

APSA Presidential Task Force on Rethinking Political Science Education

Appendix 2: Basic Concepts in Political Science/Learning Objectives

Far from exhaustive, Political Science Ph.D. students should be familiar with and able to use the following concepts in their research and teaching. In the case of Political Theory, students should also be familiar with the various philosophical traditions associated with appropriate concepts.

Political Theory

- Authority
- Legitimacy
- Justice
- Fairness
- Equity
- Sovereignty
- Liberty
- Freedom
- Law
- Social Norms
- Civil and political liberties
- Human Rights

Political Systems and Institutions

- Direct democracy
- Representative democracy
 - Representation v. Trusteeship theories
- Presidential systems
- Parliamentary systems
- Division of powers
- Federalism
- Voting Systems
 - First past the post
 - Proportional representation
 - Ranked choice
 - More...
- Authoritarianism
 - Military Juntas
 - Personalist regimes
 - Single party regimes
 - Oligarchic regimes
- Totalitarianism

Political Behavior

- Interest/advocacy Groups
- Partisanship
- Polarization

Public Opinion
Persuasion
Race and Racism
Gender

Strategic Interactions

Collective action problems
Credible commitment
Bargaining failures
Public Goods
Club Goods
Common Pool Resource problems
Principal-Agent problems
 Selection
 Monitoring and enforcement

Political Violence

War
Terrorism
Civil War
Insurrection and rebellion
Deterrence
 First-strike advantage
 Mutual Assured Destruction
Compellence

Political Economy

Poverty
Inequality
Income Distribution
Theory of comparative advantage
 Division of Labor
 Comparative Advantage
Globalization
Foreign Direct Investment
Portfolio Investment

Political Methods

Experiments v. quasi-experiments v. observational studies
Correlation
Causation
Descriptive statistics
Regression
Qualitative methods
 Case studies
 Participant-observation studies
 Ethnographic studies
Research Ethics