

## Briefs

### IPSA Launches First MOOC Program in Political Science

The International Political Science Association (IPSA) is launching a pilot set of political science MOOCs (massive open online courses), a new format for online higher education. In the academic world, MOOCs are viewed as a “disruptive innovation” offering great opportunities to improve teaching and learning methods as well as a new environment for cooperative efforts to disseminate knowledge around the world.

Thus far, more than 35 million users have enrolled in the estimated 4,200 MOOCs available online. Many among the most authoritative US and European universities are investing significant financial and organizational resources in a bid to meet this new Web-learning challenge. According to statistics produced by Class Central, however, social sciences only account for about 10% of this new market, with political science still representing only a marginal proportion of the courses offered.

The “IPSAMOOC” program, scheduled to go online by mid-June, is drawing from previous IPSA projects, such as the IPSAPortal ([www.ipsaportal.net](http://www.ipsaportal.net)), the official publication dedicated to retrieving and evaluating Web sources for political science. IPSAMOOCs are developed in cooperation with Federica Weblearning ([www.federica.eu](http://www.federica.eu)), the Center for Distance Learning at the University of Naples Federico II, which boasts an established record of 300 e-learning courses and more than 40 online MOOCs.

This first set of IPSAMOOCs will cover the basic introductory areas in the study of political science, ranging from research designs and methods to comparative political systems, and from world politics to political concepts and history of political theory. Each course will follow a common format aimed at enhancing the user experience across different political science subdisciplinary areas. Special attention will be devoted to the integration of written and video material, coupled with the intensive use of Web sources. With an innovative interface, IPSAMOOC will

offer interactive classes to students, with no geographical constraints.

Enrollment to IPSAMOOC is free and will be available on the IPSA website in time for the new program’s launch in mid-June. Classes will start in July, in conjunction with the 24th World Congress.

IPSAMOOC will be the first “concept” program of MOOCs in political science.

### Qualitative Transparency Deliberations

#### CALL FOR PARTICIPATION: INTERIM REPORT AT APSA 2016

The APSA Organized Section on Qualitative and Multi-Method Research is sponsoring the “Qualitative Transparency Deliberations” (QTD), an online deliberative process at <https://www.qualtd.net>, in which all APSA members are invited to participate. While motivated by the lively current discussions about “data access and research transparency,” *these deliberations are neither an anti-DA-RT effort, nor an attempt to “make DA-RT work” for different qualitative research transitions*. Rather, building on the symposium on transparency in the spring 2015 issue of *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2652097>), the QTD platform is designed to ensure an inclusive, transparent, and mostly bottom-up process for deliberations over the meaning, costs, benefits, and practicalities of research transparency, broadly understood.

The QTD process, approved by more than 97% of the QMMR section membership in an online vote, seeks to identify our understandings of research transparency in ways that allow for the possibility that they may differ substantially across approaches, research context, or specific empirical methods. It also seeks to advance political scientists’ understanding of the costs/risks, benefits, and practicalities of research transparency in a differentiated manner, with due attention to the primacy of ethical obligations such as human subjects protection, and based on a

broad understanding of “qualitative transparency” as explicitness about all aspects of our research that are neither strictly statistical/econometric nor experimental (including, for instance, issues of conceptualization and measurement that underpin quantitative datasets). It aims to inform new and ongoing research, graduate training, as well as reviewers and editors by identifying current best practices while also encouraging innovation.

During the first stage of the QTD process, launched in early April, everyone was invited to help shape the QTD agenda by identifying questions, dilemmas, practices, and concerns that merit discussion and examination. Stage 1 took the form of at-large online deliberations on the QTD discussion board, hosted by Duke University’s Social Science Research Institute and moderated by a Steering Committee appointed by QMMR Section President Peter Hall (Harvard University). It is cochaired by Tim Büthe (Duke University) and Alan M. Jacobs (University of British Columbia) and consists of Andrew Bennett (Georgetown University), Erik Bleich (Middlebury College), Mary Hawkesworth (Rutgers University), Kimberley S. Johnson (Barnard College), Kimberly J. Morgan (George Washington University), Sarah E. Parkinson (University of Minnesota), Edward Schatz (University of Toronto), and Deborah J. Yashar (Princeton University).

As of May 25, the QTD platform had 241 registered users who contributed 230 posts to the discussion boards. In addition, non-registered visitors provided 98 anonymous posts for a total of 328 posts during the at-large deliberations (stage 1). Informed by this input, the QTD Steering Committee has established working groups for distinct research contexts, qualitative empirical methods that result in differing concerns, and some cross-cutting issues. These working groups will lead the differentiated substantive deliberations during stage 2. Each group will seek input in various ways, including welcoming unsolicited emails or posts to each working group’s separate discussion board on [www.qualtd.net](http://www.qualtd.net).

The Steering Committee encourages posting “on the record” by registering on the QTD website and then logging in before posting, but the discussion boards also allow anonymous participation by posting without



## In the Next Issue...

Here is a preview of some articles coming in the October 2016 issue:

### POLITICS

Politics Symposium: 2016 Elections Forecasts

*James E. Campbell, guest editor*

More than a Game: Football Fans and Marriage Equality

*Melissa R. Michelson and Brian F. Harrison*

I Will Register and Vote, if You Teach Me How: A Field Experiment Testing Voter Registration in College Classrooms

*Elizabeth A. Bennion and David Warwick Nickerson*

Correct Voting and Post-Election Regret

*André Blais and Anja Killibarda*

### THE PROFESSION

Reducing Political Bias in Political Science Estimates

*Lawrence James Zigerell*

From the Sections: Watching Elections 2016 with a Gender Lens

*Kelly Dittmar*

### THE TEACHER

Campaign Simulation for American Government: An Active Learning Approach to Campaigns and Elections

*Gayle Alberda*

logging in. Input from junior scholars and graduate students is particularly welcome!

The Steering Committee will give an Interim Report at the 2016 APSA Meeting on a Theme Panel Roundtable on Thursday, September 1, 10:00–11:30 a.m.

## 111th ASA Annual Meeting

The American Sociological Association's 111th Annual Meeting on "Rethinking Social Movements: Can Changing the Conversation Change the World?" will be held August 20–23, 2016, in Seattle, Washington. The meeting provides the opportunity for professionals involved in the scientific study of society to share knowledge and new directions in research and practice. Nearly 600 program sessions are convened during the four-day meeting held every August to provide participation venues and networking outlets for nearly 3,000 research papers and over 4,600 presenters. More information can be found online at [www.asanet.org/AM2016/am\\_2016.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/AM2016/am_2016.cfm).

## The Theme of the 131st AHA Annual Meeting

### AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES THEME: "HISTORICAL SCALE: LINKING LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE"

Historians focus their research and teaching on selected levels of experience: they portray microhistory, global history, regional history, or oceanic history. For the 2017 annual meeting, contributors are encouraged to trace links among scales—spatial, temporal, and topical. The focus of the 2017 program on linking historical scales provides one way to seek coherence in the ever-widening range of historical study. Such exploration of scale in history, though timely, is hardly new. Thus, in the days of preeminence of national histories,

it was not uncommon for historians to recount the national experience through local or provincial narratives. But in 2017, we hope to push the boundaries of scalar analysis, developing practice and language by which researchers and students may describe links from the specific to the general or the other way around.

The purpose of studying historical scale today is not so much to perfect national narratives as to develop insights into historical connections. The notion of "scale" refers most obviously to geographic space but also to time, topic, and perhaps other dimensions. In linking spatial scales, one sees, for example, how worldwide decolonization and the specifics of the Algerian struggle for independence each brought changes to the other. The contemporaneous rise of Protestantism and Safavid Shi'ism each drew on yet inflected, respectively, the long-term trajectory of Christianity and Islam. For music, the sounds and orchestration of each tradition are of interest in themselves, yet music is also influenced by the social order it inhabits, while musical messages affect adjoining arts and sometimes set the tone for large-scale social change.

The possible links among historical scales are immense in number. One may hope to locate an occasional nexus of specific historical factors that combine to bring about change, even if they are at quite different scales. Juxtaposition and interaction of small and large geographical terrains, short and long periods of time, specific topics and wide-ranging topical scope—these are proposed as an underlying theme in addition to the many specific subjects of panels on research and teaching. Overall, it may be that eclectic links of papers and panels throughout the conference will reveal links across the scales of history, documenting the interdependence of historians working in various specializations.

Registration for the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (hosted in Denver, Colorado, January 5–8) will open mid-September.

### 2017 PROGRAM CHAIRS

Anand A. Yang, University of Washington, Seattle, 2017 chair

Edda L. Fields-Black, Carnegie Mellon University, 2017 cochair. ■