Scope and Methods of Political Science

You are here, in part, because you like politics. THIS COURSE IS NOT ABOUT POLITICS. IT IS ABOUT HOW POLITICS IS STUDIED BY POLITICAL SCIENTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD. It is intended to be comprehensive without exhausting the vastness of the field of political science methodology. The course has three aspects:

1. **Political Science Methodology—Its History and Issues in Its Development**: The initial part of the course exposes the student to different accounts of the history and development of political science as an academic discipline and the shifting norms within that development.

2. **Scope and Methods**: The second part of the course will introduce the student to the different ways scholars have approached the study of politics.

3. **State of the Discipline**: In the final part of the course, the student will bring these analytical skills to bear on sub-disciplines within the field of political science by putting together and presenting a paper on the state of the discipline in a sub-discipline of the student’s choosing. The student will choose a subfield from the list under “(4) State of the Discipline Essay” below.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to

1. Identify and describe the various approaches to the study of politics through direct engagement with trends in scholarship within the discipline of political science.

2. Recognize and apply the specific approaches of the subdisciplines of political science (American politics; comparative politics; international relations; political theory) through research and reflection, written and oral communication, and both formal and informal modes of interpersonal interaction.

3. Identify and be able to practice select norms of the political science profession, including peer evaluation, presentation of work, and the development of a collaborative and scholarly intellectual community.

The format of the seminar is hybrid, a blend of face-to-face seminar and computer-based learning on Blackboard. Much of the course learning activity has been moved online, making it possible for our class time to be spent in discussion of our work in issues related to our subject matter. Our face-to-face time will be student-driven presentation and discussion. All discussion and written work in the seminar is intended to develop your critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Discussions and presentations are intended to develop your public voice to go with the voice trained and given expression in written work. In the course, you will be introduced to the practices of political science. You are the show and your grade will reflect your performance.

Textbooks


Blackboard

All online work for this hybrid course will be done on Blackboard. All relevant information may be found on this course’s page there. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with assignments, due dates, etc.
Course Requirements

All grading is done on a 10-point scale: A = 90-100; b = 80-89; C = 70-79... The formal requirements of the course and their relative impact on your grade are as follows:

(1) Class Participation Formal and Informal 10%
You are expected to attend class weekly and to participate in our class discussions. This is not a lecture class; it is a seminar. Bring your readings, your questions, your answers, and your insights to class and be ready to articulate and discuss them.

(2) Reading Summaries (due Wednesday by 6pm of online week) 10%
Each subunit (every other week) when you are not writing a formal essay, you will post one paragraph (250 word) analytical summaries of each reading (one paragraph for each chapter or essay unless otherwise noted). Your analytical summary paragraph should (1) identify the main argument(s) of the work, (2) the major points the author is trying to make, and (3) how he or she used those points and examples to make the argument. Your paragraph should not be a list of answers to the above questions or a set of statements from your notes or a list of any sort. Rather, it should be a well-conceived and readable description of the work that would communicate its meaning and significance to someone who has not read the work.

(3) Peer Response to Summaries (due Friday 6pm of online week) 10%
Each subunit, when you are not writing a formal essay, you will post a one paragraph response (300 words) to the summaries (as a whole) of one of your group-mates. Your response should be written in the mode of being helpful and supportive, but it must also be more substantial than “nice job.” Specifically, your response should address the following: (1) Can you identify the general argument and major points of the work in the summaries? (2) Are the summaries clear and well-written (one paragraph, concise but complete sentences, etc.)? (3) Note if and where the summaries brought out important points that you may have overlooked. Again you are writing a paragraph, not a list of answers to these questions. Be thoughtful, clear, and helpful.

(4) Issue Identification Exercises (due Monday 6pm of each online week) 10%
Each subunit, when you are not writing a formal essay, identify (2) key issues or questions you find in this week’s readings that need to be developed and discussed in our face-to-face meeting. For each issue, post a brief paragraph (150 words) in which you (1) clearly identify the issue; (2) explain where and how you encountered it in our reading; and (3) explain why the issue is urgent. Come to class ready to explain and discuss your work with your classmates.
(Note: For Unit Two your issue identification work will be tailored to each subdiscipline’s method. Each of your paragraphs should identify a contemporary political issue that this approach is particularly well-suited to address. Come to class ready to explain and discuss the issue you have identified and be ready to explain to your classmates specifically how the methodology helps shed light on them. How would you use the method to approach the issue?)

(5) Peer Response to Draft Essay (due Friday 6pm of online essay weeks) 10%
In online weeks when essays are being prepared, you will write and post a one paragraph response (300 words) to the draft of your group partner’s essay. Your response should be written in the mode of being helpful and supportive, but it must also be more substantial than “nice job.” Specifically, your response should address the following: (1) Can you identify the general argument and major points of the essay? (2) Are the essay’s points drawn together in a way that is readily understood by the reader? (3) Is the essay clear and well-written (uses paragraphs, concise but complete sentences, etc.)? (4) Does the essay bring out important points that you may have overlooked. Again you are writing a paragraph, not a list of answers to these questions. Be thoughtful, clear, and helpful.

(6) Essays 2 x 15% = 30%
At the end of Unit 1 and Unit 2, each student will be required to write an analytical essay in response to a prompt grounded in that unit’s readings and our discussions. These essays should be not less than 5 or more than 7 pages in length (typed, 12 point font, 1 double-spaced, 1-inch margins all round). Prompts will be posted two weeks before the essay is due. You may find specific guidelines about the paper on Blackboard under the appropriate week’s assignments.
IMPORTANT: Preparation of your essays will proceed online according to the following schedule:
1) Sunday of the first face-to-face week by 2pm: Post a one-paragraph (250 words) paper topic proposal for approval by your professor. Your paragraph should be well-written, clear and address itself to the following: What are the issues raised by the topic and how will you use the authors you have chosen to address them? What do you expect to find?
2) Wednesday 6pm of online week: Post a full draft of your essay (5-7 pages following all rules of grammar, etc.) to be evaluated by your peer respondent.
3) Friday of online week: Post your peer evaluation of your partner's draft essay.
4) Wednesday of the face-to-face meeting: Bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to discuss it with your colleagues.

State of the Discipline Essay
This essay, the culmination of your work in this class, represents the “research dimension” of the course. Each student will prepare a 10-page paper using scholarly journals to survey developments in topics and methodologies prevalent in a chosen sub-discipline of political science. Your paper should demonstrate your understanding of the following: What questions are being asked in the sub-discipline and how are they being asked? Specific instructions and a sample paper are available under Unit Three on Blackboard.

NOTE: You will have to declare your subdiscipline, the journals you will be using, and the years you will focus upon by April 6 at 6pm.

Notes on Etiquette or THE RULES
--Online: please interact with one another in a helpful, professional manner. We are here to form a collegial, collaborative community of scholars and to begin practicing the civil norms that go along with such a community. In other words, be nice—or else! ; ).
--Face-to-face class starts promptly. Be here on time. After the first week or so of the semester, you WILL be denied entry if you arrive more than 5 minutes late. Late arrival is disruptive to the classroom experience of your classmates and, perhaps even your professor. In any case, it works against the mission of the classroom. To this end, I suggest you not drive from class to class—gas is too expensive and we could all use the exercise.
--The format of the face-to-face class is some lecture, student presentation, and conversation. The classroom is a safe place to ask questions. But they should be questions that derive from work with and in the material and NOT because you did not do the assignment.
--You will not read newspapers, textbooks, or study for other classes while in this class. If you do so, you will be asked to leave—and in no uncertain terms.
--Turn all cellphones and other electronic devices off (or set to vibrate) for the duration of class. You are not to accept calls or engage in text messaging during class. If you do so, I will confiscate your device. If you are awaiting a call or message of extreme importance, I suggest you skip class.
--You may use a laptop, but only for the purpose of taking notes. If I catch you surfing the web, playing games, or engaged in some other activity not related to the work of the class, you will lose your laptop privileges.
--You are responsible for material missed due to absence. I suggest you exchange notes with other responsible students in any case, but particularly if you have to miss. I am happy to answer questions about this material, but will not rehearse my lectures or our class discussions.
--Some semesters, life gets in the way. Should you have one of these semesters, I am more than happy to talk to you about what to do. But if the trauma is too great, I strongly suggest you drop one or all of your courses. Your education is vitally important, but there are things that outrank even education sometimes—and you have to make that call when it is necessary. I cannot grade you on how well or poorly you deal with your life at given moments. Your grades reflect your performance in class—not how well you are dealing with other things. I wish all of us a semester in which these things aren’t issues.
Syllabus

* Readings should be completed by date assigned. Required texts are abbreviated below as follows:

h/o from ASP = handouts from Bernard Susser, Approaches to the Study of Politics (MacMillan, 1992)

UNIT ONE: Political Science as Methodology

In this initial part of the course, we will consider and explore the history and development of political science as an academic discipline and the shifting norms within that development. We will identify and engage key questions like: “What do we understand ourselves to mean by the term ‘politics’? What does it mean to study politics? Together we will examine the general ways in which political scientists study political phenomena, including the “traditional approach,” the advent of “behavioralism,” “post-behavioralism” and the contemporary conversation between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Underlying this discussion will be an ongoing concern with what it means to study political or any other phenomena “scientifically.”

20 Jan W  Face-to-face: Introduction
--Grigsby, “1. Introduction” (AP, 1-10)
--Handout #1: Gabriel Almond, “Political Science: The History of the Discipline”

27 Jan W  Online: Political Science as Discipline
--Susser, “From Burgess to Behavioralism and Beyond” (h/o from ASP, 3-15)
--Macridis, “Major Characteristics of the Traditional Approach” (h/o from ASP, 16-26)
--Dahl, “The Behavioral Approach in Political Science...” (h/o from ASP, 27-46)
--Easton, “The Current Meaning of Behavioralism” (h/o ASP, 47-48)
--Easton, “Tenets of Post-Behavioralism” (h/o from ASP, 49-50)
Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Wed.); Peer Response to Summaries (Fri.); Issue Identification exercise (Mon.)

3 Feb W  Face-to-face: Political Science as Discipline

10 Feb W  Online: A Political Science?
--Susser, “Social Science and the Philosophy of Science” (h/o from ASP, 101-117)
--Popper, “Science: Conjectures and Refutations” (h/o from ASP, 134-165)
--Kuhn, “The Essential Tension: Tradition and Innovation in Scientific Research” (h/o from ASP, 166-179)
--Katznelson and Milner, “American Political Science: The Discipline’s State and the State of the Discipline” (PSSD, 1-26)
--Hay, “Introduction: Political Science in an Age of Acknowledged Interdependence” (ND 1-24)
Online Assignments: Paper Topic (Sun.); Draft essay (Wed.); Peer evaluation (Fri.)

17 Feb W  Face-to-face: A Political Science?
ESSAY DUE: Bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to discuss it with your colleagues.
UNIT TWO: Scope and Methods of Political Science

In the second part of the course, we will identify and explore the more specific ways scholars have approached the various dimensions of political life. There are two dimensions to this exploration. The first has to do with how the discipline of political science has been divided up into subdisciplines. These divisions bring with them different expectations about what constitutes research and how that research is carried out. In this unit, we will identify and discuss these differences through an examination of normative or value-driven political theory as well as the range of quantitative and qualitative approaches we find in the study of international relations, comparative politics, and American politics. Underlying our exploration of political science through the subdisciplines is a second major concern: whether these subdivisions—of subject matter and methods or approaches—have outlived their usefulness and whether political science would be better served by breaking down disciplinary borders and engaging in more interdisciplinary explorations.

24 Feb W  Online: The Subdisciplines—Political Theory
--Grigsby, “4. Political Theory: Examining the Ethical Foundations of Politics” (AP, 75-97)
--Wolin, “Political Philosophy and Philosophy” (h/o from Politics and Vision [2004], 3-26)
--Shapiro, “The State of Democratic Theory” (PSSD, 235-265)
--Gutmann, “Identity and Democracy” (PSSD, 542-567)
--Coles, “Pluralization and Radical Democracy” (PSSD, 286-312)
--Hutchings, “Global Justice” (ND, 231-249)

Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Wed.); Peer Response to Summaries (Fri.); Issue Identification exercise (Mon.)

2 Mar W  Face-to-face: The Subdisciplines—Political Theory

9 Mar W  SPRING BREAK WEEK (no class)

16 Mar W  Online: The Subdisciplines—American Politics
--Schlozman, “Citizen Participation in America...” (PSSD, 433-461)
--Burns, “Gender: Public Opinion and Political Action” (PSSD, 462-487)
--Dawson and Cohen, “Problems in the Study of the Politics of Race” (PSSD, 488-510)
--Fiorina, “Parties, Participation, and Representation in America...” (PSSD, 511-541)

Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Wed.); Peer Response to Summaries (Fri.); Issue Identification exercise (Mon.)

23 Mar W  Face-to-face: The Subdisciplines—American Politics

30 Mar W  Online: The Subdisciplines—Comparative Politics
--Almond, “A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics” (ASP, 209-270)
--Alt, “Comparative Political Economy” (PSSD, 147-171)
--Geddes, “The Great Transformation in the Study of Politics in Developing Countries” (PSSD, 342-370)
--Thompson, “The Character of the State” (ND, 130-147)

Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Wed.); Peer Response to Summaries (Fri.); Issue Identification exercise (Mon.)

6 Apr W  Face-to-face: The Subdisciplines—Comparative Politics
13 Apr W  **Online: The Subdisciplines—International Relations**
--Powell, “Game Theory, International Relations Theory, and the Hobbesian Stylization” (PSSD, 755-783)
--Walt, “The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition” (PSSD, 197-234)
--Frieden and Martin, “International Political Economy: Global and Domestic Interactions” (PSSD, 118-146)
--Jeffery and Wincott, “The Challenge of Territorial Politics: Methodological Nationalism” (ND, 167-188)
**Online Assignments: Paper Topic (Sun.); Draft essay (Wed.); Peer evaluation (Fri.)**

20 Apr W  **Face-to-face: The Subdisciplines—International Relations**
**ESSAY DUE:** Bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to discuss it with your colleagues.

### UNIT THREE: State of the Discipline
In the final part of the course, the student will bring these analytical skills to bear on sub-disciplines within the field of political science by putting together a paper on the state of the discipline in a sub-discipline of the student’s choosing.

27 Apr W  **RESEARCH DAY**

4 May W  **Online: State of the Discipline Essays Due to rieblanc@uttyler.edu by 12 noon.**

*This syllabus reflects the minimum requirements of our professional relationship over the course of this semester. The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus as conditions require, but he vows NOT to do so unless absolutely necessary and he will not do so in such a way as to diminish the student's opportunity to master the course material. By staying in this class, you state that you understand the contents of this syllabus and you agree to the terms and conditions stated herein.*
UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM POLICIES

Policy Regarding Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is against university as well as community standards. Academic dishonesty is defined as: cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses.

Plagiarism is defined as submitting the language, ideas, or thoughts or work of another as one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:
--use of direct quotations without quotation marks and without credit to the source;
--paraphrasing or using direct quotations within quotation marks without credit to the source;
--failure to provide adequate citations for material obtained through electronic research;
--downloading and submitting work from electronic databases without citation;
--submitting material created/written by someone else as one’s own, including purchased term/research papers;
--allowing someone to copy or submit one’s work as his/her own;
--participation in a group project which presents plagiarized materials;
--submitting the same paper in more than one course without the knowledge and approval of the instructors involved;
--assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one’s work to be used in this fashion;
--aiding and abetting another student’s dishonesty.

Cheating is defined generally as copying from someone else’s exam, homework, or laboratory work. Types of cheating include but are not limited to:
--using notes or other materials during a test or exam without authorization;
--obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual, or unauthorized use of books, notes, texts, or other materials;
--obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination;
--taking an examination for another student or arranging for another person to take an exam in one’s place;
--altering or changing test answers after submitting it for grading, or after grades have been awarded;
--releasing information about an examination to anyone who has yet to take the examination

Disciplinary procedures for incidents of academic dishonesty may result in any of the following:
(1) permanent dismissal from the university; (2) suspension from the university for not less than one semester; (3) outright failure of the course (an automatic final grade of ‘F’); (4) canceling the student’s enrollment in the class without a grade (‘W’); (5) awarding a failing grade on the exam, test, or assignment in question; (6) requiring the student to take another examination or test on the same material or to resubmit the paper or assignment based on a specific topic.

In all cases of substantiated academic dishonesty, a permanent record of academic discipline will be established in the Office of the Dean of Students. These records are searched regularly by government agencies, licensing authorities, certification authorities, and others. The existence of such a record can bar entry to many occupations.

Students Rights and Responsibilities
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness
Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.
State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services
In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services office in UC 3150, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

HERE ENDETH THE ENDLESSNESS.