

Fall 2018
Graduate Seminar Descriptions
Department of Political Science

PL SC 501
Methods of Political Analysis
Professor Allison Harris

This seminar is about research design. In contrast to 502-504, which focus on the analysis of data you have, this seminar focuses on the prior concern of how to collect data worth analyzing. In 2008, Don Rubin coined a now ubiquitous phrase: “design trumps analysis.” In this course, we’re going to think about what this means, why this is, and what you can do to design your research to provide compelling support for your arguments. Topics include design in experimental and observational settings, sampling and selection, concepts and measurement, challenges of small-N to large-N to massive-N designs, and approaches to inference.

Mondays & Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
301 Boucke Building

PL SC 502
Statistical Methods for Political Research
Professor Bruce Desmarais

This course provides an introduction to the principles of probability and mathematical statistics. Here you will learn the foundational principles of statistics that will be important for any type of quantitative analysis you will do in the future. This includes topics such as probability, distributions, estimation, hypothesis testing, cross-tabulations, and bivariate regression. The material taught in this class will be important for understanding later classes in the methods sequence on regression and other topics.”

Mondays, 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
236 Pond Lab

Fall 2018
Graduate Seminar Descriptions
Department of Political Science

PL SC 504

Topics in Political Methodology

Professor Christopher Zorn

This is an elective course in statistical methods designed to meet the particular needs of students in the political science Ph. D. curriculum. PL SC 504 is tailored to focus on the specific issues that arise in the types of data found in political science applications. Students are expected to have completed the three required foundational courses in political methodology or their equivalents. This course examines a range of regression-like models widely used in empirical political science. Its core focus is on maximum likelihood estimation of models for various kinds of limited-dependent and qualitative response variables. Specific models covered are widely used in political science today, including binary logit and probit, multinomial logit and probit, ordered logit and probit, and Poisson regression models. Additional topics include models for time-to-event (survival) data, panel data and time-series cross-sectional analysis, item response theory, multi-level models, and methods for causal inference using observational data. Students will apply these models in a series of homework assignments and a replication project. Empirical political scientists must have familiarity with these models; these techniques represent a minimal level of statistical competence necessary for those seeking to do advanced quantitative analysis in the political science. The material in this course is technical, but students will be given an intuitive rationale for each model. Weekly homework assignments will be based on data from published research in political science.

Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:10 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.

112 Osmond Lab

PLSC 507

Game Theory for Political Science II

Professor Bumba Mukherjee

This is an advanced game theory course in the department of political science. The objectives of this course are three-fold. First, we will examine in detail some classic game-theoretic models that have been developed by political scientists in the last 2-3 decades. We will evaluate in depth the main equilibrium solutions in these models and how these solutions were derived by the respective authors. Second, the students will be introduced to the PBE solution concept. We will also examine the solution concepts that game-theorists use in the context of signaling games. Third, the final 3-4 weeks of this course will focus significantly on model-building by the students enrolled in the course. Students who have not taken an introductory course in game theory will not be allowed to enroll in this advanced course.

Wednesdays, 3:35 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.

351 Willard Building

Fall 2018
Graduate Seminar Descriptions
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PL SC 513

Writing and Professional Development in Political Science

Professor Michael Nelson

The class is a workshop aimed at helping students communicate research orally and in writing. Students will draft the first half of their M.A. thesis and will present their research publicly, both to the class and to the department. Additionally, we will discuss strategies for preparing manuscripts for publication, writing and responding to manuscript reviews, working with the institutional review board, writing grant proposals, preparing for comprehensive examinations, and navigating the job market. All members of the seminar are expected to participate in each and every session, attend departmental talks, and provide constructive comments on one another's work, both orally and in writing. Grading for the course will be pass/fail.

Note: You should enroll in this course if you are entering your second year in the program. This course is the second of two required, 1.5 credit professional development courses in the graduate program in political science.

Thursdays, 10:35 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

236 Pond Lab

PL SC 519

Survey Methods II: Analysis of Survey Data

Professor Eric Plutzer

Cross-listed with Sociology

Data collected by surveys have a combination of qualities that represent challenges to valid inference. These include cluster and stratified sampling, under-representation of some groups due to differential response rates, missing data due to item non-response, and coarse measurement (3-4 categories to capture rich concepts such as religious faith or economic status). We often use surveys to test theories that the original survey designer did not intend to address, raising issues of validity and reliability of measurement. At the same time, surveys offer a number of opportunities and, when combined with other surveys (pooled cross sections) or merged with contextual data, can address a wide range of theoretical puzzles in the social sciences. This course provides an *introduction* to techniques in applied statistics that have been developed specifically to address the special features of survey data: use of design weights, post-stratification weights, accounting for clustering and other features of the research design in analysis, merging surveys with other surveys or auxiliary data, and missing data imputation. The class will emphasize the intuition of the theory underlying the statistical models rather than focusing on proofs and estimation. This will provide a foundation for frequent hands-on applications in this seminar and for subsequent enrollment in more advanced courses offered by the Statistics department and the various social science departments.

Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

174 Willard Building

Fall 2018
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PL SC 541

American Political Institutions: Seminar on Law, Courts, and Politics

Professor Michael Nelson

The study of law and courts in political science has traditionally been divided into three subfields: (1) public law, which includes the study of the philosophical underpinnings of law as well as constitutional law; (2) judicial behavior, the analysis of the political processes by which judges are selected and decide cases, and (3) law and society, the investigation of the relationship between legal processes and public policy. In this seminar, we will explore all three subfields, discussing the answers political scientists have provided for questions including: What is law? How do legal principles and extralegal pressures affect judicial decisionmaking? When do organized interests use legal processes to achieve social change (and when are they successful)? When do constitutional provisions affect the protection of citizens' rights? Our readings will be drawn from all subfields of political science, and this course will satisfy requirements for either American Politics or Comparative Politics. Students' research interests will help to focus the course's content. Students will complete several short writing assignments and write an article-length term paper.

This counts as either American or Comparative credit.

Tuesdays, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

236 Pond Lab

PL SC 550

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Matthew Golder

This course is the core seminar for the field of comparative politics in the political science Ph.D. program. It provides an introduction to the dominant questions, theories, and empirical research in comparative politics. The substantive topics covered in the class include democracy and dictatorship, democratic performance, political institutions, culture and identity issues, elections and political parties, representation and accountability, and political economy. The course has two goals: (i) to prepare students for a research career in comparative politics by providing a general survey of the field and (ii) to help prepare graduate students for the comprehensive examination in comparative politics.

Mondays, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

302 Boucke Building

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PL SC 551
Comparative Political Economy
Professor Vineeta Yadav

This class aims to provide an introduction to and an overview of the role of domestic political institutions in current research in comparative and international political economy. Political economy in its entirety explores how domestic and international political configurations (institutions, structures, etc.) and events (elections, coups, oil shocks, currency crisis, etc.) systematically produce certain specific economic policies, and influence their effects. In this class we will focus *only* on the first of these two broad categories of work – the role of domestic political institutions in initiating, enacting and implementing economic outcomes. The class assumes students have taken the comparative seminar.

The class is divided into three segments, (i) theories of institutional origins (ii) institutional influence on key actors and delegated institutions and, (iii) specific economic outcomes. For section (ii) we will consider the theoretical and empirical body of work which studies how institutions affect political party systems, special interest groups, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. We will then look at some of the most prominent models of policymaking and how they incorporate institutional factors before finally moving on to study specific policy issues. For section (iii), I have provided a list of 6 topics from which we as a class will choose 3 topics to focus on. Please look at these and jot down your preferences before we meet in class for the first time. We will cover both democracies and autocracies among developing and developed countries.

As a class in comparative politics, one of the aims of the discussion in the class will be to test abstract theories of political economy using in-depth knowledge of specific cases, and to further our understanding of cases by applying lessons from theoretical and statistical work. As such, I highly encourage you to choose a couple of countries, preferably one you are familiar with and one you have very little familiarity with, as countries you can study through these frameworks as the class progresses. Comparative varies very widely methodologically and one of our tasks is to assess the appropriateness of the various methods employed in this research. Here again, familiarity with a couple of cases will help you perform these assessments

Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
206 Business Building

Fall 2018
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PL SC 560
International Relations: Theory and Methodology
Professor Zaryab Iqbal

This course is the field seminar in international relations, aimed at providing an introduction to major theories of international relations and exposing students to contemporary research in the field. In this seminar, you will learn to understand and evaluate critically academic literature in international relations, as well as become familiar with major themes in international relations research. We will discuss important theoretical approaches used in the study of international politics and explore the manner in which social scientific research is conducted. The broad overview of theories and research topics in this course should enable you to identify areas of interest that you can further pursue in subsequent graduate courses and in independent research. This course is designed for graduate students who are planning to pursue careers in international relations or political science research; we will not focus on current events or issues in particular world regions.”

Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
236 Pond Lab

PLSC 597.001
Diplomacy, Signaling, and Coercion
Roseanne McManus

This course explores the methods that states use to communicate their resolve and intentions in order to successfully coerce adversaries in conflict bargaining situations. It incorporates a variety of theoretical perspectives, ranging from rationalist to psychological, and considers how various theories of international communication and coercion can be tested empirically.

Fridays, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
236 Pond Lab

Fall 2018
Graduate Seminar Descriptions
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SODA 502
Approaches and Issues in Social Data Analytics
Professor Ashton Verdery

Addresses the interdisciplinary integration of computational, informational, statistical, visual analytic, and social scientific approaches to learning from data that are both "social" (about, or arising from, human interactions) and "big" (of sufficient scale, variety, or complexity to strain the informational, computational, or cognitive limits of conventional social scientific approaches to data collection or analysis). Includes alternative scientific models for learning from data (Bayesian inference, causal inference, statistical / machine learning, visual analytics, measurement modeling), analytics issues with big data (variable selection, parallel computing, algorithmic scaling, ensemble modeling, validation), analytics issues with particular structures and channels of social data (network data, geospatial data, intensive longitudinal data, text data), and issues of scientific responsibility and ethics in analysis of big social data.

Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
001B Sparks Building
