

World Politics

An Introduction

The Quest to Solve the
World's Problems


What is Political Science?

- Aristotle called Poli.Sci. 'the most authoritative art' and 'most truly the master art'

Why?

- Politics envelopes everything...
- The reason is that 'the happiness of the individual is the same as that of the state' (*Politics* VII.2), 'the end of individuals and of states is the same' (*Politics* VII.15).

The Search for Utopia

- Does the perfect society exist?
- Utopia has been translated to mean “no place”
- Can Utopia exist?
- John Lennon’s “Imagine” 
- Is this anti-politics?
- We’ll look to the philosopher’s to help us in our search to solve the world’s problems.

What is Political Science?

- **What is political science?**
- The scientific study of politics and government
- **What political science is not?**
- A perfect science that has all the answers
- **Definitions of politics**
 - Lasswell - "who gets what, when and how" in a society
 - David Easton - "authoritative allocation of values"
 - Groucho Marx - "politics is the art of finding trouble everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedy."
 - Schmidt et al. - "conflict resolution in society"
 - Conflict is always present in society
 - There are differences of belief or ideology
 - There are differences in the perceived goals of the society
 - Scarce resources exist and not every want can be satisfied
 - Welch et al. - "politics is a means through which individual and group interests compete to shape government's impact on society's problems and goals"
 - Magstadt & Schotten - "the process by which rulers are selected and empowered to make decisions, take action to attain common goals, and reconcile conflicts within a political community"

Basic Concepts in Poli. Sci.

- Legitimacy: People's attitude that the government's rule is rightful
 - Gained through:
 - Existing for a long time
 - Governing well
 - Structure of government
 - National symbols

Basic Concepts in Poli.Sci.

- Sovereignty: National control over the country's territory
- Authority: Psychological ability of leaders to get others to obey them
 - Most people obey what they consider to be legitimate authority most of the time
- Order: The structures rules and practices enforced by a group of people
 - Community: An association of individuals who share a common identity
 - Government: Those persons and institutions that make and enforce rules or laws for the larger community
 - Nation-State: Geographically defined community administered by a government
 - Nation: Made up of a distinct group of people who share a common background, including any or all of the following: geographic location, history, racial or ethnic characteristics, religion, language, culture, and belief in common political ideas
 - State: A viable, sovereign government exercising authority and power in the name of society

The Question of Power

"Sympathy for the Devil"

- Theme is based on Johann Goethe's *Faust*. In the classic drama, Dr. Faust, trades his soul to gain great power. He attempts to do good, but in the end he commits evil by: "doing the wrong things for the right reasons".

What is the point of the song? Examples?

- It is a warning to not fall prey to the trap of those righteous enough to condemn those that disagree with them.

Give consideration to leaders like:

- Stalin, Mao, Hitler, ... and the people they ruled.

Political Power

Power defined:

- The ability of one person to get another to do his or her bidding
- The ability of governments, and of governmental leaders, to make and enforce rules and to influence the behavior of individuals or groups by rewarding or punishing certain behaviors
- Types of power
 - Biological: Modern biology would say that forming a political system and obeying its leaders is innate human behavior, passed on to future generations with one's genes
 - Psychological: Most people are naturally conformists and naturally surrender their independence of thought and action because an authority figure told them to do so
 - Cultural: Political communities are formed and hold together on the basis of cultural values transmitted by parents, schools, churches, and the mass media
 - If all human behavior is learned, bad behavior can be unlearned and society improved
 - Rational: People know what they want most of the time and they have good reasons for doing what they do
 - Irrational: People are basically emotional, dominated by myths and stereotypes, some argue that politics is just the manipulation of symbols
 - Composite: There is some evidence for all of these forms of power
- Justice: Is power exercised fairly, in the interest of the ruled, or merely for the sake of the rulers

World Politics

- World Politics studies the relations among nations.
- World Politics is different from domestic politics which deals with the internal decision-making of nation-states.

What is World Politics?

- **High Politics**: the politics of war between states; military security and diplomacy
- **Low Politics**: trade, int'l organizations, NGO's, culture, travel

The challenge is to understand the complex interaction among nations. International Relations Theory attempts to develop paradigms and theories to make sense of the often unpredictable nature.

WP: Anarchy vs Authority

- There is no world gov't or higher authority policing nation-states.

What maintains sanity and stability?

- A sometimes fragile association of states, reason, the UN, Large Powers, or Power Alliances.

Opposing Views of WP

- Realism
- Internationalism
- Free Trade
- Capitalism
- Idealism
- Isolationism
- Protectionism
- Socialism

Other Views: Environmentalism, Feminism, Marxism, Liberalism

Solving the World's Problems

Levels of Analysis:

- Individual
- State (Domestic)
- International (Systemic)

International Level

Actions

- States are similar
- States determine behaviour based on international system

Examples of Theories

- Balance of Power
- Hegemonic Stability
- Security Dilemma

Types of Data Considered

- Military strength
- Nuclear deterrence
- GNP
- Number of major powers

State Level

Actions

- States are unique
- State behaviour is based on state characteristics

Examples of Theories

- Peace among democracies
- Military

Types of Data Considered

- Forms of government
- Economic structure
- Ideology, History, Culture
- Public Opinion

Individual Level

Actions

- State actions determined by individual leaders

Examples of Theories

- Crisis decision making
- Cognitive theories

Types of Data Considered

- Leadership styles
- Leader's values, beliefs and goals
- Experience
- Personal relationships

Critical Thinking

Definition: Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

Critical thinking can be seen as having two components:

- A set of skills to process and generate information and beliefs, and
- The habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior.

Critical thinking involves

- Questioning everything
- Asking questions that stimulate thought
- Know what you are questioning
- Look for sources of information
- Interpret things correctly
- Discover underlying assumptions
- Ask what the implications are
- Question who is providing information and why
- Include relevant information and discard irrelevant information
- Be consistent in thought, avoid contradictions
- Be logical
- Be clear when communicating
- Being precise, definite, specific, concrete, distinct and exact
- Avoiding being vague, obscure, nebulous, blurred, confused, intangible, indefinite, imprecise, fuzzy, foggy, or indeterminate

Rules of Critical Thinking

Six Rules of Critical Thinking (James Lett)

- Falsifiability: It must be possible to conceive of evidence that would prove the claim false.
- Logic: Any argument offered as evidence in support of any claim must be sound.
- Comprehensiveness
- Honesty
- Replicability
- Sufficiency

The End

- You are now on your way to solving the world's problems...