

WWS590s  
Fall 2008  
Wednesdays 9-12

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### **Advanced Research in Social Policy**

This course is the third term in a sequence of classes that are required for students in the joint doctoral programs in Politics, Psychology and Social Policy and students holding fellowships in Social Policy. Prerequisite to this class is completion of 590a-d and the expectation is that students will follow directly on from that sequence to this course.

In the course of completing WWS 590a-d, students will have developed an original research paper, due in draft form at the end of the Spring term, to be followed by comments from their “paper advisor,” normally one of the faculty members instructing a-d. The purpose of 590s is to take that draft and turn it into a publishable paper, suitable for a first-rate journal in the student’s home discipline. To that end, students must submit the revised draft, taking into account their advisors original set of comments, by **August 25, 2008**.

Those penultimate drafts will be sent to a distinguished expert in the field from outside of Princeton who has agreed to visit the campus for the purpose of presenting his/her own work to the students and faculty in the JDP program, and to act as the primary critic on the student’s paper. (names and schedule below). Students will also receive extensive feedback from Professor Newman and from all the student participants in 590s. A final draft of the paper is due at the end of the term, on January 13, the “Dean’s Date” for Fall term written work. **This deadline holds for everyone except Danny, who will have until February 10, since we will not have a session on his paper until January 21. Kevin will be receiving written feedback from Mike Dawson and myself by December 1 and hence will have the same deadline as the majority, even though his paper will not be the subject of our seminar until April.**

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. By October 15, a written “publication plan” for your paper. You must identify three journals that your paper would be suitable for, starting with the one you would give your right arm to land (usually a top flight flagship journal), followed by a very good second choice (often a subfield flagship), and finally a “safety” journal. Your plan must specify (apart from the critiques you will receive on substance and method), what you would need to do to modify your paper to make it suitable.

To arrive at these conclusions, you need to do something we rarely do and that is go to the library and pull down three or four volumes of each potential journal and read through them for scope, methodological requirements, style, etc. You will need to cite a few articles from each as exemplars of what your paper could be, suitably reframed, to come close to these models. When I saw that we don’t usually do this, I mean that we are all familiar with articles for their substance, methods and conclusions, but we don’t

always look at the journals qua journals and it is useful to do so to get a feeling for what editors seem to be looking for, for what models of successful submissions look like (admittedly at the end of the process).

This is more than a classroom exercise. You will be expected to pursue this plan with your paper, by aiming at your top choice, but being ready to turn the paper around for the next opportunity if it doesn't work out (which usually happens).

2. Every week for which we have a presentation (including January 20), you must submit a one page written evaluation of the student paper for the week. These papers will be sent to you as PDF files in the first week of September. This is a serious assignment. Indeed, it is one of the places where this program really differs from most graduate programs. In addition to the feedback you get from me and from the visiting faculty member chosen specifically for you, you will receive 9 sets of comments from your fellow students.

These commentaries are meant to be thorough and supportive, rather than cursory and slashing, but whatever your style, the point is to give your fellow students as much constructive criticism as you can. Does the argument come across clearly and if there are places where it doesn't, can you suggest alternative formulations? Do the methods speak to the hypothesis? Does the paper make it clear why the issues in question are important (and hence avoid underplaying its significance to scholars)? Is the analysis in good shape or are there alternative techniques that might be considered?

These critiques can be from "inside" the paper's own paradigm (disciplinary, substantive, etc.) AND/or across the disciplines, particularly if you can think of ways that the material could matter more to your field (if it differs from the author's).

Critiques are due to the author AND to me no later than Sunday at noon, preceding our seminar. Hence, the first set of critiques should be emailed to Kevin Woodson and to me by Sunday, September 21 at noon. The reason for this deadline is to enable the student to incorporate responses to your thoughts into his/her presentation, coming up the following Wednesday. No exceptions to this deadline will be permitted and no skip weeks are allowed.

3. Every student will be expected to offer one 15 minute critique of the faculty paper they will have heard the night before. Student discussants will not be the same as paper presenters in a given week. They will be matched to faculty of their choosing insofar as that can be arranged, but in any case, every student will have this responsibility. Note that this may mean staying up late to work it through on Tuesday night after the visitor's presentation because – although I will ask – there is never any guarantee that the speaker will provide a written version in advance. You may have to just take notes and give it some hard thought before the next morning when we gather. This may seem an undue pressure, but it is not unlike what you will be doing all the time as assistant professors where you won't always have the luxury of advanced written papers. If you need/want to use powerpoint for your critique, you will have to bring your flash drive with you the morning of our class.

Students who are not “on the hot seat”—either as a presenter or as a critic – in a given week are nonetheless expected to come to the class prepared to engage in a spirited discussion of the faculty paper from the evening before. We will devote the first hour of our class to the visitor’s work. It’s important that everyone participate and wallflowerism (is that a word?) will not be appreciated.

This is partly to encourage your engagement with our distinguished guests, but also to reciprocate her/his generosity in critiquing your work. In past iterations of this course, I have found that our visitors walk away appreciating very much the feedback they get and carrying back to their home campus a very positive impression of the caliber of minds we have at Princeton. As you might imagine, with 10-14 talks a year of this kind, it doesn’t take very long to spread the word about the JDP program itself throughout the universities we would most like to know about the work being done here. As Robert Merton used to say, this is a “latent function,” but one that makes the effort well worth it.

4. Every student must develop a presentation based on their paper. You know what to do here, so I won’t belabor the point. If you have time, you may want to incorporate your thoughts on the critiques you will have received the previous Sunday from your fellow students. This is not required, but it’s often useful. When you have finished your presentation, our visiting faculty member will go first with about 30 minutes worth of discussion of your paper. Then the rest of us will chime in.

5. On the honor system, I ask that you keep me apprised of how the publishing process goes. We would like to amend our website to carry copies of your papers and, as your successes come in, we would like to scan the journal covers and place them on your student page. This helps prospective students see what kind of work is welcome in the JDP program.

The following schedule of speakers/student presentations will constitute our course for the Fall term. By the end of August, I will have assigned the student critics to visiting faculty as well.

#### Organizational meeting, Wednesday, September 17 9am

Tom Pettigrew, Psychology, UC Santa Cruz                      October 8  
Student discussant: TBA    Student paper: Tiane Lee

John Jost, Psychology, New York University                      October 15  
Student discussant TBA:    Student paper: Matt Kugler

John List, Economics, University of Chicago                      November 5  
Student discussant TBA.    Student paper: Chris Olivola

Frank Bean, Sociology, UC Irvine                                      November 12  
Student discussant TBA.    Student paper: Alex Rivas

John Logan, Sociology, Brown University                      November 26  
Student discussant TBA. Student paper: Alex Murphy

Theda Skocpol, Government, Harvard                              December 3  
Student discussant TBA. Student paper: Nick Carnes

Steph Haggard, Political Science, UC San Diego              December 10  
Student discussant TBA. Student paper: Camilla Liou

Sandy Jencks, Kennedy School, Harvard                              January 21  
Student discussant TBA. Student paper: Danny Schneider

Please note: Michael Dawson, Politics, University of Chicago has had to postpone his visit originally scheduled for September 24, to April XXX. We will arrange to reconvene both the Tuesday dinner/seminar and our class accordingly to consider Kevin Woodson's paper.