COURSE DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES and MAJOR THEMES

Political Science 680 focuses on the theories and methods of political inquiry. This seminar, is a required course for all Ph.D. students in the Department of Political Science. It is designed to further augment, but not replicate, the coverage of foundational literature given in any PhD core field courses. As such it focuses on key questions/debates pertaining to research strategies in political science as a discipline (and the social sciences generally) as well as providing systematic consideration of the variety of methods that might be used to facilitate research, whether this is done individually or collaboratively in a team. In addition to stressing research skills and knowledge, this course is aimed at providing incoming doctoral students with grounding in political science as a profession, and the building blocks that may ensure career success in graduate school and beyond. Therefore, upon completion of this course students will have completed assignments that will give them the framework for grant/award applications, conference abstracts, a professional CV, a teaching dossier, job cover letters, and a dissertation research proposal.

In focusing on political science and the social sciences, this course emphasizes the central concepts, theoretical and methodological issues, and ethical and practical conundrums which confront advanced students of political science. The course is guided by a number of thematic questions which include:

Can the study of politics be scientific? Should it be?

What is the relationship between normative and empirical theory?

How can we best study human social and political life?

What is the relationship between structure and agency?

Can new technologies enhance the research process? If so how?

What is the purpose of political science/social science research?

How might graduate school, the political science profession and careers be navigated to ensure personal and professional success?
REQUIRED READINGS

There are two required texts for this course, available at the University of Alberta bookstore:


Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/gradschoolproblems](https://www.facebook.com/gradschoolproblems)
Twitter: @kevindhaggerty

Articles and chapters of all other required readings are on reserve either electronically or in hard copy through the University of Alberta Library System. These are marked with an “R” in the syllabus, and the full information can be obtained through E-Class/Moodle for our course.

CLASS FORMAT

Political Science 680 is a seminar course. Each session is organized around specific themes and students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to each class session and to actively engage in analytic, theoretical, methodological and practical discussion.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for the course include:

- Weekly Summaries of Readings and Discussion Questions: 10%
- Two Seminar Reading Critiques & Leading Discussion: 10%
- Seminar Participation and Contributions: 10%
- Timely Submission of Six Homework Assignments and the Written and Oral Presentation of this Work: 30%
- Written and Oral Presentation of Draft Proposal and Formal Oral Comments on Classmates' work (November 30): 10%
- Final Written Research Proposal: 30%
ASSIGNMENTS/FORMAT

Weekly Summaries with Key Discussion Question

In order to foster a dynamic and informed classroom dialogue, all students are expected to have read the weekly assigned readings prior to each class session. All seminar participants who are not giving a formal presentation in a given week will prepare a brief (no more than 1 paged typed) personal summary of each weekly set of assigned readings and formulate one analytical, theoretical, methodological or practical question for discussion that relates to all the assigned materials and the theme for the class in question. These weekly assignments are due to me electronically, at the latest, by 4 p.m. on the Friday prior to the class meeting where they will be discussed.

For the hand in summary for the week of October 19 (when we discuss 57 Ways to Screw Up in Grad School with co-author Dr. Kevin Haggerty) students are asked to provide instead 3 "author meets reader" questions to ask Dr. Haggerty based on the book, with some brief justification/explanation for each of your questions. These will be shared with Dr. Haggerty prior to the class, and we will use his class visit as an opportunity to hear his responses and have discussion.

Leading Seminar Discussion on Readings

Twice during the term each student will undertake a formal class presentation that replaces the reading summaries discussed above. Here, select students will be asked to present on a segment of the assigned readings, raise analytical questions, and take a lead role in class discussion. The presentation of questions should be preceded by a brief discussion of the author (or authors') main argument or points, and a more detailed critical examination of the argument or points. The formal oral presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes. Students presenting are also required to hand out to each member of the class a "presentation key," a 1-2 page summary of the major points of the presentation plus any key new references. This should be distributed to each class member at the time of the presentation.

Homework Assignments

The course staggered a number of due dates for homework assignments which are designed to contribute to professionalization, and to build on, and synergize with, each other. Each assignment is worth 5% of the class grade. These assignments are:

1: Overview of yourself as a researcher (1-2 pages). Due: September 14.
2: Draft of a SSHRC doctoral award application (or other approved award application). Due: September 21.
3 Abstract for Conference. Due: October 5.
4: Academic CV (covering research, teaching and other experience). Due October 19
5: Teaching Dossier (Statement of Teaching Philosophy and Experience to Date). Due: October 26
6: Cover Letter for an 'Academic Dream Job' (based on your CV): Due November 2
Draft Proposal Assignment

Students will turn in a draft proposal on November 23, and this proposal will form the basis of a “mini-conference” on November 30 involving oral presentation of the proposal and commentary. At this stage, the proposal may be much shorter (even significantly shorter) than your final written proposal due December 14, and therefore should concentrate on providing the following information in up to 20 pages:

1: Research topic (What is going to be studied and why?);
2: Research question(s) (What specific question(s) will be answered?, Or, what do you plan to elucidate?);
3: Literature review (What has been written about the topic/question already? What are the key concepts or findings that emerge?);
4: Hypothesis or Preliminary Argument (Based on the literature review what might the likely finding or findings be?);
5: Methodology (What steps are planned to answer the research question and demonstrate the hypothesis or preliminary argument? Will ethics approval be necessary, for example if interviews are used? If so, what steps will be taken with the supervisor to ensure ethics approval?);
6: The significance of the work to the study of politics (What will the findings contribute to the study of politics and why is this research important?);
7: Preliminary brief chapter breakdown (What will be covered in different chapters?)
8: Preliminary bibliography (All sources used for the literature review and proposal should be listed, as well as other materials that might be consulted in the project).

This component of written work must be given to me in both hard copy and electronic form, and distributed to all class members electronically. Class time November 30 will be devoted to the following:

1) the author’s oral presentation summarizing the work;
2) formal oral comments from one other class member;
3) questions, comments and discussion by other class members;
4) comments from the instructor.

All seminar discussions are premised on the value of constructive criticism to the research process. Constructive criticism is a skill that requires taking a piece of work seriously on its own terms, and devoting equivalent consideration to its strengths, as well as points where it might be further strengthened. In identifying areas that might be strengthened, comments should be respectful, but may raise issues about such areas as method, theory, evidence, conceptual clarification, stylistic or organizational issues, and literature and sources utilized. Wherever possible, explicit alternatives or options should be offered as well.

In order to ensure the best possible class discussion and efficient use of class time all students are expected to have read the assigned materials prior to each class. Student overviews should not exceed 10 minutes in time; likewise formal comments should not exceed 10 minutes in time.

Final Written Proposal

Two copies of the final written proposal are due in to me on or before December 14, 2015, and should be approximately 20 pages in length (excluding bibliography) and follow the general guidelines above on the Draft Proposal Assignment. One copy will be returned with comments.
COURSE DEADLINES:

In order to ensure fairness and equity to the whole class, each student is expected to meet the course expectations and course deadlines, as specified.

GRADES

Grades will initially be given in percentages, and translated later into the letter system adopted by the University of Alberta. This will roughly translate as follows:

89% and above (A and A+ range)
80-88% (A- range)
73-79% ("B" range)
66-72% (C+ range)

Grades below a C+ constitute a failure for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
58-65 (C and C- range)
50-57% ("D" range)
49% and below ("F" range)

OFFICE APPOINTMENTS / TELEPHONE CONSULTS

In addition to my office hours on Wednesdays, office consultations can be arranged for prior to class. As well, other appointments or telephone (492-2162) consultations can be arranged and there is an answering machine in my office. If you leave a message, indicate the times when you are likely to be by the phone for a return call. If we don't make contact within two days, please phone again. My electronic address is: Yasmeen@ualberta.ca. I usually check email daily. Any student experiencing difficulty is urged to check with me earlier rather than later.

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Reading Assignments and Topical Outline

Week 1—Course Introduction and Master Class—Monday September 14, 2015

This week focuses on overviewing the course, meeting each other as researchers, and beginning the journey of contemplating how new technologies may enhance the research process. Come prepared to introduce yourself by way of your topic of research interest in our regular classroom, and take part in a special Master Class led by Dr. Karen Ross, a Distinguished Visitor and Professor of Media Studies at Northumbria University in Rutherford South 2-05A. The topic and instructions for participation in the Master Class are below, and this class will run from 10:00 to 1:00, so if possible please try and stay the extra hour to get the most from this opportunity.

HOMEWORK DUE: 1-2 page introduction of yourself as a researcher, including past experience and how you see your envisioned courses, comprehensive exam specializations and PhD topic of research building on past research.
Master Class on Digital Story-telling as Imaginary and gift: Narrating Ourselves
Dr. Karen Ross

Room: 2-05A Rutherford South

Digital story-telling is a novel way of gathering qualitative data about individual’s lived experiences, and works well in projects involving oral history, as well as being used as a creative form of therapeutic intervention in work with vulnerable people. It combines traditional story-telling methods with digital forms of data capture to produce video or audio recordings, supplemented with photos and/or music. There are at least two approaches.

a) one approach is for the researcher to interview the community member using a list of questions and being prompted by the participant’s own found object (photo, other artefact). The researcher then creates the story post-interview.

b) another approach is for the researcher to work with the participant to develop a script which the participant then narrates (video or audio), using photos of other objects as the focus, and then the researcher and the participant create the story together.

In both cases, a simple editing software package such as moviemaker will be used to create the final digital story. For the purposes of the workshop, participants will work in pairs to co-create their stories.

Pre-workshop homework
Each participant will be the central character in her or his own digital story, and for the purposes of the workshop, each participant should bring along two or three photos which provoke happy memories, from childhood up to the present day. The photos will form the inspiration for the creation of a digital story of up to 2 minutes in length: participants can bring whatever photos they like, either from the same era or a mix of old and new.

If you wish to use your own PC computer or tablet, please download Moviemaker in advance of the class. Mac users can use the PCs available in the classroom. Having a Dropbox account would also be helpful to allow for sharing and screening digital stories.

Week 2—The Basics: How to Do Research—Monday September 21, 2015:

This week addresses the question of how to study politics by considering the typical building blocks in research: literature reviews, library research, and research question(s) and design. We also spend time updating one of the most basic points of research at the University: the library system. Class will be held in Rutherford South Room 205A.

HOMEWORK DUE: Draft SSHRC Proposal

Facilitators: Ms. Emily Zheng, Public Services Librarian (Political Science), Univ. of Alberta, and Ms. Meris James, Public Services Librarian (Government Documents) Univ. of Alberta


Y. Ahi-Iahan 681 Syl 2015
Week 3— Philosophy of Science/Social Science and Epistemology—Monday September 28, 2015

This week focuses on the question of whether political science can or should be scientific, as well as the relationship between empirical and normative theory by considering the fact/value distinction, critics of positivism, and the salience of normative political theory and the role of values in research.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Cressida Heyes, Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality, and Associate Chair (Graduate), Department of Political Science, The University of Alberta

Halperin and Heath Ch. 2 “Forms of Knowledge: Laws, Explanation, and Interpretation in the Study of the Social World,” pp. 25-52; Ch. 3 “Objectivity and Values,” pp. 53-77


Week 4--- Methodological Individualism and the Structure/Agency Debate---Monday October 5, 2015

This week examines methodological individualism and holism, the structure/agency debate and considers the legacy of the nineteenth century, by considering the impact of Durkheim, Weber and Marx.

**HOMEWORK DUE: Abstract for Academic Conference of Your Choice (Follow specific conference guidelines, or have it be between 250-400 words).**

Halperin and Heath ch. 4 “Methodological Individualism and Holism,” pp. 78-98


or


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Week 5---Thanksgiving—Monday October 12, 2015

All University Classes Cancelled

Y. Abu-Laban

680 Syllabus 2015
Week 6 ---Succeeding in and Beyond Graduate School---Monday October 19, 2015
This week focuses on how to succeed in graduate school, as well as the opportunities of, and challenges to, academic freedom.

**HOMEWORK DUE: Academic CV**

*Special Guest Author: Dr. Kevin Haggerty, Professor, Editor of the Canadian Journal of Sociology, and Killam Laureate, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta*

Read: *57 Ways to Screw Up in Grad School: Perverse Professional Lessons for Graduate Studies* by Kevin D. Haggerty and Aaron Doyle


This week addresses experimental, comparative and survey research, with an eye towards the challenges of survey design in more than one language. We also examine issues relating to diversity and the profession in Canada.

Guest Speaker, Dr. Lori Thorlakson Jean Monet Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, The University of Alberta

**HOMEWORK DUE: Teaching Dossier**

Halperin and Heather Ch. 8 Experimental Research pp. 187-201; Ch. 9 Comparative Research, pp. 202-229; Surveys, pp. 230-230-252.


Week 8---Qualitative Research and Interviews/Focus Groups/Ethnography: Monday November 2, 2015

This week focuses on qualitative research and in particular interviews and focus groups. Time is also spent on research ethics in the Canadian context.

**HOMEWORK DUE:** Cover Letter

Halperin and Heath Ch. 11, “Interviewing and Focus Groups,” pp. 253-286; Ch. 12 “Ethnography and Participant Observation,” pp. 287-308.


Week 9---Reading Week—Monday November 9, 2015
All University classes cancelled November 9-13.
Week 10---Textual, Discourse and Feminist Analysis---Monday November 16, 2015

This week focuses on textual, discourse and feminist analysis, with some consideration of mixed methods research.


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Week 11---Quantitative Methods and SPSS--- Monday November 23, 2015

This week focuses on quantitative methods, and a hands on introduction of SPSS. Please go to Rutherford South 2-05A computer lab for this course.

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Draft Proposal due in electronic and hard copy form to instructor, and electronic form to the class.

Special Guest Instructor: Dr. Linda Trimble. Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta.

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Week 12---Mini Workshop--- Monday November 30, 2015

This class offers an opportunity to ‘workshop’ your draft proposal paper for preliminary feedback from the instructor and students.
Week 13 --- Opportunities and Challenges Ahead --- Monday December 7, 2015

This class focuses on careers in and outside political science and the academy, with a focus on job interviews, "pracdemia" and on the linkages between political science and "policy relevant" research.

Guest Speakers: Dr. Jared Wesley Director, Social Policy, Alberta Intergovernmental Relations, Government of Alberta; Dr. Greg Anderson, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, The University of Alberta


**The Guidebook All Grad Students Need for Their Academic Job Searches**

What's the secret to landing a job in today's competitive market? In this new guidebook, get the facts graduate students need to beat the odds in their job searches. Download the FREE guidebook, featuring advice from Karen Kelsky, author of Vitae's "The Professor Is In" advice column. Download the FREE Guidebook.
Amendments to the Code of Student Behaviour occur throughout the year. For the most recent version of the Code, visit [http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/)

**NOTICE TO INSTRUCTORS REGARDING PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS AND PARTICIPATION IN AN OFFENCE**

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset. Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

At the beginning of each term, we ask you to review with your students the definitions of plagiarism and cheating. We are now also asking you to review with your students the definition of Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence. Your co-operation and assistance in this matter are much appreciated.

### 30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

### 30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

Cheating (Continued)

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. This includes such acts as the failure to provide pertinent information on an application for admission or the altering of an educational document/transcript.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

More information can be found at: [http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en.aspx](http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en.aspx)
EXCERPTS FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR
FOR REVIEW WITH EACH CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY TERM

Procedures for Instructors Regarding
Plagiarism, Cheating,
Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence

The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence. If you have questions about these guidelines, or about the policies, please talk with the senior administrator in your Faculty responsible for dealing with student discipline—usually an Associate Dean—or the Appeals and Compliance Officer (Appeals Coordinator), University Governance (2-2655).

30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour

30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted.

30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction.

Possible Sanctions

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts:

- 30.4.3(2) a.i a mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour
- 30.4.3(2) a.ii Reduction of a grade in a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iii a grade of F for a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iv a remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour, in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii or 30.4.3(2)a.iii

- 30.4.3(3) b Expulsion
- 30.4.3(3) c Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases:

- 30.4.3(3) e Suspension of a Degree already awarded
- 30.4.3(3) f Rescission of a Degree already awarded

30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal

30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour, whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Coordinator in University Governance within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB.

Professor Steven Penney
Chair, Campus Law Review Committee

Dr Steven Dew
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

* The Campus Law Review Committee is a standing committee of General Faculties Council (GFC) responsible for the review of the Code of Student Behaviour and of student disciplinary procedures.

Updated: 27/08/2015