

Syllabus Introduction to Political Science - 2024

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Tutor

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feel free to address me on a first name basis (“Dear Luis...”) and please put as subject of your mail IPC23; please try to privilege in person conversations after class!

Course Objectives

Political Science is one of the key disciplines taught at Sciences Po. Defined broadly as the study of the political; it provides students with the analytical tools and necessary theoretical knowledge to understand ongoing developments in the political realm – such as political regimes, mobilizations, protests, voting behavior, policy-making, public discourses, exertion of power, etc.

This conférence de méthode is linked to the lecture ‘Introduction to Political Science’ taught by Samuel Hayat. Its objective is to **deepen your understanding of the lectures’ content** and **to help you develop a scientific working method** in line with the methodological standards of the discipline. In addition, the class aims to strengthen your understanding of the compulsory readings that represent key theoretical concepts in Political Science. In this course, we apply these concepts to contemporary empirical phenomena and collectively discuss them.

Course Structure

The course is structured in three main thematic blocks:

1. Sessions 1-4 focus on the socio-historical emergence and transformations of politics, from prehistory to the welfare state, and on the history of how politics has been studied, i.e. the invention of political science.
2. Session 5-8 examine the politicization of societies, both among social elites and the masses.
3. Sessions 9-12 discuss how state apparatuses produce political outcomes, how nations interact with each other, and the emergence and consequences of the transformations induced by globalization.

Typically, we will start our session with **one or two student presentations** of the mandatory readings for the session. Then, they will be followed by a short collective discussion/debate which will be moderated by the presenters. I will then proceed to give a more insight on the the week's topic. The last part of each seminar is going to consist of group works and discussions of **practical cases** that develop students' analytical and argumentative abilities.

Seminar sessions require **prior preparation by you every week**. Before the seminar sessions, you are expected to engage with the mandatory readings and prepare their contribution to the practical case discussion. In addition, I strongly recommend that you **bring notes** on the practical cases so that seminar discussions can be fruitful.

Reading Policy

Please note that the readings assigned in this course are an important part of the class. Therefore, they are **mandatory** (unless indicated otherwise in the syllabus). However, academic reading differs from other reading styles. The first session will introduce techniques for reading academic literature effectively and efficiently. All readings can be found on this course's Moodle page.

Furthermore, there will be four short and unannounced quizzes on the readings throughout the semester. They will mainly test to see if you understood the main argument(s) of the text and its main contributions and only make out 10% of the grade. A decent preparation for each session guarantees a good performance in the quizzes.

Course Grade System

The grading of this conférence de méthode is composed of the following elements:

1. One in-class reading presentation: **25%**
2. Four short quizzes on the readings: **10%**
3. Two reading reviews: **25%**
4. One mid-term exam: **40%**

Grading Guideline

Please find below the overall grading guideline for the assignments (reading reviews, reading presentations, and mid-term exam):

- Ability to use key concepts and their well-understood definitions – including references to sources, scholarship, and examples: **10 points**
- Clarity, pertinence, and logic of the argument: **7 points**
- Intelligibility and flowing character of written/oral expression (this does not mean the quality of your English or potential mistakes!): **3 points**
- = Total **20 Points**

Course Assignments

Reading presentation

Presentations are attributed at the beginning of the semester. One or two student(s) must present the central concepts of one mandatory reading. You have no more than 10 minutes and should use a maximum of four slides (excluding the title slide and sources).

Presentations are expected to be structured in three blocks: **introduction**, **analysis**, and **conclusion**. In the introduction, you should present the underlying guiding question or debate that structures the assigned reading. The second block, the analysis, should introduce and define the theoretical concepts used in the reading, as well as the principal arguments made by the author(s) and the reading's main contribution to the scientific literature. The analysis consists of a series of theoretically based and/or empirically supported arguments that should speak to the main question or the debate posed in the introduction. Finally, the conclusion should summarize the arguments and answer the central question explicitly. Here, you are welcome to reflect critically on the reading and let the class know whether you have any criticism of this reading.

At the end of the presentation, the student(s) are expected to open and moderate a **debate** with the class. This necessitates a thorough preparation of the debate and of questions that could be useful to (re-)start the debate. The debates will not exceed more than 20 minutes, especially if there are two presentations for the class.

Note: The sources used at the end of the presentation must be cited correctly!

Quizzes

Four times during the semester, students will have to answer a short unannounced pop-up quiz in class about the mandatory readings of the session (consisting of multiple-choice questions). The quizzes encourage you to read the readings and engage with the key concepts. They will help you to be prepared for the mid-term and final exams. We will speak about how to read academic papers right at the start. You will not be tested on minor details of the readings but on your broad understanding of the concepts and arguments developed in one text.

Reading reviews

Each student is expected to produce one reading reviews critically engaging with readings from two thematic blocks. Choose two texts from one thematic block and compare them critically. For example, you may choose two mandatory readings from this course but are also free to compare a mandatory reading with a reading of your choice from Samuel Hayat's lecture.

The reading review should consist of three parts:

1. a **short** introduction that introduces both readings, situate them in the larger debate of political science, and prompts the guiding question for your reading review
2. the main part consisting of a) a summary of the main theses of the selected readings and b) a discussion and comparison of the concepts and arguments that link the readings with a focus on how they advance the debate of political science
3. a conclusion in which you summarize your arguments and come back to answering the guiding question from the introduction

The reading reviews should consist of a **maximum of 1000 words** (excluding references). A submission substantially exceeding the word limit will result in a reduction of 2 points out of 20.

The deadline for the submission is **April 14, 2024**.

Please name the documents properly: "SURNAME_Reading_review"! The reading reviews **must be handed in on Moodle**.

Please note: focus on writing a succinct reading review following one red thread. There are always a handful of avenues for comparisons between texts. Exploring all possible comparisons is not required. Instead, focus on presenting a well-structured argument comparing the perspectives of the scholars along one theme.

Mid-term exam (galop d'essai)

The mid-term exam will consist of an essay question based on the central themes of the lecture *Introduction to Political Science* by Samuel Hayat and this methodological tutorial. More information will be given later in the semester. Following the course attentively and reading the mandatory texts will be a great preparation for both the galop d'essai and the final exam!

Session Outline

Block I: The Emergence of Politics

Session 1 – Political Science and the Study of Politics

January 26, 2024

This session will introduce the course and its learning objectives and show you important techniques of the scientific working method (e.g. academic reading and referencing). There is no mandatory reading for the session, but students are encouraged to read the following text, which will be highly useful for the rest of the semester:

- **Mouffe**, Chantal, “Politics and the Political”, *On the Political*, Routledge, 2005, p. 8-34.

Session 2 – Political Organization, Power, and the State

February 2, 2024

Mandatory reading:

- **Elias**, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Blackwell, 2009 [1838].
- Conceptual presentation: Power and state authority (rely on **Weber**)

Session 3 – Revolutions and the Emergence of Modern Politics

February 9, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Fraser**, N. (1990). “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.” *Social Text*, (25-26), 56-80.
- Conceptual presentation: Public sphere (rely on **Habermas**)

Session 4 – Governing and Representing Society

February 16, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Urbinati**, Nadia. (2006). *Representative Democracy: Principles and Genealogy*. University of Chicago Press.
- Conceptual presentation: Representative democracy (rely on **Manin**)

Block II: Politicization

Session 5 – The Citizen in Modern Politics

March 8, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Lipset**, Seymour Martin and **Rokkan**, Stein (eds), “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction” in *Party systems and voter alignments*, Free Press, 1967.
- Conceptual presentation: Rational choice theory (rely on **Downs**)

Session 6 – Building Nations, Politicizing Societies

March 15, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Anderson**, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1983.
- **Inglehart**, R. (1977). *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*. Princeton University Press.

Session 7 – Collective Action and Social Movements

March 22, 2024

Mandatory readings (please choose one of the two to read in depth):

- **Hirschman**, Albert. Exit, Voice, and Loyalty, Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Conceptual presentation: Repertoires of action (rely on **Tilly & Tarrow**)

Session 8 – Materializing Public Opinion

March 29, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Phillips**, Anne. ‘Democracy and Representation: Or, Why Should it Matter Who our Representatives Are?’, in *Feminism and Politics*, 224-40, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Conceptual presentation: The Subaltern (rely on **Spivak** and secondary literature)

Block III: Modern State

Session 9 – The Outputs of the Political Process: Public Policies and System Outcomes

April 5, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Lijphart**, Arend, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, 2e ed., Yale University Press, 2012.

Suggested Readings (not mandatory but an easy and very good read)

- **Lijphart**, A., *Patterns of democracy*, Yale University Press, 2012. [Chapters 2 and 3 are recommended to see an application of Lijphart’s dimensions.]

Session 10 – Democracy, Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism

April 12, 2024

Mandatory readings (please choose one of the two to read in depth):

- **Arendt**, Hannah, *The origins of totalitarianism*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973.
- **Levitsky**, Steven and **Ziblatt**, Daniel, (2018), *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown.

Session 11 – War and Peace

April 19, 2024

Mandatory readings:

- **Walt**, Stephen M. “International Relations: One World, Many Theories”, Foreign Policy, no 110, 1998.

Session 12 – Globalization and Global Politics

April 26, 2024

Mandatory readings (please choose one of the two to read in depth):

- **Kriesi**, H., **Grande**, E., **Lachat**, R., **Dolezal**, M., **Bornschier**, S., & **Frey**, T. (2006). Globalisation and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. European Journal of Political Research, 45(6), 921–956.
- Conceptual presentation: Globalisation and state power (rely on **Hay**)