

**POLS 681**  
**Professional Development Seminar**  
**Fall 2006**

Instructor: James R. Rogers  
Office: 2088 Allen  
Phone: 845- 2905

Office Hours: 10:00-11:00. Tues, OBA  
E-mail: rogers@polisci.tamu.edu

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course introduces you to some of the aspects of the political science profession that, while important to your professional success, will rarely be discussed in your courses. We will survey the design of the TAMU program, strategies for graduate school success, and life in the profession. We also address the hiring process, strategies for building a career, and getting tenure. The aim of this seminar is to provide some insight into the challenges of establishing a successful career in political science. Grades for this course are on a PASS/FAIL basis. To receive a PASS, students must attend and actively participate in the discussions. Be prepared to talk critically about the readings and to raise your own questions about how to succeed in political science. Students must also submit occasional materials when requested.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*Graduate Student Handbook, 2006-2007*  
*Texas A&M University 2006-2007 Graduate Catalog*  
Reading materials to be distributed in class

**TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

You are required to read the material assigned for each class and to participate in discussions about the readings and presentations. This is not a lecture course but a seminar intended to get you thinking and talking about your professional goals and how to achieve them. Asking questions and debating with your fellow students and visiting faculty is encouraged.

You will also be expected to complete all of the brief out of class assignments listed on the syllabus.

***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Services for Students with Disabilities in B118 Cain Hall, or call 845-1637.

**Course Schedule: Reading Topics and Assignments**  
**POLS 681—Professional Development Seminar**  
**Fall 2006**

**August 29: Making It in the Political Science Profession: Who Are We and Who Are You?**

Brintnall, “Executive Director’s Report 2004” [Political Science and Politics, 2004; 37 \(4\)](#);

Dolan, Julie et. al. “[The Future of Our Discipline: The Status of Doctoral Students in Political Science](#) (in The Profession).” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 4. (Dec., 1997), pp. 751-756.

*Do:* Go to the APSA website at [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org) and read an article from *PSOnline* touching on the state of the political science discipline; print the article and bring it to class

**September 5: Getting Started**

*Read:* Graduate Student Handbook, Sections I-V.

*Do:* Visit [student-rules.tamu.edu](http://student-rules.tamu.edu) and review Sec. 12 on scholastic deficiency. (“Student Rules” is the official book of rules and is available only on-line.)

**September 12: Planning Your Program**

*Read:* Baumgartner, “Notes Concerning a Backwards Calendar of Graduate School”; Graduate Student Handbook, Sections VI-IX

*Do:* Prepare a tentative “Degree Requirements Form” indicating the courses you plan on taking for your degree. Hand in a copy for the instructor. (Copies of this tentative degree plan will be forwarded to your Temporary Advisory Committee. You should consult your committee about the specifics of your degree plan before the end of this semester.)

**September 19: Ethical Issues in the Profession**

*Read:* [Student-rules.tamu.edu](http://student-rules.tamu.edu) and review Sec. 20 on scholastic dishonesty and Part III on student grievance procedures. (“Student Rules” is the official book of rules and is available only on-line.); and the American Political Science Association Ethics Statement located at <http://www.apsanet.org/pubs/ethics.cfm>

*Do:* Write a short (approximately 1 page) description of a professional ethical dilemma that you have been involved in, have observed, or imagine might pose a future problem for you; bring to class.

## **September 26: Research Using Human Subjects**

*Read:* TBA

*Do:* Peruse the research compliance website: <http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu>.

## **October 3: Tips for Successful Conferencing**

*Do:* Go to the APSA website “Conference” section, identify and print off a call for papers for an upcoming conference at which you might like to present a paper and bring the call to class.

## **October 10: TAMU Travel and Conference Rules and Regulations**

*Read:* Appendices D, E and F of Graduate Student Handbook

*Do:* Bring Graduate Student Handbook to class.

## **October 17: Journal Publishing: How to Do It and Why It Matters**

*Read:* Garand and Giles, “Journals in the Discipline: A Report on a New Survey of American Political Scientists,” with Micheal Giles, *PS: Political Science and Politics* (April 2003: 293-308).

*Do:* Go to the journal reading room in the PSEL Library, pick a journal in which you might be interested in publishing, and bring a copy of the instructions for contributors to class.

## **October 24: So, You Want to Publish a Book**

*Read:* Goodson (L.P.), Dillman (B.) & Hira (A.), 1999, “Ranking the Presses: Political Scientists' Evaluations of Publisher Quality,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, June, 1999 p. 257-262.

*Do:* Go to the website of an academic publisher whose list is strong in your area of specialization and locate information about the process of submitting a manuscript or proposal; bring this information to class

## **October 31: Show Me the Money: Grant Writing in Political Science**

*Read:* Dalton and Siverson, “Gee! I’ve Never Spent \$5.5 Million Before: The Six Fallacies of NSF Proposal Writing” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 1998, pp. 174-76.

*Do:* Using on-line resources (such as APSANet, the grant site at TAMU, and the NSF and NEH websites), locate a granting program or agency that offers funding for some project (dissertation, collaborative research, travel, etc.) in your research field; print and bring to class.

## **November 7: Approaching the Dissertation Project**

*Read:* Symposium on the Dissertation, *PS*, December 2001. (May, “Constructing the Prospectus”; Farrar-Myers, “The ‘Rights’ of Passage”; Anderson, “Faculty Roles and Student Projects”; Fox, “Developing the Dissertation Prospectus”; den Dulk, “Proposing a Dissertation with a Free Rein”; Benesh, “The Key to a Successful Prospectus”; “Guidelines for the Proposal”.)

*Do:* Approach a senior graduate student in your major field who is writing a dissertation and ask her/him for a copy of his/her proposal; read it and bring it to class.

## **November 14: Getting It on the Page: Your Curriculum Vitae** (Guest: Ken Meier)

*Read:* Samples of curriculum vitae to be provided

*Do:* Bring to class your current c.v.; if you don’t have one, create what you think it should look like

## **November 22: The (Long and Winding?) Road to Employment** (Guest: Ken Meier)

*Read:* Linda Lopez, "Placement Report: Political Science Ph.D.s and ABDs on the Job Market in 2001-2002," *PS*, October 2003

Article: " Navigating the Academic Job Market Minefield" Author: Ralph G. Carter; James M. Scott. Issue: Sep. 1998. Journal: *PS: Political Science & Politics*.

TBA.

*Do:* Revise your curriculum vitae in light of the November 13 meeting. Bring it to class. Check APSA’s job pages at <http://www.apsanet.org/ejobs/login.cfm>, [www.apsanet.org/opps](http://www.apsanet.org/opps), plus <http://www.apsanet.org/jobplc/>

## **November 28: Life AFTER Graduate School: Making the Transition**

*Reading:* Uncle Wuffle's Advice to the Assistant Professor. 1993. *PS* (March, 1993), 89-90. Thies, Cameron G. 2003. “Reflections on Assuming Administrative Responsibilities as an Untenured Assistant Professor.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36(3): 447-450.

TBA.

## ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

### Political Science as a Discipline

I recommend you join the American Political Science Association, one benefit of which is the news about on teaching and the profession that appear regularly in the quarterly journals, *PS: Political Science and Politics* and *Perspectives on Politics*, as well as the *American Political Science Review*.

### On Writing Well:

The importance of writing well for your professional success cannot be overestimated. While this is not a class in composition and writing, I believe it is in your interest to have on your desk while you are writing both a dictionary and thesaurus. The spell check and thesaurus in word processing programs are useful but they are not foolproof. More important, they are weak crutches on which to rely. There is no alternative to looking up words on your own. Equally important is your personal mastery of syntax and grammar. (The grammar “checks” in word processing programs are especially fallible.) I very strongly recommend that you have on your desk books that offer advice and guidance on writing well. The following books are some of my personal favorites. The craft of writing well is a lifetime task and as critical to your career as learning statistical methods. Most of these books have gone through various editions. I therefore skipped the customary citations. This also means, though, you can find used earlier editions of these books in bookstores that will serve most of your purposes quite nicely.

Strunk, William, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*

Bernstein, Theodore M., *The Careful Writer: A Modern Guide to English Usage*.

Cook, Claire Kehrwald, *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing*.

Day, Robert A. *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*.

Follett, Wilson, *Modern American Usage: A Guide*

Lanham, Richard A., *Revising Prose*.

Zinsser, William, *On Writing Well: An Informal Guides to Writing Nonfiction*.

As a final matter, you should have at your elbow the American Political Science Association’s *Style Manual for Political Science*. The manual details the rules and format required for article submissions to the *Review*. Most of the other professional journal in political science adhere to the Style Manual. I want to add, however, that many other journals have their own particular requirements; you should always consult the journal to which you are submitting an article regarding these requirements. You might also consider getting a copy of:

*Getting Published in Political Science Journals, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association)