

USSO 285Q: Ideologies, Paradigms and World Views
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Professor Justin Buchler

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Office Hours: Monday 12:45-1:45, Wednesday 3-4 and whenever else my door is open

Description

The theme for this course is how the assumptions we make and the beliefs that we hold affect the way that we see the world in a variety of contexts, from the physical sciences to social and political contexts. Our first primary area of inquiry will be the degree to which the scientific community meets its ideals. We will explore how dominant paradigms develop and slowly change based on sociological and psychological principles that are far from the idealized notion of the scientific process. Then, we will explore modern political ideologies in order to assess how fundamentally different assumptions about how the world works lead to fundamentally different conclusions about ideal policies. We will then discuss the degree to which ordinary citizens follow such ideologies. As an alternative to an ideological world view, we will then examine the concept from psychology known as the, “schema,” and we will discuss how schemata affect political perceptions. Finally, we will discuss how even so-called experts are subject to errors in judgment based on their assumptions about the world.

This is a *University Seminar*, though, so the class will also set aside time to discuss writing. The schedule has several sessions set aside for writing instruction (labeled, “writing day”). On these days, class will be led jointly by the professor and the writing liaison to discuss writing technique. For most of these sessions, you will be asked to participate in a writing exercise, to be discussed immediately afterwards. For some sessions, though, you will be asked to bring in outlines, thesis statements, sample paragraphs, or other preparation work for course assignments. You will be informed the week prior when you will need to bring such a sample to the writing session.

Course Procedures

This course is a seminar, which means there will be a strong emphasis on student discussion rather than lectures. Each week, you will be assigned a set of readings. The class meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We will begin Monday sessions by going around the room and having each student raise a question, comment, observation, criticism, etc. of the readings. Other students may respond immediately, or we can move on to the next student. Based on previous semesters with different schedules, this process generally takes significantly longer than 50 minutes, so the process will generally spill over into the Wednesday session. After each student has spoken, we will use the observations made as a starting point for discussion for the rest of the Wednesday session. The purpose of this is to ensure that each student participates in our discussions rather than having the class be dominated by two or three of the most talkative students.

On Friday, each student shall bring a discussion question to class, and hand it in to me. I will read through the discussion questions as students show up, and I will lead a discussion based on the issues that are of the greatest interest to the most students. The questions should be of the type that there is no simple answer. The questions should be the type that we can discuss and debate at length.

Course Requirements

Course requirements are as follows: active participation in all discussions (20%), two short papers (20% each), term paper (40%). Paper topics will be discussed towards the beginning of the semester.

Attendance

Attendance is required. You may miss three sessions. To be clear, that does not mean that you may miss three sessions plus however many sessions for which you have a doctor's note. You may miss three sessions, in total. Each absence beyond that will result in a three percentage point deduction from your course grade. Thus, it would be wise to save your excused absences for when you are ill. Exceptions will only be granted under extraordinary circumstances. This is a seminar, so attendance and participation are critical.

You are also expected to show up on time. I find it distracting and disrespectful when students walk in after class has begun. You may show up late once during the semester. Each time you show up late beyond that, one percentage point will be deducted from your course grade. The objective is not to punish you for being late. The objective is to get you to show up on time. If you have a class on the other side of campus just before our class, you need to speak with me about it at the beginning of the semester.

Classroom rules

- 1: Check your ideology at the door. The classroom is not the place to preach. It is a place to keep an open mind.
- 2: Be respectful. Show up on time, pay attention, participate, and TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES/BLACKBERRIES. If you fall asleep in class, five percentage points will be deducted from your course grade. You don't get any free passes on this. Drinking heavily caffeinated beverages during class is perfectly acceptable. If you don't think you can stay awake, it is also acceptable to say you aren't feeling well, and ask to be excused.

Texts

The following books will be used heavily, and are available in the University book store. Additional readings will be posted on the course blackboard site as pdf files for you to download.

Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Love, Nancy, editor. 2006. *Dogmas and Dreams*, 3rd Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Love, Nancy. *Understanding Dogmas and Dreams (Companion volume)*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Tetlock, Philip. 2006. *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It, and How Can We Know?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Schedule

8/24 Introduction

8/26-31 Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses and Misperceptions" (on Blackboard)

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases" (on Blackboard)

NOTE: Discussion questions will be handed in on 8/31 rather than 8/28 for this section

9/2, 9/4 NO CLASS-- PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN FOR CONFERENCE

Scientific Paradigms

9/7 NO CLASS-- LABOR DAY

9/9-9/11 Kuhn, Chapters 1-7

9/14-9/18 Kuhn, remainder of book

Political Ideologies

9/21-9/25 Classical Liberalism

Dogmas and Dreams, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6

Understanding Dogmas and Dreams, Chapter 1

9/28-10/2 Modern Liberalism

Dogmas and Dreams, Chapters 5, 7

Understanding Dogmas and Dreams, Chapter 2

10/5-10/9 Classical Conservatism
Dogmas and Dreams, Chapters 8, 9
Understanding Dogmas and Dreams, Chapter 3

10/12-10/14 Modern Conservatism
Dogmas and Dreams, Chapters 10, 11
Understanding Dogmas and Dreams

10/16 Writing Session

10/19 FALL BREAK-- NO CLASS

10/21-10/23 Nationalism/Globalization
Dogmas and Dreams Part VIII
Understanding Dogmas and Dreams Chapter 9

Ideologies and other modes of thinking

10/26-10/30 Do people think in terms of ideology?

Philip Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics” (on Blackboard)

James Stimson, “Belief Systems: Constraint, Complexity and the 1972 Election” (on Blackboard)

Norman Nie and Kristi Anderson, “Mass Belief Systems Revisited” (on Blackboard)

John Sullivan et al., “Ideological Constraint in the Mass Public” (on Blackboard)

Philip Converse and Gregory Markus, “Plus Ca Change” (on Blackboard)

11/2-11/6 If not ideology, then what? Schemas?

Robert Lane, “What Are People Trying To Do With Their Schemata?” (on Blackboard)

Milton Lodge and Ruth Hamill. "A Partisan Schema For Political Information Processing." (on Blackboard)

James Kuklinski, Robert C. Luskin and John Bolland. "Where's the Schema? Going Beyond the 'S' Word in Political Psychology." (on Blackboard)

Milton Lodge, et al, "Where is the Schema? Critiques" (on Blackboard)

Making Predictions

11/9-11/13 Tetlock, Chapters 1-4

11/16-11/18 Tetlock, Chapters 5-8

11/20 Writing Session

11/23-11/25 Readings to be announced on predictions about the economy

11/27 NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/30-12/4 Writing exercises for term paper, and course wrap-up

12/2 Writing Session