

**Pols. 390(1) Political Analysis and Theory Building**, Webster 103, 10:30-11:20, CRN 84339  
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**Office hours Saunders 616:** January 12-May 6, MW 2:30-4, T 3-5 pm except holidays, and by appointment.

**Catalog description:**

“**POLS 390 Political Inquiry and Analysis (3)** Introductory survey and analysis of methods used in empirical research, policy analysis, and social criticism. **DS**“

**Description for this section.**

Political analysis is about deconstructing politics, how we describe, explain, and evaluate it. Theory building is about constructing explanations and descriptions of politics, about what is and isn't, what is possible and impossible, what is desirable and undesirable, and how all that might change or be changed and why. Thus political inquiry and analysis has both a constructive and deconstructive side, a *yin* and *yang* as it were. For example, consider the following characterization of politics. One might theorize that politics is all about who gets what, when, and how; those that get the most are considered *élite*, the rest are mass, so politics is about *élite*-mass relations. Introducing into a relationship a severe threat to something highly valued politicizes relations; thus politics is about coercive relations, and the redistribution of values through politics costly, coercion costs. This characterization of politics is largely the work of Harold Lasswell, with some rephrasing of his writing in *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How; and Power and Personality*.

Now one can infer from this characterization that unlike economic behavior for instance, which is typically value-adding, political behavior is typically value-subtracting, not just value reallocating or rearranging, hence politics is inherently destructive for some, in order to benefit others, with a net loss of value. Some will benefit, some will be deprived, but on balance the result is that some value is lost. As said earlier, coercion costs.

Alternatively one might theorize that politics consists of organizing and maintaining processes that enable a community or society to construct and achieve goals collectively that they would find difficult or impossible to attain without such organization. For example, organizing for the common defense, dealing with environmental crises, and occasionally protecting individual freedom and liberty, are often such goals. Theorists promoting these ideas include the sociologist Talcott Parsons and many political “realists” not to mention America's “founding fathers” and many French revolutionaries.

Which characterization above better describes or explains what politics is about? Are there other characterizations? Other alternatives? What alternatives can be created? How are we to decide which way(s) of characterizing, critiquing and creating politics contribute more to our understanding, our ability to achieve, or even to transcend existing politics? Perhaps the very effort to understand politics is itself a political act aimed at empowering one to participate significantly in politics?

This course examines such questions through three different processes (“paradigms”)

- Practical data collection and analytic techniques will focus on particular political processes, specifically, recent and future elections. Students will gain practical experience in theory development through data construction and analysis, exemplifying a “political science paradigm.”
- Designing and simulating decision making processes will be done through classroom exercises and assignments, exemplifying a “political applications paradigm.”
- Constructing alternative theories about what is possible and desirable in collective organization of politics (including exploring the idea of the “end of politics” in some sense, for instance Glenn Paige’s *Nonkilling Political Science* proposes that a normative political science be developed that eliminates killing. Is that possible? If not, can it be made possible? Such work will exemplify a “political philosophy paradigm.”

**Self Awareness.** People playing the role of students vary in their motivation to study the subject of a course for which they register. Each of you also come with different levels of exposure to the subject matter, different learning styles, natural and cultivated abilities, and different amounts of time you can devote to study, given your life circumstances. To accommodate as great a diversity as reasonable in these capabilities and intentions, I have structured this course with a wide variety of possible ways for you to earn a grade.

**There will be regular (usually weekly) quizzes and exams**, mostly of the “objective” variety, which are aimed at helping *you* evaluate your progress in understanding the course content.

**Make-up work.** Evaluative tools are intended to help you spot your weaknesses so that you can remedy them if you choose. Accordingly, there will also be opportunities for you to improve the grades you get on the quizzes/exams by further study and writing short statements summarizing the appropriate portions of the text and/or lectures discussing the subject(s) under question. Such make-up work needs to be turned in no later than two weeks from the date of the quiz/exam, and in total will not count for more than 10% of your grade (which could make the difference between an A and a B or a B and a C).

**There will also be class participation in discussion groups**, Q&A periods, and opportunities for group collaboration as we simulate political decision making processes.

**And there will be two short papers to write** based on your individual research as you explore various ways of constructing, analyzing, and/or utilizing data to critically evaluate political action, behavior, theory, or philosophy.

**The textbook, and lectures**, Shively’s *The Craft of Political Research*, will be followed for most of the course. Don’t let it’s size of the text or the ease of reading due to his style fool you. It is highly compressed and fairly comprehensive for an introductory work. In addition there will be lectures and occasional lecture notes and online references on subjects either not covered in the text or addressed from a different perspective.

How rapidly we move through the ten chapters will depend on class interests and comprehension of text and lecture content, with some chapters possibly taking up to two or three weeks (note that we have 16 weeks of classes this semester). Quizzes will usually be given on Fridays except for holidays or when in my judgment the class needs more time on a particular subject. After 3-4 quizzes are given, there will be a summary exam on the same material, and on material covered the week of the exam.

**Grade computation.** Quizzes and exams will count in total for 60% of your grade. 20% will be two research reports, 10% will be for participation in some classroom discussion, written questions, and decision making exercises, and 10% for a final take-home essay exam. *Since the final exam is scheduled for Monday May 11, 9:45-11:45. a.m., you should turn the take-home essay in to me no later than 11:45 a.m. on that date. However, do not show up in class; no one will be there. Email it to me at [chadwick@hawaii.edu](mailto:chadwick@hawaii.edu) or slide a paper copy under my office door (Saunders 616).*

**Points will be added to the quizzes for (relevant) questions you give me in writing** each week, one point per question for up to 2 points per question per quiz or exam. This is to acknowledge the value of your participation for your own and your fellow students' education, for such questions keep me relevant to the class's interests and progress. I will use as many of these questions as class time permits in the lecture portion of our class time usually on the class day immediately after the quiz/exam.

So, let's get started.

Week 1 Monday 1/12/2015:

- read Shively, Ch. 1, preferably more than once, and once before class. To understand his orientation to political analysis and theory building read the Forward and his Preface.
- Compare his 2x2 typology of political research (p.4ff) with the one I'll introduce in my first lecture (the theory-data-culture or TDC triangle I developed).
- What are the uses to which political research is put, what motivates the researcher? What do you think? Write it down. What does Shively say (p. 2)? Do you agree?
- What does Shively say about the complexity of a theory relative to the problem being studied (p. 3f)? Why are exceptions important? Is there a cultural imperative or psychological predisposition that we struggle against when we tolerate exceptions?
- Go to Wikipedia and look up the following three scholars: Alfred Korzybski, David Easton, and Max Weber.
  - For Korzybski, read the first paragraph of the "Anecdotes" section. What does the narrative suggest in terms of political theory, political propaganda, and political culture? Are such inferences "researchable?"
  - For Easton, read the first three paragraphs in the "Scholarship" section. Do you see how his changes in motivation match/fit Shively's typology? The TDC model? What role does failure play in the life cycle of a scholar?
  - For Weber, read the "Legacy" section. (If you understand it at first reading, please tell me how you did it!) It describes the putatively profound impact one scholar with a few simple ideas can have on a society, or at least its "intellectuals." How does one evaluate such assertions?

On the lighter side, we'll also look at some political cartoons that illustrate aspects of some of the theories discussed in Shively's chapter and the other assignments.

### **Expect some flexibility in assigned reading dates**

In subsequent weeks we will go through Shively's text one chapter at a time in the order they are presented. So week 2 will be chapter 2, week 3 chapter 3 and so on, unless we need to take longer on one chapter than another. You might want to get a head start and read chapter 2 as soon as you can fit it into your schedule. I will announce each Friday whether we are moving on to the next chapter.

### **Public discussion of draft research papers**

When we set a date for the draft of your research design and I have the papers in hand (or on my computer), I will spend time reviewing them in class, making recommendations for how to proceed and alerting you to possible pitfalls. There are several reasons for this public discussion with you. First, most problems you face will be problems that others are also likely to face, so other students will learn by analogy with practical examples from your work. Second, as prospective political scientists, you should get some practice with public dialog on your work. Third, other students in class may well come up with solutions to problems I draw attention to in your draft research design, and perhaps raise problems that you and I did not think of ourselves. Fourth, you might use the final research design for writing a major paper for Pols. 404 "Senior Thesis" or even get it published in an undergraduate professional journal published by Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science honor society.

### **Syllabus outline with tentative dates**

The syllabus mentions two papers. The first is your draft research design, the second the final research design with an illustrative application. The "research" need not be quantitative or scientifically oriented. Remember there are at least three major paradigms (Shively lists four) encompassing political philosophy, practical politics (strategizing and decision making), and political science. We will be discussing all of these and more in the first week of class. *Tentative schedule – chapters will stay in order shown but may be delayed depending on your interests and comprehension, so the timing below is tentative.*

The syllabus below does not include specific times for class discussion and exercises. These will depend on students interests and how I work them into the class schedule. Expect revisions to this schedule.

#### Week Readings and Topics

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1. see above
2. Wednesday 1/21/15 (*Note: Monday is a holiday*)
  - o Shively Ch. 2 "What Does Good Theory Look Like?",
  - o quiz Friday on chapter and lectures
  - o Shively on theory, causality (time precedence, manipulation, explanation), and values (elegance: simplicity, prediction, importance)

- Dimensions of “importance:” understanding, achievement, and transcendence
  - Examples: explaining, evaluating voting patterns, war, financial corruption
  - Research strategies:
    - Standard empirical research pattern (theory, hypothesis, data, analysis)
    - Problem selection (“Machiavellian”) criteria: generalizability, weakness, clarity in design and in presentation.
3. 1/26/15 Shively Ch. 3 “Importance of Dimensional Thinking,” Friday quiz on chapter and lectures
    - “Usefulness” of research related to agreement on its meanings
    - Multiple (contextual) meanings of natural language problematic for research in all paradigms (science, practice, philosophy)
    - Beyond multidimensionality; recalling Korzybski’s “the map is not the territory”
    - Reassessing causality and the “standard model” in empirical research
    - Discussion of student research topics
  4. 2/2/15. Shively Ch. 4, exam on Chs. 1,2,3, and 4, and lectures
    - Ch. 4 “Problems of Measurement”
    - Reliability, validity, and accuracy
    - Discussion of student research topics
  5. 2/9/15. Shively Ch. 5 “Problems of Measurement: Precision,” quiz
    - Nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio measurement
  6. Wednesday 2/18. (Note: Monday is a holiday, Presidents’ Day)  
Shively Ch. 6 “Causal Thinking and Design of Research,” quiz on chapter and lectures
    - Nature of “causation” (time precedence, manipulation, explanation)
    - Manipulation: experimental and quasi-experimental methods in political science and political practice, and related ethical issues (political philosophy)
    - Ways to go wrong: effects of spurious and intervening variables
    - A postmodernist reassessment of causal thinking: information theory and creativity
  7. 2/23/15. Shively Ch. 7 “Selection of Observations for Study,” quiz
    - Selection of “cases” - random, quasi-random, purposive
    - Problems: censorship, cherry picking, natural censorship, selection along the “dependent” variable
    - Value of a single case study
  8. 3/2/15. Shively Ch. 8 “Introduction to Statistics: Measuring Relationships for Interval Data,” exam on Chs. 5,6,7 and 8, and lectures
    - The concept of the “null model” in both descriptive and inferential statistics
    - Interval and ratio scale data: Pearson’s R
  9. 3/9/15. Shively Ch. 9 “Introduction to Statistics: Further Topics on Measurement of Relationships,” quiz on chapter and lectures
    - The 2x2 table of frequency data, Yules Q
    - More than two categories, Gamma
    - Mixed measures: categories or ranks with interval or ratio independent variables
  10. 3/16/15. Shively Ch.10 “Introduction to Statistics: Inference, or How to Gamble on Your Research,” quiz on chapter and lectures
- SPRING RECESS MAR CH 23-27*

The class sessions below will review topics in the textbook and other readings in the context of your research designs. The discussions may add reading material to your class assignments. Most likely the additional material will relate more to the paradigms not much

discussed in Shively, his non-empirical “normative,” “positive,” and his empirical “engineering” research (my practical and philosophical paradigms). Typical topics might include normative theories of decision making and governance (e.g., democratic development, Saaty's rational choice models, prospect theory, social choice and value theory, political participation). The quizzes will relate to this literature and the discussions in class for each week. There may be fewer of these classes than indicated below if some of Shively's chapters take more than a week of class time to cover (last semester this was true for three of his chapters).

11. 3/30/15. Student projects discussion and review, quiz on readings and/or lectures

12. 4/6/15. Student projects discussion and review, quiz on readings and/or lectures

13. 4/13/15. Student projects discussion and review, quiz on readings and/or lectures

14. 4/20/15. Student projects discussion and review, quiz on readings and/or lectures

15. 4/27/15. Student projects discussions and review, quiz on readings and/or lectures

Week 16 5/4/15. Course wrap-up, Friday exam on Shively, Chs. 9, 10, and lectures  
Classes over. Study period begins.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam is scheduled for *Monday May 11, 9:45-11:45 am*, but you should *not* come to the classroom. Instead, email your final exam essay to me personally at [chadwick@hawaii.edu](mailto:chadwick@hawaii.edu) by 11:45 a.m. (or earlier) on that date. Alternatively, slip it under my office door (Saunders 616). The take home essay exam question will be discussed on the last day of class and emailed to you to your UH email address, with instructions. Your *personally composed and written (typed)* answer is due at end of the final exam time scheduled time for this class, shown above.

**Course evaluation.** If 75% of students complete the evaluation, everyone's average grade moves up 5% except for those who have earned an A+ already. Last semester 60% turned in evaluations and so none got a 5% boost; however 85% of my other class returned the evaluations so did get the boost. So, please be sure to fill out the course evaluation online!

I do not view it as a “popularity contest.” I value especially your written feedback, using it to revise my course (presentation` style, content, testing methods). Any advice you'd like to share in other ways would be much appreciated. The teaching interns will also be writing up a final paper including recommendations for course revisions so be sure to discuss your views with them as well.