JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
API-901: DOCTORAL RESEARCH SEMINAR
Fall 2007

Professor Pepper D. Culpepper

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is required of all first-year Ph.D. candidates in Public Policy. The course provides an introduction to social science theory, philosophy, and research methods.

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING
This is a graduate seminar and depends for the quality of discussion on your having done all the reading prior to class. To facilitate discussions, each student will comment on one or more themes or debates raised in the reading in a brief response paper, not to exceed 500 words, for each class with assigned reading (excluding the first class on Monday, September 17). These readings must be posted to the online class pages by 8am on the day of class. Each student can elect one "bye" session, in which they do not write comments on the day's reading. The bye sessions are intended to lighten your load on days for which you have other major assignments due in other classes, and you are still expected to do all the required reading on these days.

In this course we try to marry the high abstraction of theories about the philosophy of science with concrete examples of how social scientists work. Each student will provide an analysis of an example of good research completed by a Harvard professor of their choosing and will comment on the work of other students. Students will also develop and present at least an outline of a research proposal for their own topic of interest.

Course grading will be on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis.

COURSE MATERIALS
Required

- Reading packets (available at CMO)

Required Books to Purchase (available at the COOP)


Other Relevant Books (on reserve in KSG Library)

Monday, September 17

Getting Started; Monica Toft Presentation

Our first meeting is to discuss the purposes and structure of the course and organize the schedule and responsibilities for student presentations. We will also discuss the basic themes of the course. Professor Monica Toft will come in at 4:45 to give our first faculty presentation. Part of the required reading is based on the research she will discuss.

Required

Recommended

Monday, September 24th

Jeffrey Liebman Presentation

Required

What is Social Science?

Required


e) The following chapters from Fred R. Dallmayr & Thomas A. McCarthy (eds.). 1977. Understanding and Social Inquiry. Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press:
   Authors, “Introduction: Max Weber on Verstehen,” pp. 19-23
   Authors, “Introduction: The Positivist Reception,” pp. 77-80


Monday, October 1st

William Clark Presentation

Required


Positivism and Falsification

Required


MONDAY OCTOBER 8 – COLUMBUS DAY – NO CLASS
Tuesday, October 15th

Iris Bohnet Presentation on the Review Process
[At the session on October 1 I will pass out review reports and an article that Professor Bohnet recently
coauthored. We will use the first half of this session to talk about the good, the bad, and the ugly parts of
the review process.]

Constructivism and the Socially Embedded Process of Research

Required
University of Chicago Press, pp. 7-51.
- d) Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 1994. “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,” In
Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand
Oaks: Sage Publications, pp. 105-117
Rabinow and William M. Sullivan (eds.), *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*, Berkeley:
University Press, pp. 3-19.
- g) Robert M. Solow. 1988. “Comments from Inside Economics.” In Arjo Klamer et al. (eds.), *The
Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand

Presentation of Faculty Work/ Interview Assignment
Each student will interview a faculty member close to his or her field and discuss an example of the faculty
member’s research. The student will present the identified work to the seminar. We are concerned more with
methods, use of data, use of theory, reasoning from evidence to conclusions, etc., than with any specific
research finding. Obtain an article-length version of the research product and write one or two pages
summarizing the article’s strengths. Two other students will comment in writing on the summary and the
article.

Submit copies of the relevant article and summary one week in advance for distribution to the other
members of the course. The commentators will provide copies of their critiques no later than the Friday
before the class when the respective work will be discussed.
Monday, October 22nd

Research Design, Conceptual Stretching, and the Practice of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Required


Student Presentations

Student Presentation 1
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 2
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Monday, October 29th

Student Presentations

Student Presentation 3
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 4
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 5
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 6
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________
Monday, November 5th

Causal Mechanisms and Process Analysis
Required


Student Presentations

Student Presentation 7
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 8
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

MONDAY NOVEMBER 12TH -- VETERAN’S DAY -- NO CLASS
Monday, November 19th

Student Presentation 9
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 10
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 11
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Student Presentation 12
Presenter ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

Commentator ________________________________

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS/DISSertation PROPOSAL

Each student will make a presentation, and each student will be a discussant of one or more other students’ presentations. At a minimum, each presentation should include an overview of the literature and a careful outline of a research prospectus. A more elaborated dissertation prospectus is highly recommended, especially for advanced students. We urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to provide a thoughtful description of a research proposal, even if it is in the early stages of development, and to receive constructive critiques from your colleagues.

We expect each presentation to be done in the style of a job talk. You must use an overhead or slides. You must provide handouts or props, and your presentation should be well organized and smoothly presented. A copy of the overview, outline, or full prospectus must be distributed one week in advance of the presentation. In addition, two students will prepare brief comments on the text; these must be distributed on the Friday before the class.
Monday, November 26th
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: ROUND 2

Student Presentation 1
Presenter ______________________________________
Commentator __________________________________
Commentator __________________________________

Student Presentation 2
Presenter ______________________________________
Commentator __________________________________
Commentator __________________________________

Student Presentation 3
Presenter ______________________________________
Commentator __________________________________
Commentator __________________________________

Student Presentation 4
Presenter ______________________________________
Commentator __________________________________
Commentator __________________________________

Monday, December 3rd
Student Presentations

Student Presentation 5
Presenter ______________________________________
Commentator __________________________________
Commentator __________________________________

Student Presentation 6
Presenter ______________________________________
Commentator __________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

**Student Presentation 7**
Presenter ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

**Student Presentation 8**
Presenter ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

**Monday, December 10th**

**Student Presentations**
**Student Presentation 9**
Presenter ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

**Student Presentation 10**
Presenter ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

**Student Presentation 11**
Presenter ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________

**Student Presentation 12**
Presenter ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________
Commentator ________________________________