

Rotisserie Political Science

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In a recent essay in this journal, Thomas E. Cronin (1991: 489) argues that effectively teaching political science requires a sense of humor. Professor Cronin's insight is thought-provoking. Would the use of humor in political science in general improve the discipline? We think so.¹ So, from the people who brought you "The Contribution of Elvis Presley to Political Science,"² comes . . . [drum roll] . . . Rotisserie Political Science (RPS).

Rotisserie games have grown up around most major sports—football, baseball, basketball—why not political science? The basic principle behind rotisserie games is that arm-chair athletes can get vicarious thrills by selecting players who perform well in real games. Although the rules vary, the game usually begins with each game player drafting a given number of players (henceforth designated "athletes") who participate in that sport. Game players are awarded or lose points for the performance of their chosen athletes that week. For example, a running back in football gets points for touchdowns but loses points for fumbles. The game player selects a group of athletes from those he/she³ has drafted; these athletes are designated to play that week. Game players then receive points for all the athletes they own who play that week. The player whose athletes amass the largest number of points is the winner. An entry fee is usually charged, and weekly and season winners are awarded cash prizes.

The most difficult part of rotisserie games is devising the point system for the athletes. Below is our point system for RPS. Because political science does not have natural seasons similar to most other sports, we have arbitrarily declared that a political science season shall be of 12 months' duration beginning on January 1. Points are awarded only for activities

during that calendar year, although, as detailed later, some awards may be given for multiyear performance. Otherwise, points cannot be carried over into another season.

The Point System

RPS points shall be awarded in four categories: (1) publication, (2) convention participation, (3) professional development, and (4) assisting in the professional development of others.

Publications

Points for publications are awarded in the year in which the manuscripts are accepted, not in the year in which the publication appears in print. For book authors, "accepted for publication" means when the author receives the page proofs.⁴ Because the value of various outlets differs, points for publication will differ as follows:

Articles. The "coin of the realm" in most research-oriented political science departments is acceptance in a peer-reviewed journal.

Points	Activity
+ 15	Article accepted by the <i>APSR</i>
+ 10	Article accepted by <i>AJPS</i> , <i>JoP</i> , <i>WPQ</i> , or <i>SSQ</i> ⁵
+ 5	Article accepted by a refereed journal not listed above
– 2	Article accepted in which Greek letters outnumber English letters

An apparently necessary but not sufficient condition for getting an article accepted is the coveted "revise and resubmit." Because smart editors do not dispense revise and resubmits unless there is a greater than .5 probability of eventually publishing the work, these indicate quality work on the part of the recipient. Revise and resubmits receive the following

points:

Points	<i>Revise and Resubmit at</i>
+ 6	<i>APSR</i>
+ 3	<i>AJPS</i> , <i>JoP</i> , <i>WPQ</i> , or <i>SSQ</i>
+ 1	Another refereed journal not listed
0	<i>Public Administration Review</i> (unless the person actually resubmits the manuscript, in which case: – 7)

Because there is no free lunch and to prevent RPS players from drafting individuals who subscribe to the "blind hog" theory of publication⁶ (you know who you are), there are also penalty points for rejected manuscripts:

Points	<i>Article Rejected at:</i>
– 4	<i>APSR</i>
– 2	<i>AJPS</i> , <i>JoP</i> , <i>WPQ</i> , or <i>SSQ</i>
– 1	Another refereed journal not listed
+ 2	<i>Presidential Studies Quarterly</i>

The penalty for rejection is doubled if the author (1) has previously had the manuscript rejected, (2) submits the manuscript to another journal without changes, and (3) has the editor send the manuscript to a referee who recommended rejection at the first journal.

Additional article publication points are awarded for the following:

Points	<i>Activity</i>
+ 3	Having a funny title
+ 1	Saying something funny in a footnote
– 1	Making up the page numbers in a citation
– 6	Citing yourself incorrectly, aka "The David Nice Rule"
+ 65	Sending a birthday card to your manuscript if it has been under review at a journal for a year, aka "The Kathy Kemp Rule"

Citations to an author's work also contribute points:

+ 1	For every 10 citations to previously published work in the
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- 1 *Social Science Citation Index* For every citation to previously published work in the *Social Science Citation Index* if the citation is a self-citation

Book Publishing. The point system for books follows the general logic of article publication with the following points:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 20	Book accepted by a major university press ⁷
+ 10	Book accepted by a minor university press
+ 5	Book accepted by a commercial press
- 2	Book accepted by a commercial press which goes out of business after accepting, but before publishing, your book
- 8	Book published by a university press which then decides to quit publishing in political science (The University of Tennessee Press Rule)

The Tedium Rule of Book Publishing: The practical difference between a political science article and a political science book is that it is much harder to stay awake for an entire book. The tedium rule seeks to correct that problem. Books should be limited to no more than 250 pages including index, bibliography, etc. To enforce this rule, authors will be penalized one point for every 10 pages beyond 250 pages in their book. Thus, a 300-page book would earn a deduction of five points from whatever total is otherwise earned by the publication.

Additional book points:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 6	The book wins an award
+ 2	The book is issued in hard cover
+ 2	The hard cover edition has a dust jacket
+ 1	For every \$1 under \$20 in the list price of the paperback edition
+ 5--5	The cover or dust jacket includes the author's picture. In such cases, the author's picture will be rated by Lee Sigelman (for females) or his infamous unnamed "middle-aged woman who has an inordinate fondness of looking at pictures of men" (for males) on the Sigelman Ugliness—"Yummie to Yecch"—

- 3 scale⁸ The book is published without an index

Points can also be earned by having your book reviewed. The following points are awarded for reviews of your book even if the book were published in an earlier year.⁹

<i>Points</i>	<i>Event</i>
+ 1	For each review of the book that appears
- 4	The reviewer misspells the author's name
+ 6	The book is panned in <i>Public Choice</i>

Reviewing Books. Reviewing books is perhaps more important than writing books. Were it not for book reviews, some journals would not be read at all. The following points are awarded for book reviews:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 2	Reviewing a book
+ 1	Reviewing a book but saying only positive things about it
+ 4	Reviewing a book if the author responds in the next issue
+ 1	Relating humorous incidents about the author in the review

Convention Participation

Program Division. Publications, like athletes, often appear in tryout camps before they are called up to "The Show." To recognize the political scientists who are building a strong farm system, points are awarded for convention participation in three categories: (1) the program division—for those on the official program, (2) the audience division, and (3) the networking division. Program points are awarded for the following activities:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 4	Presenting a paper
- 1	If no one in the audience addresses a question to the paper giver
- 2	Actually reading the paper to the panel/audience
- 3	Presenting a paper without a dependent variable
- 5	Presenting a paper and not knowing if there is a dependent variable

Just as books can be tedious, so too can paper presentations. The

tedium rule for convention programs provides for a 1-point deduction for each minute over 15 that the presentation lasts. Presentations over 40 minutes in length also carry a one-year suspension from accruing any other program division points.

Other Conference Program points:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 6	Winning the best paper award
- 12	Winning the best paper award if the person was on the best paper award committee
+ 3	As a discussant, discovering a non-trivial thread linking all of the panel's papers
- 3	Failing to preregister
- 10	As discussant, ignoring the papers presented and presenting the paper you wanted to present, the proposal for which was rejected before you were stuck being a discussant
- 15	Failing to show up at your own panel, aka "The David Brady Rule #1"

Attendance Division. Attendance at panels is dropping at the same time participation on the official program is rising. Obviously the incentives to attend panels on which one is not a participant are insufficient to induce people to sit through three papers and two discussants. To correct this problem, RPS offers points for attendance at program functions.

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 1	For each panel attended other than the one upon which one is a participant, with the following bonuses:
+ 2	Staying for the entire panel
+ 4	Appearing on time if the panel is held at 8:45 AM
+ 6	Staying for the entire panel even if one is in the wrong room
+ 1	Asking a question of one of the panel members
- 2	Identifying yourself before asking a question (if you are that important, people will already know who you are)
- 12	Taking more than two minutes to ask a question

The Non-Program Bonus Rule: Any person earning points in the attendance division who is not listed on the official program (other than those who are not listed because of a failure to preregister) will have those points doubled.

Networking Division. Conventions are not just for presenting research or listening to papers. Conventions are major networking events that can further the careers of political scientists. All political scientists want to be one of that elite group of individuals in the discipline whose "reputation exceeds his/her vita." Networking points are awarded for the following:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 2	Buy a convention paper (limit of four points total)
- 3	Buy a copy of your own paper
- 6	Steal a convention paper from the paper room
+10	Attend the <i>JoP</i> editorial board breakfast meeting, eat breakfast, and leave before the meeting starts <i>if</i> you are not on the editorial board, aka "The Tom Dye Rule"
- 1	Wear your nametag outside the convention hotel
+ 1	Interview a candidate for job (limit of three points)
+ 2	Interview a candidate for a funded job (limit of six points total)
+ 2	Scout out a free cocktail party (unlimited points)
+ 2	Discuss a scholarly book with an editor
+ 1	Discuss a textbook with an editor
+ 1	Attend the business meeting
+ 9	Say something funny at the business meeting
- 3	Say something serious at the business meeting
-16	Fail to attend the business meeting if you are an association officer, aka "The David Brady Rule #2"
+ 1	Have your name appear in <i>PS</i> (other than on the preliminary program of the APSA)
+ 2	Have a regular photo appear in <i>PS</i>
+ 4	Have an "action" photo appear in <i>PS</i>
+ 8	Have your obituary appear in <i>PS</i> if you are not dead
-10	Ask a journal editor if a decision has been made on your manuscript
-15	Underreport income to get lower APSA dues

Professional Development

Professional development is a category where milestones and millstones in a political scientist's career are

recognized. Points are awarded for the following:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 8	Receiving an endowed chair
+ 2	Getting a fancy title without any endowment
+ 6	Promotion to full professor ¹⁰
+ 4	Receiving tenure
- 2	Being named department chair
-12	Being denied tenure
-17	Being named a dean

Assisting the Professional Development of Others

Political scientists not only should try to further their own careers, but also to develop the skills of other political scientists. To recognize such altruism, coauthor points are awarded as follows:

<i>Points</i>	<i>If your coauthor is:</i>
+ 6	a graduate student
+ 9	a graduate student who is smarter than you are (you probably don't know who you are)
+ 3	an assistant professor
+ 1	an associate or full professor
- 3	Paul Sabatier

Other altruistic activities merit points. These include:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Activity</i>
+ 3	Reviewing a person for tenure or promotion
+ 6	Reviewing a person for tenure or promotion with less than 30 days lead time
+ 1	Writing a letter of recommendation (one point per recommendee)
+ 4	Writing a letter of recommendation, but signing someone else's name (points are doubled if you use the actual stationery of the person whose name you sign)
+ 1	Reviewing a manuscript for a journal
- 6	Suggesting in a manuscript review that the author cite your work
+ 9	When reviewing a manuscript, reanalyzing the author's data and getting better results

Game Options

Game players will have to make a wide variety of decisions. The initial distribution of athletes will occur by a draft in which all political scientists are available for an RPS team. Say

you have the first draft choice. Should you take Lee Sigelman or Bernie Grofman? Trades will also be allowed. For example, another game player might offer you Susan MacManus in exchange for David Brady and Ron Weber.

Some will be upset because we have taken no notice of differences in fields. There are two ways to do this. First, a game could be defined so that participants must field a team of 10 that includes one political scientist each from specified fields: theory, international relations, comparative politics (area studies), comparative politics (cross-national studies), voting behavior, political institutions, and political methodology—with three other political scientists chosen from any field in an attempt to create an advocacy coalition (Sabatier 1988).¹¹

Second, games could be designed so that all political scientists in the draft pool are from the same field. For example, there could be a game with only public administration specialists (for those who like low scoring games). Specialized games could have specialized rules. For example, in the comparative politics (area studies division) game, a political scientist could get bonus points if her country is covered on the front page of the *New York Times* but lose points if the country ceases to exist.

How We Plan to Make Big Bucks on This Game

We have put more thought into ways that we, and you—the game players—can make big bucks on this game. One strategy would be to negotiate incentive clauses in your contracts. For example, you might negotiate a \$1,000 bonus if you earn more than 300 points in RPS in a year.

The really big bucks will, as usual, be made in merchandising. First, we shall be introducing political scientist playing cards. In addition to making us money, these cards will provide data on individual players for use in drafting a team. One side will have the traditional snapshot of the political scientist, and the obverse will include at least five years' worth of RPS statistics. There should even be room for catchy tidbits such as

“Chuck Bullock has led the University of Georgia in article points for five straight years.”

The logical extension of player cards is to publish an RPS book. The book would present career statistics and permit the authors to reveal juicy items about political scientists. For example, “Tom Mann has successfully made the transition from German novelist to congressional specialist.” “Ken Meier received a low pass on his public administration prelim exams in graduate school. This is a sad commentary on either Ken or public administration or both.” “Jim Campbell was having a great year last year until he suffered a rotator cuff tear in his theory at the Midwest meetings. Jim is likely to miss all of next year.”

To further promote the game and make money, we shall give awards, appropriately subsidized by major corporations, for game players who have notable years. The political scientist scoring the most RPS points will be awarded the Ft. Howard Paper and Pulp Recycling Co. Most Valuable Player Award. The Waste Management, Inc. Rookie of the Year Award will be awarded to the first-year RPS player with the highest score. We have tentatively lined up corporate sponsorship for several other awards: the Dow Chemical Award for the highest scoring player in the Peace Studies division; the Tammy Faye Bakker Award for the highest scoring player in the Religion and Politics division; the Duncan Yo-Yo Award for the player with the largest standard deviation in annual points amassed over a five-year period; and, the Chrysler Corp. Comeback Player of the Year Award for the player achieving the largest positive change in team point totals from one season to the next. These awards will be conferred at a banquet where we will be charging each of you money to attend at the same time that a corporate sponsor will be paying all expenses.

Once the methodology for rating political scientists is accepted, a futures market can be created. For example, if you have a good team drafted for 1993 and have cash left over, you could buy a futures contract on, say, Robert Salisbury. Assume that Professor Salisbury has

a futures price of 625 RPS points. If you think he will perform better than 625 in 1993, you would purchase a futures contract on Salisbury. If you think he will do worse, sell him short.

Space limitations prevent us from listing all of our ideas about how we can make big bucks from this game. If you think of any, drop us a note. We own the copyright on the game, but we are happy to license money-making extensions for a modest fee. We have no objection to others getting rich off the idea as long as we get a piece of the action.

Notes

1. Because we are merely following a path suggested by Professor Cronin, readers who do not think there is a need for more humor should address their complaints to him. After all, we are only following his suggestion. Readers who agree that there is a need for more humor but do not think this article fills that need should address their complaints to Paul Sabatier. This routing of complaints is consistent with the call issued by Hank Jenkins-Smith at a panel, “The Old Man and the Lake”: The ‘Contributions’ of Paul Sabatier to the Study of Lake Tahoe,” at the Western Social Science Association meetings in Reno in April, 1991, for the profession to place blame for the proverbial “all remaining errors” at the feet of Sabatier.

2. Panel at the Southern Political Science Association meetings, Peabody Hotel, Memphis, November, 1988. Designated by Program Chair Anne Hopkins as the only panel in the “Other” section of the program, participants were Carol Kohfeld, David Robertson, Kenneth Meier, Joseph Stewart, and the late Larry Regens. “The King” himself was invited to participate but did not appear. He was reportedly sighted at a wedding in Plano, Texas on the day of the panel.

3. It is a sexist myth that all rotisserie players are male. One of the authors knows the female accountant who won the 1984 Arthur Anderson rotisserie football league by selecting athletes who looked good from the rear. While this is unlikely to be a good decision rule for political scientists, it does point out that intuitive strategies are often as good as rational strategies in rotisserie games.

4. This rule is obviously targeted toward individuals whose major writing activity appears to be signing contracts to write books, but never quite getting around to writing the books.

5. If you do not know what these initials mean, you should not be playing the game.

6. This theory—often pronounced “blind hawg”—holds that even a blind hog finds an acorn “ever” now and then.” Its adherents flood the desks of journal editors with manuscripts on the presumption that with enough attempts, by random chance, one will be accepted. To these people, a .01 level of sig-

nificance takes on a whole new meaning. Practitioners of this theory seldom get anything published but use any success as evidence of the validity of the theory.

7. Major university presses are those associated with major universities. Major universities are designated by the Engstrom rule which holds: “The quality of a university is inversely related to the number of colors on the university’s stationery.” Major university presses, therefore, are those associated with universities that have only one color of ink on plain white stationery.

8. For a fuller explication and an application of this scale, see Sigelman (1990).

9. It is wishful thinking to expect your book to be reviewed in the same year it is published (or perhaps even the next one).

10. This title is commonly mispronounced. It should be pronounced as if it were spelled “fool professor.”

11. Paul contends that we do not cite his work enough. Accordingly, we have resolved to add one gratuitous cite to Paul’s work in everything we write. This is it.

References

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About the Authors

Kenneth J. Meier, a graduate of the auto-mechanics program at Moore-Norman Votech School, is currently professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is currently writing a book titled *Bar Style*, examining the relationship between alcohol consumption and the behavior of political elites. His latest contribution to humanity was sponsoring the “Name the Sabatier Child Contest.” He dedicates this game but none of the profits to Katrina Lillian Sabatier, aka “Shoeless Jo.”

Joseph Stewart, Jr. is the son of a fundamentalist minister; Joe Jr. did not follow in his father’s footsteps because he was unaware of all of the money and sex involved. He is spending the 1991-92 academic year as a National Assessment of Educational Progress Visiting Scholar at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton. Contrary to a popular hypothesis, no one has been able to establish a causal link between his arrival at ETS and the latest announced decline in standardized test scores. An “action” photo (+4 RPS points) of Stewart has appeared in *PS* (1982: 202).