

# Political Science 701: Theories of Political Inquiry

*Fall 2021*

*T 6:00- 8:45, Gambrell 104*

## **Professor**

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## **Course Description**

This course provides an overview of the field of political science at the doctoral level. We will learn broadly about the philosophy of social science and more specifically about necessary tools for our discipline's contemporary practice. Your objectives when taking this course should be:

1. To learn about the philosophy of science, how we apply it to the study of political phenomena, and where we fall short in doing so.
2. To gain an awareness of the scope and breadth of political science: its puzzles, theories, and sub-fields.
3. To understand and evaluate the various strategies for conducting political science research.
4. To 'learn the ropes' of the profession, i.e. gain professional socialization.
5. To begin defining your own puzzles, questions of interest, and roadmaps for research.

## **COVID-19 Classroom Policies**

COVID-19 continues to pose a substantial threat to the well-being and health of our Carolina community. Masks are mandated in all academic buildings, as per university policy found [here](#). As such, your mask should be on prior to entering the classroom, already covering your mouth and nose, and should not be removed until you exit Gambrell Hall. Should you arrive unprepared (maskless) for class, you will be asked to leave.

You are also urged to take extra precautions to keep yourself and your peers safe. First, please be aware of all current CDC guidelines, which can be found [here](#). Vaccines are the most effective form of protection and highly encouraged by the scientific community and your U of SC community. Masks are also required for office hours/meetings - alternatively, I am happy to meet with you virtually. Further, if you are not feeling well - STAY HOME. If you are even slightly concerned that you may have been exposed - STAY HOME. Although parts of class are discussion based, protecting everyone's health is most important and your participation grade will not be affected by choosing to stay home and notifying me by email (honor system in effect. See additional guidelines about discussion boards below). Should you become sick or need to take a longer period of absence, I will happily work with you to ensure your success in the class. Again: my priority is all of our health and safety, and I hope that yours is as well.

## **Course Requirements**

- **Reading Responses:** Each student will write one reading response paper, which will discuss critically the assigned readings (other than the professional socialization piece or pieces) for a given week. (Papers may be written beginning with Week 2, August 31. I will offer a sign up in class on August 24). Reading responses may begin with

a short summary of the readings, but these papers should be primarily analytical in nature. How do you evaluate the authors' statements and presentation of evidence? What additional testable hypotheses would you include, or what direction would you take a related research agenda? What does a given reading or set of readings suggest about conducting political science research? How does a given reading fit or contrast with other things we've read for this class, or other literature about this topic?

Papers should be between 1200 and 1400 words, or approximately 4 to 5 double spaced pages. Reaction papers should be posted to Blackboard under the 'Discussions' tab by 8pm on the Sunday prior to that week's class. This gives ample time for others, especially the discussion leader, to read the papers prior to our Tuesday class meetings. Please keep this deadline in mind when selecting your weeks.

- **Discussion Leadership:** While all students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss each week's readings, we also will have two (usually) official discussion leaders. The chief responsibility of the discussion leader is to come up with a set of three to five themes or questions around which to focus discussion during our class meeting. In doing so, the discussion leader(s) should consider the issues raised in the reaction papers, as well as in the readings themselves. Discussion leaders should coordinate with one another prior to the class meeting. Leaders are not responsible for summarizing the readings; rather, their responsibility is to structure our discussion and, where necessary, to move the conversation along. The discussion leaders also are not responsible for leading discussion of the "professional socialization" reading(s) or resources. Sign ups for discussion leader duties also will occur during the first class meeting. One should not serve as discussion leader during a week when one is writing a reaction paper.
- **Article Review:** Students are asked to select a more recent article (published from 2010-2020 in a main political science or subfield journal - check with me if there is any confusion) in their area of interest. Provide a review describing and critiquing the fundamental puzzle addressed in the article (i.e. the research question and theory) and the approach used to evaluate this question (i.e. the research design). This assignment is designed to mimic a primary form of professional service: peer review. Peer review is a vital part of academic work, allowing us to ensure the standards and rigor of our field are met. Virtually all academic work you read - in this class and others - has seen multiple rounds of peer review. A good review highlights a manuscript's strengths and offers (in as much detail as possible) pathways for constructive criticism. To aid you in this assignment, I will post two peer reviews (one I have received and one I have written) on Blackboard. Article reviews are due via Blackboard by **September 28**.
- **Research Design:** Much of what we will read in this class is about how to select, design and implement research projects in political science. We usually begin with a puzzle that motivates a research question; review existing literature on and approaches to the question or subject; develop a theoretical argument and a set of hypotheses; and then design an empirical analysis of the hypotheses (not to mention carrying out the analysis!).

With this process in mind, this assignment involves producing a research project that consists of: a) clearly articulated research question; b) review of the relevant literature; c) development of a cogent theoretical argument with testable hypotheses; and d) a research design suitable for evaluating the theoretical expectations identified. Students are welcome to coordinate this project with the empirical analyses required for POLI 502. Note, however, that completing the analysis is *\*not\** part of this assignment. Research designs should be suitable for the question at hand and proposed theory - there is no reward for proposing shiny methods simply for the sake of it. Students should also be aware that I do not give incompletes for the class (except under the most extreme circumstances) and no late papers will be accepted.

On the final class day (**November 30**), students will present their research designs (10 minutes per student) followed by an interactive question and answer (Q&A) period, similar in format to professional conferences. In order

to keep everyone on track, you will complete this assignment in a sequence of steps, which mimic the paper-writing process:

- A brief write-up (1-3 pages) of the introduction and puzzle statement will be due **September 14**. Identify a research question that is of interest to you, and that would generate a seminar paper, conference paper, article and/or dissertation chapter. Your research question should be framed in a way that is broad enough to be of interest not only to specialists in a sub-sub-field, but also narrow enough to be tractable in the space of a research paper, article or dissertation. While this is a short writing assignment, it will require some background reading, research, and a few citations (you cannot be puzzled without some base knowledge). You are strongly encouraged to talk with other faculty in your area of interest for suggestions about what to read or which scholars are working on a given issue.
- A revised introduction (based on professor feedback), expanded literature review, and discussion of the theoretical argument will be due **November 2**. Read some of the political science literature related to your chosen question, and decide how to situate your question/interests in this literature. What have others already argued? What have they found? How can their theoretical approaches be improved upon or synthesized? Note that the literature is not simply an annotated bibliography, or a “he said, she said” that summarizes a bunch of things you’ve read. Rather, a good literature review identifies what the state of knowledge is, discusses where the shortcomings/openings are, and sets up your own theoretical thinking on the subject. In this section, you will also advance a causal argument about your chosen puzzle (e.g. under what conditions does multinational production lead to improvements in workers’ rights, and why?), and develop one or more causal claims which flow from this argument. This should culminate in one or more testable hypotheses and should be 8-12 pages.
- The final draft (15-20 pages) is due at the end of the semester (**December 7**) on Blackboard. You’ll combine these pieces, or revised versions of them, into your final course assignment, which is a full research design. The only section of the final research design that you won’t draft along the way is the one that discusses the planned empirical tests of your hypotheses. In that section of the research design, you should discuss how (using what sorts of methods, what kind of data, for which countries/cases, and why your chosen method and evidence is appropriate) you would test your hypotheses.

**Honor Code:** The Carolinian Creed ([at this website](#)) is in effect in this class and all others at the University.

## Required Readings

The below texts are required for this course, and are good resources for starting your political science career. Additional articles and book chapters will be scanned and uploaded to Blackboard or available through the UofSC library (you are still responsible for downloading any articles that are not on Blackboard). Each week, we will have two sets of readings: one about the scope or practice of political science, and another about professional socialization (how to survive graduate school, how to tackle publication, etc.)

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton. [KKV]
- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge. [Gerring]
- Brady, Henry E. and Collier, David. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman and Littlefield. [BC]

## Becoming a Member of the Academic Community

While your coursework is an important part of becoming a member of the academic community, your effort should by no means stop there. It is expected that you will familiarize yourself with and frequently consult the primary political science journals in your subfield. If your reading begins and ends with the contents of your syllabi, you are not fulfilling your obligations as a graduate student. Finally, your faculty here at Uof SC are an important resource. I - and my colleagues - are always happy to discuss your research, provide feedback, or answer questions related to the discipline.

## Class Schedule

### August 24: You Call this a Science?

- Schwartz, Martiin A. 2008. "The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research." *Journal of Cell Science* 121: 1771.
- Smith, Rogers M. 2002. "Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More About Politics?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35: 199-201.

### August 31: The Discipline and its Discontents

- Green, Jessica, "Why We Need a More Activist Academy." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 15, 2018, 6 pp.
- Keohane, Robert O. 2009. *Political Science as a Vocation*. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42: 359-363.
- Ashworth, S., Berry, C. and Bueno de Mesquita, E. 2015. "All Else Equal in Theory and Data (Big or Small)" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48 (1).
- Keele, L. 2015. "The Discipline of Identification." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48 (1).

#### *Recommended:*

- Jervis, Robert. 2002. "Politics, Political Science, and Specialization." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35: 187-189.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 2010. "A Long Polycentric Journey." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13:1-23.

### Professional Socialization: The Graduate School Experience

- Duck of Minerva Symposium: "[Five Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me in Graduate School](#)": (navigate through five Symposium articles)
- Carsey, T. "Advice about Graduate School, Finding a Job, Reaching Tenure in Political Science and other Social Sciences, and All of the Steps in Between." Introduction and Ch. 5.

### September 7: Incorporating the Scientific Method

- BC, Chapter 1.
- KKV, pp 1 - 11.
- Gerring, Chapter 1.
- Blair, G, J. Cooper, A. Coppock and M. Humphreys. 2019. "Declaring and Diagnosing Research Designs." *American Political Science Review*, 113(3), 838-859. doi:10.1017/S0003055419000194

#### *Recommended:*

- Lake, David A. 2011. “Why ‘isms’ Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress.” *International Studies Quarterly* 55: 465-480.
- Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### **Professional Socialization: Dissertation Topics, Proposals, and Advisors**

- Stephen B. Rothman. 2008. “Comparatively Evaluating Potential Dissertation and Thesis Projects.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* (April): 367-369.
- Farrar-Myers, Victoria. 2001. “The “Rights” of Passage” *PS: Political Science and Politics* (December): 845-846.
- Benesh, Sara. 2001. “The Key to a Successful Prospectus: Consult an Advisor, Early and Often.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* (December): 853-854.
- den Dulk, Kevin. 2001. “Proposing a Dissertation With a Free Rein” *PS: Political Science and Politics* (December): 851-852.

### **September 14: Puzzling is a Verb Puzzle Statements Due**

- Zinnes, Dana. 1980. “Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher: Presidential Address. *International Studies Quarterly* 24: 315-342.
- Carsey, T. Chapter 3.
- Gerring, Chapter 2.
- KKV pp 12 33.
- BC, Chapter 5.

#### *Recommended:*

- Morton, Rebecca B. 1999. *Methods and Models: A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models in Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.
- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press.

### **Professional Socialization: Writing and Publishing**

- Shoub, K. “Concrete Steps on the Path to Approaching Academic Research.” 2021.
- Rich, Timothy. 2013. “Publishing as a Graduate Student: A Quick and (Hopefully) Painless Guide to Establishing Yourself as a Scholar.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46(2): 376-379.
- [Nathan Jensen’s \(Professor, UT Austin\) Blog Post on the Review Process](#)

### **September 21: Building a Theory**

- Gerring, Ch. 3 and 4.
- Hill, Kim Quaile. 2012. “In Search of General Theory.” *Journal of Politics* 74: 917-931.
- Fearon, James D. 1991. “Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science.” *World Politics* 43: 169-195.
- Gustafsson, Karl and Linus Hagstrom, 2017. “What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students How to Construct Research Puzzles”, *European Political Science* (15 pages).

#### *Recommended:*

- Bueno de Mesquita, B. “Toward a Scientific Understanding of International Conflict.”

### **Professional Socialization: Academic Journals and Peer Review**

- Multiple Authors. “Special Issue on Peer Review.” 2015. *The Political Methodologist*.
- [Saideman, S. Duck of Minerva, Tyranny of the Big 3 \(2018\)](#)
- Gerring, John and Pemstein, Daniel. 2020. “Proposal: A Political Science Peer Review and Publication Consortium.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*.
- Gerber, Alan and Neil Malhotra. 2008. “Do Statistical Reporting Standards Affect What Is Published? Publication Bias in Two Leading Political Science Journals,” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3(3): 313- 326.

### **September 28: NO CLASS, APSA ANNUAL MEETING**

#### **Article Reviews Due**

### **October 5: Descriptive and Causal Inference**

- Gerring, Chapters 6 and 8.
- Dowding, Keith. 2021. “Why Forecast? The Value of Forecasting to Political Science.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*.
- Carsey, T. Chapter 7.
- BC, Chapter 9.

#### *Recommended:*

- Gerring, John. 2005. “Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Sciences.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17: 163-198.
- Searight, Jason. 2010. “Regression-Based Inference: A Case Study in Failed Causal Assessment,” Chapter 13 in Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.
- Ashworth, Berry and Bueno de Mesquita. *Theory and Credibility: Integrating Theoretical and Empirical Social Science*. Princeton University Press, 2021. Ch. 3.

### **Professional Socialization: Coauthoring, Collaboration, and Workflow**

- Lebo, Matthew J. 2016. “Managing your Research Pipeline.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 49(2): 259-264.
- Metz, T., and Jackle, S. (2017). Patterns of Publishing in Political Science Journals: An Overview of Our Profession Using Bibliographic Data and a Co-Authorship Network. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 50(1): 157-165.

### **October 12: Forms of Evidence 1 - Observational Data**

- Gross, Justin H. 2015. “Testing What Matters (If You Must Test at All): A Context-Driven Approach to Substantive and Statistical Significance.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59: 775-788.
- Samii, Cyrus. 2016. “Causal Empiricism in Quantitative Research.” *Journal of Politics* 78(3): 941-955.
- Elman, Colin, Diana Kapiszewski and Arthur Lupia. 2018. “Transparent Social Inquiry: Implications for Political Science.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 29-47

- Slantchev, Branislav L., Anna Alexandrova, and Erik Gartzke. 2005. "Probabilistic Causality, Selection Bias, and the Logic of the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* 99: 459-462.

*Recommended:*

- Rhodes, William. 2010. "Heterogenous Treatment Effects: What Does a Regression Estimate?" *Evaluation Review* 34: 334-361.
- Keele, Luke and William Minozzi. 2013. How Much Is Minnesota Like Wisconsin? Assumptions and Counterfactuals in Causal Inference with Observational Data." *Political Analysis* 21(2): 193-216.
- Gerring, Ch. 9-11.

**Professional Socialization: Data and Replication**

- Shoub, K. "Data Set Basics." 2021.
- Peer, L. and Orr, L. and Coppock, A. 2021. "Active Maintenance: A Proposal for the Long-Term Computational Reproducibility of Scientific Results." *PS: Political Science & Politics*.
- Berinsky, Druckman and Yamamoto. 2020. "Publication Biases in Replication Studies." *Political Analysis*.

**October 19: Forms of Evidence 2 - Surveys and Experiments**

- Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. The Logic of the Survey Experiment Revisited." *Political Analysis* 15 (Winter): 1-20.
- Johnson, J. 2018. "Protecting the Community: Lessons from the Montana Flyer Project." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(3): 615-619.
- Hyde, Susan. 2015. Experiments in International Relations: Lab, Survey and Field." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 403-424.
- McDermott, Rose. 2013. The Ten Commandments of Experiments. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46 (July): 605-610.
- Malhotra, N. 2021. 'Threats to the Scientific Credibility of Experiments: Publication Bias and P-Hacking.' In *Advances in Experimental Political Science*, Chapter 19.

*Recommended:*

- Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision? *American Political Science Review* 101: 709-725.
- Robinson, Gregory, John E. McNulty, and Jonathan S. Krasno. 2009. "Observing the Counterfactual? The Search for Political Experiments in Nature." *Political Analysis* 17: 341-357.

**Professional Socialization: Teaching and Research**

- Symposium: Research and Undergraduate Teaching: A False Divide? *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48(1), edited by James Druckman (2015).
- Martin, Lisa L. 2016. "Gender, Teaching Evaluations and Professional Success in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 49(2): 313-319.

**October 26: Forms of Evidence 3 - Qualitative and Small-N Studies**

- Plumper, Thomas, Vera E Troeger and Eric Neumayer. 2019. "Case selection and causal inferences in qualitative comparative research. PLOS ONE 14(7): 1-18.
- BC, Chapter 11.
- Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." American Political Science Review 95: 529-546.
- Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research. Political Analysis 14: 227-249.
- Holmes, C. 2021. "Standing Out and Blending In: Contact- Based Research, Ethics, and Positionality." PS: Political Science and Politics.

*Recommended:*

- Pepinsky, Tom. 2018. "Single Country Research in Comparative Politics."
- Brookes, M. 2017. "Introduction to The Road Less Traveled: An Agenda for Mixed Methods Research." PS: Political Science & Politics 50(4): 1015-1018.

**Professional Socialization: Connecting Literature, Theory, and Testing**

- Knopf, Jeffrey. 2006. "Writing a Literature Review." PS: Political Science and Politics (January): 127-132
- Carsey book, Chapter 7.
- Clarke, K. and Primo, D. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach." Perspectives on Politics.

**November 2: Questioning Paradigms - Rationalist and Behavioral Approaches**  
**Literature and Theory Section Due**

- Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." American Political Science Review 92: 1-22.
- Kocher, Martin G. and Matthias Sutter. 2005. "The Decision Maker Matters: Individual versus Group Behaviour in Experimental Beauty-Contest Games". The Economic Journal 115(500): 200-223.
- McDermott, R. 2004. "The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science." PS: Political Science & Politics.
- Wilson, R. 2011. "The Contribution of Behavioral Economics to Political Science." Annual Review of Political Science.
- Gailmard, S. 2019. "Optimism, Pessimism, and Dialogue in Electoral-Accountability Research." PS: Political Science & Politics.

*Recommended:*

- Ashworth, Berry and Bueno de Mesquita. Theory and Credibility: Integrating Theoretical and Empirical Social Science. Princeton University Press, 2021. Ch. 4.
- Lane, R. 2008. "Bottom Up Comparative Politics: Game Theory Abroad." PS: Political Science & Politics.
- Hafner-Burton, E., Haggard, S., Lake, D., and Victor, D. 2017. The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations. International Organization.



### Professional Socialization: Gender and Diversity in the Discipline

- Dion, Michelle, Jane Sumner, Sara Mitchell. 2018. “Gendered Citation Patterns across Political Science and Social Science Methodology Fields.” *Political Analysis* 26(3): 312-327.
- Colgan, Jeff. 2015. “New Evidence on Gender Bias in IR Syllabi.” Duck of Minerva post.
- Zvobgo, K. and Loken, M. 2020. “Why Race Matters in International Relations.” *Foreign Policy*.

### November 9: Subfield Circus I - Institutional Explanations

*Guest Speakers: Dr. Cody Drolc, Dr. Jessica Schoenherr, Dr. Kelsey Shoub*

- Black, Ryan C. and Owens, Ryan J. 2016 “Courting the President: How Circuit Court Judges Alter Their Behavior for Promotion to the Supreme Court.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Struthers, Cory L., Tyler A. Scott, Forrest Fleischman, and Gwen Arnold. 2021. “The forest ranger (and the legislator): How local congressional politics shape policy implementation in agency field offices. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. <https://doi-org.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/10.1093/jopart/muab037>
- Pop-Eleches, G. and Way, L. 2021. “Censorship and the Impact of Repression on Dissent.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Additional TBD

### Professional Socialization: Teaching and Research

- No readings, but come prepared to ask your faculty questions about graduate school or the discipline.

### November 16: Subfield Circus II - Behavioral Explanations

*Guest Speakers: Dr. Elizabeth Connors, Dr. Katey Stauffer*

- Connors, Elizabeth. 2020. “The Social Dimension of Political Values.” *Political Behavior*
- Stauffer, Katelyn. 2021. “Public Perceptions of Women’s Inclusion and Feelings of Political Efficacy.”
- Estancona, Chelsea. 2021. “Rebel Primary Commodity Markets, Price Shocks, and Supplier Victimization.” *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Clayton, A., O’Brien, D. and Piscopo, J. 2018. “All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

### Professional Socialization: Teaching and Research

- No readings, but come prepared to ask your faculty questions about graduate school or the discipline.

### November 23: NO CLASS, PEER WORK DAY

### November 30: Your Turn

- Carsey, T. Chapter 9: Presenting Your Research  
*Recommended:*
  - Carsey, T. Chapter 10.

**Professional Socialization: Teaching and Research**

- Rutherford, Amanda. 2015. “Conquering the Lumbering Dinosaur:’ Graduate Student Experiences at Political Science Conferences.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48(2): 324-327.
- Lake, David. 2013. “Networking at Conferences: Not Just for Graduate Students and Junior Faculty.” (blog post)
- Sapiro, Virginia and David Campbell. 2018. “Report on the 2017 APSA Survey on Sexual Harassment at Annual Meetings.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(1): 197-206.

**December 7, Final Paper Due**