

# Research Applications in Political Science

## Political Science 601 Department of Political Science

Instructor: Dr. Frederick Bird  
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Thursday 1:30 – 4:20 p.m..

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This course provides students with an opportunity to develop and expand on the methodological and theoretical themes discussed in PSCI 600 and to prepare for the research phase of their respective graduate program. The course is designed to follow the practice of learned conferences where students will act as chairs, discussants and paper presenters each week. The purpose of the course is to prepare graduate students for academic and other professional careers in which they will be required to present or discuss research before expert audiences. The presentations will be based on the research proposals prepared by graduate students in November. A more general aim of the course is to sophisticate student understanding of the role, scope and potential bias of the primary theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches employed in the study of politics.

Optimally, the course will prepare students to write the theoretical and methodological chapters of their respective graduate research projects. To accomplish this, each student will be expected to discuss different ways to study the political phenomena they are investigating, and to demonstrate and evaluate the various assumptions underlying these perspectives. The paper presentation will be between 30 -35 minutes, followed by two eight-minute critical reviews by discussants and a general question period. Each student will receive an electronic copy of the presentation on the Monday prior to each class. You are expected to read the paper critically and to come to class prepared to challenge the presenter. The success of this course depends on the full participation of all students. Final grades will reflect the level of active participation.

All graduate students will perform three roles in this course: chair, discussant and presenter.

**Chair:** The role of the chairperson is to maintain a sustained level of professionalism throughout the proceedings. The chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the papers are distributed promptly, that the critical reviews are forwarded to the appropriate presenter and that the presentations begin promptly. As well, the chairperson must make certain that the presentations run no longer than 35 minutes, that discussants speak no longer than eight minutes and that all audience questions are addressed through the chair. Your task is to manage the panel and subsequent discussion in a professional and scholarly manner.

**Discussant:** The role of the discussant is to critically review the paper presented. In

academic circles the word critical does not mean negative or unfavourable but relates to the clarity and sufficiency of the assumptions underlying the arguments being presented. Are the assumptions supportable? Is the logic of the argument persuasive? Does the empirical evidence support the argument? Are there other theoretical or methodological ways to approach the research? Alternatively, a discussant may agree in general with the paper's approach and argument but still suggest ways it could be improved. The role of the discussant is always constructive and positive.

**Presenter:** The oral presentation will be 30-35 minutes maximum. The paper upon which the presentation will be based should be approximately 20 to 25 pages. It may not be read but must be presented. You may work from notes but you must not simply read the paper. All students will have access to PowerPoint or other digital or computer equipment, if required. Each presenter will meet with the instructor at least one week prior to the presentation. Students must arrange this appointment with the instructor. Your papers must be written and forwarded to the instructor and all other students in the course by the times listed below. It is the discussant's responsibility, in consultation with the chairperson, to ensure that the critical reviews are available to the presenter and the instructor no later than 3:00 pm on the Wednesday prior to the class presentation. The presenter must be given an opportunity to read and assess the discussant's comments. Following their presentations and responses, presenters and discussants will be given one week to submit to the instructor revised versions of their presentations and comments. Finally, all absences will be recorded.

### **Grading Scheme:**

Paper and Presentation	60%
Discussant (Twice)	30%
Chair and Discussion	10%

### **Course Schedule**

Jan. 5: Introduction to Course

Sign up for times as chairs, presenters, and discussants.

Jan. 12: Review of Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Jan. 19: Review of Methodological Issues

Discussion of Research Ethics

Jan. 26: No Class:

Feb. 2: Presentation by Careers Office

Regarding Alternative Careers for Political Science Graduates

Feb. 9: Two Presentations: Comparative Studies: Aid Programs in Africa and Water Security Policies

Papers due by Monday, February 6, at 3 pm

First presentation: Asif Farooq

Chair: Austin White

Discussants: Sam Wisnicki and Hira Siddiqui

Second presentation: Vince Di Sciullo

Chair: Maja Kokotovic

Discussants: Rachel Emery and Irina Dodik

Feb 16 Two Presentations: Women and Peace Building Negotiations and “Refugee Rights”

Papers due by Monday, February 13 at 3 pm

First Presentation: Maja Kokotovic

Chair: Vince Di Sciullo

Discussants: Sia Limperatos and Irina Dodik

Second Presentation: Venus Ho

Chair: Rachel Emery

Discussants: Lu Ma and Austin White

Feb 23: Winter Break week

March 1: Two Presentations: Post (and present) conflict studies: Political Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan and Politics, Federalism and Human Rights in Sri Lanka

Papers due by Monday, February 26 at 3 pm

First Presentation: Arvin Puyan

Chair: Sia Limperatos

Discussants: Mark Richardson and Maja Kokotovic

Second Presentation: Sathseesan Kumarasamy

Chair: Irina Dodik

Hira Siddiqui and Rachel Emery

March 8: Two Presentations: Post conflict Studies: “Forging political agreements in security sector reforms” and “Terrorism in the EU: when and why does it end?”

Papers due by Monday, March 5 at 3 pm

First Presentation: Mark Richardson

Chair: Sam Wisnicki

Discussants: Sathseesan Kumarasamy and Asif Farooq

Second Presentation: Rachel Emery

Chair: Lu Ma

Discussants: Venus Ho and Vince Di Sciullo

March 15: Three Presentations: Studies of Brazil (Initiatives with regard to the environment and

participatory budgeting) and State Sponsored “terrorism”

Papers due by Monday, March 12 at 3 pm

First Presentation: Irina Dodik

Chair: Sathseesan Kumarasamy

Discussants: Maja Kokotovic and Arvin Puyan

Second Presentation: Sam Wisnicki

Chair: Asif Farooq

Discussants: Venus Ho and Vince Di Sciullo

Third Presentation: Titli Maitra

Chair: Hira Siddiqui

Discussants: Austin white and Mark Richardson

Mar. 22: Graduate Conference

March 29: Two Presentations: Comparative Study of Refugee Rights and “Wealth Inequality and Government Debt”

Papers due by Monday, March 26 at 3 pm

First Presentation: Lu Ma

Chair: Titli Maitra

Discussants: Asif Farooq and Arvin Puyan

Second Presentation: Austin White

Chair: Venus Ho

Discussants: Sathseesan Kumarasamy and Sia Limperatos

April 5: Two Presentations: “Entrepreneurs of violence: The case of Karachi” and “US Housing Crisis and the Greek Debt Crisis”

Papers due by Monday April 2 at 3 p.m.

First Presentation: Hira Siddiqui

Chair: Mark Richardson

Discussants: Titli Maitra and Lu Ma

Second Presentation: Sia Limperatos

Chair: Arvin Puyan

Discussants: Sam Wisnicki and Vince Di Sciullo