Political Science 800

“Political Science as a Discipline and Profession”

Fall 2015

Professor Scott Straus

Wednesdays 5:30-6:45
The Ogg Room

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 4:00-5:00pm; Thursdays 1:15-2:15pm; and by appointment

CONTACT: sstraus@wisc.edu and 608.263.1894

COURSE MATERIAL AVAILABLE AT THE Learn@UW site

CLASSLIST: polisci800-1-f15@lists.wisc.edu
Overview

This course provides an introduction to 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 policies. For our review of the profession, we will discuss matters both broad (e.g., the life of the scholar) and narrow (e.g., obtaining research grants) that are of interest to those building professional careers in political science, particularly in academia.

The purpose of the course is to provide an orientation to basic features 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—and some of our faculty—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.

Requirements

Active Participation. The quality of this seminar depends on the active participation of all students. Everyone is expected to digest 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, available on the course website at Learn@UW. The deadline for posting questions is 9 am the day of the seminar. I will share these comments with our guest faculty member before class. Please come to class prepared to discuss your comment, plus 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 a) at least one meeting of the workshop or colloquium for some other subfield, and at least one meeting of some other group (MAD, Political Behavior, the seminar series for an area center, etc.). By the last day of class, you should turn in a 2–4 page paper (hard copy), single-spaced, 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.

Final Grade. Your final grade for the seminar will be determined as follows: 50% for class participation and advance comments, 50% for attendance of colloquia and workshops and the related paper.
Readings and Schedule

Most readings are available through the learn@UW 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

Introduction: Syllabus
September 2

Positivism and Behavioralism
September 9
Guest: Noam Lupu

Required

Recommended

Rational Choice Theory
September 16
Guest: Andy Kydd

Required

Recommended
Political Theory
September 23
Guest: John Zumbrunnen

Required

Recommended

History and Ideas
September 30
Guest: Erica Simmons

Required

Recommended

Department and Disciplinary History
October 7
Guest: Crawford Young

Required

Recommended

**II. Political Science as a Profession**

**Writing Well**  
**October 14**  
Guest: Ryan Owens

**Recommended**

Readings from next week (Week of October 21)  

Strunk and White!

**Publishing Not Perishing**  
**October 21**  
Guest: David Canon

**Required**


**Recommended**

The Dissertation  
October 28  
Guest: Jonathan Renshon

Required  


Recommended

Review a few of the recent winners of APSA dissertation awards. (The 8 awards are listed at [http://www.apsanet.org/PROGRAMS/APSA-Awards](http://www.apsanet.org/PROGRAMS/APSA-Awards). Follow the navigation for each award to see past winners. Dissertations can be found through the UW library web site.)

Becoming a Teacher  
November 4  
Guest: Eleanor Powell

Required  


Edward M. Bumila. 2010. “Graduate Students as Independent Instructors: Seven Things to Know about Teaching Your Own Course while in Graduate School.” *PS* 44: 557-60.

Recommended  

Teaching and Learning Excellence at UW. [https://tle.wisc.edu](https://tle.wisc.edu)

Finding Financial Support  
November 11  
Guest: Jessica Weeks

Required  
Professional Ethics are Important
November 18
Guest: Rikhil Bhavnani

Required
John Bohannon, “Many Psychology Papers Fail Replication Test,” Science, August 28, 910-911
(email me for full article if you wish to read it).
UW-Madison SBS Human Research Protection Program:

Recommended
   Rowman and Littlefied.
Academic Misconduct policies at UW (Student Assistance & Judicial Affairs).
   <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>

No Class for Thanksgiving Holiday
November 25

Peeking Ahead to the Job Market (and Tenure)
December 2
Guest: Yoshiko Herrera

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

Recommended


**Life of the Scholar**

**December 9**

Guest: Lisa Martin

**Required**


**Recommended**

