Course Description
This course is an introduction to the profession of political science. In it we will explore the practice of political inquiry. Put differently, we will explore how one can acquire understanding about political phenomena. More specifically, we will investigate the following topics.

1. Philosophy of Science: Ontology and Epistemology
2. Puzzles, Questions, Research Agendas & Writing a Paper
3. Causal Claims
   - Causation
   - Conceptualization
   - Hypotheses
4. What is a Theory and How does One Create One?
   - Logic: Deduction
   - From Assumptions to Implications
   - Modeling
     - Non-formal Models
     - Formal Models
5. Evaluating Theories
   - Overview
   - Hypothesis Testing
     - Measuring Concepts
     - Inference
     - Experiments
     - Empiricism: Ad Hoc Hypothesis Testing
– Observations (or Cases)
  * Large-N: Randomization
  * Small-N: Case Selection
  * Quasi-Experiments: Assigning Treatments

**Evaluation (aka Grades)**
You will be evaluated over three criteria:

(1) Class participation which will account for 40% of your final grade.
(2) A research proposal that will account for 30% of your final grade.
(3) A final exam that will account for 30% of your grade.

**Class Participation**
This is a seminar, not a lecture course. As such, you are expected to [1] do the reading and arrive prepared to discuss it, and [2] actively participate in the seminar. To be more explicit, for each class meeting I will assign you a participation grade as follows:

A (excellent): The student participated strongly and frequently, making insightful comments that contributed to our collective understanding.
A- (very good): The student contributed frequently with a mix of excellent and average quality of comments, or student spoke infrequently, but made excellent comments.
B+ (good): The student contributed meaningfully to the class discussion by asking good questions and/or exhibiting a grasp of the material s/he discussed, but did not make excellent comments or spoke infrequently.
B (satisfactory): The student participated, but discussion exhibited a limited grasp of the material, or a good grasp of material, but only spoke once
C (poor): The student spoke, but did not address the assigned material.
F (unsatisfactory): The student did not speak in class.

I advise those of you who are shy or reserved to check that personality trait at the door as I cannot give you credit for class participation unless you participate. However, there will also be an opportunity to earn participation credit by posting on the Discussion Board on the Blackboard course site—in advance of class—questions requesting clarification on points you did not understand in the assigned reading. Posting questions is a supplement to, but not a whole replacement for, participation in seminar discussion.

I will only count the top 12 scores when calculating your participation grade (i.e., I will drop the three lowest scores).

**Research Design Paper**
For the research design paper assignment you must outline a specific research question in the study of politics, make the case that this is something that warrants study, generate one
or more empirically falsifiable hypotheses, and present a research design and the method(s) and data you will use to test the hypothesis or hypotheses. The key here is to focus on the following:

1. The puzzle or question that motivates the proposed research
   - Identify the place of your proposed research in the literature
2. The theory that provides an answer to the question
   - Domain of theory
   - Concepts
   - Assumptions
   - Causal Mechanisms
3. The hypotheses implied by the theory
4. The research design that will enable you to draw inferences about your hypotheses
   - Spatial-temporal domain
   - Sample
   - Operational definitions
   - Inferential method

Please note that this is not a research paper, it is a research proposal. Please do not focus on the specific data set you plan to use or the estimation technique you will employ. These are important parts of the paper; they are not the main emphasis.

You might think of this as a trial run for your dissertation prospectus, as that will be a similar document. However, this is actually the proposal for a research project you will complete in your second semester as part of the Methods III course.

I will take the lead helping you with the research design portion of the paper (assuming you stop by and seek such assistance, which I recommend). You need to find a faculty member with whom to work on the substantive/theoretical portion of the paper.\(^1\) In the past we have organized a series of faculty presentations that first year students were required to attend, but that was rather a grind for all involved, so this year we are asking you to make appointments with faculty who you think you may want to work with so that you can discuss their research and your interests. Send her/him an email message requesting a meeting to discuss your 1st year paper project. You may want to bring to that meeting ideas of your own that connect to or build on the research s/he is doing, or you may simply ask her/him to suggest a project.

\(^1\)If you have an interest in political violence you might work with me.
Once you have settled on a research topic, the question that motivates the project, and a theory that implies one or more hypotheses, send me an email message briefly describing those three elements, and copy the faculty member who will be supervising the substantive/theoretical portion of the project. You must send me such an email message by Friday 13 October at the latest.

With respect to style, please refer to the *Style Manual for Political Science* (American Political Science Association, 2001). The papers are required to comply with that guide.

The paper is due at 9:00 am on Monday 10 December. Late papers will receive a $2/3^\text{rd}$ grade deduction per day late (i.e., an A will become a B). While it is not required, I strongly recommend that you get a draft of the paper to both myself and your supervisor by Wednesday 7 November.

**Final Exam**
The final exam is a cumulative, in class short answer and essay exam. The exam is scheduled for Wed 12 Dec from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. I will pass out a study sheet for the exam toward the end of the semester.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ 98-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A  93-97</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-  90-92</td>
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<td>B+ 88-89</td>
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<td>B  83-87</td>
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<td>B-  80-82</td>
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<td>C+ 78-79</td>
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<td>C  73-77</td>
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<td>C-  70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+ 68-69</td>
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<td>D  63-67</td>
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<td>D-  60-62</td>
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<td>F  0-59</td>
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</tbody>
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*Posting Grades*
After the term is complete, grades will be posted using the last 6 digits of the student’s ID #. If you would prefer that your grade not be posted, please notify me and I will remove it from the sheet that is posted.

*Academic Honesty*
With respect to academic honesty, FSU students are governed by an honor code and you are advised to familiarize yourself with this policy (see the Student Handbook which is available in paper or via the WWW). Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated: it will lead to a zero on the assignment, and will likely lead to dismissal from the program.

*Accommodating Challenges*
Students with challenges who require individualized testing or other accommodations should identify themselves to the instructor and express their needs during the first week of class. Where the challenge is not immediately apparent, verification will be required. The Department of Political Science is happy to do whatever it can to assure each student a full and rewarding participation in our courses.
**Reading**

You will want to purchase the following books at your favorite online vendor (NB: I did not order them for the bookstore):


The other reading materials will be available on the BlackBoard site for the course or online. The readings available on the BlackBoard site are marked with the ‡ symbol. To find the others I recommend going to http://scholar.google.com/ or the Electronic Journals page of the FSU Library website.

**Reading Assignments**

1. **Philosophy of Science: Ontology & Epistemology**

   **Fri 31 Aug:**

   - Cohen & Nagel. 2002[1934]. *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, chap XX.
Fri 7 Sep:

- Clark, William, Matt Golder & Sona Golder. 2006. “What is Science?”‡
- Additional Recommended Reading:

2 Puzzles, Questions, Research Agendas & Writing a Paper

Fri 14 Sep:

- Examples:
Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*, Cambridge University Press, pp. xii-xiii.‡


Additional Recommended Reading:


First year paper assignment distributed in class.

### 3 Causal Claims

#### 3.1 Causation

Fri 21 Sep:


• Recommended Additional Reading:

#### 3.2 Conceptualization

**Fri 28 Sep:**


• Cohen & Nagel. 2002[1934], pp. 30-33, 223-33, 238-44.


• Examples:
3.3 Hypotheses

- Hypothesis, available online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypothesis

4 What is a Theory and How does one Create One?

Fri 5 Oct:

- Theory, online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory

4.1 Logic: Deduction & Induction


3NB: This week we are reading two sub-sections in addition to the wikipedia entry: “Logic: Deduction & Induction” and “From Assumptions (axioms) to Implications (hypotheses).”
4.2 From Assumptions (axioms) to Implications (hypotheses)

- Cohen & Nagel. 2002[1934], pp. 129-33, 202-06, chap XI.

4.3 Modeling

Fri 12 Oct:¹


- Recommended Additional Readings:

¹NB: This week we are reading two sub-sub-sections: one on “Non-Formal Models” (aka verbal or natural language models) and one on “Formal Models.”
4.3.1 Non-Formal Models

- Examples:

4.3.2 Formal Models

- Examples:
- Recommended Additional Readings:
5 Evaluating Theories

5.1 Overview

Fri 19 Oct:


5.2 Hypothesis Testing

5.2.1 Measuring Concepts

- Operationalization, available online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operationalization
- Recommended Additional Readings:
5.2.2 Inference

Fri 26 Oct:


- Internal Validity of Inferences

- External Validity of Inferences

- Additional Recommended Readings:
  - King, Gary. 1995. “Replication, Replication PS, Fall, 444-452

5.2.3 Experiments

Fri 2 Nov: Peace Science Meeting// Class moved to Wed 31 Oct at time TBD.

- Cohen & Nagel. 2002[1934], chap XIII.


• Examples:

5.2.4 Empiricism: ad hoc hypothesis testing

Fri 9 Nov:


• Example:

Abstract: The increasing use of mixed-member electoral systems has led to an explosion of research attempting to specify their effects. Yet there has been no work on the economic policy effects of such systems, even though this has been a significant subject of debate for scholars analyzing other electoral systems. An analysis of mixed-member system policy effects is problematic, given the wide variation in institutional rules among different systems. This article attempts to determine whether the institutional differences between mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) and mixed-member proportional (MMP) systems lead to differences in policy outputs. The political economy literature finds that government expenditures are positively correlated with electoral system proportionality. Our statistical analysis of government expenditures in 17 mixed-member systems between 1990 and 2000 shows that MMP systems, which are more proportional than

\(^5\)NB: I am only assigning the abstract for this article. You need not read the article itself.
MMM systems, are correlated with higher levels of government spending. Thus the MMM-MMP distinction produces significant policy differences.

In addition to discussing the reading we will do some in-class exercises. Come prepared to describe at least two studies from the core seminar you are taking that you would describe as exercises in ad hoc hypothesis testing.

5.2.5 Observations (or Cases)

5.2.5.1 Large-N: Randomization & Control Variables

Fri 16 Nov:

- King, Keohane & Verba. 1994, ch. 4.

Fri 23 Nov: Thanksgiving
Class moved to Tue 20 or Wed 21 Nov at time TBD.

5.2.5.2 Small-N: Case Selection


• King, Keohane, & Verba. 1994, ch. 6.


• Additional Recommended Readings:

5.2.5.3 Quasi-Experiments: Assigning Treatments

Fri 30 Nov:

• de Vaus, David. 2001. Research Design in Social Research, ch. 5.‡

• Shadish, Cook & Campbell. 2002. pp. 103-34.

• Example:


• Example:

5.2.5.4 Survey Research

Fri 7 Dec:
• Sampling: Definitions


• Margin of Error, available online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margin_of_error

Mon 10 Dec: First Year Papers due, 9:00 am.

6 Things We Should Have Covered

6.1 The Scope of Political Science


• Greenstein, FI & NW Polsby (eds.). 1975. Handbook of political science, Addison-Wesley.


• Bennett, SE. 2000. “‘Perestroika’ Lost: Why the Latest ‘Reform’ Movement in Political Science Should Fail,” *PS: Political Science & Politics*


• Harding, Sandra. 1991 *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?*, Cornell UP.


### 6.2 The Status of Assumptions


6.3 Case Studies, etc.


- Gerring, John. 2004. “What is a Case Study and What is it Good for?” American Political Science Review

- Popular Nonsense\(^6\)

6.4 Modeling


\(^6\)Given the popularity of this work it will not surprise you that my view that it is nonsense is controversial. I will be happy to defend the claim should you familiarize yourself with the work and then visit my office and ask me to do so (once you have completed the course and are prepared to engage in such a conversation).