

PSCI 4400A

Socio-Technical Change and Public Policy Design

Thursdays 8:35-11:25

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor:

Scott Bennett

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Office Hours:

Wednesdays 8:00 to 10:30 and 15:00 to 16:00

Thursdays 8:00 to 8:30 and 11:45 to 12:15

Fridays 8:00 to 8:30

Note that the above office hours may not be held during the first week of classes and are sometimes cancelled due to conflict with various university meetings.

Read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus stipulates class and university policies. Exemptions from these policies are almost never granted.

NOTE: IN SO FAR AS POSSIBLE, YOU SHOULD TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE INSTRUCTOR IN CLASS OR THROUGH ELECTRONIC MAIL. THE INSTRUCTOR CANNOT GUARANTEE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO EMAILS, BUT IS USUALLY ABLE TO RESPOND WITHIN 48 HOURS.

NOTE: EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE VIA YOUR CARLETON CONNECT ACCOUNT.

Course Description

This course focuses on the joint implications of demographics, social structure, science and technology for the design of public policy at the systemic or meta level of policy phenomena. Students will have an opportunity to explore major works in these areas and write papers analysing change or proposing broad policy designs to deal with change. Although specific substantive policy fields will be considered in the course, the main emphasis of the course will be general patterns of change and design. In a sense, we are interested in studying how broad socio-technical change has/will/should affect the broadest systems of policy design such as constitutions and rules that cross many policy areas, and how such broad systems of policy design have/will/should relate to socio-technical change.

The course is structured around several trajectories that describe the most important aspects of structure in and around polities. We will consider each trajectory and their interactions. Some of the trajectories describe essentially physical phenomena. Others relate more to the realm of human population structure. Some are directly linked to conscious human use of science and technology. There are also elements that relate to the basic nature of choice in human institutions.

Apart from mastering the substantive knowledge involved in the course, it is hoped that students will also develop some intellectual habits that may not have been central to some of their other academic experiences. For example, you may find that the work in this course involves a greater degree of counterintuitive and speculative thinking compared to other courses you have taken.

Class Format

This is a seminar in which, by definition, the students must have the primary responsibility for using course time effectively. You must be prepared to do your part in covering course material and participating.

Grade Components:

Major Seminar Paper 75% of course grade

Participation 25% of Course Grade

More details on the paper will be provided in class. It is due in typed hard copy and digital forms (using a readable and writable medium) in the last class (November 27). In order for the student to have a chance at a reasonable grade, the paper must be at least 6250 words long at a bare minimum. Typically, many papers will likely be considerably longer than this. Also, during that last class, you will make an oral presentation of your final work, if time permits.

The instructor may allow students to write a kind of take home exam in place of a paper. However, the amount of work will be just as great as the paper, and the time frame for submission will be the same. It is just a matter of the instructor posing the questions for the students that differentiates this option from the paper.

Class participation will probably be judged primarily in terms of presentations of one's own work and presentations of readings for which one is responsible. There may be other elements to participation, and these will be clearly determined and defined later. Generally, it is expected that a student will be principally involved in at least 2 or 3 presentations on readings. In addition, students will also do a mid-course presentation on

their proposed major paper. If time permits, there will also be a presentation of final papers. We will not finalize the exact details of presentation procedures until we know more about the people enrolled in the seminar.

If you are principally responsible for a particular part of the readings in a given week, you should prepare a typed summary of that area and provide copies of that summary to the class.

Required and Recommended Text Books:

Change of State: Information, Policy and Power, Sandra Braman, published by MIT Press, 2007
Required

The Future of the Welfare State: Crisis Myths and Crisis Realities, Francis G. Castles, published by Oxford University Press, 2004
Required

Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution, Francis Fukuyama, published by Picador, 2003
Required

NOTE: Do Not Purchase Texts until you have been to the first class.

Course Topics & Readings

It is possible that the readings will be modified. Perhaps they will be extended in some areas and reduced in others. It may even turn out to be the case that certain secondary topics cannot be covered at all due to lack of time. Some patience is required in this regard.

Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy and probably bad administration to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. In general, we hope to reach topic 5 (preliminary outlines) no later than week 7 of the course. However, this is an expectation that can be altered in light of student background, interests and progress. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below.

1. Introduction to the Class
2. The Legacy of Traditional Policy Studies

John, Analysing Public Policy

Howlett and Ramesh, Studying Public Policy: Policy cycles and Policy Subsystems (2nd or latest edition) – Chapters 10 and 11

3. The Environmental/Nature Trajectory

McIntosh, Tainter, Keech McIntosh (eds.), The Way the Wind Blows: Climate, History and Human Action -Chapters 1, 12 and 13

4. The Demographic Trajectory

Castles, The Future of the Welfare State: Crisis Myths and Crisis Realities

5. The Biotechnological Trajectory

Fukuyama, Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution

6. Preliminary Proposals

7. The Informational Trajectory

Braman, Change of State: Information, Policy and Power

8. The Institutional Trajectory

Bratland, John, “On Societal Ascendance and Collapse: An Austrian Challenge to Jared Diamond’s Explications’

Diamond, Jared, Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, Chapter 14

9. The Interaction of Trajectories

Diamond, Jared, Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, Chapters 1, 14, 15 and 16

10. “Creative” Problem Solving and Macro Resilience?

Homer-Dixon, The Upside of Down –Prologue, Chapters 1 and 11

11. Final Presentations

Important Guidelines, Rules and Warnings

Without going into great detail, various other course, departmental and university rules apply to the conduct of any course. You are expected to know them. From, my point of view, the important rules are:

1. Do your work on time as described in this outline and in class.
2. Do not engage in plagiarism.
3. Do not disrupt the class.
4. Keep an open mind with respect to value systems and approaches to inquiry.

With respect to point one above, the final copy of the course paper should be handed in at the last class on November 27, 2008. It should be in a large envelope and it must be in both typed form and on disk/cd/dvd that is both readable and writeable. Be sure you keep copies of the paper. No excuses for lateness will be accepted except for some extreme emergency (such as the student's hospitalisation) that makes it physically impossible for the student to turn in a paper. Failure to observe this rule will lead to a loss of all marks associated with the paper.

Presentations must be done on time as assigned. The only excuses accepted are the same as those noted in the previous paragraph. Failure to observe this will lead to a loss of all marks associated with a presentation.

Other rules of general interest from a departmental or university perspective are contained in an attachment that follows.

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (9500 University Drive) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your letter of accommodation, **no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations.** If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 7, 2008**, for December examinations, and **March 6, 2009**, 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 Deferred) 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.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social

events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.