

MAPS 30000
Perspectives in Social Science Analysis
Autumn Quarter 2023
T/Th 3:30-4:50 pm
Meeting Location: 1155 Building 289B

Instructor: Dr. Juan Qian
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Office Hours: by appointment ([Book time with Juan](#))
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Course Description & Objectives

Perspectives in Social Science Analysis is an introduction to interdisciplinary social theory which aims to teach you how to read social science research at the graduate level and develop your ability to formulate and execute a successful master's thesis.

After an introduction during orientation week, we will devote six weeks of this course to learning six influential theories and approaches (or perspectives) that social scientists use to understand the nature of social life and individual behavior. While the course will not provide a comprehensive overview of all perspectives in the social sciences, it is designed to stimulate your thinking about how standards of argumentation and evidence are applied in social science research.

In these six weeks, we will read classic and contemporary social science research and discuss the perspective in our seminar sessions. These sessions will help you learn how to “reverse engineer” texts to identify and analyze the authors’ theoretical and methodological choices. Developing these skills is critical to success in your courses and on your M.A. thesis.

Our study of these six perspectives is intended to familiarize you with a broad range of ways that scholars study social life. This encounter is an essential part of graduate education in the social sciences. As you will see during your time in the program, some of the most important work in the social sciences is the product of scholars who engaged multiple perspectives or traditions in social science analysis.

The other three weeks of this course, interspersed throughout the quarter, will be devoted to M.A. thesis preparation. Here you will apply your developing knowledge of social science research to begin formulating a thesis project. Written assignments will provide you with opportunities to explore and analyze scholarship in your area and develop a thesis proposal.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Disability

The University of Chicago believes that a culture of rigorous inquiry demands an environment where diverse perspectives, experiences, individuals, and ideas inform intellectual exchange and engagement. In line with this perspective, this course will explore challenging ideas, unfamiliar arguments, and ways of viewing the world that may differ markedly from our own. Our conversations, both in and out of the classroom, present an opportunity to interrogate our assumptions about the social sciences and each another. This will require an open mind, patience, and mutual respect.

If at any point you are not treated with respect, or you have concerns about a conversation you have had or witnessed, please do not keep it to yourself. Please reach out to me directly or MAPSS leadership. I also welcome your suggestions for how I might improve efforts to foster an inclusive learning environment in which everyone feels welcome and treated equitably.

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a documented need for accommodation should contact Student Disability Services (773-702-6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu) and Juan as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

It is imperative that we all know how to distinguish between our own ideas and statements and those of others, particularly in presentation. You are expected to acknowledge the contributions of others in your work. If you have any questions about acceptable and unacceptable use of others' research and writings, please consult Charles Lipson's *Doing Honest Work in College* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), two chapters of which are in the Course Documents on Canvas, and/or contact your preceptor before submitting your work.

ChatGPT/Generative AI Use

Students must give credit to AI tools whenever used, even if only to generate ideas rather than usable text. When using AI tools on writing assignments, **prepare an appendix** showing (a) the entire exchange, highlighting the most relevant sections; (b) a description of precisely which AI tools were used (e.g. ChatGPT, private subscription version), (c) an explanation of *how* the AI tools were used (e.g. to generate ideas, turns of phrase, elements of text, long stretches of text, lines of argument, pieces of evidence, maps of the conceptual territory, illustrations of key concepts, etc.); (d) an account of why AI tools were used (e.g. to save time, to surmount writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to handle mounting stress, to clarify prose, to translate text, to experiment for fun, etc.). Overall, AI tools should be used wisely and reflectively with an aim to deepen understanding of subject matter.

Grading

The grading of this course has two parts: **engagement with reading materials (50%)** during class and **thesis writing (50%)**.

- **Reading engagement through participation: 50%.** We will dedicate **six weeks** (Weeks 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8) to discussing six approaches to social science analysis.
 - **Posting of discussion question (12%)**. By 12:00 pm on the day of each class session during these weeks, you need to post a question on the assigned reading to be discussed in the upcoming class. Your question should engage with the materials and be relevant to the perspectives we will discuss in class.
 - **Presentation as Discussion Leader (20%)**. During each class session, 2 people will be assigned by Juan to serve as discussion leaders. They will collectively make a brief presentation, up to **15 minutes in length**, in which they are expected to: (1) summarize the main ideas and findings of each reading; (2) discuss how these readings are related to the week's perspective; and (3) provide comments, critiques, and questions on the readings.
 - **Class Participation (18%)**. Active class participation is crucial in graduate-level seminars. Every student is expected to engage actively in class discussions, which may include asking questions, providing comments and critiques, or engaging with others' remarks.
- **Thesis preparation writing assignments: 50%.** During weeks 3, 6, and 9, we will hold three in-class writing workshops to assist you in developing specific sections of your draft thesis proposal.
 - For our first workshop (Week 3), you will submit a **brief literature review** of your intended thesis topic, a description of how your thesis might contribute to this literature (i.e., identification of a gap in the literature or an area of the research that can be expanded upon), and a brief explanation of why this work is significant and the implications of your intended research. This should be *5 pages, double spaced*. **(10%)**
 - For our second workshop (Week 6), you will **submit your intended hypotheses and a preliminary plan for your thesis method and results**. You should also list some strengths and limitations of your proposed method. This should be about *5 pages, double-spaced*. **(10%)**
 - For our third workshop (Week 9), you will **submit a draft of your thesis proposal**. More information on the content and format of your proposal will be provided separately. This should be *5 pages, double-spaced*. **(10%)**
 - You will need to revise your thesis proposal based on feedback provided by me and your peers and submit your revised version at the end of the quarter. **(20%)**

Textbook

- Individual articles and book chapters will be assigned and uploaded on Canvas. No need to purchase any textbooks for this class.

Late Work Policy

- Please read and familiarize yourself with the syllabus and important due dates for the quarter. Students will be penalized **1/3 of a letter grade per day** for each day that an assignment is late. If you need an extension on an assignment, please email me in advance to discuss your reasons for such an accommodation.

Email Policy

- The easiest way to reach me outside of the classroom is by email. I will typically respond within 48 hours. If for some reason I have not, please send me a reminder email **after 48 hours**.
- **I do not discuss grades over email.** If you want to discuss your grade, please **schedule an appointment** with me during my office hours.

Course Schedule

Orientation Week

- Common reading assignment: Booth et al., *The Craft of Research* Chapters 3 (“From Topics to Questions”), 5 (“From Problems to Sources”), 6 (“Engaging Sources”), 8 (“Making Claims”)
- Online lecture (by Prof. Jon Rogowski) providing introduction to course and outlining different parts of a scholarly project, so you know what lies ahead for their own project. Prof. Rogowski will use *Booth* to demonstrate what it means to reverse engineer a text, modeling how it will be done in seminar discussions.
- Preceptor section introductory sessions on Wednesday, September 20 (ice breaker, overview of year, and discussion of *Booth* to better understand what it means to “reverse engineer” a text)

Week 1: Perspective One – Structuralism

Session 1: Canons

- Durkheim, Emile. 1893[2014]. *The Division of Labor in Society*. The Free Press. Chapter. 1–3. pp. 41-105
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1899[2007]. *The Philadelphia Negro*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 16. pp. 229-256.

- Mark S. Granovetter. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (6): 1360-80.

Session 2: Applications

- Willis, Paul E. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. Columbia University Press, 1977. pp. 1-51.
- Bourgois, Philippe. 2002. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Chapter 4. pp. 114-173.

Week 2: Perspective Two – Rational Choice/Public Choice

Session 1: Canons

- Simon, Herbert. 1985. "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 79(2): 293-304.
- Becker, Gary S. 1968. "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach." *Journal of Political Economy* 76(2): 169-217.
- Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Harvard University Press. pp.1-20.

Session 2: Applications

- Leeson, Peter T., and Jacob W. Russ. 2018. "Witch trials." *The Economic Journal* 128(613): 2066-2105.
- Scharpf, Adam, and Christian Gläsel. 2020. "Why Underachievers Dominate Secret Police Organizations: Evidence from Autocratic Argentina." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(4): 791-806.

Watch this video before the Tuesday class:

- Ian Shapiro: "From Soviet Communism to Russian Gangster Capitalism," *Open Yale Courses*. <https://youtu.be/f5nbT4xQqWI?si=4oLVGaP2lO0sxMxy>

Week 3: Thesis Preparation Workshop 1: Finding a Focused Topic & Research Question

Reading Assignments

- Review Booth et al, *The Craft of Research*. Chapters 3 and 4 ("From Topics to Questions" and "From Questions to a Problem").
- M.A. Thesis and Proposal Guidelines for MAPSS Students

Writing Assignments

- Proposed thesis topic and literature review

Week 4: Perspective Three – Cognitive Science

Session 1: Canons

- Clark, Kenneth B. and Mamie P. Clark. 1947. "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," in E. L. Hartley, *Readings in Social Psychology*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. pp. 169-178.
- Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark. 1950. "Emotional Factors in Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," *Journal of Negro Education* 19(3): 341-50.

- Festinger, Leon, and James M. Carlsmith. 1959. "Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance." *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 58(2).

Session 2: Applications

- Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 709-725.
- Huang, Haifeng. 2018. "The Pathology of Hard Propaganda." *The Journal of Politics* 80(3): 1034-1038.
- Truex, Rory, and Daniel L. Tavana. 2019. "Implicit Attitudes toward an Authoritarian Regime." *The Journal of Politics* 81(3): 1014-1027.

Week 5: Perspective Four – Critical Theory and Perspectives

Session 1: Canons

- Bell, Derrick A. 1973[2008]. *Race, Racism, and American Law*. Little, Brown and Company. *Please read:*
 - Section 1.9 to 1.14, pp. 26-50
 - Section 7.2 to 7.3, pp. 542-551
 - Section 7.6.5 to 7.7, pp. 586-616.
- Debord, Guy. 1967[1994]. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Zone Books. pp. 11-34.
- Mouffe, Chantal. 2014. "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci," In *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, Routledge Library Editions. pp. 168-204.

Session 2: Applications

- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," In *Feminist Legal Theories*, Routledge. pp. 23-51.
- Meier, Anna A. 2020. "The Idea of Terror: Institutional Reproduction in Government Responses to Political Violence." *International Studies Quarterly* 64(3): 499-509.

Week 6: Research Design and Thesis Workshop 2 – Finding Data, Selecting Methods, and Developing an Initial Argument

Reading assignment

- Review Booth et al, *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 5, 6, & 8 ("From Problems to Sources", "Engaging Sources", "Making Claims")

Writing assignment

- Data and provisional argument paper (5 pages)

Week 7: Perspective Five – Historical Narrative

Session 1: Canons

- Patterson, Molly and Kristen Renwick. 1998. "Narrative in Political Science." *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 1: 315-331.

- Lustick, Ian. 1996. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 90(3): 605-618.

Session 2: Applications

- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1995. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press. Ch. 2
- Gillette, Maris. 2008. "Violence, the State, and a Chinese Muslim Ritual Remembrance." *Journal of Asian Studies* 67(3): 1011-1037.
- Wang, Zheng. 2012. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. Introduction & Chapter 1. pp. 1-38.

Week 8: Perspective Six – Cultural Hermeneutics

Session 1: Canons

- Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books. pp.3-32.
- Lisa Weeden. 2002. "Conceptualizing Culture," *American Political Science Review* 96(4): 713-728.

Session 2: Applications

- Nissenbaum, Asaf, and Limor Shifman. 2017. "Internet Memes as Contested Cultural Capital: The Case of 4chan's /b/ Board." *New Media & Society* 19(4): 483-501.
- Fang, Kecheng. 2020. "Turning a Communist Party Leader into an Internet Meme: the Political and Apolitical Aspects of China's Toad Worship Culture." *Information, Communication & Society* 23(1): 38-58.

Week 9: No Classes – Happy Thanksgiving

- Tuesday, November 21, 2023
- Thursday, November 23, 2023

Week 10: Research Design and Thesis Workshop, Session 3

Reading Assignments

- M.A. Thesis and Proposal Guidelines for MAPSS Students (again)
- M.A. Thesis proposals in their field (from previous cohorts)

Writing Assignments

- M.A. thesis proposal draft (5 pages)

Final Assignment Instructions

- Final version of M.A. Thesis Proposal due to preceptor on **December 4**.
- Students should use their winter break to revise their proposal based upon feedback from their preceptor. They must have polished proposals ready to share with faculty readers by the second week of Winter Quarter (ends **January 12**).