

Political Science 84-401
Political Analysis
3.0 Credits

Spring Semester, 2017
University Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Time: Monday/Wednesday 3:00–4:30
Classroom: Sage Hall 4212

Dr. James R. Simmons
Office: Sage 4632 (424-7165)
Hours: M, W 1:30-3:00
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Course Description

Political Analysis is a Senior Seminar designed to provide a culminating capstone experience for Political Science majors during their final year of study. It is a vehicle for assessing their individual knowledge, skills, and mastery of the discipline. Students will study the leading theoretical perspectives in the field, discuss scholarship and methods, debate major issues, and engage in a significant research project that is an extension and revision of a previous work. In addition, students will take both departmental and national examinations in the field. They will also prepare a portfolio containing a representative sample of their undergraduate work in the major for the purpose of personal and program assessment.

Prerequisite: Senior standing and Political Science major status.

Learning Goals

There are several sets of essential learning outcomes for this course. The department asks students to demonstrate a theoretical and contextual understanding of both historical and contemporary politics, civic and global engagement, written and oral communications skills, analytical ability, and critical and creative thinking. This class will showcase your skills at analysis and presentation. It will allow you reflect on how you have progressed in the discipline, assess what you have learned, and extend what you already know.

Required Readings

Three textbooks are required in this class:

Baglione, Lisa A. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*.
Dahl, Robert A. and Bruce Stinebrickner. *Modern Political Analysis*.
Smith, Raymond A. *The American Anomaly*.

Students are expected to complete all reading assignments prior to the class meeting and to be prepared to discuss the material.

Assessment

- 1) Portfolio- Students will submit a portfolio which contains a representative sample of work done to complete the Major. These materials must include self-reflection,

examples of term papers, essays, reviews, research projects, presentations, exams and quizzes.

- 2) Comprehensive Exams- Students will take three comprehensive examinations (one departmental test and two external general assessment tests) to help determine each individual student's knowledge retention as well as the overall success of the department's program.

Note:

These materials will provide the basis for individual recommendations from the instructor for job placement, post-graduate study and other career pursuits.

Objectives

- To contribute to a liberal education of students by clarifying the manifold ways in which politics influences the quality of their lives and shapes their opportunities for self-actualization.
- To prepare students for active citizenship by providing them with essential knowledge about the political process as well as useful participatory skills.
- To provide a rigorous intellectual environment in which students are given analytical tools, learn research methods and develop the capacity to clearly articulate their arguments, ideas and values.

Course Grades

- 1) Three Exams (40%)- Four-tenths of your course grade will be based on 3 exams. (One regular exam for 25% over the course readings, lectures and discussions, one general internal departmental test for 5% and an external Comprehensive Field-Area test for 10%). The two course examinations covering all the classroom materials will include a major essay, short answers, and multiple-choice questions. The other two tests covering your accumulated knowledge of the field will be entirely objective. The final Field Test will be taken out of class at Polk Testing Services.
- 2) Issue Debate (10%)- Each student will participate in one formal debate over a major and highly contentious issue in contemporary politics.
- 3) Presentation (10%)- Students will give an in-class formal presentation of the question, methods, and findings from the research they have undertaken. They will develop a research question, submit a description of their proposed design by mid-term, and work on development of their research in consultation with the instructor or another member of the department who is an expert on the topic. Class presentations will be delivered at a special conference and will be evaluated by the instructor and all other members of the department.

- 4) Research Project (20%)- A medium length term paper (approximately 13 to 15 pages) must be completed. Students must provide the instructor with sources and references to the materials they uncovered in their research for the paper. The final paper should be revised following critical commentary at the conference and a meeting with the instructor.
- 5) Portfolio (10%)- Each student will create a representative portfolio of their work in the major for presentation in their e-portfolio. This material will consist of the following: 1) A cover page. 2) A list of courses completed. 3) A Resume/CV. 4) Three written papers from their past coursework in the major. 5) The completed revised research project. 6) A job or graduate school application. 7) A personal statement that reflects on their written work as well as their experience and accomplishments in the Political Science discipline.
- 6) Participation (10%)- Attendance is expected and reading assignments should be completed before class so that students are prepared to discuss all of this material. Oral classroom participation in addition to the formal presentation is required and will be counted toward the student's final grade.

Course Outline:

Topics- Weeks	Readings-		
	Dahl	Baglione	Smith
1. Modern Political Analysis - Introduction and Overview - Nation, State, Regime	ch. 1-3	ch. 1	ch. 1
2. Constitutional Order - U.S. Constitution - Federalism	4	2	2-3
3. Government Framework - Internal Department Exam - Division of Powers	5	3	4
4. Government Institutions I - Executive - Legislatures	6	4	5-6
5. Government Institutions II - Research Project/Resume - Judiciaries	7	5	7
6. Political Participation I - Groups and Movements - Voting and Elections	8	6	8-9
7. Political Participation II - Political Parties - Public Opinion	9	7	9-10
8. Public Policy - Domestic Policy	10	8	12-13

- Foreign Policy			
9. Exam and Consultation	11-12	9	-
- Regular Course Test			
- Project Consultation			
10. Issues Debate	-	-	-
11. Issues Debate	-	-	-
12. Class Presentations	-	-	-
13. Class Presentations	-	-	-
14. Consultation and Field Exam			
