

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Department of Political Science

2014 Summer Session I

POLS 390: Political Inquiry and Analysis
Critical Inquiry and Trans-Disciplinary Method

Instructor: Bettina J. Brown

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M-F 12:00-1:15 – BusAd C103

Office Hours and Location: TBA

“Politics is not the exercise of power. Politics ought to be defined in its own terms as a specific mode of action that is enacted by a specific subject and that has its own proper rationality. It is the political relationship that makes it possible to conceive of the subject of politics, not the other way around.”

--Jacques Rancière

Course Overview:

This course introduces political inquiry and analysis by asking ‘how do we *think* and *do* the political’? Instead of inquiring about the ‘what’ of politics (as in a set of political affiliations or events), we will investigate the relationship between ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ the ‘political’. For example, how do we construct political ‘meaning-making’ in relation to what we know (epistemology), and how we research/produce knowledge (methodology)? By approaching our inquiry into political theory and analysis with the development of our critical thinking, we will seek to ‘peel back the layers’ of the relationships between knowledge/power formations and practices. In this way, this course will focus on digging beneath the surface of the ‘what’ subject of politics, as a way of thinking political relationships through various contexts and sites of articulation.

One of the primary tools by which political thinking and analysis is articulated and practiced, is by individual (singular) and collective everyday experiences, the encounters and events. These daily experiences help shape and are shaped in part by how we encounter events. In turn, how we experience this relationship is informed between and by relations, including gender, race, class, and nation. **This course will then begin to investigate how these political relationships are ‘thought’, and ‘produced’ within the context of diverse sites of cultural articulation (genre), beginning with, but not limited to literature and film (we will view several films throughout the course). We will also begin to learn to ask questions, about how political inquiry inter-articulates with our analytical approach across ‘disciplines’ and what we know. For example,**

how do we employ inquiry ‘methods’ of collecting ‘data’ in participatory research paradigms? As such, this approach to inquiry and analysis is intended **for students interested in “a practice of critique that should be understood both as a challenge to epistemological certainties and as a positive engagement with actual experiences and issues pertaining to them,”**¹ - in any or some of the varying disciplinary areas of political inquiry/analysis and practice (e.g. indigenous politics, global politics, feminist theory, public policy etc.).

In keeping with these course objectives, we will explore a variety of ‘text’ sites including: feature film, novel, online sources, and class discussion materials available on Lulima. Our goal in this course is to provoke and develop our critical inquiry and analysis by engaging the learning material, and each other in thoughtful participation. **Our objective in not to ‘master’ the text form and content, but rather to begin to inform and develop our political inquiry with these sources, and with class/group discussion.**

Course Objectives:

The objectives in this course reflect the undergraduate student learning outcomes outlined by the UHM Department of Political Science. Please read the complete descriptions at <http://www.politicalscience.hawaii.edu/mission-statement.html#UG>

In this course, you will learn to:

- ☒ Think critically about power and the political
- ☒ Craft and defend evidence-based arguments
- ☒ Communicate effectively in public settings, with attention to and appreciation of diverse cultural contexts
- ☒ Cogently explain the interconnectedness of local and global dynamics of power within the context of the political and cultural specificities of Hawai'i nei.

Course Materials:

Lulima

The syllabus and class discussion materials will be available through Lulima. Please familiarize yourself with this online learning tool in advance, if you have not had the opportunity. Brief tutorials can be accessed through this interface. It's recommended that you log in directly to <http://lulima.hawaii.edu/portal> and use the Firefox browser for the most effective connection.

Required Texts

Books are available through online venues, and can be purchased as either an e-book or new to used print editions (delivery may take 3 to 4 weeks).

1. Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, eds. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches* (Toronto, Ontario: Scholars' Press/Women's Press, 2005).
2. Kerry E. Howell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2013).
3. Michael J. Shapiro, *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic turn* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Recommended Text

1. Kate L. Turabian, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph Williams, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th edition (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

Course Requirements:

My approach to 'grading' is that everyone starts the course with an 'A,' and maintains it by meeting the following course requirements. This course employs a student-directed approach to facilitating learning within this framework:

1. Attendance and participation – 30%
2. Inquiry Reflection Responses (2-3 paragraphs, 10 responses at 30 pts. each, submit a hardcopy to me before class) – 30%
3. Political Inquiry and Analysis Presentation/Outline (2 pages or less, double-spaced) – 20%
4. Final Paper (5-10 pages, double-spaced) – 20%

Attendance and Participation – 30%

Please attend each class meeting prepared for class discussions on the course materials. You are expected to bring the reading material to class, either in print or by electronic device. **Also, please notify me by email as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a class.** Please don't hesitate to request my assistance, hopefully before potential problems occur, or ask questions regarding material covered in class. I am also available by appointment, or stop by during my office hours. If email is not readily accessible to

you, computer labs are available at various sites on campus. Check <http://www.hawaii.edu/itslab/index.htm> for hours and locations. They are also located in Sinclair and Hamilton Library. **However, if you have more than 3 absences without notification, your final course grade will be dropped by one letter grade. Your attendance and participation is central to how we will consider, discuss, and develop our thinking by critically engaging the selected text assignments.** You are expected to participate in a way that is thoughtful, and respectful of other students. Cell phones should be turned off. All electronic devices will be used in a way that is directly relevant to the class discussion, such as accessing readings on Laulima, or taking notes.

During the first segment of the class, we will go over the assigned readings, and relevant texts (novel, film, etc.). We will ‘work through’ our readings or film viewings by sharing thoughts and questions. This will help to develop our ideas and inquiry in response to the material. The second segment of the class will give you another opportunity to discuss the course materials by using your prepared **inquiry reflection response** to engage your thinking and analysis about the readings.

Inquiry Reflection Responses – 30%

Inquiry reflection responses will be written as a form of student attendance/participation in response to reading assignments, or the related film viewings in class, and should be written in advance - not during the class due date.

Please submit a hardcopy of your reflection response to me at the beginning of class. They should be 2-3 paragraphs in length. Any quotation, reference to a text, directly or indirectly, and idea that is not your own, should be cited completely by a footnote or parenthetically in the text. Please refer to the plagiarism description in this syllabus. It is your responsibility to know the guidelines. Check out reference resources in Sinclair or Hamilton Library. Turabian, Chicago, and Harvard citation styles are acceptable, and additional resource sites are available online. Please proofread, spell/grammar check your work, and regardless of the citation style you use, make sure you use it consistently throughout your response/paper. Since your reflection is also used for the in-class discussions, **late responses will not be accepted for credit.**

Your response is much like a reflective ‘place’ from which you develop your inquiries and thoughts about the reading or the film. They are **not** short summaries. Your reflection on the material should help develop your critical inquiry and analysis. For example, you could begin your response with a question, or you could start with a relevant, significant experience in a particular setting or situation. You could also use an example from the reading or film to inspire your thinking and writing. These are suggestions and you are not limited to them.

‘Political Inquiry and Analysis’ Presentation – 20%

Guidelines

This course is designed to provoke and encourage our thinking on the ‘how’ of politics. We begin to learn how to inquire about the relationships between our daily encounters with diverse events and situations. As stated in the course overview, how we begin to think politically in relation to ‘what we know’ and how we research/produce knowledge, is informed between and by these relationships.

In your presentation on how to begin thinking and analyzing the political, **select a text, a genre - (reading, film etc.)** that interests you, and **briefly describe what you consider to be 2 thought provoking events, conversations, images, or ideas.**

Then develop your inquiry and analysis **by applying your 2 descriptions to 2 concepts from the relevant course material/books.** For example, you could begin your inquiry and analysis with a conversation in a film, and discuss how or what is said, or ‘can be said’ by protagonists (characters) in the film. Think in terms of how your selected reading or film is informed, or informs you – about the relationships of events to the subjects or persons in the text. How does their encounter or the situation in the film influence what they express or say? Ask yourself about the relationships of events to subjects - in your 2 selected descriptions, and how or what it says in relation to gender and/or race, class, nationhood. **Then say what, or how you think about the relationships focused on in your selected text.**

One suggested approach to help your inquiry about this relationship is to **look at the language used in the text.** For example, you could read the text aloud to help you sense how the language makes you feel when you speak it. You could also look at texts and try to investigate **how the words or images are used to convey information.** What does it **not** say about something - which readily pops into your mind, and that you are wondering about? How or what is being left out? Why?

Another approach to help your inquiry about the relation of events and subjects in your text is to focus on the **historical relationship and context.** For example, how does the historical setting or situation affect the subject(s) in your text? How does it influence what they show or say? Or conversely, how and what does their showing or saying – express about the history of their setting or situation? What are the historical conditions, in space, place and time, that makes this relation, expression possible?

Presentation Outline

Outline your presentation in 2 pages or less. Please submit your outline one day, before your presentation day to my email address only. Please follow the standard format guidelines (double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1-inch margins). Also, practice your presentation for effective delivery and timing. **Please make sure your presentation does not exceed 10 minutes.** A sign-up sheet will be circulated

in class two weeks prior to the presentations. Your outline will **not** be graded or returned to you with my comments. Please bring a hard copy of your presentation outline to class. If you can access the outline electronically in class, a hard copy is not necessary. **I will only grade the oral portion of your presentation based on the presentation guidelines.**

2 descriptions (5% as 50 pts. each) = 100 pts.

2 concepts (5% as 50 pts. each) = 100 pts.

Total 20% = 200 pts.

Final Paper – 20%

Your final paper should show your thoughtful engagement with the course materials, and the concepts discussed during class. Your writing should also show the ‘how’ of your thinking by creating a central inquiry or argument, and developing it effectively with your selected text descriptions and key conceptual tools. I am looking for your ability to ‘peel back the layers’ from the surface of the course texts. In other words, your paper should demonstrate your ability to critically question and analyze how the texts say something in relation to the subjects.

For example, to critically analyze a text, you could think about what the text says or shows about the relationship between the events and subjects. You could also question or analyze what the text does **not** say or show. How or what was included, or left out? Why? This is one approach to reading the course material critically, and developing your own political thinking. I’d like to clarify, that when you show your critical thinking in your paper, it does not necessarily imply a negative analysis or approach. Please avoid writing only text summaries in your paper, except when they specifically support your central inquiry or argument. **Please submit your final papers to my email address only, by the deadline. Unless I’m notified of an extenuating circumstance, late papers will not be accepted.** I will return your papers electronically with my comments/suggestions and final paper grade.

Final Paper Option A

Your final paper should utilize your reflection responses, and your political inquiry and analysis presentations. By using your prior work as resources, you can begin to develop a central argument or critical question relevant to the how of your political thinking, and the course materials. You must include **3** key concepts in your paper to help you support or develop your central argument or question. They may be concepts you used in your reflections and/or from the texts covered in class. Choose a topic that you find interesting and would like to explore further. In addition to using your own resources, you should

use references from at least **2** course texts or materials. You may also research other relevant resources that interest you to supplement course references. Your paper should be **5 to 10 pages in length**. It must have a bibliography Please follow the same paper format guidelines (12-point font etc.) described previously.

Final Paper Option B

Your final paper can also start ‘from scratch’, without utilizing your prior work. You should use at least **5** reference sources, **3** of which should cite course materials. In addition, you must use at least **2** reference sources that are not part of the course resource list. Develop a critical inquiry that interests you, and that is relevant to the how of political thinking and analysis by exploring these resources. You must include **3** key concepts that support your central argument or question. Your paper should be **5 to 10 pages in length**. It must have a bibliography. Please follow the same paper format guidelines.

Text descriptions (5%- 50 pts.)

Key concepts (5% 50 pts.)

Developing critical inquiry (5%-50 pts.)

Developing critical analysis/argument (5%-50 pts.)

Total = 20% - 200 pts

Writing Resources:

It’s a good idea to ask someone to help edit your paper. The following is a suggested guideline to help you in structuring your paper. You are not limited to this format:

- Name, date, course, and final paper title (required)
- List of 3 key concepts (terms)
- Introduction (overview of central critical inquiry, and content/organization)
- Body (selected text descriptions and analysis, applying conceptual tools)
- Review (summary of inquiry and analysis, possible conclusions)

Standard format: double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Please follow the same guidelines for citations and plagiarism aforementioned in the section on *Inquiry Reflection Response*.

There is a Writing Center on the UH Mānoa campus:

<http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/mwp/resources/campus/writing-center>

Hawai'i Student Conduct Code and Plagiarism:

Please arrange a time to meet with me, or stop by during my office hours if you are having difficulty with the course material or meeting the requirements. Any coursework that is plagiarized will result in a failing grade. It is your responsibility to know all the policies concerning student conduct and plagiarism. You can access these at:

http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/

<http://www.hawaii.edu/eil/students/plagiarism.html>

Course Grading:

30% - Attendance and Participation (300 pts.)
30% - Inquiry Reflection Responses (300 pts.)
20% - Political Inquiry and Analysis Presentation (200 pts.)
20% - Final Paper (200 pts.)
100% (1000 pts.)

Grading Scale: UH Mānoa Credit and Grades description: <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/undergrad-ed/creditsGrades.htm>

93-100 =A	83-86 =B	73-76 =C	63-66 =D
90-92 =A-	80-82 =B-	70-72 =C-	60-62 =D-
87-89 =B+	77-79 =C+	67-69 =D+	59-0 =F

Computer Issues:

If you are having a problem with your computer or other technical difficulties, please let me know as soon as possible. There are multiple computer lab locations on campus, as described under the *Attendance and Participation* section of the syllabus. As such, computer issues are not an excuse for late paper submissions. However, I am willing to work with you regarding extenuating circumstances. Also, please try to avoid the last minute submission of your work.

Accessibility Assistance:

Please contact me and/or the KOKUA program (956-7511) located in the Student Services Center, on the ground floor level, if you need any disability assistance, including reasonable accommodations.

Class Schedule:

Please note that this schedule may change based on student needs, interests, and the allotted class time. Sometimes unforeseen circumstances come up, and it is your responsibility to log any changes to the class schedule.☺

CRITICAL INQUIRY AS METHOD

Week 1

Mon: Introduction and Syllabus

Tues: Kerry E. Howell, “Preface” and “Introduction: Problems Identified” in *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology*

Wed: Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, “Transgressive Possibilities”

Thurs: Howell, “Explaining and Understanding Theory,” and Michael J. Shapiro, “Preface” in *Trans-Disciplinary Method*

Fri: Film: Ivan Sen’s *Beneath Clouds* (2002)

Week 2

Mon: Howell, “Postmodernism and Poststructuralism”

Tues: Shapiro, “Philosophy, method and the arts”

Wed: Susan Strega, “The View from the Poststructural Margins: Epistemology and and Methodology Reconsidered”

Thurs: Howell, “Critical Theory”

Fri: Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, “Situating Anti-oppressive Theories with Critical and Difference-centered Perspectives”

Week 3

Mon: Fairn Hersing, “Interrupting Positions: Critical Thresholds and Queer Propositions”

DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES

Tues: Howell, “Ethnography”

Wed: Sally A. Kimpson, “Stepping off the Road: A Narrative of Inquiry”

Thurs: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, excerpts from *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Laulima)

Fri: Shapiro, “Social Science, ‘Comparative Politics’, and Inequality” in *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject* (Laulima)

Week 4

Mon: Film: Sean Penn’s *The Pledge* (2001)

Tues: Howell, “Constructivism and Participatory Paradigms of Inquiry”

Wed: Kathy Absolon and Cam Willet, “Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research” **Sign-up sheet for Inquiry and Analysis Presentation. Begin working on 2 pg. presentation outline.**

Thurs: Noenoe K. Silva, excerpts from *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Laulima)

Fri: Howell, “Methods of Data Collection”

Week 5

Mon: Margaret Kovach, “Emerging from the Margins: Indigenous Methodologies”

Tues: Qwul’sih’yah’maht and Robina Anne Thomas, “Honouring the Oral Traditions of my Ancestors through Storytelling”

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

Wed: Howell, “Reliability, Generalization and Reflexivity: Identifying Validity and Trustworthiness

Thurs: Karen Potts and Leslie Brown, “Becoming an Anti-oppressive Researcher”

Fri: Howell, “ Michel Foucault”, and excerpts from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Laulima)

Week 6

Mon: Howell, “Hermeneutics”

Tues: Howell, “Empiricism, Positivism, and Post-Positivism”

Wed: Foucault, excerpts from *The Order of Things* (Laulima) **Political Inquiry and Analysis Presentations (5-10 min. each)**

Thurs: Shapiro, “The Micro-Politics of Justice: Language, sense, and space” in *Trans-disciplinary Method*. **Political Inquiry and Analysis Presentations**

Fri: Finish Presentations

Sun: Final Papers Due