Course Description

In this course, we will read six books written by non-political scientists. That might sound strange, given that this is a course in Political Science. The animating idea of the course, however, is that the books share a common thread—phenomena that the public typically does not think about, but should. The first half of the course covers aspects of technology; the second covers psychological and sociological processes. Throughout the semester, we will be connecting these ideas to political and policy issues. This is a WID course, so there will be a large number of writing assignments throughout the semester.

Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, students will:

- Make connections between political science and intellectual and technical perspectives from outside political science.
- Develop and hone writing skills across a range of different tasks.
- Be able to write competently at an advanced undergraduate level, with an emphasis on making connections between political science and other disciplines.

Books


Grades
As a rule, there will be no deadline extensions given in this course. Exceptions only will be made with prior consent for planned events such as sponsored GWU activities or religious observances or under unusual circumstances such as a documented medical emergency. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade (e.g., A- to B-) each day.

Your course grade will be based on the following components:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>One page response papers (9)</td>
<td>Weekly, 9/14 to 12/7 sessions, due the <strong>Monday before class</strong></td>
<td>2 points each, for a total of 18 points. Choose 9 of 12 weeks.</td>
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<td>Class participation and discussion</td>
<td>Throughout the semester</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<td>Seminar leadership</td>
<td>Article proposals to me by 9/14, as discussed in first class</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>One 5 page essay, with peer review</td>
<td>10/5 peer review session, 10/19 final draft due</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>One long (10-12) paper</td>
<td>Draft 11/16, Final 12/7</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turning in everything on time all semester</td>
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<td>2 points</td>
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Detailed guidelines and rubrics for the essay and long paper will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard well in advance of the assignment deadlines.

Response papers will work as follows. For each paper, you will write a one page critical response to the readings. Do not merely summarize the readings. Offer critiques or raise issues that are not addressed (or not adequately addressed) by the authors. Conclude with three questions that could provide topics for discussion on Wednesday. Weekly response papers must be emailed to me in **.pdf form** by 11:59pm on Monday. The papers may be, but need not be, single-spaced (i.e., 2 double spaced or 1 single spaced page maximum). Each week, I will choose one response paper that we all will read at the start of class. The response papers will be graded pass/fail. If you complete the assignment, you get 2 points. If you do not complete the assignment, you get 0 points for the assignment. Note that you do not need to write a response paper every week, but only for 9 of the 12 weeks starting 9/4.

Participation and Reading
You are expected to attend seminar and complete each reading assignment before the class period(s) for which it is assigned. Taking the response papers seriously will make you a much more effective participant in our class discussions. No-laptop policies are cropping up in classrooms across the country. These policies have emerged to confront the distractions laptops can create for the laptop-using students, the students sitting near them, and the professors delivering lectures or leading discussions. Laptops will not be allowed in this class, and I ask that you also put away your cell phones.
during class. You can text after class. If you have the readings in electronic form, talk to me about that.

University Policies

University Policy on Religious Holidays

- Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
- Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
- Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals.

http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

Academic Integrity Code

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see:

https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.
Preliminary Course Calendar
[subject to change due to extenuating circumstances]

8/31 Course overview

9/7 - 9/21 *Reclaiming Conversation*, Sherry Turkle
- 9/7 “The Case for Conversation” and “One Chair”
- 9/14 “Two Chairs”
- 9/21 “Three Chairs,” “The Path Forward,” and “A Fourth Chair?”

9/28 & 10/5 *Data and Goliath*, Bruce Schneier
- 9/28 chapters 1-6
- 10/5 chapters 7-16

10/12 *Weapons of Math Destruction*, Cathy O’Neill

10/19 - 11/2 *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman
- 10/19 chapters 1-9
- 10/26 chapters 10-24
- 11/2 chapters 25-38

11/9 & 11/16 *Blindspot*, Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald
- 11/9 chapters 1-5
- 11/16 chapters 6-10, Appendix 1 & 2

11/30 & 12/7 *Everything is Obvious*, Duncan Watts
- 11/30 chapters 1-6
- 12/7 chapters 7-10