

F o u n d a t i o n a l F r a m e w o r k

UPH FACULTY OF Social and Political Sciences (FISIP)

Faculty Foundational Framework of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP)

Introduction

The teaching and learning process of social and political sciences in UPH aims to equip students and graduates with a biblical understanding of the behavior or actions of individuals and groups in society in accordance with the mission and guiding theological framework of UPH and the Pelita Harapan Educational Foundation. To this end, the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences is itself grounded in and shaped by that same mission and guiding theological framework, and seeks to understand and promote three study programs: communication, international relations and political sciences in the light of the Holy Scriptures, the convictions of Reformed theology, and the preeminence of Jesus Christ in all things.

Specifically this means that biblical, Reformed theology -- grounded in the Holy Scriptures, dependent on our sovereign and gracious God, and centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ -- is the starting-point, the guiding conviction, and the ultimate evaluative framework for the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. This theology is foundational and primary, such that, even as the faculty enables earnest and honest exploration of the vast array of sub-disciplines, theories, and practices in social and political sciences, all teaching and scholarship will finally be governed by this theological understanding.

This theological understanding presupposes the fact that all human thinking or ideas, including the discipline of social and political sciences, is rooted in worldview. There is no such thing as religiously “neutral” or purely “objective” thought, and every theory or practice in social and political sciences gives evidence, explicitly or implicitly, of its underlying worldview. The framework articulated below is presented in the interest of transparency and accountability regarding the worldview that undergirds and motivates the study of social and political sciences in UPH.

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences is committed to the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, which are the words of God written, and to the expression of the truth of the Scriptures in the tenets of Reformed theology. On this basis, the study of social and political sciences in UPH is rooted in the conviction that each person is created in the image of God, but has fallen into sin and can only be completely restored through redemption in Christ. On top of that the assumption of self-perfectibility of social and political institutions should be rejected as social and political transformation can only begin with the redemption of the human heart through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Recognizing the broad range of sub-disciplines within the field of social and political sciences, we recognize that the import and impact of this theological framework will vary somewhat across the sub-disciplines (communication, international relations and political sciences). However, we also affirm that, as the theological framework addresses the most

basic and pervasive foundations of all understanding, every sub-discipline will, in important ways, be framed and informed by our theological convictions.

Foundational Framework

In the broader academic community, the study of social and political sciences is commonly based on principles and methods that ignore the existence of God and the truth that he has revealed in Holy Scripture, assuming that human beings can understand the range of topics in social and political sciences and address human and group behavior independently of God and his Word. In contrast, UPH's understanding of Christ-centered study of social and political sciences, rooted in Reformed tradition and biblical worldview, serves as a foundational framework on which to build a correct and comprehensive understanding of that discipline.

Four (4) key components of the foundational framework of a Christ-centered study of social and political sciences include:

1. Statement of faith (See YPPH/YUPH Statement of Faith)
2. Biblical foundation
3. Key principles
4. Key diagnostic questions

Biblical Foundation:

Based on the theological framework of the YPPH/YUPH Statement of Faith, teaching of social and political sciences in UPH is meant:

1. To develop individuals who are professional and mature, both spiritually and mentally, and able to play a role as professionals in the field of social and political sciences who display Christian values in every aspect of their lives.
2. To produce graduates who are grounded professionally and personally in God's truth as revealed in Holy Scripture, and who depend totally on God's sovereignty and God's way in their life transformation. The ultimate aim is that they would become Christ-like themselves, leaning not on their own strength and self-sufficiency, but faithfully applying their biblically-grounded knowledge of social and political sciences for the good of others and for the glory of God.

The authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures are the foundation and framework on which we build, in order that we might know and love God, and thereby understand and love others as we ought. To know and love God, we need the grace of God, for in our nature human beings are sinful and separated from God. The same is true as we seek to know and serve others.

The study of social and political sciences utilizes empirical and phenomenological or qualitative methods to enable us to understand the social and political behavior of individuals and groups or institutions in society. However, because modern social and political sciences does not take into account the biblical doctrine of the fallenness of human being, the modern social and political scientists have, at best, a partial or incomplete understanding of the nature of human being and society. Since the Enlightenment period, the study of social and political sciences has put aside the notion of the sovereignty of God and the dependence of man on His authority and promoted instead the autonomy of man and the self-perfectibility of social and political institutions to create a better or more perfect society. The implication of the influence of the enlightenment philosophers upon the development and sophistication of the methodology of social and political sciences is profound in the sense that our understanding of human and social reality has distorted our apprehension of the same object as known by God. In contrast, grounding the study of social and political sciences in a biblical framework constitutes an imperative to recognize and take into account human sinfulness and its societal and political consequences and the possibilities, by God's grace, of turning away from sin to holiness and wholeness. Hence, the study of social and political sciences cannot be separated from theology.

Key Principles:

Human nature and society must be observed from the biblical perspective of creation-fall-redemption-consummation. Human beings are the peak of God's creation, created in the likeness and image of the Triune God, the creatures valued and loved most highly by God, but also creatures who have fallen into sin so that every aspect of human thought and social experience is corrupted by our spiritual and moral depravity. Therefore human beings and society should be observed and understood holistically in biblical perspective and cannot be treated in a naturalistic and reductionist manner. Human beings and society also need salvation from God through Jesus Christ and will achieve perfect wholeness and holiness only when Jesus Christ comes for the second time.

The secular theories of social and political sciences, including those that are grounded in unbiblical ideologies or worldviews, can provide partial insight into the human condition and social-political reality. This is the blessing of God's common grace. But to the degree that those theories fail to take into account biblical truth, they fail to give a fully accurate and beneficial framework for both understanding and practice. The task of biblically-grounded study of social and political sciences is to understand the panoply of theories, and the empirical and hermeneutical findings that flow from them, in the light of the Scriptures and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus "redeem" whatever is true and worthy and reject what is false and harmful. The redeeming of secular theories of social and political sciences should be in line with the biblical answers to the question of the origin of human being (who is created in the image of God), biblical moral framework, the meaning or purpose of human life (to thank for His grace of salvation and declare His glory here on earth), and the ultimate destiny of humankind (the eschatological hope of the consummation).

A further task for our social and political scientists, thoroughly grounded in a biblical worldview and engaged with the theories and findings of contemporary social and political sciences, is to contribute to the scientific and professional progress of the field, functioning as godly and competent professionals seeking to serve the well-being of others, for the ultimate purpose of the glory of Jesus Christ and salvation through His gospel.

Human and social transformation based on the principle of Christ-centeredness.

Human and social transformation that is based on the principle of Christ-centeredness cannot be achieved through human understanding and effort, but rather is accomplished only by the work of Christ in his death on the cross and triumph over death in his resurrection, and by the work of the Holy Spirit who regenerates and sanctifies human beings. The regeneration of human heart through the redemptive work of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ should be the basis and the starting point of all talks about human and social transformation. This is in contrast with the general understanding in the contemporary or modern social and political sciences that we can change human or social behavior from the outside through the enactment of laws or the introduction of new social and political institutions that somehow can create a better society.

As new creations, redeemed Christian people will have the deepest capacity to be exemplary members of society and citizens of the state as their obedience to the government is directly derived from their obedience to Christ. As Alexander Solzhenitzyn says: *“in relation to the true ends of human beings here on earth ... the state structure is of secondary importance”*. Thus, framed by biblical truth and the gospel, the study of social and political sciences can help to create the right kind of human and social and political agency that is needed for a genuine social and political transformation. True biblical understanding of human fallenness has inspired some Christian thinkers to come up with such inspiring statements like: *“Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows”* by C. S. Lewis or *“Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary”* by Reinhold Niebuhr.

Key Diagnostic Questions:

1. Are human beings born to this world without inherent identity and then such identity is determined by their social interactions or is each and every human being is the bearer of the image of God regardless of their social upbringing and culture and therefore should be treated as such in social and political sciences?
2. Can human being claim an absolute human autonomy or as created being he or she should submit to God’s sovereignty over all His creation?
3. What does it mean to be human? Is it to demand an absolute human autonomy or to grow in the knowledge of God the Son for the ultimate glory of God?

4. Can we rely on the self-perfectibility of social and political institutions in order to produce social and political transformation or should the starting point be the regeneration of human heart through the faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
5. Do we have to rely on the salvific message of secular ideologies or submit to God's providence as He has good plans for the faithful?
6. Should the practice of interfaith dialogue prevent us from proclaiming the distinctiveness of biblical truth for the sake of political correctness or should we uphold the uniqueness of our Christian faith regardless of its social and political consequences?
7. Can we strive for social and political transformation without changing the depravity of human heart as the repository of all our evil predispositions in social relations with our fellow human beings?
8. How does the Christian hope for the heaven and the new earth under the eternal rule and reign of Jesus Christ affect our understanding and goals for social and political transformation?
9. Can we make our obedience to the government absolute or should we derive such commitment from our ultimate obedience to God?

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