Study Guide: Analytical Approaches in Political Science

This course is organized as a series of combined lectures and seminars with mandatory attendance. Each meeting is three hours long, starting with an introductory lecture the first hour and then taking the form of a seminar in which a number of key-questions are discussed of great relevance to the examination task (see below), but all participants are of course welcome to raise other relevant questions as well. This requires that we are all well prepared for each meeting in terms of having read parts of the literature and reflected on it in relation to the examination questions. These meetings are intended to work as preparations for the examination, which is an individual written assignment. It should be handed in at the end of the course and is presented below.

Schedule:


Friday 8 Nov: Delivery of assignment kl. 16.00 to: jan.olsson@oru.se och jan.olsson.oru@analys.urkund.se

Examination:

The course is assessed through an examination consisting of the components listed below.
- Mandatory attendance at seminars.
- Examination in the form of an individual written assignment where the doctoral student presents and compares different analytical approaches in political science.
The assignment
How can we understand the meaning of analytical approaches on politics in the research tradition of political science? In discussing this main question you need to do a systematic, comparative analysis in relation to the following dimensions/aspects:

- What epistemological and ontological assumptions (explicit/implicit) are of central importance for the different approaches?
- How are the analytical approaches used as guides for theoretical and empirical inquiry?
- Do the approaches have a set of well-established research problems? Which are the classical ones and are there problems at the margin, maybe even excluded?
- What are the methodological traditions and strategies of the analytical approaches?
- Are there study objects and/or empirical data of particular importance to the different approaches?
- To what extent are the various analytical approaches used within different political science sub-disciplines, such as political theory, comparative politics, international politics, policy studies etc.?
- How do the analytical approaches perceive of praxis relevance? Do they have specific traditions and/or strategies for interaction and communication? In your opinion, have any of the approaches had a major influence on society?

Your analysis should be summarized in form of a written essay, about 15-20 pages and with some kind of reference system. Answer the questions above by doing a systematic comparative analysis of the approaches. Argue and exemplify in relation to the literature. Make a concluding reflection on the main question: How can we understand the meaning of analytical approaches on politics in the research tradition of political science? To pass you need to cover all the literature listed below.

Course readings:

Books and research reports:
Articles and book chapters:
(pp.16-41).
pages
Merriam, C. E. (1921): The Present State of the Study of Politics. The American Political 
Political Life,” American Political Science Review 78 (September): 3 (5), 734–49.
Munck, G.L. (2007): The Past and Presents of Comparative Politics. I Munck, G. L & Snyder, 
University Press (s. 32-62).
A. J. & Stavrakakis, Y. (2000), Discourse theory and political analysis. Identities, 