This course provides an introduction to political science as a discipline and a profession. For our review of the discipline, we will consider a variety of approaches to the study of policies, from behavioralism to methods used in political theory. For our review of the profession, we discuss matters both at a broad level (e.g., the life of the scholar) and at a more narrow level (e.g., obtaining research grants). Along the way, we will review several areas of interest to those building professional careers in political science, particularly in academia. The purpose of the course is to provide an orientation to basic features of scholarly life. We cannot examine all the various dimensions of these issues in this seminar; the goal is, more modestly, to introduce you to these issues – and some of our faculty – at an early point in your scholarly career. You will begin to form your own perspective toward political science as a discipline and profession.

Requirements

Active Participation. The quality of this seminar depends on the active participation of all students. Everyone is expected to digest the required readings before class and to participate actively in discussions. It is essential to have a good understanding of each reading – not only individually, but, where appropriate, how they fit together.

Reaction Papers. To facilitate our conversations, you should submit a one-page, single-spaced reaction paper each week of the semester. Reaction papers should be just that: they should indicate your responses to, questions about, and observations about the week’s required readings. In them you should feel free to raise points of agreement or disagreement you might have with the various authors. Some weeks it might be a particular author that provokes a reaction; other weeks it might be several of the authors. Do not feel you must respond to every author. The key to this exercise is coming to class prepared with a reaction to some aspect of the week’s readings. When we enter the second half of the course (the profession), you might find that your reactions are more in the form of questions – for example, questions about the job market that you would like answered that were not answered in the reading, or the answer was unsatisfying, hard to decipher, or somewhat intimidating. These papers are required but will not be given a letter grade. Place a copy of the paper in my North Hall mailbox no later than 4pm each Tuesday so that they can be part of our Wednesday discussions.
Paper. A five-page essay is due on Monday, December 12. For this paper you will propose how a reading from one of your substantive seminars this semester could be studied differently using one of the approaches we discussed in the first part of the course. For example, assume in one of your classes you covered voting behavior, and the reading and discussion was based largely on behavioralist research. How might this research topic be approached by a rational choice approach? What, if anything, might this add to our understanding of this topic? Are there important questions one might get at more successfully using this alternative approach? No additional reading (other than what you’ve already read for your courses) is expected or necessary for this assignment.

Final Grade. Your final grade for the seminar will be determined as follows: 50% for submission of reaction papers, 25% for the short essay, and 25% for class participation.

Readings

Most readings will be available at PDFs on the Learn@UW site for PS 800 <http://learnuw.wisc.edu>. A general disclaimer: the substantive articles assigned for this course are not necessarily the “great” or “best” works in a given area; rather, they illustrate a given perspective, issue, or type of research. Please note that the reading list may be revised as we proceed through the semester.

I. Political Science as a Discipline

Introduction
September 7

Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going?
September 14

Required
Crawford Young, ed. 2006. Political Science at the University of Wisconsin: A Centennial History. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison. (Read chapters 4 and 5 plus two field-specific chapters of your choosing.)


Recommended

Positivism and Behavioralism
September 21
Guest: Charles Franklin

Required

Political Theory
September 28
Guest: Daniel Kapust

Required
Leo Strauss. 1959. What is Political Philosophy? Glencoe, IL: Free Press. (Chapter 1) [PAGES?]

Recommended

History and Ideas
October 5
Guest: Nadav Shelef

Required
Rational Choice Theory
October 12
Guest: Andrew Kydd


II. Political Science as a Profession

Conferences Aren’t Just for Conferring
October 19
Guest: Ryan Owens

Required
Christopher Zorn. “A Typology of Political Science Professional Meetings.” [modified]

Recommended

Publishing Not Perishing
October 26
Guest: Mark Copelovitch

Required
**Recommended**

**Becoming a Teacher**

**November 2**

Guest: Nils Ringe

**Required**
Edward M. Bumila. 2011. “Graduate Students as Independent Instructors: Seven Things to Know about Teaching Your Own Course while in Graduate School.” *PS* 44: 557-60.

**Recommended**
<http://web.mit.edu/tll/teaching-materials/torch-hose.html>

Teaching and Learning Excellence at UW. <https://tle.wisc.edu>

**Money Helps**

**November 9**

Guest: Aili Tripp

**Required**
“Conceptualizing, Writing, and Revising a Social Science Research Proposal.”  
<http://iis.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>

**Recommended**

UW Research & Sponsored Programs web site. <http://www.rsp.wisc.edu/>
Peeking Ahead to the Job Market (and Tenure)
November 16
Guest: Yoi Herrera

Required

Recommended

No Class for Thanksgiving holiday
November 23

Professional Ethics are Actually Important
November 30
Guest: Donald Downs

Required
Recommended
Academic Misconduct policies at UW (Student Assistance & Judicial Affairs).
<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>

Life of the Scholar
December 7
Guest: Kathy Walsh

Required

Recommended
<http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/womeninpoliticalscience.pdf>

Doing the Dissertation
December 14
Guest: Lisa Martin

Required
Mary I. Dereshiwsky, “In Search of the Elusive Dissertation Topic.”
<http://www.abdsurvivalguide.com/News/071102.htm>
Review a few of the recent winners of APSA dissertation awards. (The 8 awards are listed at
  <http://www.apsanet.org/content_4113.cfm> and dissertations can be found through
  the UW library web site.)
Recommended
  <http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/06/08/advice_on_writing_for_graduate_students> (first half of article)
Review handouts from the orientation packet.

**Monday, December 12:** Five-page paper is due by 4pm in my mailbox.