Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the field of political science at the graduate level. The primary goal is to expose the student to the social science approach to explaining political phenomena that are puzzling. To do so, the course investigates a broad array of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives and tools associated with the field of political, and more broadly social, science. Examples of political science will be drawn from the sub-fields of international relations, American politics, comparative politics, and political theory. During the course of the semester, students will become familiar with said perspectives through discussion during weekly seminars, group discussions, in addition to co-authoring a semester project.

Reading Materials

The following reading materials are necessary for the course, and are available at the UNT bookstore and other online booksellers:


Seminars
The bedrock of the course is the weekly seminar. The seminars will not be lectures (although I may introduce a week’s material with a presentation.) Rather, the seminars will consist of focused discussion by the students and the instructor of the the topics covered in the weekly readings. The greater the degree to which the participants consider the weekly readings and their implications for political science, the more that participants will learn individually and collectively.

Student Responsibilities
Participation
As noted above, the course is grounded in discussion, rather than lecture. Students are expected to arrive to seminar having read the appropriate readings for the week, having discussed the material previously within assigned small groups, and prepared to discuss the readings in the seminar. Credit for participation in the seminar is based on the student’s ability to do the following:

1. Demonstrate thorough familiarity with the assigned readings;
2. Integrate verbal contributions with the reading material (i.e., stay “on point”);
3. Provide quality conversation topics that elicit seminar discussion (quality trumps quantity);
4. Make quality contributions to your weekly discussion group (evaluated at semester’s end by group colleagues);
5. Upload any weekly papers to UNT’s Blackboard system in a timely fashion and read those posted by your small group colleagues.

Participation will contribute 30% to each student’s final grade. A midterm evaluation of each student’s seminar participation will be posted via Blackboard during the week of Oct. 12.

Exam
There will be one exam (November 16). This exam will be essay in format and will cover the readings and as well as issues raised during seminar discussions. The exam will contribute 40% to the student’s final grade.
Semester Paper

Pairings of students (which I will assign) will be responsible for writing and presenting a semester paper. Each student’s semester paper will consist of an evaluation and re-analysis of the research question and theoretical argument advanced in the following book:


We will not discuss Bremmer’s book formally during seminar. It is recommended that students read *The J Curve* on their own and early in the semester, so that they can begin to evaluate the book as they accrue knowledge about the craft of political science, thereby laying the groundwork for writing the semester paper. In analyzing the *The J Curve*, students will evaluate (or, reevaluate) any of the primary claims made by Bremmer. This evaluation will require students to do the following in their papers:

1. Identify the research question to be examined and evaluate its merits (e.g., normative, intellectual);
2. Review the social scientific literature relevant to this question (literature used, as well as unused, by Bremmer in his study);
3. Evaluate (and, if necessary, modify) Bremmer’s theory;
4. Evaluate Bremmer’s research design and improve it where necessary, give what you’ve learned;
5. Retest Bremmer’s theoretical argument (as well as your additions, if any) empirically and compare the new findings with those reported in *The J Curve*; and
6. Summarize the findings of the revised analysis, identify strengths and weakness of the revised analysis, suggest avenues for future research, and pass judgement on *The J Curve* as a work of social science.

The format of the semester paper will follow the structure of the standard political science manuscript identified in *A Guide to Writing Research Projects in Graduate Political Science Courses* (hereafter, *The Guide*), which is available on Enterline’s department webpage at the following URL: [http://www.psci.unt.edu/enterline/projectguidev4b.pdf](http://www.psci.unt.edu/enterline/projectguidev4b.pdf). Students should download a copy of *The Guide* post haste, bringing it along to seminar (in either electronic or hardcopy form) so that notes and ideas can be jotted in the margin. Instructor–student consultation about projects will be held on Nov. 21 in extended office hours. Co-authors will make a presentation of their semester paper in the final two weeks of the semester. A final draft of the semester paper is due on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 6:30 in our regular seminar room (no early submissions, please.)
Calendar
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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
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<th>No Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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| Week 3 | Sept. 7 | Purpose, Puzzles & Questions  
|        |         | Shively, Ch. 1 |
| Week 4 | Sept. 14 | Theories in Political Science  
|        |         | Shively, Chs. 2, 11  
|        |         | King, et al., Chs. 1–50  
|        |         | Upload 2-page Puzzle & Research Question on 9/13 by noon |
| Week 5 | Sept. 21 | Literature, Measurement & Research Designs  
|        |         | Shively, Chs. 3–10  
|        |         | King, et al., Chs. 51–100  
|        |         | Upload 4-page Assessment of Literature on 9/20 by noon |
| Week 6 | Sept. 28 | Models & Theory Bldg. I  
|        |         | Olson  
|        |         | Upload 4-page Theory on 9/27 by noon |
| Week 7 | Oct. 5  | Models & Theory Bldg. II  
|        |         | Mahoney & Rueschemeyer  
|        |         | Upload 4-page Research Design Proposal on 10/4 by noon |
| Week 8 | Oct. 12 | Visualization  
|        |         | Tuft  
|        |         | Upload 4-page Discussion/Examples of Good & Bad Graphics from PSCI by on 10/11 by noon  
|        |         | Midterm Participation Evaluation |
| Week 9 | Oct. 19 | International Relations  
|        |         | Bennett & Stam |
| Week 10 | Oct. 26 | Comparative Politics  
|         |         | Stokes |
| Week 11 | Nov. 2  | American Politics  
|         |         | Canes-Wrone |

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| Week 12  | Nov. 9 | Political Theory       |
|         |       | Walzer                |
| Week 13 | Nov. 16 | Exam              |
| Week 14 | Nov. 23 | No Class           |
|         |         | Paper Consultation in Office Hours, 11/21, 3:30–8 |
| Week 15 | Nov. 30 | Presentations I       |
| Week 16 | Dec. 7 | Presentations II      |
| Week 17 |       | Wednesday, Dec. 14 Paper Due in Seminar Room |
Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism

The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying others’ tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one’s own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty. Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is grade of "F" in the course. In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be the failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the field faculty in the case of departmental exams. Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental exams, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee. Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary course work may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee in the case of undergraduate students, or the Graduate Studies Committee in the case of graduate students. These committees, acting as agents of the department chair, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it. In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case. Students may appeal a decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Statement of ADA Compliance

The Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request on or before the second week of classes.