Rationale and objectives

Over the past three decades, cognitive science—the interdisciplinary study of mind and intelligence—has radically improved our understanding of the way in which we perceive, represent and understand reality. The knowledge generated by this relatively new field of science can no longer be ignored by political science. After all, as Mark Turner points out, social science is a mental activity that deals with human actions conditioned by individual and collective mental processes.

Social science in general, and political science in particular, must critically acknowledge and confront the impact that cognitive science is having on many of the fundamental ontological and epistemological premises that have shaped our discipline’s intellectual history. It is difficult, if not impossible, to talk today about the nature of political reality, perception, representation, concept formation, recognition, causality, objectivity, ethnocentrism, and language, without taking into consideration what cognitive science is saying about these topics.
This course has been designed as a first point of contact between students of political science and cognitive science. Its objective is to introduce students to key ideas in cognitive science that have a bearing on the ways in which we study and explain political phenomena. In this sense, the course does not require any academic background on any of the disciplines that integrate cognitive science.

Content and Organization

The course will be predominantly based on academic literature and video presentations that explicitly bridge cognitive and social science and that use the language of political and social science to explore the contributions of cognitive science. It will be divided into five sections. Each of these sections will explore a set of topics in which political science and cognitive sciences converge.

I. Introduction
II. Political Reality and the Self (Where do you— the political scientist— end and where does the rest of the world begin?)
III. Reason, Knowledge and Representation (Is knowledge organized ignorance in the same way as music is organized noise?)
IV. Emotion, Empathy and Recognition (Can Mr. Spock ever become a good political scientist?)
V. Conclusions

The first week of each of the three substantive sections (II, III and IV) of the course, will be used to examine dominant positions regarding key topics and problems in political science/social science. The second week will examine key contributions made by cognitive science regarding the same topics. The third week will be used to examine the convergences, tensions and contradictions between cognitive and political science. The following case studies will be used to explore the relationship between cognitive science and political science in the third week of sections II, III, and IV of the course:

Section II: Political Reality and the Self: The Return of Quetzalcoatl: The re-construction of reality and the Self after the Conquest of America in 1492.

Section III: Reason, Knowledge and Representation: The Liberation of Dissonance in Music, Painting and the Human Sciences.


Prerequisites: Political Science 2237 or 2245
Student Assessment

The overall grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Essay: 50%
- Comparative Book Review: 30%

Participation

Students in this course will be expected to master the assigned readings and to actively participate in the discussions that will take place every week. Moreover, students will be required to post a critical assessment of the assigned readings on the Cognitive Dimensions of Politics Bulletin Board that will be created for this purpose. Critical assessments must be posted each week by Monday at noon. One or two students will formally introduce the assigned readings each week having read the other students’ critical comments on the bulletin board.

Essay

A research essay (15-17) double-spaced page will be due on November 30, 2011 IN CLASS. The instructor will provide guidelines for this assignment.

Comparative Book Review:

Students will critically assess and compare the central premises, arguments and conclusions of the following two books:


The book review is due on October 12, 2011 IN CLASS. The review should not exceed 8 double-spaced pages. The instructor will provide guidelines for this assignment.

Note: A penalty of 5% per day (including week-ends and holidays) will be imposed on any written assignment that is not handed in on time, IN CLASS.

Books Recommended for Purchase:


Movies Recommended: Consult the *Cognitive Science Movie Index*: https://www.indiana.edu/~cogfilms/
READING MATERIAL

I. INTRODUCTION

September 14: Objectives and Organization of the Course

September 21: Politics and Your Brain

http://dingo.sbs.arizona.edu/~massimo/publications/PDF/LN&MPPIntro.pdf


Recommended:


September 28: Political Science: The Absent Brain?


Recommended:


**II. POLITICAL REALITY AND THE SELF**

**October 5: Reality and the Self in Political Science**


**Recommended:**


**October 12: Reality and the Self in Cognitive Science: You Are Your Brain/You Are More Than Your Brain**


**Recommended:**


**October 19: Reality and the Self: Points of Encounter between Cognitive Science and Social Science.**

**Case Study:** The Re-construction of Reality and the Self after the Conquest of America in 1492.


http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29447/1/Reconciling_Social_Science_and_Cognitive_(LSERO).pdf

After-class movie: *The Other Conquest* (2000). Director: Salvador Carrasco. This is a film about 1520s Mexico in the aftermath of the Spanish Conquest from the vantage point of the Aztec people.

**III. REASON, KNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENTATION**

**October 26: Epistemological Foundations of Political Science**


**Recommended:**


**November 2: Political Cognition: Contributions from Cognitive Science**


**Recommended:**


**November 9: The Nature of Knowledge: Points of Encounter Between Cognitive Science and Social Science.**

**Case Study:** The Liberation of Dissonance in Music, Painting and the Human Sciences.


Picasso: The Reordering of Reality
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqKap69JySI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqKap69JySI)

**After-class movie:** Coco Chanel & Igor Stravinsky. Director: Jan Kounen. Paris 1913. From the official description of the movie: “Igor Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring is about
to be performed. The revolutionary dissonances of Igor's work parallel Coco's radical ideas. She wants to democratize women's fashion; he wants to redefine musical taste. Coco attends the scandalous first performance of The Rite in a chic white dress. The music and ballet are criticized as too modern, too foreign.”

IV. EMOTION, EMPATHY AND RECOGNITION

November 16: Dealing with the Other: Justice and Morality in Political Science


http://umaine.academia.edu/RobertGlover/Papers/745611/Of_Virtues_and_Values_Sympathy_Empathy_and_Agonistic_Respect_in_Recent_Democratic_Theory


Recommended:


November 23: Justice, Morality and the Emotional Brain


Recommended:

John O’Manique, The Origins of Justice: The Evolution of Morality, Human Rights and
November 30: Emotion, Empathy and Recognition: Points of Encounter Between Cognitive Science and Social Science

Case Study: The Contribution of Visual Perspective to Our Intuitive Understanding of the Holocaust.


http://publish.uwo.ca/~schow53/index_files/Page320.htm


Recommended:


After-class movie: Schindler's List (1993). Directed by Steven Spielberg. Plot summary by Rob Hartill: “The true story of Czech born Oskar Schindler, a businessman who tried to make his fortune during the Second World War by exploiting cheap Jewish labour, but ended up penniless having saved over 1000 Polish Jews from almost certain death during the holocaust”.

December 7: Conclusions

\[\textit{The title of this course is a variation of the title of Mark Turner's}\textit{ Cognitive Dimensions of Social Science}. \textit{Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.}
\[\textit{This question is a variation of the question raised by Alva Noë in Out of Our Heads: Why You Are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness}. \textit{New York: Hill and Wang, 2009, 67.}\]
APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Prerequisite checking - the student’s responsibility
"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements
With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)
"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:
• the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
• the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work (refer to current Western Academic Calendar (http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/)
"Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work
Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments
In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

Academic Offences
"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf."
Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA’S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR’S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/)

Students registered in Social Science should refer to [http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/) [http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp) for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty’s academic counselling office.

### Plagiarism

"Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

**Plagiarism Checking:** "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ([http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com))."

**Multiple-choice tests/exams:** "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/)

### PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer’s words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.
A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History
Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History
August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western

Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.