

**International Relations/Political Science
Interdisciplinary Masters Programme**

Academic year 2023–2024

Time in Contemporary Politics

RISP167-MINT384 – Fall – 6 ECTS

Course Description

Time is tied both to politics and our political theories, yet receives relatively little sustained, analytic attention. This advanced seminar aims to support students to develop their own theories and analyse contemporary developments in their own fields by reviewing some tools for thinking about the relationship between time and politics. Throughout the course, we marry theoretical discussion with analysing current topics in social movements, public policy, and international institutions.

PROFESSOR

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Tuesdays, 14–16**ASSISTANT**

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Wednesdays, 10–12

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 who wish to think more deeply about the relationship between time and politics, change and continuity, during the development of their own insights and 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 Evaluation

News Report (20%): Each student will select a recent news article (not op-ed) from a reputable source to complement the week's theoretical readings. They will also give a short presentation (5-10 minutes) at the start of that session outlining how we can interpret the news through the concepts and frameworks offered by or beyond the readings. 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/after the first class. The news articles must be finalised by 5pm Wednesdays before class, but it is worth checking your intended news article with me beforehand.

Questions and Participation (20%): Students will submit a question on each of the readings for 8 out of 10 weeks (excluding the news report week and one other week of your choice). These are due 5pm Wednesdays. These questions will be graded and supplemented by your overall in-class participation throughout the course.

Annotated Glossary (20%): Students will submit an annotated glossary of five concepts that they find particularly interesting from the first half of the course. This is due instead of class on week 7.

Op-Ed (40%): 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. This is due 22nd December.

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; 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.

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 (22 Sep): Introduction

Recommended but not required:

- Abbott, Andrew (1988). "Transcending general linear reality". *Sociological Theory*, 6(2), 169–186.
- Aminzade, Ronald (1992). "Historical Sociology and Time". *Sociological Methods & Research*, 20(4), 456–480.
- Adam, Barbara (2008). "Of Timescapes, Futurescapes and Timeprints". *Lüneberg University*, 1–9.

Week 2 (29 Sep): Trends and Prediction

- Ward, Michael (2016). "Can We Predict Politics? Toward What End?". *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 1(1), 80–91.
- Reynolds-Stenson, Heidi, & Earl, Jennifer (2022). "The Puzzle of Protest Policing Over Time: Historicizing Repression Research Using Temporal Moving Regressions". *American Behavioral Scientist*, 66(5), 625–647.
- [News article](#)

Week 3 (6 Oct): Trajectories and Path Dependence

- Howlett, Michael (2009). "Process Sequencing Policy Dynamics: Beyond Homeostasis and Path Dependency". *Journal of Public Policy*, 29(3), 241–262.
- 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.
- [News article](#)

Week 4 (13 Oct): Turns and Junctures

- 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.
- Hogan, John (2019). "The Critical Juncture Concept's Evolving Capacity to Explain Policy Change". *European Policy Analysis*, 5(2), 170–189.
- [News article](#)

Week 5 (20 Oct): Tales and Stories

- Lebow, Richard Ned (2008). "The Future of Memory". *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 617(1), 25–41.
- Czarniawska, Barbara (2010). "The uses of narratology in social and policy studies". *Critical Policy Studies*, 4(1), 58–76.
- [News article](#)

Week 6 (27 Oct): Timings and Action

- Manulak, Michael (2020). “A bird in the hand: Temporal focal points and change in international institutions”. *The Review of International Organizations*, 15(1), 1–27.
- 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 7 (3 Nov): Annotated Glossary Due

Week 8 (10 Nov): Tempos and Acceleration

- Rosa, Hartmut (2017). “Dynamic Stabilization, the Triple A Approach to the Good Life, and the Resonance Conception”. *Questions de Communication*, 31, 437–456.
- Van Kersbergen, Kees, & Vis, Barbara (2022). “Digitalization as a policy response to social acceleration: Comparing democratic problem solving in Denmark and the Netherlands”. *Government Information Quarterly*, 39(3), 101707.
- [News article](#)

Week 9 (17 Nov): Trials and Resilience

- Hsu, Eric (2019). “Must disasters be rapidly occurring? The case for an expanded temporal typology of disasters”. *Time & Society*, 28(3), 904–921.
- Clark, Janine Natalya (2021). “Beyond “Bouncing”: Resilience as an Expansion–Contraction Dynamic within a Holonic Frame”. *International Studies Review*, 23, 556–579.
- [News article](#)

Week 10 (24 Nov): Temporalities and Generations

- Steele, Brent (2015). “Never Trust Anyone Who Remembers Jerry Rubin: 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.
- Caney, Simon (2022). “Global Climate Governance, Short-Termism, and the Vulnerability of Future Generations”. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 36(2), 137–155.
- [News article](#)

Week 11 (1 Dec): Timeframes and Horizons

- Goetz, Klaus, & Meyer-Sahling, Jan-Hinrik (2009). “Political time in the EU: dimensions, perspectives, theories”. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(2), 180–201.
- Eaton, Sarah, & Kostka, Genia (2014). “Authoritarian Environmentalism Undermined? Local Leaders’ Time Horizons and Environmental Policy Implementation in China”. *The China Quarterly*, 218, 359–380.
- [News article](#)

Week 12 (8 Dec): Teleologies and Prophecies

- Biggs, Michael (2009). “Self-Fulfilling Prophecies”. In *Oxford handbook of analytical sociology* (294–314). Oxford University Press.
- Koskenniemi, Martti (2012). “Law, Teleology and International Relations: An Essay in Counter-disciplinarity”. *International Relations*, 26(1), 3–34.
- [News article](#)

Week 13 (15 Dec): Optional Consultancies

Week 14 (22 Dec): Op-Ed Due

– This syllabus is subject to change –