MAPS 30000, Perspectives in Social Science Analysis
Autumn Quarter 2015

Instructors: Dain Borges, Theresa Anasti, Alexandra Bass, Samantha Peishan Fan, Elina Hartikainen, Darcy Hughes Heuring, Juan Fernando Ibarra del Cueto, John McCallum, Francis McKay, Jonah Rubin, Alicia VandeVusse.

Lecture: Monday, 4:30-6:30, in Kent Hall 107

Optional discussion: Wednesday, 4:30-5:30, Kent Hall 107

Discussion sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theresa Anasti</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9:00-10:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexandra Bass</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>11:00-12:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha Fan</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11:00-12:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 247A</td>
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<td>Elina Hartikainen</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>1:00-2:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darcy Heuring</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11:00-12:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 242</td>
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<td>Juan Fernando Ibarra</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>3:00-4:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 242</td>
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<tr>
<td>John McCallum</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9:00-10:50</td>
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<td>Francis McKay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonah Rubin</td>
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<td>3:00-4:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alicia VandeVusse</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>5:00-6:50</td>
<td>Saieh Hall 242</td>
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Preceptors will post their office hours availability. Dain Borges will hold office hours Thursday, 1-3, in Saieh Hall 245. <dborges@uchicago.edu> 773-702-8317.

Aims of the course:

This course presents a set of perspectives that may be appreciated in their own right and that can be used as coordinates to map the modern social sciences. Each week we will explore a different “perspective” in social sciences research, taking it on its own terms and also confronting it with the others. By the end of the course, we will have assembled a matrix of diverse directions in research. One specific skill that we will exercise is the ability to read a new research paper in any discipline and locate it in relation to familiar perspectives in the social sciences. The course is also meant to bring the students and preceptors in the MAPSS program together around a shared reading list of foundational works and exemplary research; we will develop a shared vocabulary for how to discuss differences among various types of research.

As we will define them, perspectives are stances from which social thinkers see the world and explain the world; they are not just ways of “looking” but also starting points
for “acting,” for doing research. Each perspective is made up of theories, ideal models and counter-models; over time each has established habits of how to pick an interesting question, what methods to use, and what data is most relevant. Perspectives also bump up against each another: they may complement one another, or they may contradict one another frontally. As we will define them, perspectives are not theories, methods, or disciplines --and they are certainly not university departments. Perhaps they are most like what Thomas Kuhn called a “scientific paradigm:” an agenda of interesting problems that is defined partly by shared theories, and also by shared, habitual ways of conducting productive research. Each week of this course, then, will be an exercise in empathy, in walking in the shoes of others’ ways of doing social sciences. Conversely, it should defamiliarize perspectives and texts we thought were familiar. By the end of it, we will understand where our own stance on research fits into the social sciences because we will be acquainted with what we are not doing, as well as what we are doing.

Structure and organization of the course:

Everyone will meet Mondays for a lecture in Kent Hall 107. On Wednesdays there will be an informal, optional discussion for the entire class, following up on Monday’s lecture. The third weekly meeting (either Thursday or Friday) is divided into sections, each led by a preceptor.

Grades will be based on two written, take-home examinations: a mid-term and a final. Each exam will offer a new social science reading and ask students to identify and critically analyze its relation to the perspectives studied in the course.

Readings for the course:

All required readings for the course are available on our CHALK website and on Regenstein Library reserve. In addition, there are three texts available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore for those who wish to purchase them:


Schedule:

**September 28, week 1. Historical Perspective**


October 5, week 2. Rational Choice


Oct. 12, week 3. Marxism


**Oct. 19, week 4. Positivism and Structural-Functionalisms**


**Oct. 26, week 5. Interactions, especially Microinteractions**


Oct. 28: **Wednesday**, materials for midterm exam handed out after class.

Nov. 2, Week 6. No lecture; midterm writing. The exam is due on **Wednesday**, November 4, in Pick Hall 301.

Nov. 9, week 7. Modernization(s) Theory, Comparative Perspective


Nov. 16, week 8. Linguistic Structuralisms.

Ferdinand de Saussure, selections from the *Course in General Linguistics* (Scranton: Harper Collins, 1959), pp. 6-17, 21-23, 71-83, 98-100, 114-134.


Nov. 23, week 9. Experimental Positivisms


**Discussion sections will meet Tuesday, Nov. 24, at times and locations to be announced.**

[No Wednesday meeting; Thanksgiving holiday, Thursday, Nov. 26.]

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**Nov. 30, week 10. Hermeneutics of Culture**


**Wednesday, Dec. 2, exam handed out. Due Wednesday, Dec. 9, in Pick Hall 301.**

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**WINTER BREAK ASSIGNMENT**

In preparation for the M.A. Proposal Workshop in January, please read:


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If you need any special accommodations, please provide your instructor with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) as soon as possible so that we may discuss how your accommodations may be implemented in this course.