

PSCI 401
Fall 2017
LWH 3094
M 7:05-9:45pm
3 credit hours

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Classics of Political Science
College of Arts and Sciences Syllabus

An examination of selected classics of the discipline of political science, with a special emphasis on major contributions of the modern era. This course provides students with an opportunity for close analysis of complex works in political science.

Required Texts

There are four required texts for this course:

- Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Expanded Edition)
- E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*
- Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*
- Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*

Course Learning Objectives

This course is intended to give students background and skills for use in their graduate career in the field of Political Science. Substantial reading and writing is required, as well as informed class discussions. Students are expected not only to learn the substantive material, but also to apply the theories they learn across multiple areas. By the end of the semester students should have an understanding of how scholars in this field do their work and learn about how to produce scholarly work of their own.

Academic Integrity Policy

By enrolling in this course, you are bound by the NEIU Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.neiu.edu/university-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-code-conduct>. You will be informed by your instructor of any additional policy specific to your course regarding plagiarism, class disruptions, etc.

ADA Statement

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To request accommodations, students with special needs should make arrangements with the Student Disability Services (SDS) office, located on the main campus in room D104. Contact SDS via (773) 442-4595 or <http://www.neiu.edu/university-life/student-disability-services>.

Campus Safety

Web links to Campus Safety: Emergency Procedures and Safety Information can be found on NEIUport on the MyNEIU tab or as follows:
http://homepages.neiu.edu/~neiuemp/Emergency_Procedures/MainCampus/.

Course Requirements

- 1) Complete all readings on schedule. If you miss a class, email me for the next reading assignment, as the schedule may change. Bring the assigned readings with you to class.
- 2) Attend on time and actively participate in class discussions. In a graduate seminar full participation by all students is central to creating productive discussions, so this makes up a large percentage of your grade. The base participation grade is a B which can rise or fall based on your contributions in class. Those who arrive more than 5 minutes late, or who leave in the middle of class, will be marked for half of an absence. During week 6 of the semester I will update you as to your current participation grade, so that you will have an opportunity for improvement. Use of electronic devices such as phones or music players during class is prohibited. Laptops/tablets are permitted for note-taking only.
- 3) Keep up with the news. We will frequently discuss current events as they relate to the concepts we are discussing in class. This way, we will be able to connect what can be abstract ideas to real-world outcomes. Read a newspaper, visit cnn.com, or do anything that helps makes you an informed citizen.
- 4) Take the final exam. It will be in take-home form.
- 5) Complete all required writing assignments. **Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late** (barring serious emergencies, which must be documented). For the purposes of this course, "late" is defined as submitted through D2L after the class starting time on the due date of the assignment. I will not accept submissions via email or in hard copy. Do not wait to the last moment to submit assignments.

All written assignments must be typed in a 12 point font, double spaced, with one-inch margins, and have page numbers. Papers not meeting these criteria will be penalized.

Writing Assignment #1: You will write 4 response papers based on the assigned class readings. Papers are due on the day of the assigned readings. You may not write more than one per class

and you may not submit more than 4 in total. Each essay will proceed in the following order: First, briefly summarize the readings assigned for that day's class. Then answer the response questions listed below the readings on the syllabus. (Cite all your sources appropriately.) **Please note:** not every week has a response paper option, so plan ahead!

Once you have received a grade on your paper, I will give you the option of revising it, if you wish. All revisions are due within one week of when you receive your grade.

Writing Assignment #2: You will write a literature review of an area of Political Science that interests you. No later than **October 16th** you will submit a proposal for my approval. This proposal must specify an area of political science you would like to investigate further. It must include both the general subfield (American, Comparative, International Relations, or Political Theory) as well as the specific topic you are going to address and an initial outline of sources.

This assignment is graded Approved/Not Approved. Once your proposal is approved you may proceed with your paper. You may not submit a completed literature review until your proposal has been approved. I am open-minded as to potential topics but will be happy to make suggestions, if you wish.

Your paper must be at least 8 pages and include appropriate references (either footnotes or parenthetical style is acceptable) as well as a bibliography. Your paper must be submitted no later than **November 27th**. You will also have the opportunity, if you wish, to revise your paper after it is returned to you. If you choose to submit a revision you must do so no later than **December 11th**.

Grading

Work conducted towards the end of the semester will be more heavily weighted in my mind when dispensing final grades; in other words, *improvement counts*.

Attendance/Participation: 20%
Response papers: 30%
Literature Review: 25%
Final: 25%

90-100 A
80-89 B
70-79 C
60-69 D
Below 60 F

Incompletes will only be given for valid, documented emergencies.

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM: Any student found plagiarizing work will receive a grade of **zero** for that assignment and an **F** for the course. You will also be reported to the University for violating the academic integrity policy. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: direct copying

of material that is not your own, copying the material even while providing a citation, or copying ideas without proper attribution. **It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism; if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask!**

Schedule of Classes and Exams

August 28th: Introduction – Political Science and Scholarship

September 4th – No classes – Labor Day

September 11th: How to Think About Social Science

The American Political Science Association: APSA organized sections,
www.apsanet.org/sections

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, “The *Science* in Social Science,” chapter 1 of *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 3-33. [D2L]

James Mahoney, “After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research,” *World Politics* 62:1 (January 2010): 120-147. [D2L]

Response questions:

1. Explain KKV’s perspective on what social science is supposed to do, and contrast that with Mahoney’s views. Which argument do you think best explains the nature of social scientific research? Provide an example.

September 18th: Methods of Studying Political Science

David Austen-Smith, “Economic Methods in Positive Political Theory,” *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. [D2L]

James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “Elaborating the ‘New Institutionalism,’” *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. [D2L]

Charles Tilly, “Why and How History Matters,” *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. [D2L]

Response questions:

1. To what extent are economic methods of understanding the world relevant to analyzing politics?
2. Compare the “new institutionalism” to Tilly’s exploration of why history matters.

September 25th: Methods of Studying Political Science, part II

Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, “Beyond the Iconography of Order: Notes for a ‘New Institutionalism,’” in Lawrence C. Dodd and Calvin Jillson, eds., *The Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches and Interpretations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 311-330. [D2L]

Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 94:2 (June 2000): 251-267. [D2L]

Paul Pierson, “Not Just What, but *When*: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes,” *Studies in American Political Development* 14:1 (Spring 2000): 72-92. [D2L]

Response questions:

1. Based on these readings, explain why “history matters” is by itself insufficient as an explanation of the relevance of studying politics from a historical perspective. Provide a specific example of a case where this can be demonstrated.

October 2nd: Democracy and the Madisonian System

James Madison, *Federalist* #10 and #51 [D2L]

Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, chapters 1 and 2

Response questions:

1. Explain Madison’s theory of faction from *Federalist* #10 and describe his proposed solutions.
2. Explain Dahl’s disagreements with Madison’s theory of politics, specifically why he disagrees with Madison’s protections for minority views.

October 9th – No classes – Fall Break

October 16th: Polyarchy

Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, chapters 3, 4, 5, and Afterword

October 23rd: Democracy and Conflict

E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, chapters 1-4

October 30th: Democracy and the Public

E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, chapters 5-8

Response questions:

1. According to Schattschneider, is the United States a democratic nation? How does he define “democracy”, and does the U.S. meet those criteria?
2. To what extent does Schattschneider agree or disagree with Dahl?

November 6th: Civic Engagement and Social Capital

Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, chapters 1-9

Response questions:

1. Does Putnam have a theory of American democracy? What evidence does he use to make his case? Are you convinced by the evidence he provides (and why or why not)?

November 13th: Social Capital and its Effects

Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, chapters 10, 15, 16, 21, and 22

November 20th: History and Social Capital

Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, chapters 23 and 24, and Appendix I, II, and III

Response questions:

1. Does Putnam have a theory of American democracy? After having read the book, do you agree or disagree with his theory, and why? Be as specific as possible in your response.

November 27th: Critiques of *Bowling Alone*

Keith E. Whittington, “Revisiting Tocqueville’s America: Society, Politics, and Association in the Nineteenth Century,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 42:1 (September 1998): 21-32. [D2L]

Bob Edwards and Michael W. Foley, “Civil Society and Social Capital Beyond Putnam,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 42:1 (September 1998): 124-139. [D2L]

Simon Szreter, “The State of Social Capital: Bringing Back in Power, Politics, and History,” *Theory and Society* 31:5 (October 2002): 673-621. [D2L]

December 4th: Civic Engagement, Revisited

Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*, chapters 1-4

Response questions:

1. What evidence does Skocpol provide in support of her argument regarding the changes to American civic life? What methods did Skocpol use to gather that evidence?

December 11th: Civic Engagement and Democracy

Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*, chapters 5-7

Response questions:

1. Does Skocpol agree or disagree with Putnam's thesis about social capital? To what extent does her work prove or disprove Putnam's argument?

FINAL EXAM DUE: December 13th at midnight