

Political Science 7961: Seminar on Scope and Methods

Fall 2018

Class Meeting: Friday 9:00-11:50

Class Location: 210 Stubbs

Instructor: David Sobek

Office Hours: Thursday 9:00-10:00

Wednesday 9:00-10:00

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Office Location: 211 Stubbs

Office Number: 578-2134

Summary:

This class is the introduction to the study of research methods of political science. The course has two main goals. First, it is a broader introduction to the key debates within the philosophy of science literature. In other words, how do we learn about a subject and how do we know that we learned something. These are questions that are not specific to any sub-field in political science nor even to political science but are vital any endeavor that claims to be scientific.

The second goal of the course is more practical and that is to introduce the basic methods used in political science. There are numerous methods used and as such this course only provides a broad overview of the various approaches and discusses the benefits and costs of each approach. In addition, the course will provide an overview of how one designs and implements a research project starting from the research question to the completed manuscript.

Brief Overview of Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: 20% of final grade.

Research questions: 5% of final grade

Research pages: 10% of final grade

Literature reviews: 15%

Final Paper Assignment: 25% of final grade.

Final Exam: 25% of final grade.

Reading assignments

Many of the readings for this course come from the books. Significant portions of the readings, however, come from articles that you will need to acquire. For each week the assignments are listed in a specific order meant to demonstrate the development of the literature. Please read them in the order that they are listed.

Required Books:

Chalmers, A.F. 1976. *What is this thing called Science? 4th Edition*. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

ISBN-13: 978-1624660382

ISBN-10: 162466038X

Green, Donald P. and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven, CT. Yale University Press.

ISBN-13: 978-0300066364

ISBN-10: 0300066368

Hoover, Kenneth and Todd Donovan. 1995. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking. 11th Edition*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

ISBN-13: 978-1133607670

ISBN-10: 1133607675

Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

ISBN-13: 978-0226458120

ISBN-10: 0226458121

Voegelin, Eric. 1987(1952). *The New Science of Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

ISBN-13: 978-4880592909

ISBN-10: 4880592900

Grading System:

Attendance and Participation (20%): Attendance and participation account for 20% of your final

Week 1 (August 24th): Introduction

Philosophy of Science

Week 2 (August 31st): What is Science and its Limits?
Chalmers, Chapters 1-7

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Arendt, Hannah. 2004. "Philosophy and Politics." *Social Research*. 57(3): 427-54.

References for Examples of their Method of Analysis

Voegelin, Eric. 1987(1952). *The New Science of Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, Hannah. 1953. "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government." *The Review of Politics*