International Relations/Political Science
Academic year 2020–2021

Time in Political Relations
RISP112 – Fall – 6 ECTS

Course Description
Time is tied into both political relations and our theories of them, and yet receives relatively little sustained and concerted attention. This advanced theory seminar aims to support students' development of their own theories and analysis by providing them with a number of tools for thinking about the relationship between time and politics in their own fields. The course is roughly structured in two parts. In the first part, we consider historical and current debates about ways to think about change and continuity. In the second part, we treat time's salience for political processes at different time scales, concluding with a discussion about the future. Throughout the course, we marry theoretical discussion with analysing current topics in social movements, public policy, and international institutions.

PROFESSOR

James Hollway
james.hollway@
graduateinstitute.ch

Office hours:
Zoom 945-053-3848,
Thursdays, 13–15

ASSISTANT

Bart Gabriel
bart.gabriel@
graduateinstitute.ch

Office hours:
Wednesdays, 12–14

Syllabus

Course Aims

The course is designed as a small, discussion-based seminar to afford time to really engage with various themes. This course is pitched toward more advanced students (i.e. second year masters students and doctoral students) who wish to think more deeply about the relationship between time and politics during the development of their research projects.

Course Structure

The course is roughly structured in two parts. The first part of the course is built around historical and more current debates about the best way to think about description and explanation, causality, change and continuity. We cover stochastics, narratives, path dependence, and punctuated equilibrium theory. We then move on to treat time's salience for political processes at different time scales, concluding with a discussion about the future.

Course Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. However, many of the books from which chapters are taken for this syllabus are worth reading in their entirety.

Course Evaluation

News Report (15%): Each student will select (initially with my assistance) a recent (within the last month) news article from a reputable source to complement one of the week's theoretical readings. They will also give a short presentation (5-10 minutes) at the start of that session outlining how they see the news relating to the readings and vice versa. We will then refer to this material in our further discussion. Grading will cover how well the selected news item relates to the two pieces, evidence of further investigation and interpretation in your report, and the clarity and style with which you present your report. A sign-up sheet will be distributed during the first class.

Questions (8 x 5%): For every week that there are news articles, students will also submit six questions the day before class, three for each (theoretical) reading. For one of the readings, questions should be focused at the sentence-level; for the other, questions will be more general at the paragraph/section-level. This trains asking questions at different reading levels. Students may decide which sentences/paragraphs/sections they question. The grading rubric is as follows:

1. Poor (e.g. incomprehensible, potentially offensive)
2. Ok (e.g. leading, trivial, unclear)
3. Good (e.g. compound, perhaps ambiguous, has potential)
4. Very good (e.g. relevant, pointed, intertextual)
5. Excellent (e.g. profound, insightful, interweek/intercourse)

Op-Ed (45%): At the end of the course, students will submit a blog/op-ed entry that reflects on the temporal dimension of some current political news item, ideally on a substantive topic considered for their thesis. Small, ungraded tasks throughout the semester help you find an angle for your article. A grading rubric will be distributed towards the end of the semester.

Course Policies

Auditing is unfortunately not possible in this course at the current time. If you are interested in the course, please consider registering.

Participation is expected and all questions and comments are encouraged. If you wish to raise a new point, please raise your hand (digitally or in person); if you wish to add something to the current line of discussion, please raise two fingers. This should help keep the discussion as coherent as possible.

Grading is according to a 20 point scale (apart from the questions, mentioned above). I reserve the right to rescale the final grades at the end of the course, but as a general guide a 10 is roughly a passing grade. Expect your question structure to improve over the course.

Plagiarism means presenting another's thoughts, ideas, or expressions as one's own, and is a breach of academic integrity that is not tolerated at the Graduate Institute. Students who present others' work as their own will receive a 0. Please cite appropriately and contact the TA if you have any doubts.

Course Schedule

Week 1   (16 Sep): Preface

- McKay, Alasdair (2016). "Introduction". In A. Hom, C. McIntosh, A. McKay, & L. Stockdale (Eds.), *Time, temporality and global politics* (1–19).
- Monbiot, George (2008). "If an hour is a long time in politics, we must start thinking in centuries". *The Guardian*, 1–3.

Week 2   (23 Sep): –no class–

- *Recommended*: Abbott, Andrew (1988). "Transcending general linear reality". *Sociological Theory*, 6(2), 169–186.

Week 3   (30 Sep): Prediction

- Martin, Andrew D., Quinn, Kevin M., Ruger, Theodore W., & Kim, Pauline T. (2004). "Competing approaches to predicting supreme court decision making". *Perspectives on Politics*, 2(4), 761–767.
- Isaac, Larry W., & Griffin, Larry J. (1989). "Ahistoricism in Time-Series Analyses of Historical Process: Critique, Redirection, and Illustrations from U.S. Labor History". *American Sociological Review*, 54(6), 873–890.
- News article

Week 4   (7 Oct): (Post)Positivist Narratives

- Czarniawska, Barbara (2010). "The uses of narratology in social and policy studies". *Critical Policy Studies*, 4(1), 58–76.
- Abbott, Andrew (1992). "From causes to events". *Sociological Methods & Research*, 20(4), 428–455.
- News article

Week 5   (14 Oct): –no class–

- *Recommended*: Pierson, Paul (2003). "Big, Slow-Moving, and... Invisible: Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics". In J. Mahoney & D. Rueschemeyer (Eds.), *Comparative historical analysis in the social sciences* (177–207).

Week 6   (21 Oct): Path Dependence

- Rixen, Thomas, & Viola, Lora Anne (2014). "Putting path dependence in its place: toward a Taxonomy of institutional change". *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 27(2), 301–323.
- Haydu, Jeffrey (1998). "Making Use of the Past: Time Periods as Cases to Compare and as Sequences of Problem Solving". *The American Journal of Sociology*, 104(2), 339–371.
- News article

Week 7   (28 Oct): Punctuated Equilibria

- Jones, Bryan D., & Baumgartner, Frank R. (2012). "From There to Here: Punctuated Equilibrium to the General Punctuation Thesis to a Theory of Government Information Processing". *Policy Studies Journal*, 40(1), 1–20.
- Mahoney, James, & Thelen, Kathleen (2010). "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change". In J. Mahoney & K. Thelen (Eds.), *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power* (1–37). Cambridge University Press.
- News article

Week 8   (4 Nov): Political Timing

- *Recommended*: Aminzade, Ronald (1992). "Historical Sociology and Time". *Sociological Methods & Research*, 20(4), 456–480.
- Axelrod, Robert (1979). "The rational timing of surprise". *World Politics*, 31(2), 228–246.
- Ketelaars, Pauline, & Sevenans, Julie (2020). "It's a Matter of Timing. How the Timing of Politicians' Information Subsidies Affects What Becomes News". *Political Communication*, 00(00), 1–21.
- News article

Week 9   (11 Nov): Political Horizons

- Adam, Barbara (2008). "Of Timescapes, Futurescapes and Timeprints". *Lüneberg University*, 1–9.
- Goetz, Klaus H., & Meyer-Sahling, Jan-Hinrik (2009). "Political time in the EU: dimensions, perspectives, theories". *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(2), 180–201.
- News article

Week 10   (18 Nov): Political Generations

- Steele, Brent J. (2015). "Never Trust Anyone Who Remembers Jerry Rubin: The Promise of Generational Conflict". In A. Hom, C. McIntosh, A. McKay, & L. Stockdale (Eds.), *Theory and application of the "generation" in international relations and politics* (25–46). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lucas, Jennifer C., & Sisco, Tauna S. (2015). "Generations and Gender in the 2008 U.S. Democratic Primaries". In A. Hom, C. McIntosh, A. McKay, & L. Stockdale (Eds.), *Theory and application of the "generation" in international relations and politics* (147–176). Palgrave Macmillan.
- News article

Week 11   (25 Nov): Prophecies

- Urry, John (2016). "Methods for Making Futures". In *What is the future?* (87–100). Cambridge University Press.
- Biggs, Michael (2009). "Self-Fulfilling Prophecies". In *Oxford handbook of analytical sociology* (294–314). Oxford University Press.
- News article

Week 12   (2 Dec): Optional Consultancies

Week 13   (9 Dec): Op-Ed Due

Week 14   (16 Dec): Op-Ed Comments

– This syllabus is subject to change –