Simulations and Role Play

Simulations and role-play exercises help political scientists and students model the decision-making processes of real-world political actors. Examples of these teaching techniques and strategies include Model United Nations, Model European Union, in-class self-designed simulations, and online role playing exercises. Papers in this track will address topics such as the following: In what way can simulations and role-play expand student learning opportunities in political science? Which formats are most effective? How do we measure the effectiveness of simulations?

Teaching Research Methods

Political science research methods courses are an increasingly common component of the political science curriculum, not only in graduate programs, but also undergraduate programs. This track will address how political science faculty encourage the learning of research methods.

Teaching Political Theory and Theories

Political science is unique among the social sciences in maintaining the interdependence of the study of political theory/philosophy and the empirical/historical study of political life. Yet, ontologies of theories of all types are treated separately in the political science curriculum, suggesting that teaching political philosophy and theories of political science pose different challenges for both teachers and students in the discipline.

The conference concludes on Sunday, January 18, with a closing session summarizing track highlights and addressing hot topics in the field. Conference moderators and participants will put forth their suggestions for enhancing teaching and learning throughout the discipline and within their own academic communities and departments.

Track summaries of the 2015 Teaching and Learning Conference will be available in the July 2015 issue of PS: Political Science and Politics. For more information on the 2015 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference please visit apsanet.org/tlc.

2015 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference Program Committee

Mark Johnson, Minnesota State Community and Technical College (chair)
Kimberley Cowell-Meyers, American University
Audrey Haynes, University of Georgia
Steven Rathgeb Smith, APSA
Cameron Thies, Arizona State University
Sherri Wallace, University of Louisville

DA-RT Workshop Offered

In September 2014, APSA, the Center for Political Studies and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, and the Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry and its Qualitative Data Repository at Syracuse University, sponsored a workshop on data access and research transparency (DA-RT) at the University of Michigan. An aspirational goal of the workshop was for journal editors to commit to enhancing their journals’ requirements for research transparency over time with the objective of encouraging scholars to be more open about their data collection and analytic methods.

While finances limited the number of stake-holders who could be included, more than 30 journal editors, domain repository officers, representatives from publishing houses, and topic practitioners (in addition to APSA staff) attended the two-day meeting. Participants discussed a range of openness issues, including research transparency, preregistration of research designs, journal management software, incentives for replication, and data sharing.

BACKGROUND

Since 2011, APSA has been engaged in a multilayered dialogue on DA-RT. As part of this conversation, APSA Council approved the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT) to discuss openness in political science. This wide-ranging discussion has included dozens of scholars from every sub-field in the discipline. DA-RT materials have been reviewed and discussed by members of multiple APSA committees, including the APSA Council and the APSR Editorial Board. Substantial progress on DA-RT is reflected in the discipline’s data-management infrastructure. The introduction to that symposium includes draft guidelines offering practical advice for putting DA-RT’s principles into practice in the qualitative and quantitative research traditions. Also in 2014, the editorial team of the American Political Science Review commenced amending the APSR’s submission guidelines to help authors meet those expectations.

In August 2014, as part of the APSA Annual Meeting, DA-RT presentations were to be featured at the annual journal editors’ breakfast. When that event was cancelled due to unexpected events at the meeting site, APSA distributed to journal editors the materials that the DA-RT committee had prepared for the meeting.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

The September 2014 workshop at the University of Michigan sought to provide stakeholders in the transparency project an opportunity to discuss next steps. As journal editors and repository officers can provide...
powerful incentives and opportunities to improve transparency, their needs, knowledge, and perspectives were the workshop’s primary focus.

The workshop began with a series of opening presentations. These presentations focused on:

• The use of persistent identifiers and their role in developing better citation practices;
• The preregistration of experimental and observational research designs;
• The incorporation of transparency standards into journal workflow, in particular through recent developments in editorial software;
• The use of active citation (digitally enhanced citations) to achieve research transparency in qualitative scholarship; and
• The use of “badges for open practices” developed by the Center for Open Science.

Subsequent breakout sessions posed key questions facing journal editors and leaders of domain repositories including:

1. The purposes for which data are shared (replication/transparency, secondary analysis, and/or teaching), and what authors need to provide in order for data serve those purposes. For example, for replication, what do authors need to do to achieve both production transparency and analytic transparency?

2. The timing of sharing data and supporting materials. Possible triggers include manuscript submission, requests by reviewers, acceptance for publication, electronic publication, paper publication, and a specified time after publication. Can/should reviewers have access to data and related documentation during the review process?

3. How should journals guide scholars to satisfy openness standards when the data they use are under ethical or proprietary constraint?

4. Strategies for incentivizing data sharing, including insisting on appropriate citation and increasing disciplinary credit for data sharing as a value-adding practice.

5. How journals can help to ensure that the discipline offers adequate training to prepare scholars to engage in data management.

6. How journals can address the concerns of qualitative researchers regarding the potential implications of data transparency for their work including the issues of confidentiality and data access.

More information about the September workshop and the materials presented can be found at http://datacommunity.icpsr.umich.edu/da-rt-workshop.

An important outcome of the workshop was a proposal from the floor to develop a joint statement of support for, and commitment to, increasing openness and transparency. The journal editors in attendance wanted to word the statement in a way that was simultaneously strong and broadly inclusive, laying out a shared commitment to data access and research transparency. Workshop organizers were tasked with coordinating the writing and dissemination of the statement, and over the next month workshop participants produced and reviewed a series of drafts, and journal editors began to sign on. On October 31, 2014, the group posted the statement and supporting materials on a new website, dartstatement.org; updates are sent on a related twitter account @DART-supporters. Within days of the statement’s release, a larger set of political science journal editors joined the discussion and the list of signers began to grow.

DA-RT is committed to a pluralist approach to openness and an inclusive dialogue. The group sees its role as one of coordinating an emerging consensus. It continues to work to developed networks of journal editors, publishers, repository officers, and others who can help increase transparency in the discipline.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

In March 2015, APSA, the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan, and the Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry and its Qualitative Data Repository at Syracuse University, will host a one-day workshop in Washington, DC on research transparency for disciplinary, region-specific, and topic-specific associations. The workshop will address the debate concerning research transparency, its benefits, and its implications and consider the role that such associations can play in supporting and encouraging research transparency. For details, contact journalpublishing@apsanet.org.

To offer comments and suggestions on the joint journal editors’ statement or to learn more about other initiatives related to openness in political science research, please contact APSA Executive Director Steven Rathgeb Smith (smithsr@apsanet.org) and/or DA-RT Coordinators Colin Elman (celman@syr.edu) and Arthur “Skip” Lupia (lupia@umich.edu).