

Political Science 499

Future Politics

Jake Bowers

jwbowers@illinois.edu

Moodle: <https://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu/course/view.php?name=09SpPS499JB>

Spring 2009

General Information

Where/When We meet in 106 David Kinley Hall Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:20 PM.

Office Hours My office hours are 12–1 PM Mondays and Wednesdays in 495 Lincoln Hall. I will have three 20 minute meetings available for each office hour: You can choose 12:00–12:20, 12:20–12:40, or 12:40–1:00. Please make an appointment if you want to come to office hours.

Overview

What can political science learn from science fiction? How can we use what we currently know about politics, society, and economics to create plausible and compelling visions of the future? How does considering the future help us think critically about politics today? In this course we will read social science together with science fiction in an attempt to enhance the currently impoverished social scientific imagination and to help guide reflections on current theories of politics, economics, and society.

Goals and Expectations

You must turn in all of the papers required for this course to receive a grade. (This does not include the discussion questions, just the three required papers).

Questions By noon the day of class, each person will have submitted one question about the reading to me (I'm hoping this will be done via the class Moodle). The point of these is to alert me to what puzzled you, or what you'd like to discuss. This way people who are shy about talking in class can get credit for participating — by writing thoughtful discussion questions about the readings. I will grade them as unsatisfactory/satisfactory/excellent taking into account *engagement with the material, understanding of the material, and writing skills*. An excellent discussion question shows deep reading *and* creative thinking. An unsatisfactory question can be answered as “yes or no” without qualification or shows little engagement with the reading, little comprehension of it, and/or poor writing.

Papers You will write 3 papers in this class: 2 shorter papers (5-7 CSPages excluding bibliography) and 1 longer paper (10-12 CSPages excluding bibliography).¹

The shorter papers allow you to synthesize and react to the readings with minimal research outside the course readings. You may leave a given class meeting feeling like you had more to say about a given topic, or perhaps your mind is still buzzing with ideas and puzzles and worries after a particular meeting. The point of these short paper assignments is to give you a place to dig into a particular piece of what we've read and to figure out what you think about it — or what you think others should think about it. I will grade them using the standard letter scale taking into account *engagement with the material, understanding of the material, writing skills, and synthetic and analytic thinking*.

¹A “CSPage” is a Common Sense Page. Palatino 14 point with 2.5 line spacing will generally be seen as an attempt to write as little as possible for the sake of writing little (unless you let me know that you need to use a large font with lots of space in between the lines and that, thus, I should adjust my expectations for your pages upwards). The point is to write good and interesting papers, not to fill pages. If you have trouble coming up with words to write, come to my office hours, or raise the problem in class for group discussion.

The final, longer, paper can be an essay imagining how politics, society, or economics (or all three) will be different in the future based on certain premises and based crucially on the academic social science literature (pointed to in class, and discovered and read outside of class as part of the preparation of the paper). Or, the final paper can reflect on the relationship between speculation, imagination, social science, and social policy in a given area. This is not a science fiction short story: It is an exercise in futurism. Thus, the final paper will allow you to write about something of particular interest to you — to allow you to go beyond the course itself. You will turn in a draft of this paper, and you'll write comments on the drafts of your colleagues (and be graded on the quality of those comments). Thus, we (myself and whole class) will take your writing and ideas seriously.

This paper is an opportunity for you to carefully apply outside readings in social science, technology, as well as the physical and biological sciences, to create a vision of some narrowly defined aspect of politics, economics, and/or society in some future. I will grade them using the standard letter scale taking into account *engagement with the material, understanding of the material, writing skills, and synthetic and analytic thinking*.

We will have several assignments oriented around your paper to push your paper along so that the quality of papers turned in at the end is high.

Grades I'll calculate your grade for the course this way: 40% final paper quality (including grade on the draft quality), 20% short paper quality, 35% participation/discussion question quality, 5% quality of criticism on drafts of other students' work.²

Part of the grade for the paper will be based on the quality of the draft that you present. The proportion of the paper grade based on the draft will vary, depending on when you present it. Earlier presenters, with less time to work on their drafts, will have less of their paper grade determined by their draft. Later presenters will have more. The precise breakdown will be: 15% of the paper grade for those who present their papers at the first workshop, 20% of the paper grade for second workshop, 25% for the third workshop, and 30% for the fourth workshop.

I do not curve. If all of you perform excellently, then I will say so to the computer system of the University. That said, I am a hard grader with very high standards: I have never given more than 3 A's to a 20 person undergraduate class. I hope I can assign all A's this term.

Involvement Quality class participation does not mean "talking a lot." It includes turning in assignments on time; thinking and caring about the material and expressing your thoughts respectfully and succinctly in class.

List of Assigned Readings

Some of these readings will be assigned only in part — i.e. only chapters or sections. Other readings will be available for free online. Most articles will be provided by me. See the Schedule of classes for this information before buying a given reading.

In addition to these readings, I have assigned two movies and assorted web-sites. They are listed in the schedule.

Alpert, P., Keller, A., Airame, S., Lauenroth, W. K., Pouyat, R. V., Mooney, H. A., Rogers, K. H., and Breen, C. M. (2003). The ecology-policy interface. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 1(1):45–50.

Bakan, J. (2003). *The Corporation*, film directed by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan. *Big Picture Media Corporation*.

Banks, I. (1991). *Consider Phlebas*. Orbit.

²In calculating the grade based on the discussion questions, I'll drop your lowest 3 scores. We all have bad days sometimes.

- Barry, M. (2004). *Jennifer Government*. Abacus.
- Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press.
- Callenbach, E. (1990). *Ecotopia*. Bantam Books.
- Constant, B. (1988). The liberty of the ancients compared with that of the moderns. In *Political Writings*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Costanza, R. (2008). Stewardship for a 'Full' World: The mainstream development model emerged at a time when the world was still relatively empty of humans and their infrastructure. *Current History*, 107(705):30.
- Cutler, D., Deaton, A., and Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). The Determinants of Mortality. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(3):97–120.
- Doctorow, C. (2008). *Little Brother*. Tor Teen.
- Guggenheim, D., Gore, A., Bender, L., Burns, S., David, L., Pictures, P., Productions, P., and Documentary, G. (2006). *An Inconvenient Truth*. Paramount Pictures.
- Habyarimana, J., Humphreys, M., Posner, D., Weinstein, J., Rosecrance, R., Stein, A., and Muller, J. (2008). Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable? *Foreign Affairs*, 87(4):138.
- Jeffords, J. and Daschle, T. (2001). POLICY ISSUES: Political Issues in the Genome Era. *Science*, 291(5507):1249–1251.
- Le Guin, U. (2003). *The Dispossessed*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics.
- Madison, J. (1981). Federalist No. 51. *The Federalist Papers*.
- Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*.
- McCauley, D. (2006). Selling out on nature. *Nature*, 443:27–28.
- Moore, B. (1966). *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Beacon Press.
- Muller, J. (2008). Us and them. *Foreign Affairs*, 87(2):18.
- Niccol, A. (1997). *Gattaca [Motion picture]*. Columbia TriStar Pictures.
- Pateman, C. (1972). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, K. (1993). *Red Mars*. Bantam Books.
- Robinson, K. (1995). *Green Mars*. Spectra Books.
- Robinson, K. (1996). *Blue Mars*. Bantam Books.
- Rousseau, J. (1985). *The Government of Poland*. Hackett Pub Co Inc.
- Rousseau, J. (2007). *Emile, Or on Education*. NuVision Publications, LLC.
- Skocpol, T. (1979). *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stephenson, N. (2000). *The Diamond Age*. Bantam Books.
- Sterling, B. (1996). *Holy Fire*. Bantam Books.
- Sterling, B., Wild, L., and Lunenfeld, P. (2005). *Shaping Things*. MIT Press.
- Stross, C. (2006). *Accelerando*. Orbit.
- Tilly, C. (1977). Getting It Together In Burgundy, 1675-1975. *Theory and Society*, 4(4):479–504.

Weber, M. (1994). *The Profession and Vocation of Politics*, pages 309–69. Cambridge University Press.

Computing

If you turn in a paper in electronic form (via the class Moodle TBA) it must be in pdf format otherwise you'll need to turn them in as hard-copy.³

You can comment on class-mates drafts by hand, or using Acrobat, or Skim (on OS X), or some other pdf markup and pdf export capable piece of software.

Schedule

Note: This schedule is preliminary and subject to change. If you miss a class make sure you contact me or one of your colleagues to find out about changes in the lesson plans or assignments.

January 21, 2009—Course Overview, Motivation, Expectations

I THE STATE, THE PERSON AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Weber (1994) famously defined the State as the group in society with a “monopoly on the legitimate use of force” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monopoly_on_the_legitimate_use_of_physical_force). Individuals within any state must contend with/rely on/suffer from/benefit from the violence of the state. Yet, arms are not the only way to control the person. Modernity and post-industrial capitalism may be seen to *either* be forces of great liberation *or* more terrible and insidious modes of social control than men with guns. In this section of the course we will engage with these concerns about freedom and control with reference to futures quite near and (seemingly) quite far while also confronting new challenges current and past understandings about the dance (or battle) of the individual and the state.

January 26, 2009—Civil Liberties and Resistance

Discuss Tilly, C. (1977). Getting It Together In Burgundy, 1675-1975. *Theory and Society*, 4(4):479–504

“Cairo Activists Use Facebook to Rattle Regime” http://www.wired.com/print/techbiz/startups/magazine/16-11/ff_facebookegypt

“Egyptian Activists Challenge Facebook-Enabled Diplomacy 2.0” http://www.techpresident.com/blog/entry/33334/egyptian_activists_challenge_facebook_enabled_diplomacy_2_0

Due: Due before class: Submit one way that people are changing protest and social movements now compared to before (ideally with web links).

January 28, 2009—Civil Liberties and Resistance

Discuss Doctorow, C. (2008). *Little Brother*. Tor Teen (download for free from <http://craphound.com/littlebrother/>)

February 2, 2009—Social and Political Control (or Freedom) Via Things

Discuss Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* [Introduction, Chapters 1 & 10] (download for free from <http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/64onedim/odmcontents.html>)

³Actually, I'll accept documents in postscript or html as well.

February 4, 2009—Social and Political Control (or Freedom) Via Things

Discuss Sterling, B., Wild, L., and Lunenfeld, P. (2005). *Shaping Things*. MIT Press (download for free from http://laboratorio.us/misc/Shaping_Things.pdf)

February 9, 2009—Obsolescence of the State (and of the Person?)

Discuss Stross, C. (2006). *Accelerando*. Orbit (download for free from <http://www.accelerando.org/book/>)

Tasks: Discuss first short paper assignment.

February 11, 2009—Obsolescence of the State (and of the Person?)

Discuss Stross Seminar (Paul Krugman among others):

<http://crookedtimber.org/2009/01/27/charles-stross-book-event/>

Follow the links of the seminar as it unfolds. Read it all. There are *at least* 7 blogs on it, plus two responses from Stross himself.

Tasks: Each person tells us their topic for the first short paper assignment.

February 16, 2009—Public Health as Social Control

Discuss Niccol, A. (1997). *Gattaca [Motion picture]*. Columbia TriStar Pictures (I think you can watch this online <http://www.hulu.com/videos/search?query=gattaca>)

Jeffords, J. and Daschle, T. (2001). POLICY ISSUES: Political Issues in the Genome Era. *Science*, 291(5507):1249–1251

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 6]

February 18, 2009—Public Health as Social Control

Discuss Sterling, B. (1996). *Holy Fire*. Bantam Books

Short Paper 1 Due on February 20, 2009 by 5pm:

Short paper 1 on first part of course (5-7 CSPages).

II POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGY

This next part of the course focuses on the study of political development. Rather than learn from the past by reading Moore (1966) or Skocpol (1979) (among other great books that you ought to read someday), we will focus on future visions, paying close attention to a future history of the political development of Mars.

February 23, 2009—Science and Politics: The Case of Ecology

Discuss Guggenheim, D., Gore, A., Bender, L., Burns, S., David, L., Pictures, P., Productions, P., and Documentary, G. (2006). *An Inconvenient Truth*. Paramount Pictures

Alpert, P., Keller, A., Airame, S., Lauenroth, W. K., Pouyat, R. V., Mooney, H. A., Rogers, K. H., and Breen, C. M. (2003). The ecology-policy interface. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 1(1):45–50 (and associated commentary)

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 2]

February 25, 2009— Science and Politics: The Case of Ecology

Discuss Callenbach, E. (1990). *Ecotopia*. Bantam Books

March 2, 2009— Ecological Economics and Political Development

Discuss Costanza, R. (2008). Stewardship for a 'Full' World: The mainstream development model emerged at a time when the world was still relatively empty of humans and their infrastructure. *Current History*, 107(705):30

McCauley, D. (2006). Selling out on nature. *Nature*, 443:27–28 (and included commentary)

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 3]

March 4, 2009—Ecological Economics and Political Development

Discuss Robinson, K. (1993). *Red Mars*. Bantam Books

March 9, 2009—Scarcity, Science, Economics

Discuss Cutler, D., Deaton, A., and Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). The Determinants of Mortality. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(3):97–120

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 4]

Task Discuss topics for second paper assignment.

March 11, 2009

Discuss Robinson, K. (1995). *Green Mars*. Spectra Books

Task Each person tells us their topic for the second paper assignment.

March 16, 2009—Constitution Writing and Institutional Design

Discuss Muller, J. (2008). Us and them. *Foreign Affairs*, 87(2):18

Habyarimana, J., Humphreys, M., Posner, D., Weinstein, J., Rosecrance, R., Stein, A., and Muller, J. (2008). Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable? *Foreign Affairs*, 87(4):138

Madison, J. (1981). Federalist No. 51. *The Federalist Papers* (<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa51.htm>)

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 5]

March 18, 2009—Constitution Writing and Institutional Design

Discuss Robinson, K. (1996). *Blue Mars*. Bantam Books

Short Paper 2 Due on March 20, 2009 by 5pm

Short paper 2 on second part of the course (5-7 CSPages).

March 23 & 25 — Spring Break

March 30, 2009—What does the State *do*? The case of anarchy as system.

Discuss "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For." (online version: http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/bl_eg_an1_anarchism.htm)

TBA, possible also "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" (http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_Archives/goldman/aando/emancipation.html)

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 7]

April 1, 2009—What does the State *do*? The case of anarchy as system.

Discuss Le Guin, U. (2003). *The Dispossessed*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics

April 6, 2009—What does the State *do*? The case of corporations as system.

Discuss Bakan, J. (2003). *The Corporation*, film directed by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan. *Big Picture Media Corporation* (Online here http://www.thecorporation.com/index.cfm?page_id=46)

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 10]

Due: Final paper topics: What do you want to write about? Why should anyone care about your topic? (no more than 1 page)

April 8, 2009—What does the State *do*? The case of corporations as system.

Discuss Barry, M. (2004). *Jennifer Government*. Abacus (see the simulation game linked to the book at www.nationstates.net)

April 13, 2009—Socialization: Control via Education

Discuss Rousseau, J. (1985). *The Government of Poland*. Hackett Pub Co Inc [Chapters TBA]

Rousseau, J. (2007). *Emile, Or on Education*. NuVision Publications, LLC[Chapters TBA]

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 8]

April 15, 2009—Socialization: Control via Education

Discuss Stephenson, N. (2000). *The Diamond Age*. Bantam Books

April 20, 2009—Why Govern Ourselves?

Discuss Constant, B. (1988). The liberty of the ancients compared with that of the moderns. In *Political Writings*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (download pdf from class website)

Pateman, C. (1972). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press[Chapters 1-2]

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press[Chapter 9]

Tasks: Sign-up for draft workshops.

April 22, 2009—Why Govern Ourselves?

Discuss Banks, I. (1991). *Consider Phlebas*. Orbit

Tasks Discuss commenting/criticism of colleagues' papers. What is high quality criticism? What is low quality criticism?

III YOUR IDEAS: FOCUS ON THE CRAFT OF COMMENTARY AND OF WRITING

This course as much about the craft of writing as it is about developing political imagination. These next two weeks are devoted to the study of the drafts of your papers and also discussions about how to act as good commentators and critics.

April 27, 2009— Draft Workshop 1

List of presenters TBA

Due Drafts for presenters due **April 24**.
Comments on drafts for workshop 1 due **today**.

April 29, 2009—Draft Workshop 2

List of presenters TBA

Due Drafts for presenters due **April 26**.
Comments on drafts for workshop 2 due **today**.

May 4, 2009— Draft Workshop 3

List of presenters TBA

Due Drafts for presenters due **May 1**.
Comments on drafts for workshop 3 due **today**.

May 6, 2009— Draft Workshop 4 — Final Class

List of presenters TBA

Due Drafts for presenters due **May 3**.
Comments on drafts for workshop 4 due **today**.

May 12, 2009— Final Papers Due