SciencesPo

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Sciences Po - Campus Nancy
Spring Semester

Introduction to Political Science

(methodology tutorial / conférence de méthode)

Jens Carstens

TUTOR

Jens Carstens, Ph.D. candidate at Sciences Po
Centre for European Studies and Comparative Politics (CEE)

Contact: jens.carstens@sciencespo.fr
Note: Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns and address me on a first-name basis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Political Science is one of the key disciplines taught at Sciences Po. Defined broadly as the study of the political; it provides students with the **analytical tools** and necessary **theoretical knowledge** to understand ongoing developments in the political realm – such as political regimes, mobilisations, protests, voting behaviour, policymaking, public discourses, exertion of power, and many more.

This methodology tutorial / conférence de méthode is linked to the lecture 'Introduction to Political Science' taught by Samuel Hayat. Its objective is to **deepen your understanding** of the lectures' content and to help you develop a **scientific working method** in line with the methodological standards of the discipline. In addition, the class aims to strengthen your understanding of the compulsory readings that represent key theoretical concepts in Political Science. In this course, we apply these concepts to contemporary empirical phenomena and **collectively discuss** them.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is structured in three main thematic blocks:

- The first block (sessions 1-4) focuses on the socio-historical emergence and transformations of politics, from prehistory to the modern welfare state, and on the history of how politics has been studied, i.e. the invention of political science.
- The second block (sessions 5-8) examines the politicisation of societies, both among social elites and the masses.
- The third block (sessions 9-12) discusses how state apparatuses produce political outcomes, how nations interact with each other, and transformations induced by globalisation.

A typical session in this methodology tutorial / conférence de méthode will consist of the first part of **reading presentations** from students summarising the mandatory readings, followed by a short collective discussion. This part aims to support you in developing a profound and critical understanding of political science

scholarship. The second part will discuss **practical cases** from current political debates that develop students' analytical and argumentative abilities.

Seminar sessions require **prior preparation** by you every week. Before the seminar sessions, you must engage with the mandatory readings and prepare their contribution to the practical case discussion. In addition, I strongly recommend that you bring notes on the practical cases so that seminar discussions can be fruitful.

READING POLICY

Please note that the readings assigned in this course are essential to the class. Therefore, they are mandatory (unless indicated otherwise in the syllabus). However, academic reading differs from other reading styles. The first session will introduce techniques for reading academic literature effectively and efficiently. All readings can be found in the courses' Google Drive folder.

COURSE GRADE SYSTEM

The grading of the tutorial class is composed of the following elements:

1. One in-class reading presentation: **25%**
2. Four short quizzes on the readings: **10%**
3. One reading review: **25%**
4. One mid-term exam: **40%**

GRADING GUIDELINE

Please find below the overall grading guidelines for the assignments (reading reviews, reading presentations, and mid-term exam):

- Ability to use key concepts and their well-understood definitions – including references to sources, scholarship, and examples: **10 points**.
- Clarity, pertinence, and logic of the argument: **7 points**.
- Intelligibility and flowing character of written/oral expression (quality of your English and the possible presence of mistakes notwithstanding): **3 points**

= Total 20 Points

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading and conceptual presentation

Presentations are attributed at the beginning of the semester. One or two student(s) will present one mandatory reading or a central concept of political science. You have no more than 10 minutes for your presentation and should use a maximum of four substantial slides (excluding the title slide and sources).

- *Reading presentations* are expected to be structured in three blocks: **introduction**, **analysis**, and **conclusion**. In the introduction, you should present the underlying guiding question or debate that structures the assigned reading. The second part, the analysis, should introduce and define the theoretical concepts used in the reading. The analysis consists of a series of theoretically based and/or empirically supported arguments that should speak to the main question or the debate posed in the introduction. Finally, the conclusion should summarise the arguments and answer the central question explicitly. Here, you are welcome to reflect critically on the reading. After presenting the weekly reading, facilitate a brief **Q&A session** to address any questions or comments from your peers. Two assigned **discussants** should kick off the discussion by posing at least one question each about clarifying concepts or exploring how the ideas relate to current political issues.

- *Conceptual presentations* are designed to introduce a central concept of political science that is not part of the assigned readings. The goal is to provide your classmates with a short overview of the concept, its definition and its importance in political science. You are expected to follow a similar structure to the reading presentations (introduction, main part, conclusion), but you are freer to decide what you want

to include or which examples you want to give to clarify the concept. I provide you with one central reference that you should rely on for the conceptual presentation. You are free, however, to go beyond this reference and provide additional data, conceptualisations or applications that you find useful. Please consult secondary literature as well.

Note: The **sources** used at the end of the presentation must be cited correctly following the Harvard (author-date) system: Link

Reading quizzes

Four times during the semester, students will have to answer a short, unannounced pop-up quiz in class about the mandatory readings of the session (consisting of multiple-choice questions). The quizzes encourage you to read the readings and emphasise the key concepts. In addition, they will help you prepare for the mid-term and final exams.

Reading review

Each student is expected to produce **one reading review** of the mandatory readings from this course's syllabus. The goal is to show that you understand the concepts of political science and can discuss them critically.

Please choose two texts from this course's syllabus for the reading review. The texts might be from the same session or different sessions. If you want to compare a text from the syllabus with another text you are interested in but not on the syllabus, this is possible, but please contact me via email to arrange this.

The reading review should consist of three parts:

1. An **introduction** that introduces both readings, situates them in the larger debate of political science, and prompts the guiding question for your reading review;

2. The **main part** consisting of a) a summary of the main theses and conceptualisation in the selected readings and b) a discussion and comparison of the concepts and arguments that link the readings with a focus on how they advance the debate of political science or help us to understand a current political issue. Be critical of the limitations and weaknesses of the concepts and discuss them critically (e.g. do cleavage theory and the exit-voice-loyalty framework take into account the role of political elites?)

3. A **conclusion** in which you summarise your arguments and come back to answering the guiding question from the introduction.

The reading reviews should consist of a maximum of **1000 words** (excluding references). A submission substantially exceeding the word limit will result in a reduction of 2 points out of 20.

The deadline for submitting the reading review is **April 14 at midnight**. I encourage you, however, to submit earlier. Organise your semester's workload well in advance, and remember that the end of the semester tends to be busier with preparation for the final exam.

The subject of your email to me should be: "IPS24 - Reading Review" – please send your reading review in a **Word document including your name**: "SURNAME_Reading Review".

Please note: Focus on writing a succinct reading review following one red threat. There are always a handful of avenues for comparisons between texts. Exploring all possible comparisons is not required. Instead, focus on presenting a well-structured argument comparing the perspectives of the scholars along one theme. **Harvard-style referencing** is mandatory, and citation software such as Zotero is recommended (I will introduce referencing techniques in the first session).

Mid-term exam (galop d'essai)

The mid-term exam will consist of an essay question based on the central themes of the lecture' Introduction to Political Science' by Samuel Hayat and this methodological tutorial. More information will be given later in the semester. It will be on Saturday, March 9, from 8.30 to 11.30.

SESSION OUTLINE

BLOCK I: THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICS

Session 1 – Political Science and the Study of Politics
(January 26)

This session will **introduce the course** and its learning objectives and show you essential techniques of the scientific working method (e.g. academic reading and referencing).

There is no mandatory reading for the session, but students are encouraged to read the following text, which will be highly useful for the rest of the semester:

- **Mouffe**, C. (2005). "Politics and the Political." In *On the Political,* 8-34. Routledge.

Session 2 – Political Organisation, Power, and the State
(February 2)

In this session, we will study the **origins of state power** from the socio-historical perspective introduced by Elias. We will discuss how social media transform politics today and can start an 'un-civilising process'.

Mandatory reading:
- **Elias**, N. (2009 [1939]). *The Civilising Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations.* Blackwell.

Conceptual presentation: **Power and state authority** (rely on Weber)

Session 3 – Revolutions and the Emergence of Modern Politics
(February 9)

In this session on the emergence of modern politics, we will discuss the '**public sphere**' as a place of exchange that makes democracy possible, as defined by Habermas and adapted by Fraser. We will discuss how the public sphere can be adapted to today's democracy in times of affective polarisation.

Mandatory reading:
- **Fraser**, N. (1990). "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text*, (25-26), 56-80.

Conceptual presentation: **Public sphere** (rely on Habermas)

Session 4 – Governing and Representing Society
(February 16)

In this session, we will learn about **representative democracy** as a form of government, particularly the role of deliberation formulated by Urbinati. We will discuss whether direct democracy is a more desirable form of government to make the people's voices heard.

Mandatory reading:
- **Urbinati**, Nadia. (2006). *Representative Democracy: Principles and Genealogy*. University of Chicago Press.

Conceptual presentation: **Representative democracy** (rely on Manin)

BLOCK II: POLITICISATION

Session 5 – The Citizen in Modern Politics
(March 8)

In this session, we will study **why and how citizens vote** in modern democracy through the lens of 'cleavage theory' by Lipset and Rokkan. We will discuss today's party system and analyse modern cleavages that divide our societies.

Mandatory reading:

- **Lipset**, S. M., & **Rokkan**, S. (Eds.). (1967). "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. Free Press. (2 people)

Conceptual presentation: **Rational choice theory** (rely on Downs)

Session 6 – Building Nations, Politicizing Societies

(March 15)

In this session, we will discuss the **origins of the nation** as a political unit from the constructivist perspective of Anderson and study how citizens' relationship with their nation changes over time, as analysed by Inglehart. We will discuss what role nationalism plays in today's politics.

Mandatory readings:

- **Anderson**, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.
- **Inglehart**, R. (1977). *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*. Princeton University Press.

Session 7 – Collective Action and Social Movements

(March 22)

This session introduces ideas about **public (in-)action**: Hirschman's framework of 'exit-voice-loyalty' and Putnam's decline of social capital. We will discuss how societies today can come together and how repertoires of action are changing, as seen by the Gilets Jaunes movement.

Mandatory reading:

- **Tilly**, C., & Tarrow, S. (2015). *Contentious Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Conceptual presentation**: Social capital** (rely on Putnam I and Putnam II)

Session 8 – Materialising Public Opinion

(Online session - March 29)

In this session, we will study the representation of majority and marginalised groups through the concept of substantial and descriptive representation by Pitkin and discuss female representation by Phillips. We will discuss the complexities of representation in today's fragmented and polarised societies.

Mandatory reading:

- **Phillips**, A. (1998). 'Democracy and Representation: Or, Why Should it Matter Who our Representatives Are?'. In *Feminism and Politics*, 224-240.

Conceptual presentation: **The Subaltern** (rely on Spivak and secondary literature)

BLOCK III: MODERN STATE

Session 9 – The Outputs of the Political Process

(RATTRAPAGE: May 3)

In this session, we will learn about the **output of different democratic systems** analysed by Lijphart. We will discuss the pros and cons of policy stability in current democratic debates.

Mandatory reading:

- **Lijphart**, A. (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. (2nd ed.). Yale

University Press.

Session 10 – Democracy, Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism

(April 12)

This session will expand our horizon beyond democracies, and we will learn about **terror and totalitarianism** from Arendt. We will discuss how fragile democracies are and what **populism** means for the future of politics.

Mandatory readings:

- **Arendt**, H. (1973). *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. (2 people)
- **Levitsky**, S., & **Ziblatt**, D. (2018). *How Democracies Die.* New York: Crown.

Conceptual presentation: **Populism** (rely on Kaltwasser & Mudde)

Session 11 – International Relations: War and Peace

(April 19)

This session introduces the theory and logic of **International Relations**. Walt will provide us with an overview of the three main theoretical orientations in International Relations: **Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism**. We will put these to use with a current example of foreign policy.

Mandatory reading:

- **Walt**, S. M. (1998). International Relations: One World, Many Theories. *Foreign Policy*, (110).

Session 12 – Globalisation and Global Politics

(April 26)

In this final session, we will discuss the role of **globalisation** in today's politics, contributing to inequality and populism, according to Rodrik and Milanovic. We will discuss the pros and cons of globalisation and politics open to the world.

Mandatory reading:

- **Kriesi**, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalisation and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 921–956.

Conceptual presentation: **Globalisation and the nation state** (rely on Hay)