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Advanced Political Analysis

Modular value: 20 credits
Duration: Term 1
Teaching: 2 hours of seminars weekly

Lecturers: **Stephen Bates (/staff/profiles/government-society/bates-stephen.aspx)** and **Peter Burnham (/staff/profiles/government-society/burnham-peter.aspx)**

Political analysis is an essentially contested field. This has important implications for the research methods deployed in political analysis. Above all methods of empirical investigation cannot be separated from assumptions about ontology (the nature of social reality) and epistemology (the nature and status of the knowledge that we can have about this reality).

The aim of this course is to provide an introduction to the ontological, epistemological and methodological dispute which characterise contemporary political analysis. Particular attention is devoted to the appropriateness of specific methodological choices to different types of research questions.

The course provides graduate students with a critical introduction to the practices and controversies of contemporary political analysis and to their relevance to substantive research in politics and international relations.

Course Outline:

- Introduction
- The Discipline of Political Science
- Power
- Structure and Agency
- Ideas
- Rational Choice Theory
- New Institutionalism
- Feminism
- Theories of the State (I)
- Theories of the State (II)

The second term will be organised around the research projects of class participants and will be concerned both with the wider issues of the philosophy of social sciences and the detailed business of assembling a research project.

Assessment

- 1 x 3000 word critical review 60%
- 2 hour written examination 40%

You may be interested in these degrees:

- **Political Science (with specialist pathways) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/political-science.aspx)**
- **International Relations (Gender) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-relations-gender.aspx)**

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