

PS800: Political Science as a Discipline and Profession

Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Rikhil R. Bhavnani

Fall 2024

Class times: Mondays, 9–11 am

Class location: North Hall 422 (the Ogg Room)

Class website: canvas.wisc.edu/courses/421182

Office hours: Thursdays, 9:30–11 am

(Sign up at calendly.com/rikhil/)

E-mail: bhavnani@wisc.edu

Requisites

Graduate/professional standing.

Course description

Describes and evaluates major approaches used in political science. Explores issues related to professional development and political science careers.

Detailed overview

This course introduces political science as a *discipline* and a *profession*. For our review of the *discipline*, we will consider a variety of approaches to the study of politics. For our review of the *profession*, we will discuss matters both broad (e.g., professional development) and narrow (e.g., obtaining research grants) that are of interest to those building academic careers with a political science Ph.D.

The purpose of the course is twofold. First, to provide an orientation to some of the basic features, some of which are “hidden,” of scholarly life. We cannot examine all the various dimensions of this life in a one-credit seminar. The goal is, more modestly, to introduce you to some of the issues at an early point in your scholarly career. Through the course readings and discussion, you will begin to form your own perspective on political science as a discipline and profession. Second, to provide a venue for you to meet many of our faculty, especially those outside your subfields.

Instructional mode

Face-to-face.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students will demonstrate an understanding of political science as a discipline and profession. Recognize major approaches used in the discipline of political science and the “hidden curriculum” of the profession. Identify a broad cross-section of the faculty and their research in the political science department.

Regular and Substantive Student-Instructor Interaction

1. Providing direct instruction;
2. Assessing and providing feedback on students’ coursework;
3. Providing information and responding to questions about the course content;
4. Facilitating group discussion regarding the course content.

Course credits

This is a one-credit class. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 45 hours of student engagement with course learning activities, including class meetings of two hours a week, reading, writing, and other work as described in the syllabus.

Assignments and grading

Active participation. The quality of this seminar depends on the active participation of all students. Everyone is expected to have read and reflected on the required readings before class, and to participate actively in discussion. It is essential to have a good understanding of each reading—not only individually, but, where appropriate, how they fit together. To facilitate this process, prior to each week’s class, you will post 1–2 questions or comments related to that week’s readings on the class discussion board on Canvas. The deadline for posting questions is 4 pm the day before the seminar. I will share these comments and questions with our guest faculty member before class. Please come to class prepared to discuss your comments/questions, and that of the person who posted just before you on the discussion board (if you posted first, the person who posted last).

Workshops and colloquia. Much of the work of political science takes place in workshops and colloquia, with visiting speakers and discussion of written work. I want you to get in the habit of attending these. You will already be attending the workshop or colloquium for your primary subfield. I ask you to also attend at least one meeting of a workshop or colloquium for some other subfield, and at least one meeting of some other group (the Models, Experiments, and Data Workshop or MEAD, the seminar series for an area center, etc.). By the last day of class, you should turn in a two-page, single-spaced paper reflecting on the process by which ideas are exchanged and developed in different corners of the academy and assessing what you find most and least effective. Please upload these to Canvas. In addition, I would like you to meet with at least one outside speaker during the semester. Please also, before the last day of class, write up a statement about the speaker, your meeting, and the presentation. That statement should be one page or less, and should also be submitted via Canvas.

Final grade. Your final grade for the seminar will be determined as follows: 25% for class participation, 25% for advance questions/comments, 25% for attendance of colloquia and workshops, and 25% for the two related papers.

All assignments will be given one of the following letter grades: A, AB, B, BC, C, D and F. To calculate the final class grade, these grades will be converted to numeric scores (A = 96.5, AB = 90.5, B = 85.5, BC = 80.5, C = 74.5, D = 68, F = 63), which will then be summed using the weights mentioned above. A total score greater than 85.5 (that is, a B average) will be given a Satisfactory (S) grade; anything below will be given an Unsatisfactory (U) grade.

The participation grade will be assigned as follows—

A: This student never misses class, always completes assigned readings, and comes to class prepared to think carefully, making connections between readings and across topics. He or she is willing to take the lead in discussion periodically, posing interesting questions or taking risks by answering tough questions. He or she avoids dominating discussion, instead participating mindfully in discussion with other students, considering their ideas and responding thoughtfully and respectfully. He or she helps to create a sense of a shared conversation in the group as a whole. This student shows passion for the work of the class and is committed fully to our work while in the classroom.

AB: This student does most of what an A student does, but may be slightly deficient in one area – for instance, he or she may be a conscientious reader and thinker who tends not to listen to other students or otherwise dominates conversation instead of engaging in productive deliberation. Or, he or she may have been late to class a few times, or may have missed a reading or two.

B: This student participates often, but not consistently. He or she may attend every class and do all the readings but avoids taking the lead in discussion, instead only responding to questions or adding periodically to others' ideas. This student may participate well but may have missed a class and failed to submit the makeup assignment.

BC: This student may be a frequent but superficial discussion participant. The student may let shyness keep him or her from participating as fully as he or she should. At times the student may seem not to have done the readings, though he or she usually comes prepared.

C: This student is intermittently prepared for class (e.g., participates well but has missed two classes without submitting a makeup assignment). He or she may have flashes of brilliance, but rarely participates beyond the occasional superficial comment.

D: This student very rarely participates, and only in superficial ways.

F: This student has missed three classes without submitting a makeup assignment and/or attends most classes but never participates.

North Hall

The Political Science department is located in North Hall, the oldest building on campus. Due to its age, this building is not accessible to individuals with mobility disabilities and does not have an elevator or accessible restroom. The department is committed to equal opportunity for all students to attend office hours, advising, and other department-related events. Please contact me if North Hall presents a disability-related barrier to you, and the department will gladly work to ensure access. If you require a disability-related accommodation for the academic requirements of this course unrelated to North Hall, please review the “Accommodations for students with disabilities” section below.

Rules, rights & responsibilities

See <http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/>.

Course evaluations

You will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester when your course evaluation is available. You will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID where you can complete the evaluation and submit it, anonymously. Your feedback is important to me.

Academic calendar and religious observances

See <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>.

Academic integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW–Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to <http://studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

The University of Wisconsin–Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW–Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end

of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I, will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center (at 1305 Linden Drive and 608.263.2741; see www.mcburney.wisc.edu) to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW–Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin–Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background—people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Class readings and schedule

Most readings are available through the Canvas site for this class; a few are instead available at the web addresses below. A general disclaimer: The substantive articles assigned for this course are not necessarily the “great” or “best” works in a given area. Rather, they illustrate a given perspective, issue, or type of research.

I. Political Science as a Discipline

Class 1 (9/9): Introduction

Class 2 (9/16): Positivism and Causal Inference

Guest: Eleanor Powell

- Druckman, James, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. 2006. “The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 627-35.
- Sanders, David. 2010. “Behavioral Analysis.” In *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. 3rd ed., ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Recommended

- Clarke, Kevin and David M. Primo. 2007. “Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach.” *Perspectives on Politics* 5: 741-54.
- Aldrich, John, James E. Alt, and Arthur Lupia. 2008. “The EITM Approach: Origins & Interpretation.” In *The Oxford Handbook Political Methodology*, ed. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. New York: Oxford University Press.

Class 3 (9/23): Rational Choice Theory

Guest: Andy Kydd

- Kydd, Andrew. 2015. *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction.

Recommended

- Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49: 379-414.
- Gehlbach, Scott. 2006. "A Formal Model of Exit and Voice." *Rationality & Society* 18: 395-418.

Class 4 (9/30): Interpretive Approaches to Studying Politics

Guest: Erica Simmons

- Wedeen, Lisa. 2002. "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 96(4): 713-728.
- Schaffer, Frederic. 2016. *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 1-25.
- Fu, Diana, and Erica S. Simmons. 2021. "Ethnographic approaches to contentious politics: the what, how, and why." *Comparative Political Studies* 54(10): 1695-1721.
- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press. Introduction.

Class 5 (10/7): Political Theory

Guest: Joshua Dienstag

- Getachew, Adom and Mantena, Karuna. 2021. "Anticolonialism and the Decolonization of Political Theory." *Critical Times* 4(3): 359-388.
- Rawls, John. 2007. "Introduction: Remarks on Political Philosophy." In Samuel Freeman (Ed.), *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 1-20.
- Skinner, Quentin. 2002. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas." In *Visions of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4, pp. 57-89.
- Strauss, Leo. 1988. "What is Political Philosophy?" In *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 1.
- Wolin, Sheldon S. 2016. "Political Philosophy and Philosophy." In *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3-26.

Recommended

- Krause, Sharon. 2013. "Beyond Non-Domination: Agency, Inequality, and the Meaning of Freedom," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39(2): 187-208.

- Pocock, J.G.A. 2008. “Theory in History: Problems of Context and Narrative.” In *The Oxford Handbook Political Theory*, ed. John Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 163-174.
- Levy, Jacob T. 2016. “There is no such thing as ideal theory,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 33(1-2): 312-333.
- Farr, James. 2008. “The History of Political Thought as Disciplinary Genre.” In *The Oxford Handbook Political Theory*, ed. John Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 225-242.
- Mills, Charles. 2005. “‘Ideal Theory’ as Ideology?” *Hypatia* 20(3): 165-183.

II. Political Science as a Profession

Class 6 (10/14): The Dissertation

Guest: Jessica Weeks

- Barreca, Gina. 2011. “6 Easy – and Not So Easy – Pieces of Advice for Grad Students.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. May 28.
- Tilly, Charles. 2006. “Selecting a Dissertation Topic: Range and Scope.”
- Tilly, Charles. 2003. “All All-Purpose Questionnaire for Research Proposals.”
- Hall, Peter A. 1990. “Helpful Hints for Writing Dissertations in Comparative Politics” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 23(4): 596-8.
- Smith, Chris. 2018. “The planning fallacy: Why you miss your deadlines and how you can stop.” *Prolifiko*, May 9.

Recommended

- Review a few of the recent winners of APSA [Proposal and Dissertation Awards](#). Follow the links for each award to see past winners. Dissertations can be found through the UW library web site.

Class 7 (10/21): Making the Most of Graduate School

Guest: Marty Davidson

- Benson, Thomas, and Christina Boyes. 2022. “Health and Well-Being in Graduate School: Preventing Burnout.” APSA Preprints. doi: 10.33774/apsa-2022-2dsjl.
- Review <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>.
- Clay, Chad K. 2014. “What to Expect in Graduate School: A Primer.”
- Flaherty, Colleen. 2013. “If You Want to Be My Student.”
- Wilson, Rick. 2014. “Advice to Graduate Students from a Faculty Member.”
- See [UW–Madison, Political Science Advisor-Advisee meeting guidelines](#).
- Goemans, Hein. “Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research”
- University of Maryland, Division of Student Affairs. “Time Management Tips for Graduate Students”

Recommended

- Bennion, Elizabeth A. 2004. “The Importance of Peer Mentoring for Facilitating Professional and Personal Development.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(1): 111-13.

Class 8 (10/28): Writing Well and Strategies for Publishing

Guest: Steven Brooke

- King, Gary. 2006. “Publication, Publication.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 119-25.
- McLean, Iain et al. 2009. “Comparative Journal Ratings: A Survey Report.” *Political Studies Review* 7:18-38.
- Polsky, Andrew J. 2007. “Seeing Your Name in Print: Unpacking the Mysteries of the Review Process at Political Science Scholarly Journals.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40(3): 539-43.
- Merrill, Paul W. 1947. “The Principles of Poor Writing.” *The Scientific Monthly* 64(1): 72-74.
- Esarey, Justin, ed. 2015. “Special Issue on Peer Review” in *The Political Methodologist* 23(1):1-24.
- Orwell, George. 1946. “Politics and the English Language” in *Horizon* 13(76): 252-265.

Recommended

- O’Conner, Patricia T. 2010. *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe’s Guide to Better English in Plain English*. Riverhead Trade.
- Munger, Michael C. 2010. “[10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly.](#)” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* September 6.
- Myers, Charles T. 2004. “A Short Tour of Book Publishing for Political Scientists.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(3): 489-91.
- Thunder, David. 2004. “Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(3): 493-95.
- Van Cott, Donna Lee. 2005. “A Graduate Student’s Guide to Publishing Scholarly Journal Articles.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 38(4): 741-3.
- Strunk, William and E. B White. 2000. *The Elements of Style* Fourth ed. New York: Longman.

Class 9 (11/4): Ethics and Collaboration

Guest: Jonathan Renshon

- American Political Science Association. 2022. “A Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science.”
- Bohannon, John. 2016. “[About 40% of Economics Experiments Failed Replication Survey.](#)”
- McDermott, Rose and Peter K. Hatemi. 2010. “Emerging Models of Collaboration in Political Science: Changes, Benefits, and Challenges.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43(1): 49-58.
- Couzin, Jennifer. 2006. “Scientific Misconduct: Truth and Consequences.” *Science* 313(5791): 1222-26.

- Seligson, Mitchell A. 2008. "Human Subjects Protection and Large-N Research: When Exempt is Non-Exempt and Research is Non-Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41(3): 477-82.
- See [UW–Madison Human Research Protection Program](#).

Recommended

- Chandra, Kanchan et al. 2006. "Report of APSA Working Group on Collaboration."
- Cahn, Steven M. 1993. *Saints and Scamps: Ethics in Academia*. Revised ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Fylkesnes, Knut and Torgeir Knag Fylkesnes. 2003. "Informed Consent as Part and Parcel of the Scientific Inquiry." *Lancet* 361(9376): 2171-2.
- Ziman, John. 1998. "Why Must Scientists Become More Ethically Sensitive Than They Used To Be?" *Science* 282(5395): 1813-4.
- Review [Academic misconduct policies and resources at UW](#).

Class 10 (11/11): Finding Financial Support

Guest: Aili Tripp

- Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. 1995. "[The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions](#)."

Recommended

- Altman, Micah. 2009. "Funding, Funding." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(3): 521-6.
- Dalton, Russell and Randolph Silverson. 1998. "Gee! I've Never Spent 5.5 Million Before: The Six Fallacies of NSF Proposal Writing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 31(1): 74-6.
- Review [UW Research & Sponsored Programs web site](#).
- Review "[Dissertation Proposal Resources](#)."

Class 11 (11/18): Peeking Ahead at the Job Market and Tenure

Guest: Yoshiko Herrera

- CVs of recent successful ABD candidates, to be provided.

Recommended

- Hamermesh, Daniel S. 2011. "10 Tips for Junior Faculty." *Insider Higher Ed*. May 25.
- Miller, William J. and Bobbi Gentry. 2011. "Navigating the Academic Job Market in Treacherous Times." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(3): 578-82.
- Simien, Evelyn M. 2002. "On the Market: Strategies for the Successful Job Candidate." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35(3): 581-3.
- Gould, Jon B. and Scott Keeter. 2003. "No Second Chance at Making a Good First Impression: Peril and Possibility in the Campus Visit." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 36(4): 792-94.

- Stone, Jason. 2005. “Becoming a More Productive Researcher.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. February 17.
- Wuffle, A. 2006. “Uncle Wuffle’s Advice on Job Talks.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(4): 883-6.
- Straus, Scott and Aili Tripp. 2024. “Introduction: The Legacies of Crawford Young” in Straus, Scott and Aili Tripp, ed. *The State, Ethnicity and Gender in Africa: Intellectual Legacies of Crawford Young*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 3–23.

Class 12 (11/25): Becoming a Teacher

Guest: Michelle Schwarze

- Baum, Lawrence. 2002. “Enthusiasm in Teaching.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35(1): 87-90.
- Boice, Robert. 1991. “Quick Starters: New Faculty Who Succeed.” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 48: 111-21.
- Burmila, Edward M. 2010. “Graduate Students as Independent Instructors: Seven Things to Know about Teaching Your Own Course while in Graduate School.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43(3): 557-60.

Recommended

- Mattuck, Arthur P. 2009. *The Torch or the Firehose: A Guide to Section Teaching*.
- See [Madison Teaching and Learning Excellence](#).
- Review the [Discussion Project](#).

Class 13 (12/2): Bias and Representation in the Discipline

Guest: Nils Ringe

- Ackelsberg, Martha et al. 2004. “Remembering the ‘Life’ in Academic Life: Finding a Balance between Work and Personal Responsibilities in the Academy.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(4): 879-83.
- Catalinac, Amy. “Overcoming Barriers to Women’s Advancement in Political Science.”
- Kinsella, Helen and Maria Sanchez. 2023. “Gendered and Raced Inequities in the Discipline.” Working Paper.
- Martin, Lisa. 2016. “Gender, Teaching Evaluations, and Professional Success in Political Science,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(2): 313-319.
- Soss, Joe and Vesla Weaver. 2016. “Learning from Ferguson: Welfare, Criminal Justice, and the Political Science of Race and Class.” *The Politics of Racial and Class Inequalities in America*, APSA. Pp. 73-98.

Recommended

- See [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, Mentoring Map](#).
- Ainley, Kirsten, Ida Danewid and Joanne Yao. “[Challenging the gender citation gap: what journals can do.](#)”

- American Political Science Association. 2004. “[Women’s Advancement in Political Science: A Report of the APSA Workshop on the Advancement of Women in Academic Political Science in the United States.](#)” Pp. iii-vi, 1-13.
- Erez, Miriam. 1996. “Rhythms of an Academic’s Life: Crossing Cultural Borders” in *Rhythms of Academic Life*, ed. P. J. Frost and S. Taylor. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage. Pp. 19-29.
- Monroe, Kristen et al. 2008. “Gender Equality in Academia: Bad News from the Trenches, and Some Possible Solutions.” *Perspectives on Politics* 6(2): 215-33.

Class 14 (12/9): Professional Development in and out of Academia

Guest: Adeline Lo

- Benz, Jennifer. 2016. “Reflect, Then Prepare for a Career Outside the Academy.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(3): 504-6.
- Lau, Olivia and Ian Yohai. 2016. “Using Quantitative Methods in Industry.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(3): 524-6.
- Explore versatilephd.com. UW–Madison is a member, so you have access.
- See [Individual Development Plans](#).

Recommended

- Lowi, Theodore. 2004. “Memo to the APSA Task Force on Mentoring.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 34:325-6.