SYLLABUS

PCS Research Methodology (532M0058):
Introduction to Conflict and Contentious Politics
Fall 2017

Professor Yasuyuki Matsunaga
matsunaga@tufs.ac.jp

GOALS

This seminar introduces social scientific approaches to conflict and contentious politics to the first-year PCS students. The course is not a survey; rather, it is intended to be a collective engagement with analytical issues and several key substantive issue areas of contemporary importance in the field of peace and conflict studies. Its primary purpose is to help sharpen the participants’ analytical perspectives on real-world issues. Together with its follow-up course to be offered in the Spring Term by the same instructor (Conflict and Social Change: Advanced Seminar on Conflict and Contentious Politics), this seminar aims to help the participants reshape their own M.A. thesis project.

REQUIREMENTS

The participants are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss the materials. To facilitate this, a set of “reading assignment” questions will be distributed for each week's required readings. You are required to send in your written answers to those questions via email to matsunaga@tufs.ac.jp no later than 9 p.m. on the day before each class meeting.

Your answers (to be saved as a Word document) must be (1) zero- or single-spaced, (2) typed with a small font (e.g., 10.5 Times New Roman) and narrow margins (e.g., 12.7 mm), and (3) no more than a single page when printed out. The file name should be “your first name_RA1” (for reading assignment #1) and so forth. Please note that your answers may not be too short (the expected minimum word count is 800 to 1,000), and are expected to be well thought out and nuanced (there is no need to send your answers early; feel free to keep revising them until the deadline). Also you are expected to write primarily in your own words; when you refer to the passages in the required readings, you are expected not to quote verbatim but to paraphrase them.

The instructor will not refer to your submitted answers during the class discussions. It is, therefore, your responsibility to bring your own copy of your submitted answers so that you may be able to bring them up orally during the class discussion. In addition, you are expected to bring up your own questions about the readings and other ideas during the class discussion.

This is a seminar, and therefore the most important requirement is active, informed participation in class discussion. Needless to say, full attendance is mandatory (there are ways not to get sick on school days!). There will be an open-book in-class midterm examination at the mid-semester point (November 28) and a take-home final examination (due on January 30).

GRADING POLICY

Weekly assignments and class participation: 50%;
Mid-term and final examinations: 50%;
OVERALL SCHEDULE

Week 1 (October 3) Course Orientation (Goals and Requirements).
Week 2 (October 10): The Goal and Methods of the Social Science
Week 3 (October 17): Four Major Meta-Theoretical Traditions
Week 4 (October 24): Approaches to Social Violence
Week 5 (October 31): Group Identity and Mobilization (1)
Week 6 (November 7): Group Identity and Mobilization (2)
Week 7 (November 14): Relational Approaches to Contentious Interaction
   [School Break: November 21 through 27]
Week 8 (November 28) In-class midterm examination [to be administered by TA]
Week 9 (December 5): Political Regimes, Political Context, and Group Conflict
Week 10 (December 12): Culture and Contentious Interaction
Week 11 (December 19): Nonviolence as Strategy and Contentious Politics
   [School Break: December 26 through January 4]
Week 12 (January 9): Social Boundaries and Host/Immigrant Relations
Week 13 (January 16): Finding “Puzzles” to Pursue
January 30: Take-home final exam due via email

WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Week 1 (October 3): Course Orientation; no reading

Week 2 (October 10): The Goal and Methods of the Social Science

Required Readings:

Abbott, Andrew. 2004. Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences (New York: W. W. Norton), Ch. 1 and Sections II through IV of Ch. 2 (pp. 3-40 and 53-79).

Recommended Further Readings:


Useful References:


Week 3 (October 17): Four Major Meta-Theoretical Traditions

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Week 4 (October 24): Approaches to Social Violence

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Week 5 (October 31): Group Identity and Mobilization (1)

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:


Week 6 (November 7): Group Identity and Mobilization (2)

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Week 7 (November 14): Relational Approaches to Contentious Interaction

**Required Readings:**

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press), chs. 1 and 5. [Read Ch. 5 first and then Ch. 1.]

**Recommended Readings:**


November 22: School holiday—no class

Week 8 (November 28): In-class midterm exam

Week 9 (December 5): Political Regimes, Political Context, and Group Conflict

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Week 10 (December 12): Culture and Contentious Interaction

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds. 1996. Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).


Week 11 (December 19): Nonviolence as Strategy and Contentious Politics

Required Readings:

Political Science and Politics 36.4: 705-712.


Recommended Readings:


School break: December 26 through January 4

Week 12 (January 9): Social Boundaries and Host/Immigrant Relations

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Week 13 (January 16): Finding “Puzzles” to Pursue

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


January 30: Take-Home Final Exam due via email.