Political Science 800

“Political Science as a Discipline and Profession”

Fall 2016

Professor Scott Straus

Wednesdays 5:30-6:45
The Ogg Room

OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 1:30-3:30 and by appointment

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COURSE MATERIAL AVAILABLE AT THE Learn@UW site

CLASSLIST: polisci800-1-f16@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 four 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. In addition, I would like you to meet with 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.

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 papers.
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 7

Positivism and Behavioralism
September 14
Guest: Barry Burden

Required

Recommended

Rational Choice Theory
September 21
Guest: Andy Kydd

Required

Recommended
Political Theory  
September 28  
Guest: Dan Kapust

Required  

Recommended  

Concepts and Cultures  
October 5  
Guest: Erica Simmons

Required  

Recommended  

Department and Disciplinary History  
October 12  
Guest: Crawford Young

Required  

Recommended  

II. Political Science as a Profession

Writing Well
**October 19**

Guest: Ryan Owens

**Recommended**

Readings from next week (Week of October 26)

Strunk and White!

**The Dissertation**

**October 26**

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. Follow the navigation for each award to see past winners. Dissertations can be found through the UW library web site.)

**Publishing Not Perishing**

**November 2**

Guest: Jon Pevehouse

**Required**


**Recommended**

Finding Financial Support
November 9
Guest: Jessica Weeks

Required

Recommended
UW Research & Sponsored Programs web site. http://www.rsp.wisc.edu/
Becoming a Teacher
November 16 (most likely moved to November 21—to discuss time)
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)

November 23: No Class for Thanksgiving Holiday

Ethics and Collaboration

November 30
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).
[http://www.grad.wisc.edu/hrpp/10046.htm](http://www.grad.wisc.edu/hrpp/10046.htm)

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

**Peeking Ahead to the Job Market (and Tenure)**
**December 7**
Guest: Yoshiko Herrera

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

**Recommended**
http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/05/25/10_tips_for_junior_faculty_members

**Life of the Scholar**
**December 14**
Guest: Lisa Martin

**Required**

**Recommended**
<http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/womeninpoliticalscience.pdf>