

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
CRITIQUES, NEW DIRECTIONS,
AND IMPORTANT COGNATE FIELDS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Terms and concepts to know:

Policy studies (subfields and stages)
Ecopolitics
Globalization
Skeptical and affirmative PM's
Cognate fields
Economics (public policy)
Sociology

Biopolitics
Feminism (liberal, Marxist, radical)
Postmodernism
Concept of the "privileged"
History (mainstream and revisionism)
Philosophy (philosophy of science)
Anthropology

Study and discussion questions:

1. What do you suppose would be the implications of Roger Masters' contention that political concepts and philosophies can be integrated with the findings of evolutionary biology, which would lead to an explanation of human behavior that would transcend the fact/value dichotomy?
2. How has the feminist perspective affected the field of political science?
3. Discuss the "postmodern" alternative approach to political science. Heineman notes that political science as a discipline would be "unrecognizable" if the postmodernist approach became dominant. Is this a problem? Why or why not?
4. According to Heineman, postmodernists "attack the idea that there is any correct method for discovering knowledge...or finding objective truth or values that are seen as good by everyone." How does this make you feel about postmodernism?
5. Discuss the concept of "the privileged" in postmodernism. What can you identify as privileged within the discourse of political science? Discuss also Heineman's critique of postmodernism (259). Why does he take the position that he does with regard to the usefulness of postmodern techniques?
6. Heineman discusses a number of important "cognate" fields that he describes as "essential to those hoping to obtain useful explanations of politics." Examine the various fields Heineman proposes (history, economics, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology), suggest others (law, psychology, religion, and the natural sciences), and finally discuss which of these in your opinion can contribute the most to the field of political science.
7. Dimaggio notes that "political science has long been dominated by over-specialization and obscurity, with scholars...regularly asking questions of limited to no practical utility." If he's right, what kind of challenges does this pose for the discipline in the future?

Readings:

Heineman. *Political Science*, Chapters 19 and 20.

Video: *Four Horsemen*.