

## ***COURSE SYLLABUS***

Political Science 6350: Logic, Methodology and Scope of Political Science  
2:30-5:15 p.m., Wednesday, Fall Semester, 2010

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### ***Contact Information***

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### ***Course Information***

The general objective of this course is to present students with a rigorous approach to the guidelines, design, conduct, evaluation, and communication of state-of-the-science research in Political Science and related areas of academic inquiry. The specific objectives of the course are to help students learn to:

- describe and assess the logic of Political Science research in particular and of scientific research in general - that is, the state of an area of inquiry in terms of current contributions and future directions;
- describe and assess the scope of Political Science research - that is, the failures or successes of Political Science research programs in terms of making knowledge gains;
- describe, assess, and apply the methodologies of Political Science research - that is, the design, conduct, evaluation, and communication of research, in terms of the identification of interesting and important (and researchable) questions, the development of credible answers in terms of appropriate methodologies and strategies, and the communication and evaluation of research results.

### ***Required Books***

American Political Science Association. 2000. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, volume XXXIII. Special Issue: The Public Value of Political Science Research. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association. Available at [http://www.apsanet.org/content\\_13155.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/content_13155.cfm)

Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H.T. Reynolds with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Polsby, Nelson W., ed. 1998-2008. *Annual Review of Political Science*. Palo Alto: Annual Reviews. Available through UTD McDermott Library EBSCO Host, at <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&jid=84B&site=ehost-live>

### ***Calendar***

**August 25. An Introduction to The Course.**

**September 1-22. The Logic, Scope and Value of Political Science Research.**

September 1 - No class meeting - Professor research presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C. - Logic, Scope and Value of Political Science Essay and In-Class Presentation due September 8.

September 8. Science (Logic, Scope and Value) of Political Science Essay and In-Class Presentation based on the following readings:

*Required Reading*

Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, chs. 1-2.

*PS: Political Science & Politics:*

George, Alexander L., "Strategies for Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution: Scholarship for Policymaking," pp. 15-19.

Munger, Michael C., "Political Science and Fundamental Research," pp. 25-30.

Ostrom, Elinor, "The Danger of Self-Evident Truths," pp. 33-44.

Siverson, Randolph M., "The Contributions of International Politics Research to Policy," pp. 59-64.

Polsby, ed., *Annual Review of Political Science* – Any 1 of the following 4 sets:

Engerman, Stanley L. and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, "Debating the Role of Institutions in Political and Economic Development: Theory, History, and Findings," v. 11: pp. 119-135.

Geddes, Barbara, "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?," v. 2: pp. 115-144.

Treisman, Daniel, "What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?," v. 10: pp. 211-244.

*OR*

Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," v. 4: pp. 391-416.

Huth, Paul K., "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Implications," v. 2: pp. 25-48.

Walt, Stephen M., "The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations," v. 8: pp. 23-48.

*OR*

Baum, Lawrence, "The Supreme Court in American Politics," v. 6: pp. 161-180.

Graber, Mark A., "Constructing Judicial Review," v. 8: pp. 425-451.

Helmke, Gretchen and Frances Rosenbluth, "Regimes and the Rule of Law: Judicial Independence in Comparative Perspective," v. 12: pp. 345-366.

*OR*

Bowles, Nigel, "Studying The Presidency," v. 2: pp. 1-23.

Hart, John, "Neglected Aspects of The Study of the Presidency," v. 1: pp. 379-399.

Polsby, Nelson W. and Eric Schickler, "Landmarks in The Study of Congress since 1945," v. 5: pp. 333-367.

September 15-22. (Some) Philosophy of Science.

*Required Reading*

Polsby, ed. *Annual Review of Political Science:*

Polsby, Nelson W., "Social Science and Scientific Change: A Note on Thomas S. Kuhn's Contribution," v.1: pp. 199-210.

Thompson, Dennis F., "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science," v. 11: 521-538.

Mutz, Diana C., "Is Deliberative Democracy a Falsifiable Theory?," v. 11: 521-538.

*Recommended Reading*

In Martin Curd and J.A. Cover, eds. 1998. *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues*. New York: W.W. Norton:

Popper, Karl, "Science: Conjectures and Refutations," pp. 3-10.

Kuhn, Thomas S., "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research," 11-19.

Kuhn, Thomas S., "The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions," pp. 86-101.

Lakatos, Imre, "Science and Pseudoscience," pp. 20-26.

Feyerabend, Paul K., "How to Be a Good Empiricist – A Plea for Tolerance in Matters Epistemological," pp. 922-949.

In Ian Hacking, ed. 1981. *Scientific Revolutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press:

Feyerabend, Paul, "How To Defend Society Against Science," pp. 156-167.

**September 29-November 24. The Methodology of Political Science Research.**

September 29-October 6. Criteria for Identifying An Interesting and Important (and Researchable) Question.

*Required Reading*

Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, chs. 3, 6.

October 13. First In-Class Exercise on Hypotheses, Concepts and Variables.

October 13-20. Research Tools: Measurement and Sampling.

*Required Reading*

Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, chs. 4, 7.

October 27. Second In-Class Exercise on Measurement and Sampling.

October 27-November 3. Research Tools: Experimental and Non-Experimental Designs.

*Required Reading*

Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, ch. 5.

Polsby, ed., *Annual Review of Political Science*:

Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elmen, "Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods," v. 9: 503-27.

De Rooij, Eline, Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, "Field Experiments on Political Behavior and Collective Action," v. 12: 389-95.

Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development," v. 12: 367-78.

McDermott, Rose, "Experimental Methods in Political Science," v. 5: 31-61.

November 10. Third In-Class Exercise on Experimental and Non-Experimental Designs.

November 10-17. Research Tools: Direct and Indirect Observation and Content and Document Analysis Designs.

*Required Reading*

Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, chs. 8-9.

November 24. Fourth In-Class Exercise on Direct and Indirect Observation and on Content and Document Analysis Designs.

November 24-December 1. Research Tools: Survey Research.

*Required Reading*

Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, ch. 10.

*PS: Political Science & Politics*:

Brady, Henry E., "Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science," pp. 47-57.  
The 2009-10 British Election Study. Available at <http://bes2009-10.org>

## **December 1. Research Design Papers Due and Presented.**

### ***Grading Criteria and Assignments***

Class participation = 20%; Science of Political Science Essay = 20%; 4 In-Class Written Exercises @ 10%; Research Design Paper = 20%.

A+: 95-100%; A-: 90-94; B+: 83-89; B: 77-82; B-: 70-76; C+: 65-69; C: 60-64; F: Below 60%.

Class Participation: Regular attendance; Assigned reading prior to the class meeting when it will be discussed; Class presentations based on assigned readings; Constructive and frequent contributions to seminar discussions.

Science (Logic, Scope and Value) of Political Science) Essay: A double-spaced, typed, 3-page essay that: (1) describes the key points made by Johnson and Reynolds, chs. 1-2, and by *PS* articles paired with your selection of one of four sets of Required Reading, as follows:

(A) George, Alexander L., "Strategies for Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution: Scholarship for Policymaking," AND Siverson, Randolph M., "The Contributions of International Politics Research to Policy."

*Paired with:*

(Ai) Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics;" Huth, Paul K., "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Implications;" and, Walt, Stephen M., "The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations."

*OR*

(Aii) Engerman, Stanley L. and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, "Debating the Role of Institutions in Political and Economic Development: Theory, History, and Findings;" Geddes, Barbara, "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?;" and, Treisman, Daniel, "What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?."

*OR*

(B) Munger, Michael C., "Political Science and Fundamental Research," AND Ostrom, Elinor, "The Danger of Self-Evident Truths."

*Paired with:*

(Bi) Baum, Lawrence, "The Supreme Court in American Politics;" Graber, Mark A., "Constructing Judicial Review;" and, Helmke, Gretchen and Frances Rosenbluth, "Regimes and the Rule of Law: Judicial Independence in Comparative Perspective."

*OR*

(Bii) Bowles, Nigel, "Studying The Presidency;" Hart, John, "Neglected Aspects of The Study of the Presidency;" and Polsby, Nelson W. and Eric Schickler, "Landmarks in The Study of Congress since 1945."

(2) based on the readings in (1) above, suggests one topic that can be studied scientifically and another topic that might not be studied scientifically;

(3) based on (1) and (2) above, discusses why.

Essays and In-Class Presentations due September 8. Students are expected to comply with this date.

4 In-Class Written Exercises: Each of the four exercises is in-class, is open-text/open-note, and consists of 3-5 straightforward, written exercises that are based on the Johnson and Reynolds chapters announced above, and are done within the first 30-40 minutes of each class date as announced above (that is, October 13, October 27, November 10, and November 24). The fifth exercise is a brief (5-6 minute) oral presentation of your research design paper, scheduled for December 1. All students are expected to comply with these dates – no makeups will be given.

Research Design Paper: A double-spaced, typed, 8-page paper that:

- states an interesting and important research question, and justifies why it is so (1 page);
- reviews a selection of relevant research literature (see Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 6) that includes scholarly chapters in edited volumes (such as *Annual Review of Political Science*) and/or in scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals in either a chronological (date-of-publication) order or a knowledge-production (set-of-ideas) form (3 pages);
- articulates an empirically testable hypothesis, identifies its independent and dependent variables, precisely defines the core concepts associated with these variables, and discusses what several indicators or measures of these variables would be (2 pages);
- discusses appropriate sampling considerations as well as appropriate research design (methodologies of data collection) needed to test the hypothesis and to try to provide an answer to the research question (2 pages).
- lists endnotes and references in appropriate form.

Due December 1 – All students are expected to comply with this date.

#### *Note*

In addition to the above, students are expected to:

- know that this syllabus, including calendar/timelines, is subject to change at the discretion of the Professor;
- access and read related policy material at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>