

PSCI 4309 (A)
Contemporary Approaches to Political Enquiry
Wednesday 2:35 p.m. – 5:25 p.m.
(A602 Loeb Building)

Instructor: Dr. Shaun Young
Office: A639 Loeb Building
Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m./Wednesday 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.,
or by appointment
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Course Overview:

For literally millennia individuals have sought to develop an analytical method by which they might generate a systematic and objective knowledge and understanding of the practice of politics. Though the general questions and concerns of “political scientists” have remained essentially the same—for example, why do political actors behave the way they do?, why are certain systems of governance (seemingly) more “successful” and/or prominent than others?—not surprisingly, there has emerged a diversity of proposals respecting how the desired information might most effectively be secured. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the prominent contemporary theoretical approaches to the practice of political enquiry, including behaviouralism, rational choice, institutionalism, feminism, interpretive theory, and normative theory. In so doing, the nature and challenges of quantitative and qualitative research techniques will also be surveyed. The principal goal of such an undertaking is to provide students with both a sound understanding of the contemporary practice of political enquiry, and the information needed to assess the relative advantages and disadvantages of each of the approaches/methodologies examined.

Required Text:

Available in the Carleton University Bookstore

☆ David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) – hereafter, *TMPS*.

☆ All other required material (noted with an asterisk [*]) is available electronically through the Maxwell MacOdrum Library or will otherwise be made available

Course Requirements and Grading Scheme:

Class Participation (Mid-Term)	10%	February 27, 2008
Class Participation (End of Term)	10%	April 7, 2008
Term Paper	40%	<u>Due March 19/2008</u>
In-Class Examination	40%	<u>April 2/2008</u>

Class Participation:

Classes are an integral component of the course; they provide an opportunity for students to engage in discussions and analysis of the assigned readings and to secure additional, significant information related to the specific topic under examination. Doing so facilitates both the acquisition of a sound understanding of the material and the satisfaction of the aims of the course. Students will be provided with a number of questions for discussion in each class.

Class participation accounts for 20% of each student's final grade. Please note that the grade assigned is for ***participation, not attendance*** (it is, of course, impossible to participate if you do not attend). Students who due to illness or for personal reasons are unable to attend a class should discuss this matter with the instructor at the earliest possible point in time.

Term Paper:

Students will be required to write and submit a term paper of approximately 10-12 typewritten, double-spaced pages in length. **Papers that significantly fail to meet this length, as well as those that notably exceed it, will be penalized accordingly.** The paper must offer a critical assessment of one of the approaches to political enquiry examined during the course. The assessment should briefly describe the fundamental characteristics of the approach in question and then comment upon the benefits and disadvantages of that approach. In identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the approach under examination, students should engage the arguments associated with other approaches. This exercise allows students both to demonstrate their understanding of the course material and the specific topic under examination and to improve their written communication skills. As with all written assignments, students should ensure that adequate attention is given to proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.

The Department's Style Guide is available free at: www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/styleguide.pdf

Each student must submit a hard copy of his/her paper to the instructor in class on Wednesday, March 19, 2007. Papers submitted after that time will be assessed a late penalty (see below). Essays not submitted in the above-noted fashion can be deposited in the Departmental "Drop Box" (a mail slot in the wall) located in the corridor outside of room B640 Loeb. Assignments are retrieved **once** every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. Assignments submitted after 4:00pm will be date stamped as received the next business day. **E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that any paper submitted other than directly to the instructor (i.e. via the Departmental "Drop Box") is received by the instructor. The paper will account for 40% of each student's final grade.

Late Penalties:

There will be a **5% per day (including Saturdays and Sundays)** late penalty assessed against any assignments submitted after the identified due date. Extensions with respect to due dates will be granted only in the case of extenuating, unavoidable circumstances that can be **verified** (e.g., note from a doctor, etc). This policy will be strictly enforced.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious offence against academic honesty, and, consequently, is completely unacceptable. Papers containing plagiarized passages or arguments/ideas will be severely penalized, potentially resulting in a **grade of 0** and further academic repercussions. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the University's regulations regarding plagiarism/academic misconduct, which can be found in the University's academic calendar (see, for example, http://www.sprott.carleton.ca/academic_programs/plagiarism.pdf).

Students are expected to know how to avoid plagiarism and other forms of cheating. To that end, it is strongly recommended that student take advantage of the assistance available through the Academic Writing Centre and Writing Tutorial Service (see, for example, <http://www.carleton.ca/wts/docs/index.htm>). Should a student remain uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism/academic misconduct, s/he should seek clarification from the instructor.

Final Examination:

There will be a final examination written during the regularly scheduled class on **April 2/2008**. The exam will be comprised of essay questions; **it will account for 40% of each student's final grade**.

Note on the Duration of the Course:

A significant amount of work will need to be completed in a relatively brief period of time. Students are expected to be properly prepared for classes, and this will necessitate devoting a notable amount of time to reading the assigned materials. In addition, the time constraints will make it necessary for students to begin thinking immediately about potential topics for their research papers, and to embark upon the writing process as soon as their research proposal has been approved.

Important Dates:

January 7/2008: *Winter-term classes begin.*

January 18/2008: *Last day for registration for winter-term courses; last day to change courses or sections for winter-term courses.*

February 18–22/2008: *Winter Break, classes suspended.*

March 14/2008: *Last day to withdraw from Fall/winter and winter-term courses.*

March 19/2008: *Term paper due.*

April 2/2008: *In-class examination.*

April 7/2008: *Last day of Fall/winter and winter-term classes; some lectures, laboratories, review tutorials, etc may take place in Review Period until the end of winter term on April 5.*

April 9/2008: *Winter term ends; last day for handing in term assignments.*

Class Schedule and Readings:

All material noted with an asterisk (*) is available electronically through the Maxwell MacOdrum Library or will otherwise be made available.

January 9 Introduction to the Course

Distribution and review/discussion of syllabus; identification and explanation of expectations; dissemination of other useful information; brief introductory lecture.

January 16 What is Political Science?

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, "Introduction", pp. 1-16.

APPROACHES

January 23 Behaviouralism

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 2

Discussion: *A. J. Ayer, "Man as a Subject for Science," in Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman, eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society, Third Series* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), pp. 6-24.

January 30 Rational Choice

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 3

Discussion: *Anthony Downs, "Social Values and Democracy," in Kristen Monroe, ed., *The Economic Approach to Politics: A Critical Assessment of the Theory of Rational Action* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 143-71.

February 6 Institutionalism

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 4

Discussion: *David Marsh, "Explaining Thatcherite Policies: Beyond Uni-dimensional Explanation," *Political Studies* 43, 4 (1995): pp. 595-613.

Class Schedule and Readings:

February 13

Feminism

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 5

Discussion: *Nancy Hartsock, “How Feminist Scholarship Could Change Political Science,” in Kristen Monroe, ed., *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 231-48.

February 20

WINTER BREAK—NO CLASS

February 27

Interpretive Theory

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 6

Discussion: *Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes, “Studying British Government: Reconstructing the Research Agenda,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 1, 2 (1999): pp. 215-39.

March 5

Marxism

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 7

Discussion: *Alex Callinicos, “Equality and Capitalism,” *Equality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), pp. 88-129. (**TBC**)

March 12

Normative Theory

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 8

Discussion: *John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, 3 (1985): pp. 223-51.

†**NOTE: TERM PAPER IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19**

METHODS

March 19

Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Reading: Marsh and Stoker, *TMPS*, chapter 11

Discussion: *Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, “The Science in Social Science,” *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 3-33.

†**NOTE: TERM PAPER IS DUE**

Class Schedule and Readings:

March 26 EXAM REVIEW

April 2 FINAL CLASS: IN-CLASS EXAM

Academic Accommodations

For Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Paul Menton Centre (PMC) for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) to complete the necessary forms. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first in-class test or CUTV midterm exam**. This will allow for sufficient time to process your request. Please note the following deadline for submitting completed forms to the PMC for formally scheduled exam accommodations: **March 14th, 2008** for April examinations.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as: "to use and pass off as one's own idea or product, work of another without expressly giving credit to another." The Graduate Calendar states that plagiarism has occurred when a student either: (a) directly copies another's work without acknowledgment; or (b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgment; or (c) borrows, without acknowledgment, any ideas in a clear and recognizable form in such a way as to present them as the student's own thought, where such ideas, if they were the student's own would contribute to the merit of his or her own work. Instructors who suspect plagiarism are required to submit the paper and supporting documentation to the Departmental Chair who will refer the case to the Dean.

It is not permitted to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses. The Department's Style Guide is available at: <http://www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/Essay%20Style%20Guide.html>

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure — No Deferral) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: The Department of Political Science strongly encourages students to sign up for a campus email account. Important course and University information will be distributed via the Connect email system. See <http://connect.carleton.ca> for instructions on how to set up your account.