Course Description

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS

a. Pre-requisites
Contemporary political theory, contemporary economics, intellectual history

b. Course Type
Compulsory

c. Abstract
The course is focused on methodological approaches applied in contemporary political science and economics. Analyses of established and emerging research programs are centered around relationships between their basic assumptions and theoretical models, interactions between task setting and the choice of adequate research strategies.

2. Learning Objectives
The course objective is to shape students’ critical thinking in the face of multiple epistemological strategies, working methodologies and theoretical approaches practiced in contemporary social sciences, to understand their powers and limits, to develop skills necessary for choosing analytical tools adequate to specific research areas and tasks, for designing research programs.

2. Learning Outcomes
New competencies acquired from the course are:
- contemporary understanding of science norms and values,
- knowledge of crucial theoretical and methodological controversies in social sciences with special emphasis on political science and economics; - ability to recognize preconceptions behind particular schools of social thought, political and economic theories,
- competencies to differentiate kinds of social science knowledge: positive and normative; theoretical, empirical, and applied, their specific features and interconnections;
- ability to recognize basic types of scientific information and its sources,
- competencies to apply variety of assessment criteria of scientific outcomes – logical, empirical, pragmatic, ethical;
- competencies to master skills of searching social science information and developing bibliographies for standard topics, as well as for new interdisciplinary projects.

3. Course Plan
4. Introduction to the philosophy and methodology of science
5. Ontological assumptions of social sciences
   a. agency and structure,
   b. interpretations of institutions,
6. Epistemology of social inquiry
   a. truth assessment in social research, truth and values
   b. modeling
   c. measurement
   d. hermeneutics
   e. project methodologies
4. Methodological projects “How to model revolutions?”
5. Reading List

A. Required

11. Colander D. From muddling through to the economics of control. Middlebury College Economics Discussion Paper No 04-21

B. Optional


6. Grading System

The final grade will be composed of the accumulated grade and the exam grade:

$$0.6 \cdot Q_{ac} + 0.4 \cdot Q_{exam}$$

where

$$Q_{ac} = 0.3 \cdot Q_{sem} + 0.4 \cdot Q_{project} + 0.3 \cdot Q_{es}$$

- $Q_{ac}$ - accumulated preliminary grade, summing partial grades for class participation, ($Q_{sem}$), a project grade ($Q_{project}$), and an essay grade ($Q_{es}$);
- $Q_{ex}$ - grade received for final written exam.

Additional condition: final, accumulated and exam grades below 4 are not rounded.
Attendance and class participation are mandatory and vital for the successful performance. It is compulsory to read and be prepared to discuss “required literature”. The absence of a student on one-third or more classes will make one’s accumulated grade equal to zero.
7. Guidelines for Knowledge Assessment

Students are expected to study recommended literature before respective lectures and seminars. Participation in class discussions is required.

Methodological essays of about 2000 words (12000-14000 signs) should be presented as paper copies and WORD (or pdf.) files not later than April 25.

Methodological projects imply team work of students. The exercise consists in application of different research methods for the study of common set of social phenomena on the principle “one team – one method”. Performance of team leaders is assessed with respect to both organization and the outcome of the team work; performance of each student is assessed on the basis of individual input to the team work, including fruitfulness of team participation. Project essays (team work outcomes) should include indication of authorship of each participant and be presented as paper copies and WORD (or pdf.) files not later than 5 days before the seminar according to the schedule of final presentation. Final presentation should be arranged in PowerPoint.

8. Methods of Instruction

Students are encouraged to interact with colleagues and teachers.

Texts for methodological essays are to be proposed by students and approved by a teacher.