Week 3 - Quantitative Methods

Introduction to Quantitative Methods

Kenneth Cukier and Viktor Mayer-Schoenberger, "The Rise of Big Data: How It's Changing the Way We

Think about the World," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2013), pp. 28 – 40. Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.300-337.

Statistics: strengths and drawbacks

Bartels, Larry M. "Some Unfulfilled Promises of Quantitative Imperialism". Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David (ed). *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, p.21-50.

Malcom Gladwell, "The Order of Things: What College Rankings Really Tell Us," *The New Yorker* (February 14, 2011).

Week 4: Rational Actors and Game Theory

Rationality

Fiorina, Morris P., "When Stakes Are High, Rationality Kicks In" and Shapiro, Ian, "A Model That Pretends to Explain Everything" in "Political Scientists Debate Theory of Rational Choice", *The New York Times*, 26 February 2000, available at <http://myweb.liu.edu/~uroy/eco54/histlist/pol-sci-rational.htm>.

War is a (losing) game?

Dan Reiter, "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War," *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2003), v. 1(1), pp. 27 – 37.

Week 5 - Qualitative methods

It's all about quality!

Freedman, David. "On types of scientific enquiry: the role of qualitative reasoning". Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 300-318.

Case studies and Comparative Research

Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is A Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review*. 98, 2: 341-354.

Krishna, Sankaran. *Globalization and Postcolonialism: hegemony and resistance in the 21st Century*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008, p.1-6.

Week 6 - Theories, Hypotheses and Inference

Hypotheses and Theories

Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics*. 43:169-95.

Popper, Sir Karl. 1963/2002. "Science: Conjectures and Refutations." in *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge, pp. 43-78.

Core assumptions and Causal Inference

Brady, Henry E.; Collier, David. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.385-403.

SECTION III: EXPERIMENTS AND SURVEY METHODS

Week 7 - Surveys and Social Policy

Experimental Methods

Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams. 2008. "Experimentation in Political Science" in Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady and David Collier ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Butler, Daniel M., and David E. Broockman. 2011. "Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 55: 463-477.
Ian Parker, "The Poverty Lab," *The New Yorker* (May 17, 2010) <https://www.byliner.com/ian-parker/stories/the-poverty-lab>.

Week 8

Monday - Midterm

SECTION IV: QUALITATIVE METHODS: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEWS

Wed/Fri - Qualitative research in practice

Nagy Hesse-Biber, Sharlene J.; Leavy, Patricia L. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2011, p.93-126.

Week 9 : Qualitative Methods and Participant Observation

Glaser, James M. "The Challenge of Campaign Watching: Seven Lessons of Participant-Observation Research", *Political Science & Politics*, 1996, 29, 3: 533-537.

Pachirat, Timothy. "The Political in Political Ethnography: Dispatches from the Kill Floor," in Schatz, Edward (ed.), *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Week 10: Research Ethics and Human Subjects

Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, *Qualitative Practice*, 2nd edition (Sage, 2011), Chapter 4, pp. 59 – 89.

Ariel Kaminer, "Columbia's Gang Scholar Lives on the Edge," *New York Times* (November 30, 2012).

Week 11: Spring Break

Week 12 - Interviews and Interpretative Methods

Seidman, Irving. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. New York: Teachers' College, 2012., p.1-13 and 81-95.

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 4 – 30.

Week 13: History as Method?

History matters

Pierson, Paul & Theda Skocpol. 2002. "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science." *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., pp. 693-721.

Linda Shopes, "Making Sense of Oral History," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the web* at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>, February 2002.

Archival Research and oral history

Ferguson, Kathy. 2008. "Discourses of Danger." *Political Theory*, 36 (5): 735.

SECTION V: KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH AND POWER

Week 14 - Problematizing the political

Knowledge/Power

Kariel, Henry "Becoming Political," in Van Dyke (ed) *Teaching Political Science*, (1977) pp. 129-145.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972 (I encourage you to read the chapter entitled 'Truth and Power', p.109-133 but will also welcome your choice of another chapter that sparks your interests).

Who's to say?

Inayatullah, Naeem "Why do some people think they know what is good for others?," Edkins, Jenny;

Zehfuss, Maja (ed). *International Relations: A New Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 344-369.

Week 15 - Aesthetics as politics and method

Film: *Moonrise Kingdom*. Dir.: Wes Anderson, 2012. Shapiro, Michael. *The time of the City: Politics*,

philosophy and genre. New York: Routledge, 2010, p.1-24.

Week 16 - Culture and method: music, novels, photography, films

Shapiro, Michael. *Studies in Transdisciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*. New York: Routledge, 2013, p.1-32.

Brennan, Timothy *Secular Devotion: Afro-Latin Music and Imperial Jazz*, Verso, 2008.

* I will hand out sample questions for you to work on over the weekend.

Week 17

Monday - Exam review - We will go over the mock-essay questions that were handed out the previous week - provided you have questions on the lectures and readings we worked on throughout the semester.

Wednesday - Final Exam

Friday - Feedback