

POLS 504
THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO POLICY AND GOVERNANCE:
INQUIRY, LANGUAGE, GOVERNMENT
Spring 2005

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Course Description and Requirements

This course begins as an introduction to the philosophy of inquiry—with special reference to politics—and gradually moves to a terrain that some have called “critical policy studies.” Contemporary continental and analytic philosophy have been greatly influenced by historicism and the “linguistic turn”; critical policy studies incorporates these into the conduct of social research, often along so-called “interpretivist” lines. In critical policy studies there is particular attention given to the ways that dominant programs of social science have participated in building the very worlds they study, through the construction of powerful theoretical objects—for example, “the economy”—and through the related promotion of particular practices and institutions.

Students are expected to write a 2-page memo on each week’s reading, due at the beginning of class. 9 (out of 12) passing memos will guarantee an “A” for 40% of the final grade (fewer passes make this grade decline sharply: B for 8, C for 7, etc.). A presentation of your seminar project will count for another 15%, the final seminar paper (15-20 pp.) 35%, and attendance and participation 10%. Papers are due May 5; missed memos cannot be made up.

Required books are available at the UIC Bookstore (not all the books are currently in). I will provide the required articles. Anyone interested in doing additional reading in particular research areas should consult me for recommendations. Please generate an informal paper proposal by March 15. Any topic inspired by these readings is fine, but you must get instructor approval before proceeding.

Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism rates for memos and essays are rising in my classes; I assume that this is because of students’ increasing reliance on the world wide web. This is true, unfortunately, even of graduate students. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense; it is grounds for automatic course failure and can be grounds for dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see <http://www.uic.edu/depts/pols/Plagiarism1.pdf>.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

January 11: Introduction

Inquiry in Political Science

January 18: Anne Norton, 95 Theses on Politics, Culture, and Method

January 25: King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry (excerpts)
Shepsle and Bonchek, Analyzing Politics (excerpts)
Taylor, “Neutrality in Political Science”
Mihic, Engelmann, and Wingrove, “Facts, Values, and ‘Real’ Numbers”

February 1: Connolly, The Terms of Political Discourse, Introduction and chs. 1-3

February 8: The Terms of Political Discourse, chs. 4-6

Skepticism and Its Limits

February 15: Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty

History, Government, Policy

February 22: Daston, “Baconian Facts, Academic Civility, and the Prehistory of Objectivity”

Burchell et. al., The Foucault Effect, chs. 1, 3-5

March 1: The Foucault Effect, chs. 7-10, 12-14

March 8: Mitchell, Rule of Experts, Introduction and part I

March 15: Rule of Experts, part II

March 29: Rule of Experts, part III

Bennett and Reed, “The New Face of Urban Renewal: The Near-North Redevelopment Initiative and the Cabrini-Green Neighborhood”

April 5: Luker, Dubious Conceptions, chs. 1-4

April 12: Dubious Conceptions, chs. 5-7

April 19: Student Projects I

April 26: Student Projects II