

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

This course examines the relationship among political processes, public policy, and the energy and environmental crises. It seeks to show how and why public policy played a major role in creating these crises, and how and to what degree policies have contributed to resolving them. It presents and analyzes a variety of proposed policy alternatives, and it shows how policies and responses to them by energy producers and consumers have changed economic, environmental, and energy realities for many nations and individuals. Because of the global nature of environmental problems, the course also treats international issues.

The following are required texts:

Walter A. Rosenbaum, *Environmental Politics and Policy*, 10th ed. (CQ Press, 2016); and Norman J. Vig and Michael E. Kraft, *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, 9th ed. (CQ Press, 2015 [2016]). [Abbreviated as VK in syllabus.]

Additional readings will be available via the internet, on Blackboard, on electronic reserves (ERes) <http://hunter.docutec.com/eres/>, or in the library reserve book collection. Announcements and some readings will be emailed, so students are required to activate and use their Hunter internet accounts, and to check their Hunter email inboxes, even if they usually use commercial email servers. Blackboard is accessed through the CUNY Portal (instructions at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/the-cuny-portalid>). There is an alternate login link on the Blackboard info page, along with other helpful information: <http://bb.hunter.cuny.edu/>. If you seem blocked from Blackboard (usually because there is a problem at the Portal), try this alternate link. URLs sometimes change. If the URLs for the assigned readings below do not work, please let me know and I will find a new URL or post the reading on Blackboard.

The instructor has designed this course to enable students to develop their abilities to read critically; to think comparatively and logically; to write critically and analytically, organizing their thought into effective analyses or arguments; and to acquire knowledge about environmental dynamics and about the US political system and policy processes. Guidelines for effective critical and analytic prose are offered in the writing tipsheet that accompanies this syllabus.

To help students recognize the issues that the instructor considers important, and to prepare for the final exam, this syllabus contains a sample list of comprehensive essay questions.

In any field of scientific inquiry, scholars employ explanatory concepts and theories to organize data and to interpret phenomena. One goal of this course is to show students how academic disciplines develop dominant explanatory paradigms composed of such concepts and theories, and how, over time, these paradigms are challenged, refined, and/or replaced by new paradigms. The evolution of US environmental policies over more than a century serves well to illustrate this process.

Dominant paradigms also shape the ways that political leaders, policy practitioners, and citizens in general approach contemporary problems. The relationships among academic paradigms, policy paradigms, public-opinion streams, and political processes provide an important theme for this course. Understanding these relationships not only helps one explain why certain policies are followed at any given moment, but it should also enable critics and opponents to assess these policies more effectively in order to propose alternatives.

Course requirements include a mid-term exam, a final exam, a written assignment, and participation in class discussion. These will count, respectively, for 20%, 40%, 30%, and 10% in calculating final grades. The written assignment may be either a policy paper based on your research or a comparative, analytic book review of at least **two** books on environmental or energy policy or politics. Students must consult with the instructor about research topics or books to review. A tentative choice of books or topic for the paper must be emailed to the instructor by March 21, with a

copy to Turnitin.com. It should be well written and should contain a paragraph or two explaining why you chose the topic, what questions you seek to answer, and key sources that you have located in your bibliographic search. The emailed copy should be written or pasted into the body of the message, **not** attached to it. The research paper or book review is due on May 9. It must be submitted both electronically via Turnitin.com and in hard copy. I will read and offer comments on a complete (i.e., not hasty or partial) first draft of the term paper if it is submitted by April 7.

Useful bibliographic sources for research materials or books to review can be found in: the source notes of the two textbooks; EBSCO and Lexis-Nexis on the Hunter Library website databases; CUNYPLUS; in the Columbia University Library catalogue <http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/searchAdvanced> ; Google Scholar <http://www.scholar.google.com> , and amazon.com and bn.com . Keywords identifying your interests (e.g., k=politics and energy, k=nuclear and policy, k=environment and justice, k=petroleum and pollution; k=toxic* and policy) will bring up many recent books and articles. Where the catalogue offers you the option to select by descending date, i.e., by most-recent first, as in Columbia's CLIO, choose that option. You can quickly build a working bibliography by saving, copying, and then pasting the results into a document file. The websites of science- and policy-oriented NGOs provide rich research and analyses. Google.com can provide links to excellent web sources, especially reports from NGOs that don't get catalogued in the library's databases.

For reporting and analysis of relevant current events in the hemisphere that we may discuss in class, students are expected to follow the *New York Times* and other media sources. Let me also point out the often neglected (in this age of television) and truly outstanding news coverage of WNYC radio (AM 82 and FM 93.9). Weekdays, FM carries "Morning Edition," the two-hour National Public Radio newscast from 5 to 9 a.m., and AM carries it from 6:30 to 9 a.m. AM presents "The Takeaway," from 9 to 10 o'clock. They play "All Things Considered," the NPR evening news program, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. WNYC-AM broadcasts "The World," a joint PRI-BBC world news magazine from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., and BBC newscasts overnight and at other hours. AM runs the audio feed of the televised PBS NewsHour from 11 p.m. to midnight. At other hours AM presents excellent current-affairs interview and talk shows. Most of these provide podcasts or downloadable versions. "Living on Earth," an hour devoted to environmental news and features, is available in podcast at: <http://www.loe.org/> . The BBC's One Planet show ended in 2012, but its podcast archive is online at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p002vsn5/broadcasts/2012/08> .

And WBAI, the Pacifica Foundation station (FM 99.5), presents news and analysis on "Democracy Now" from 8 to 9 a.m. and the evening news weekdays from 6 to 7 p.m. (with a rebroadcast at 11 p.m.). On alternate Tuesdays from 8 to 9 p.m., environmental activists Ken Gale and David Occhiuto host "Eco-Logic" on WBAI. On Saturdays, WBAI presents "Explorations," a critique of science, technology, and policy with Michio Kaku from 2 to 3 p.m. Major media websites (www.nytimes.com, www.salon.com, www.washingtonpost.com, www.cnn.com, etc.) make it easy to follow recent current events. Lexis-Nexis, on the Hunter Library website, allows one to search many media at once.

My office hours are: Tuesday, 3:40-4:10 and 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, 4:30 to 5:00 p.m.; and by appointment, in HW1720 (tel. 212-772-5498). My e-mail inbox had two addresses: Kenneth.Erickson@hunter.cuny.edu and kerickso@hunter.cuny.edu . If you have a junk-mail filter in your email account, please be sure to program it to accept email from both of my addresses. To be sure I will find your emails, always put the course number "244" in the subject line.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

I. INTRODUCTION: BASIC ISSUES.

- Jan. 31. Read syllabus carefully. Thomas L. Friedman, "Is Vacation Over?" *New York Times*, 12-23-14, and "A Pump War?" *NYT*, 10-14-14 <via Lexis-Nexis>; and James Hansen, "Tipping Point: Perspective of a Climatologist," in *State of the Wild 2008-2009: A Global Portrait of Wildlife, Wildlands, and Oceans*, Eva Fearn (ed), Wildlife Conservation Society/Island Press, 2008, 6-15; and "Climate guru James Hansen warns of much worse than expected sea level rise," *The Guardian*, 3-22-2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/mar/22/sea-level-rise-james-hansen-climate-change-scientist> .
- Feb. 3. "Erickson's notes on science and paradigms," 1-9; and

Thomas S. Kuhn, "The Route to Normal Science," in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed., (U. of Chicago Press, 1996), 10-21; and

Allen Savory on desertification:

http://video.ted.com/talk/podcast/2013/None/AllanSavory_2013-480p.mp4

(22-minute video); or

<http://www.npr.org/2013/11/15/243721657/how-can-deserts-turn-into-grasslands>

(10-minute audio podcast)

Vig & Kraft [VK], Preface and Ch 1, viii-32; and, along with p. 4 on market failure, read 225-226.

Thomas Friedman, "A Pump War," *NYT*, 10-14-14, and "Is Vacation Over?"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/15/opinion/thomas-friedman-a-pump-war.html?rref=collection%2Fcolumn%2Fthomas-l-friedman> and

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/24/opinion/thomas-friedman-is-vacation-over.html?rref=collection%2Fcolumn%2Fthomas-l-friedman>

Justin Gillis, "Weak Federal Powers Could Limit Trump's Climate-Policy Rollback," *NYT*, 1-2-17.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/02/science/donald-trump-global-warming.html>

Feb. 7. Rosenbaum, Preface and Ch 1, xi-32.

II. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, POLICY PROCESSES, AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

A. Environmental Politics and the Policy Process.

Feb. 10. Rosenbaum, Ch 2, 33-78.

B. Political Institutions, Regulatory Processes, and the EPA.

Feb. 14. Rosenbaum, Ch. 3, 79-126; and

Andrews in VK, Ch 7, 151-156, 165-167; and

W.A. Rosenbaum, "Science, Politics, and Policy at the EPA," Ch 7 in VK, 8th ed (2013), [Use Erickson's notes on this Rosenbaum chapter, in VK notes].

Feb. 17. Reading to be announced.

C. Regulatory Reform, State Policies, & Incentives for Industry.

Feb. 21. Barry Rabe in VK, Ch 2, 33-57; and

Aaron Chatterji, "Don't Look to States for New Ideas," *NYT*, 1-12-15.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/opinion/dont-look-to-states-for-new-ideas.html>

Feb. 24. Press & Mazmanian in VK, Ch 11, 239-264.

D. Urban Futures, Environmental Activists, Movements, Values, Politics, and Policies.

Feb. 28. Robert Paehlke, "Sustainable Development and Urban Life in North America," Ch 12 in VK, 8th ed (2013), 255-276; and

Robert D. Putnam, "Crumbling American Dreams," *NYT*, The Opiniator, 8-3-13.

http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/03/crumbling-american-dreams/?_r=0

John Lanchester, "The Robots Are Coming," *London Review of Books*, 3-5-15,

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v37/n05/john-lanchester/the-robots-are-coming>

Christopher Bosso & Deborah Lynn Guber in VK 2013 ed, Ch 3, 54-65; and

Chris Mooney, "Liberals and Conservatives Don't Just Vote Differently.

They Think Differently," *Washington Post*, 4-12-12; and

Matthew Nisbet in VK 2016, Ch 3, 58-78.

E. Federal Institutions and Environmental Policy.

- Mar. 3. Norman Vig in VK, Ch 4, 80-102; and
- Mar. 7. Michael Kraft in VK, Ch 5, 103-127; and
- Mar.10. Rosemary O’Leary in VK, Ch 6, 128-150; and Review.

III. CRITERIA AND PARADIGMS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: RISK ASSESSMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.

- Mar. 14. Rosenbaum, Ch 4, 129-162.
- Mar. 17. MID-TERM EXAM (on material through Section II of the syllabus).
- Mar. 21. DUE TODAY: Brief description of PAPER TOPIC, with copy to Turnitin.com.
Rosenbaum, Ch 5, 163-194; and
Sheila Olmstead in VK, Ch 10, 215-238.
- Mar. 24. Richard Schmalensee and Robert N. Stavins, “The SO₂ Allowance Trading System: The Ironic History of a Grand Policy Experiment,” *J of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 27, No 1 (Winter 2013), 103-122.

IV. CASE STUDIES OF U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: CLEAN AIR, CLEAN WATER, TOXICS, ENERGY, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND PUBLIC LANDS.

- Mar. 28. Rosenbaum, Ch 6, 195-236.
- Mar. 31. Rosenbaum, Ch 7, 237-272.
- Apr. 4. Rosenbaum, Ch 8, 273-312; and
Edward Weber et al in VK, Ch 8, 173-193.
Erickson’s Energy Slides [filename 244EnergySlidesSpr2017.pptx], and “Understanding Oil and Gas Tax Subsidies,” *Taxpayers for Common Sense*, April 2014, 1-20.
- Apr. 7. Optional First-Draft Paper due today; and Erickson’s nuclear policy lecture [NtNukeLec16.doc].
“Nuclear Power: A Resurgence We Can’t Afford,” UCS Issue Briefing, Aug 2009.
UCS. “Snap, Crackle, & Pop: The BWR Power Uprate Experiment,” UCS Issue Briefing, 07-09-2004. 6p.
Dave Lochbaum, “Nuclear Plant Aging,” <http://allthingsnuclear.org/nuclear-plant-aging/>, 3-31-2015.
David Lochbaum, *The NRC and Nuclear Power Plant Safety in 2014: Tarnished Gold Standard*,
UCS, March 2015, p. 1, 36-42.
Junji Cao, James Hansen, et al., “China-U.S. cooperation to advance nuclear power,” *Science*, 8-5-16, 547-548.
- Apr. 11-18. Spring break.
- Apr. 21. Rosenbaum, Ch 9, 313-356. [Note: No evening session class on Thurs, April 20.]

V. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND POLICY.

- Apr. 25. Rosenbaum, Ch 10, 357-390.
- Apr. 28. Henrik Selin & Stacy D. VanDeveer in VK, Ch 13, 288-310; and William H. Calvin, "The Great Climate Flip-Flop," *The Atlantic Monthly*, January 1998, 47-64; and New York City Panel on Climate Change, 2013: *Climate Risk Information 2013: Observations, Climate Change Projections, and Maps*. C. Rosenzweig and W. Solecki, Eds.
- May 2. Richard J. Tobin in VK, Ch 14, 311-322.
- May 5. Kelly Sims Gallagher & Joanna I. Lewis in VK, Ch 15, 333-356.
- May 9. TERM PAPER DUE; Peter Schwartz and Doug Randall, "An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security" (October 2003) (A report commissioned by the U.S. Defense Department). [Recommended]
Michael Mann, "The Terrifying Math of Melting Ice Sheets," April 2016 interview at: <http://loe.org/shows/segments.html?programID=16-P13-00015&segmentID=1>

VI. AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE, AND REVIEW.

- May 12. Vig and Kraft in VK, Ch 16, 358-378; and review.
- May 16. Review.
- May 18. Review (evening session last class).
- May 23. FINAL EXAM, Evening Session, 5:20-7:20 p.m. (Tuesday)
- May 26. FINAL EXAM, Day Session, 11:30-1:30 p.m. (Friday)

POLSC 244, Spring 2017

Exam Preparation

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

The mid-term exam will consist of short essays, in which you will select four out of five terms (generally concepts treated in readings and class discussion), highlight for each the logic of the process involved, and illustrate its relevance to understanding the formulation and/or analysis of environmental or energy policy. On the final exam, the short-essay part (20 percent) has the same format as the mid-term, with terms drawn from materials covered since the mid-term. The long-essay part (for 80 percent) is cumulative, covering the entire semester. Make-up (i.e., late) exams do not have choices among questions.

Below are questions on material we cover during this course, to help you recognize issues considered important by the instructor. These are typical long-essay questions. You are encouraged to form study groups to discuss the materials and prepare for the exams. You may bring one letter-size sheet of notes (8.5"x11") to the final exam with you, but not to the mid-term. Bear in mind tips from the writing tipsheet about writing essays, in particular the importance of illustrating generalizations with examples.

1. Paradigms are the dominant analytic models used by academic disciplines to address and understand important phenomena. These academic paradigms consist of the key problems a discipline places on its research agenda, and the theories, concepts, and methodologies with which it seeks to understand, analyze, and solve such problems. Academic paradigms often give rise to counterpart paradigms of problem-solvers and policy makers outside of academia. Discuss and analyze the key paradigms that have shaped environmental policy in the United States, and the reasons for the adoption of each and for the shifts from one paradigm to another. Do you think we are now on the verge of a paradigm shift, and why, or why not?

2. Policy analysts agree that policy making must be conceived of as a process rather than a single event. Describe the stages of the policy process, the principal institutions or arenas in which each stage takes place, and the types of outcomes that this kind of process usually creates. Illustrate your discussion with at least three major selected energy- and/or environmental-policy issues, showing how the policy evolved through these phases over time. Reflect on the ways the Trump administration has pursued its policy goals in these processes.
3. If you were an adviser on environmental policy issues to an aspirant to the US presidency, what would be the principal components of your critique of US environmental policy since the Second World War, and what policies would you propose for the coming four-year presidential term as well as for the long term? What are the principal difficulties that a president must confront in order to get his/her policy adopted and implemented, and how would you advise your candidate to approach these difficulties? Be sure to address the institutional context that will shape the likelihood of passage of these policies.
4. The principal federal agency to execute environmental policy is the EPA, an agency that many policy specialists see as in serious danger of failing. Discuss the goals and tasks of the EPA, its application of science to those tasks, its key successes and failures, challenges to its authority and ability to execute its mandate, the causes of its problems, and the likelihood that solutions can be devised to enhance its abilities. If the EPA can't do the job, are there alternative agencies or processes that might be expected to improve environmental quality?
5. Now that punitive command-and-control regulatory policies have fallen into disfavor, policy makers are considering alternative measures to win compliance or to force the internalization of externalized costs. These measures include governmentally administered taxes or fees as well as market-based incentives. Discuss the reasons why command-and-control has fallen into disfavor, causing this shift in strategies, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the alternatives. Make clear the logic behind each approach you mention, and the strengths and weaknesses of each. Illustrate with appropriate case material.
6. Environmental threats are no longer considered isolated problems of industrial locales but rather problems for humankind everywhere, requiring international collaboration to resolve them. Identify the principal threats whose solutions require international collaboration, including among them acid rain, ozone depletion, and climate change, and discuss, illustrate, and evaluate international efforts to address them. As watershed events in this process, include the Stockholm, Montreal, Rio, Kyoto, and Copenhagen conferences and their effects.
7. Discuss the evolution of US energy policy from the 1960s to the present, with special emphasis on the ways in which policy has addressed the supply and the demand of energy resources. Be sure to describe the principal policy shifts, the content of each policy period, the factors that caused the shifts, and their environmental implications. Illustrate with specific examples.
8. As recently as 1970, nuclear fission was seen as a "miraculous, inexhaustible energy source" whose clean energy would be so abundant that it would be "too cheap to meter." For more than three decades, however, the nuclear industry has been a "sick industry" whose commercial viability is considered dubious. Describe the technological, political, and economic factors, domestically and internationally, that contributed to the paralysis of nuclear generation of electricity. Could this outcome have been avoided by different policies during the postwar era? Evaluate the prospects for a change in nuclear energy policy in the future.
9. Conservation is seen by many observers as a "source" of energy every bit as important as coal, oil, gas, and nuclear power. Since the first oil shock in 1973-74, what kinds of policies have been proposed to conserve energy? Compare the actual or likely effectiveness of these various proposals, assess their environmental implications, and explain your reasoning. How successful has the United States been in using public policy to achieve conservation, and what accounts for its success or failure? Illustrate with examples, and feel free to make comparative reference to other countries.

A reminder: In an effective essay, all generalizations and arguments should be supported with illustrations and data. And an effective essay should be so organized that it has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Because you can bring one sheet of notes to the exam, you can outline in advance so that your essay is complete and well organized.

WRITING TIPSHEET, K. P. Erickson

HANDOUT FOR STUDENTS, ON WRITING PAPERS AND EXAMS (Updated January 2008)

All essays should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Essays should make a point or an argument, and illustrate it with supporting evidence.

Consider the argument of a book review. In most cases, monographic studies address a debate in their discipline. They take a position that accepts, illustrates, and perhaps refines the prevailing wisdom (dominant paradigm) in the field, or they criticize that prevailing wisdom and present data to support an alternative explanation of the phenomenon under study. Reviewers should present the main point or argument of the book or books they treat, along with their evaluation of the arguments, logic, evidence, coherence, and clarity of the book or books. Student reviewers should be able to reread their reviews two years after writing them and effectively recall the key ideas and substance of a book, as well as their evaluation or criticism of it.

Writers should always make the logic of their thought explicit, on the level of overall organization, on the level of paragraphs, and on the level of sentences. They should also make explicit the logic of the processes they describe or analyze. One effective way to make clear the overall logic of a paper, chapter, or dissertation/book is to begin it with an introductory "roadmap" paragraph or section.

Paragraphs should begin with topic sentences, and long paragraphs should be broken into smaller ones, each with its own topic sentence. One of the reasons why long paragraphs usually do not make their thought as clear as shorter ones is that long paragraphs include more than one component of a thought, but they contain only one topic sentence. Breaking up a long paragraph into two or more smaller ones, therefore, is not simply responding to esthetic desires for more white space on a page. Rather, when writers break up long paragraphs, they necessarily must link the components of an argument with more topic sentences, thereby making their logic more explicit.

Illustrations, preferably brief, should be provided for each generalization.

Writers should write for a hypothetical intelligent but uninformed reader, so that they are forced to make explicit the logic and the data on which they make their argument.

In selecting words for strong and effective argument, remember that verbs are much stronger than nouns or other types of words, and that transitive verbs (those that force the reader to include a subject and an object, i.e., to state who did what to whom) in the active voice are the strongest. Avoid passives and intransitive verbs (for they tend to lose information, because passives do not require a subject and intransitives do not require an object) and impersonal constructions where nouns replace verbs. For example, "there was a meeting where it was decided that..." conveys less information and thus is not as strong as "party leaders held a meeting where they decided that...."

Fernando Fajnzylber's phrasing below, for example, in his brilliant but difficult to read (and therefore impossible to assign as required reading) *Unavoidable Industrial Restructuring in Latin America* (1990), p. 47 relies on nouns that he could have replaced with verbs: "In Japan and in large U.S. corporations, estimates have prognosticated a duplication in the production during the next fifteen to twenty years, with a reduction in employment of between 25 and 40 percent." A sharp copyeditor could have forced him to check his data and change his formulation to something like: "Japanese and US corporate studies predict that, over the next fifteen to twenty years, production will double while employment will decline by 25 to 40 percent."

Students are expected to proofread their papers before submitting them, so that typographical errors and spelling errors have been corrected. Students should routinely do such proofreading, out of self-respect as well as out of respect for their instructor.

In the case of papers submitted for this course, those averaging more than three spelling or typographical errors per page over three or more pages will be returned ungraded. The corrected version, when resubmitted, will be graded two-thirds

of a letter grade below the grade the work would otherwise earn (e.g., a B+ would become a B-, and a B would become a C+). Students who are not strong spellers should be attentive to prompts from their word processor's spelling checker.

Papers for this course should be typed, double-spaced, stapled, and not in plastic or other folders. Hand-written exams should also be double-spaced.

I grade papers on the basis of their organization, logic, coherence, originality, evaluative criticism, data, and clarity.

Some symbols I use in my penned comments:

Circled words or letters indicate spelling errors. A line linking circled words suggests overuse of a word, inconsistency or contradiction in use, or some other problem.

[] **Brackets** indicate a word choice that I question. Reconsider the word, even though you may choose to stick with your original word. Brackets also may indicate a passage that I have commented on in the margin. I sometimes add delete marks to brackets, suggesting that you drop the passage.

d A lower-case "d" in the margin is for diction, i.e., to signal that the sentence next to the "d" does not say well what it seeks to say, perhaps for reasons of grammar or simply due to confusing construction or word choice (e.g., Fajnzylber's sentence above).

ant "Antecedent," raises questions about the antecedent of a pronoun or adjective, i.e. ambiguity or error in attribution, as with "they" to refer to a singular noun earlier in the sentence. I also use it also to indicate that you are treating a topic as if the reader is already familiar with it, when in fact it has not yet been introduced.

logic When I write "logic" in your ms., it is to signal some break in the internal logic that your exposition seeks to develop.

trans Transition needed between components of a thought.

Parallel upright lines, with diagonal line through them. Grammatical structures or arguments are not parallel.

SYLLABUS ADDENDUM: GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING SCHOLARLY PAPERS

Notes drafted for inclusion on syllabi (graduate and advanced undergraduate courses), as guidelines for organizing scholarly papers:

Political science, like any other discipline in the natural or social sciences, seeks to identify patterns, processes, or phenomena and to explain how and why they work the way they do. To explain or illuminate such processes or phenomena, political scientists use analytical concepts to organize data and to formulate and assess explanatory theories and hypotheses. Students writing in the discipline of political science therefore should focus their research and write-up on a key conceptual/theoretical issue of importance to them and to the discipline.

Ideally, in papers, theses, and dissertations, and later in journal articles, one should (1) begin with a brief review of conceptual/ theoretical interpretations or explanations of how some political process or phenomenon works, then (2) show how the prevailing explanation or concept falls short in some way, and finally (3) propose some new concept or refinement of a hypothesis that would better explain the phenomenon. Then one can (4) move to specific, operationalizable hypotheses that can be examined with real data in order to infer the answer to the overarching, broader hypothesis.

Within this framework, one can then elaborate a case study that assembles the data to answer one's questions. And as one proceeds with the case material, one needs to make systematic, explicit reference to the theories or hypotheses that the case material helps one address. That is, one should provide the reader with explicit connective tissue that integrates the empirical components of the study with its theoretical and conceptual framework. This task of making a writer's logic explicit, addressed in the writing tipsheet, is what distinguishes an inspired, outstanding manuscript from an inspired but merely good one, and this increases its likelihood of being accepted for publication by the editors of a journal or press.

The identification of shortcomings or needed refinements in a theory or hypothesis usually comes after some work in graduate school, so students at earlier stages are more likely to draw upon a prevailing concept or hypothesis to gather and organize data to illuminate some specific problem or issue. In comparative politics, for example, one might use a generally accepted hypothesis to organize the questions asked and the data gathered about some process in a country or context of one's choosing, for example, the role of elite pacting in democratization or the impact of electoral or parliamentary rules on party accountability.

Well designed case studies of this type have considerable academic value. When preparing a manuscript to submit for publication in comparative politics, one should keep in mind that the board of a journal will surely prefer a manuscript that seeks to refine an accepted concept or to develop a new one. Such a journal, however, will also consider seriously a case study applying an accepted concept in a way that can be replicated, cumulatively, in other contexts for the development of comparative analysis. And journals devoted to specific regions or nations explicitly seek out such case studies.

[Revised January 2008]

Academic Dishonesty and University Policies [Current as of 1-1-2017]

The Hunter College Senate passed the following resolution on May 11, 2005: “Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

The College and University policy on academic honesty and dishonesty is set forth in the Hunter College Undergraduate Catalogue, 2007-2010 (p. 71): “The use of material (whether or not purchased) prepared by another and submitted by students as their own will result in disciplinary proceedings.” Section 15.3.a of the Student Disciplinary Procedure Bylaws of CUNY (on p. 275 of the same catalogue) instructs members of the college community: “Any charge, accusation, or allegation...must be submitted in writing in complete detail to the office of the dean of students promptly by the individual...making the charge.” The dean’s office then investigates and disposes of such cases.

The reason that academic communities consider academic dishonesty such a serious offense is that scientific research and learning—and hence the very life of the academic enterprise—are built on a foundation of truth. Without that foundation, academic institutions would lack the integrity that permits critical analysis and that, from a utilitarian perspective, fosters scientific, economic, and social progress.

To make the case that academic honesty is indispensable to scholarly work in the social sciences, let me begin with a discussion of the natural sciences. Students who perform laboratory experiments must carefully record their procedures in their lab reports. This enables them, and their instructors, to verify that their findings are correct, or, if not, to know why not. Such record keeping is not simply a make-work exercise. Students follow the same procedures as professional scientists, who must keep careful records of their work so that their colleagues, critics, or successors can replicate the original experiments to test their work and verify (or, depending on the results, qualify or reject) their findings.

For library research in the social sciences, correct and complete citation is analogous to rigorous laboratory procedure in the physical sciences. Scholars in the social sciences take careful notes so that their evidence can be checked and their work replicated or challenged by other social scientists. This enables knowledge and understanding to evolve as researchers confirm, refine, or reject prevailing paradigms of explanation. And, just as laboratory experiments and lab notes must represent a student’s own work, so too must research papers or other written work—properly documented—be the student’s own.

Web links to the Hunter College and CUNY policy on academic integrity are posted on line. This policy is consistent with, but not identical to, the regulations above, and can be viewed in detail at:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/provost/academic-integrity> and
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf

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