Course Purpose:
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the nature, language, forms, and methods of empirical social science inquiry. This course will focus on philosophical and theoretical problems and issues in the social sciences; epistemological issues; and the theoretical scope of the study of politics. Among the topics we will cover are concept development and formulation, theory building and evaluation, various epistemological issues, and several specific approaches to the scientific study of politics.

Course Format:
Because this is a seminar, it carries with it special expectations: mandatory attendance, full preparation prior to class, and active participation by all. Bouncing different ideas off each other does much of the teaching in any seminar.

Requirements:
You are responsible for coming to class prepared – at the least having read all reading assignments – and ready to discuss all of the issues raised in the readings. You are also responsible for two exams, and two small papers.

Required Books:


Recommended Books:


Scope and Methods in Political Science


**Topic and Reading Calendar:**

**Section 1:** *The Nature of Science*
- Susser, 118-133.
- Kaplan, Chapter 1.
- Susser, 13-65.
- Asher, 3-20.
- Russell, in Feigl and Brodbeck, 387-407.
- Feigl, in Feigl and Brodbeck, 408-418.

**Section 2:** *The Potential for Social Science*

**Section 3:** *Approaches to the Study of Politics*

**Traditionalism**
- Susser, 3-15

**Behavioralism**

**Post-Behavioralism**
- Susser, 76-100.
Scope and Methods in Political Science


**Systems Analysis**
- Susser, 180-188.

**Structure-Functionalism**
- Susser, 202-208.

**Rational Choice and Game Theory**
- Susser, 300-311.
- Schelling, Thomas C. “What is Game Theory?” In Susser: 318-346.

**Political Psychology**
- Susser, 347-357.
- Greenstein, F. I. “Can Personality and Politics Be Studied Systematically?” In Susser: 363-89.

**Marxism**
- Susser, 421-29.

**Section 4: Orientations to the Development of Knowledge**
- Schlick, M. “Positivism and Realism.” In Ayer: 82-107.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. : 10-110.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. “The Essential Tension.” In Susser: 166-79.
- Ball, T. “From Paradigms to Research Programs: Toward a Post-Kuhnian Political Science.” In Asher: 23-49.
Scope and Methods in Political Science

Section 5: Epistemological Issues

- Hempel, Chapter 8.
- Abel, T. “The Operation Called Verstehen.” In Feigl and Brodbeck: 677-87.

Section 6: Concept Formation and Development

- Hempel, Chapter 7.
- Kaplan, Chapter 2.

Section 7: Hypothesis Testing and Theory Evaluation

- Hempel, Chapters 2-4.

Section 8: Explanation and Prediction

- Hempel, Chapter 5.
- Kaplan, Chapter 9.

Section 9: Theory – Components, Forms, and Functions

- Hempel, Chapter 6.
- Kaplan, Chapters 3 and 8.
- Bergmann G. “Imperfect Knowledge.” In Brodbeck: 415-436.

Section 10: Models in the Social Sciences

- Kaplan, Chapter 7
Scope and Methods in Political Science

Reserved Books:


Scope and Methods in Political Science


**Evaluation**

Exam 1 (End of Section III): 20%  
Exam 2 (November 28): 20%  
Class Discussion: 20%  

Paper 1 (End of Section I): 20%  
Paper 2 (End of Section VII): 20%

**Grades**

A 90 – 100%  
B+ 88 – 90%  
B 80 – 88%  
C+ 78 – 80%  
C 70 – 78%  
D 60 – 70%