Course Outline POLI 338, Sec. A01

January-April 2018

Approaches to Political Analysis

Wednesday 1.30 pm-5:20 pm

Room: – MAC D109

Instructor: Dr. Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay

Email: reeta@uvic.ca

Office hours and location: Monday 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm or by appointment, DTB A308

We acknowledge and respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the University stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day

Course Description:

This course intends to introduce students of political science to a variety of approaches in the social sciences. It is designed to help students to design their research projects by developing some familiarity with current methodological debates and by asking a fundamental question: how and to what extent is it possible to combine different perspectives into a coherent research design? This course underscores the fact that there is no single approach to political science, and, there is no unique ‘best’ approach to understanding and explaining complex political phenomena. There is an on-going debate among political scientists regarding the validity of several competing and complementary approach. Instead we will learn in this course that there is a plurality of approaches and we ought to consider the validity of each approach.

The course is divided into three parts: the first part introduces students to the traditional dominant paradigms in political science and the genesis of the behaviour revolution; the second part examines the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of various approaches; the third part details the theoretical underpinnings/assumptions/frameworks/concepts of different approaches in political science. Although this course does not deal with Methods (tools), we will conclude the course with a discussion of research design – introducing the students to concepts and concept formation and the comparative method.

Required Text


Additional Required Readings posted on Course Spaces.

For the Final Exam, you will be tested on your understanding of the lecture material, the text book as well as readings assigned under the Discussion Case heading.
Course Spaces

Course Spaces is an online learning resource provided by the University of Victoria. The POLI 338 page provides important course material such as the syllabus and information on the various course assignments. The additional materials for the course is posted to the POLI 338 page.

Evaluation Criteria

This course emphasizes critical analysis and open discussion of the weekly readings, as well as the development of your research and writing skills. Final grades are broken down accordingly:

Midterm Exam: Wednesday February 7 20%
Review Papers: Wednesday April 4 20%
Final Exam: (Examination Period) 45%
Participation Throughout 15%

Attendance, Assignments, and Grading:

The UVic Academic Calendar states: “Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled.” Attendance will be taken, and any student who attends fewer than 70 percent of scheduled class sessions will be assigned a grade of “N” for the course. Students must complete all assignments (see Course Requirements) in order to get credit for the course.

The Learning Environment:

The UVic Academic Calendar notes: “The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment.” Students and community partners have diverse views on the issues discussed in this course, and we seek to create an environment in which all perspectives – including those of the instructors – can be analyzed critically in a respectful fashion.

Grading Policies and Academic Integrity:

Students must complete all assignments in order to get credit for the course. Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades as follows:

- 90-100% = A+
- 85-89% = A
- 80-84% = A-
- 77-79% = B+
- 73-76% = B
- 70-72% = B-
- 65-69% = C+
- 60-64% = C
- 50-59% = D
- Below 50% = F
Complete overview of University of Victoria’s undergraduate grading system:

http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2013/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html

As per University of Victoria policy, you must complete all assignments. Failure to do so will result in a grade of ‘N’ (incomplete) for the course.

Participation

I strongly encourage you to come to class prepared with questions and/or observations regarding the course material and the cases that we are examining. Your participation mark will be based on the quality of your discussion. Active attendance and participation in broader class discussion are important aspects of this course. See above: Attendance, Assignments, and Grading.

Review Papers:

You are to select two journal articles (the journal should be peer reviewed and each article should have a minimum length of 15 pages). Your job is three fold: a) identify what approach or approaches the author is using; b) how the author explains the research question (argument/thesis) using the approach/s; c) your evaluation – how sound is the author’s analysis and whether there could have been an alternative approach which might have worked better. The total length of your review is 10 to 12 typed (double-spaced) pages – 5 to 6 pages for each article.

You need my approval for the journal articles. Please send me by an e-mail the two articles (in pdf form) you have selected by March 15th.

Please submit your essay before the deadline of 5:00 PM on Wednesday April 7. I will grant deadline extensions only in the event of an illness, an emergency, or on compassionate grounds (with documentation provided in each scenario). Late papers will be penalized 3% a day (including weekends), and papers handed in after April 4 will not be marked (unless I have granted an extension).

Midterm Exam: It will be a 60 minutes exam, short questions plus one essay.

Final Exam

The final exam will take place during the examination period. It is a written exam, two to three essay questions and will last for two hours. The exam will be cumulative and will cover both readings (text book as well as Discussion Case readings) and lecture material from the entire course.

Class Participation

Active attendance and participation in broader class discussion are important aspects of this course. See above: Attendance, Assignments, and Grading. I strongly encourage you to come to class prepared to discuss the readings as well as with questions and/or observations regarding the course material and the cases that we are examining.

Classroom Etiquette and Collegiality

I expect appropriate and respectful behaviour from everyone in the course. You are in this class to learn and that requires your full and undivided attention. Accordingly, please arrive to class on time. Laptops are only permitted in class for taking notes. Further, texting is not permitted and cell phones must be
Students must also be respectful to each other and to each other’s contributions to class discussion.

**Accessibility**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations http://rcsd.uvic.ca/. The sooner you let them know your needs the quicker they can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The **responsibility of the institution** - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The **responsibility of the student** - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar.

[It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity:](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)

[Useful information from the University on plagiarism and tips on how to avoid it:](http://library.uvic.ca/instruction/cite/documents/avoiding_plagiarism.pdf)

**Course Experience Survey (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.
Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1

Introduction to the Course, What is Politics? The Study of Political Science; Paradigms, Approaches and Methods – Conceptual Clarity; Shift from dominant paradigms to a Wider Set of Approaches (Old Institutionalism, Pluralism/neo-Pluralism; Elite theory and Marxism/neo-Marxism)


Ralph Miliband “Poulantzas and the Capitalist State” New Left Review I/82 (Nov 1973), 83-92


Week 2 and 3

Shift from dominant paradigms to a Wider Set of Approaches (Old Institutionalism, Pluralism/neo-Pluralism; Elite theory and Marxism/neo-Marxism)


Ralph Miliband “Poulantzas and the Capitalist State” New Left Review I/82 (Nov 1973), 83-92


http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html

Week 3

Behaviour Revolution (Making the Study of Politics Scientific); Distinction from the Normative Study of Politics


Discussion of the Readings for Weeks 1 and 2

Week 4

Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science – What we study? How we know things? Positivists; Post-Positivists; Constructivists, Interpretivists; and Humanistic ontologies and epistemologies


Week 5

Rational Choice Approach


Pankaj Mishra, “Welcome to the age of anger”.
https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/dec/08/welcome-age-anger-brexit-trump?CMP=share_btn_link

Dan McLaughlin, “In Defense of Trump Voters

Week 6 and 7

Midterm

Political Economy Approach: intersection of politics and economy


Discussion of the Readings for Weeks 4,5,6

Reading Break

Week 7 and 8

New Institutionalism (Historical, Sociological and Rational Choice)


**Week 9**

Feminism; different approaches to the Feminist thought


O.P. Maria Riley, “A Feminist Political Economic Framework”

Discussion of the Readings for Weeks 7, 8, 9

**Week 10**

Intersectionality

Ahir Gopaldas, “Intersectionality 101” Journal of Public Policy & Marketing Vol. 32 (Special Issue) 2013

Centred: Together Equal Different, “intersectionality literature review”

[http://www.centred.org.uk/content/intersectionality-literature-review](http://www.centred.org.uk/content/intersectionality-literature-review)

**Week 11**

Ethnographic Research


Discussion of the Readings for Weeks 11 and 12
Week 12

Research Design (Concepts and Concept formation and the Comparative Method) and Review of the Course


Week 13

Review Class

Review Paper due: April 4, 2018