
Politics Course Descriptions

Note:

Most required courses are offered each semester, and most electives are offered every year or every other year. Also, a number of courses satisfy requirements in interdisciplinary programs such as Criminal Justice, Environmental Studies, Human Services, U.S. and Global Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies. Contact the department chair for more information.

@ = Indicates a non-liberal arts course. Please refer to page 48 for a description of non-liberal arts credits.

POLS 195, 295, 395, 495 – Special Topics (1-4)

POLS 198, 298, 398, 498 – Tutorial (1-4)

Introductory Courses

POLS 110 – Introduction to U.S. Politics (4) An introduction to the major political institutions in U.S. national politics and the behavior of individuals and groups involved with these institutions. Fall and Spring. Gen Ed: SA credit, and occasionally taught for FS credit.

POLS 122 – Bioethics and the Law (4) Examination of the ethical and legal issues raised by developments in human biology and medicine. Topics discussed will include withdrawal of life support, abortion and genetic privacy. Fall and Spring. Gen Ed: PI, FC credit; also rarely taught for FS or WI credit.

POLS 124 – Springsteen's Political Themes (4) This course examines political themes in the life and lyrics of musician and "Poet of the Turnpike," Bruce Springsteen. Particular themes explored include populism, republicanism, nationalism, patriotism, the work (and play) ethics, religion, manhood, love, and human relationships. Occasionally. Gen Ed: AC credit.

POLS 125 – Women's and Gender Studies I (4) As the foundation course for the Women's and Gender Studies program, this course provides an introduction to the multidisciplinary field of women's and gender studies. By exploring feminist theories, paradigms, and critiques, the course offers opportunities to explore the relationships of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation and to examine feminist struggles worldwide for equality and justice. Equivalent to WMST 100. Gen Ed: occasionally taught for FS credit.

POLS 130 – Introduction to Comparative Politics (4) This course provides an introduction to basic concepts in comparative political analysis and application of them to selected countries from diverse regions of the world. We will explore the formal political institutions in each country, as well as less formal aspects including political values and culture. We will also examine how society, economy, and globalization help shape domestic politics. Most semesters. Gen Ed: XC credit.

POLS 135 – Riots, Rebellions & Revolutions (4) This course explores social conflict and political violence in its many forms, from isolated outbreaks to popular uprisings. Theories of violence are discussed and applied to examples from different parts of the world. Alternate years. Gen Ed: FS credit.

POLS 140 – Introduction to International Relations (4) This course introduces students to fundamental issues in the study of global politics. We look at today's international politics in a historical perspective by reading different theoretical approaches within the discipline of International Relations and discussing their main arguments and "world views." The course covers important topics such as the role of international organizations, war and peace, globalization and environmental cooperation. Most semesters.

POLS 200 – Political Ideas (4) Considers major perennial political problems. Introduces concepts and analytical techniques used in the search

for appropriate responses to those problems. Fall and Spring. Gen Ed: PI credit.

Political Theory Courses

POLS 316 – Power and Democracy (4) Considers the structure of power; the effects of social class, economic structure and political ideology on the distribution of political power; and the implications for democratic theory and practice. Prerequisite: POLS 200.

POLS 342 – Approaching Political Puzzles (4) This course is designed to improve students' understanding of political science by enhancing their critical thinking skills and exploring different theoretical approaches to political science. Prerequisite: POLS 110 or 200. Every year.

POLS 347 – Post-Colonial Theories and Societies (4) It is the goal of this class to demonstrate that the history of material and ideological dependency of most parts of the Global South on imperial powers has not simply ended with decolonization. To better understand this situation, we analyze the post-colonial production of knowledge that is still based on Western domination. Sophomore standing. Occasionally. Gen Ed: XC credit.

POLS 353 – Feminist Political Thought (4) This course gives an overview of feminist political theorizing and aims to make students familiar with feminist political ideas as results of specific historical contexts and controversies. Students will be encouraged to develop their own viewpoints in response to the readings and to reflect upon the conditions of the production of knowledge. Prerequisite: POLS 125 or 200. Alternate years. Gen Ed: PI credit.

POLS 354 – Western Political Thought (4) A selective survey of original classics of Western political theory plus a look at commentary. We will consider Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, Locke, and others. Prerequisite: POLS 200. Alternate years. Gen Ed: PI & WC credit.

U.S. Politics Courses

POLS 301 – U.S. Parties, Elections & Interest Groups (4) This course examines the historical and contemporary understandings of parties, elections, and interest groups. Their historical development, institutionalization, and importance to our political system are explored within the context of citizen participation. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally.

POLS 302 – American Media & Politics (4) This course is designed to gain a deeper understanding of the interrelationships between mass media, the mass public and public officials. We study the reciprocal relations between the media, the public and public officials in an effort to think more systematically and become better consumers of political news. Prerequisite: POLS 110 or permission of instructor. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally.

POLS 306 – Congress and the Presidency (4) This course examines the historical and contemporary understandings of the Congress and Presidency. We explore each institution separately as well as their relationship with each other, with particular emphasis on presidential-congressional budgeting and policy-making. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 312 – Crime and Justice (4) An introduction to the U.S. legal system with emphasis on the criminal justice system. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Once a year. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 317 – Politics of Basketball (4) Examines patterns of power and influence in the world of sports with particular emphasis on basketball. Topics generally include the politics of sport and rules, gender, race, commercialism, and drug and violence. Occasionally. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 321 – Politics and the Judicial Process (4) A legal-political analysis of the institutions and factors shaping judicial behavior and decision-making. Emphasis is placed upon the federal political system, particularly the

Supreme Court of the U.S. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 322 – State and Local Government (4) This course examines the conflict and cooperation between the state, local, and federal units of government in the United States. Students are asked to develop an understanding of American state and local politics, institutions, and public policy, and also consider how and where they, as a community member and (for most) a citizen - can engage politically. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Alternate years. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 323 – Politics of Social Welfare (4) Examines social welfare policy in the U.S. political economy with an emphasis on factors influencing the development of the modern social welfare state and its effects on the poor. Prerequisite: POLS 110 or 125 or SOCI 101 or 325 or permission.

POLS 325 – U.S. Public Policy & Administration (4) This course examines the creation of U.S. public policies, the policy making process, administrative institutions, organizational theory, and accountability by public officials in elected offices and bureaucracies. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally.

POLS 355 – Politics and the Environment (4) Examines the environmental movement, governmental institutions and policymaking as it relates to the environmental problems, the ways to think about the interactions of humans with the natural and built environments and the searches for grassroots solutions to environmental problems. There is also a focus on national institutions and structures aimed at imparting an understanding of presidential leadership, congressional gridlock and judicial environmental policy. Prerequisite: Junior standing.

POLS 410 – Politics of the Family (4) Explores the relationships between family structures and other political structures to determine how family forms and ideals effect power inside and outside the family. The family values debate is considered as well. Prerequisite: POLS 125 or 200 or SOCI 101 or 325. Occasionally.

POLS 412 – Constitutional Law (4) Study of the early formation of the U.S. Constitutional law and the role of the U.S. Supreme Court, with emphasis on issue of federalism. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Spring. Gen Ed: AH & WI credit.

POLS 413 – Civil Liberties: Expression and Religion (4) Legal-political analysis of the development of national policy regarding the First Amendment with emphasis on Supreme Court decisions dealing with obscenity, libel, subversive speech and religious freedom. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Recommended prerequisite: POLS 321. Alternate years. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 414 – Environmental Law (4) This course provides a survey and analysis of statutes, both state and federal, regulating water, soil, air pollution, resource conservation and recovery, and the actions of the Environmental Protection Agency. The course also addresses questions pertaining to problems of implementation, interpretation, enforcement, and development of environmental laws. In addition, the course examines New York State environmental laws, the New York State Constitution, especially Article 14 and other rules and regulations that pertain to the Adirondack Park. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally.

POLS 415 – Civil Liberties I: Race, Sex & Privacy (4) The focus of this course will be on the Supreme Court's interpretation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as well as the Court's development of the constitutional right to privacy. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 420 – Recent U.S. Foreign Policy (4) Political process by which foreign policy is made; origins and character of Cold War; and role and interests of the United States in a post-cold war world. Prerequisite: POLS 200. Occasionally. Gen Ed: WI credit.

POLS 490 – Legal Internship (4) Students assigned to members of legal profession. Nature of work generally includes legal research, attendance

at trials and drafting of briefs or legal memoranda. Students prepare term paper dealing with an aspect of the law to which they have been exposed. Prerequisites: POLS 321, outstanding work in law-related courses and permission. Every semester.

POLS 491 – Public Policy Internship (4) During summer or regular semesters, students work as researchers and administrative assistants with policy implementing government and non-governmental agencies. Prerequisite: permission. Every semester.

POLS 492 – Internship Seminar (3) Conducted in conjunction with New York State Senate and Assembly Internship Programs or the Washington Brockport Internship Program. Students must complete all requirements of their internship program (including the completion of POLS 494) and write an in-depth term project or paper. Prerequisite: Junior-Senior status and permission. Open to all majors.

POLS 494 – @Political Science Internship (12) Conducted in conjunction with New York State Senate and Assembly Internship Program or Washington Brockport Internship. MUST be taken concurrently with POLS 492 for a maximum of 15 semester hours combined. Prerequisite: Junior-Senior status, permission. Open to all majors. Non-liberal arts credit.

International Politics Courses

POLS 332 – Women and Politics (4) This course explores the impact of male-dominated politics on women and development of feminist politics from U.S., international, and comparative perspectives. It also examines gender, race and class relations in politics of international relations, state, workplace, community and family. Prerequisite: POLS 125 or 200. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 335 – Peace and Conflict Resolution (4) Conflict is a natural part of human life that can be a positive force for change, but can also be destructive and eventually lead to violence and war. This course explores different forms of conflict – from non-violent to violent – and their underlying dynamics. The following questions will be addressed: Why can some conflicts be managed in a peaceful way, while others end in genocide? What are origins, stages, and causes of conflict? What role does the cultural context, the state, the military, the economy, the gender order and ethnicity and nationalism play in conflicts? What are techniques to mediate and transform conflicts? And how in the aftermath of a conflict, can peace be made sustainable? Prerequisite: Junior standing. Occasionally. Gen Ed: Occasionally taught for WI and SI credit.

POLS 337 – International Political Economy (4) This course is concerned with the interactions and tensions between states and markets. We will examine both current and past events with international political and economic ramifications, as well as theories that seek to provide systematic explanations for the economic behavior of states.

POLS 338 – International Human Rights (4) Since World War II, human rights have gained the status of the universal and non-discriminatory principle of human dignity. Yet in a world assembling a wide variety of value systems, the universality of the idea has attracted widespread criticism. This course sheds light on the theoretical contestations around the understanding of human rights and on the political practices to might make rights a reality. The course analyzes several practices that refer to human rights, ranging from the rights monitoring system of the United Nations and domestic and foreign policies of selected states to transnational organizations working for human dignity, e.g., in the field of indigenous or women's rights. Prerequisite: POLS 140 or permission. Gen Ed: XC credit.

POLS 340 – International Environmental Policy (4) This course examines the emergence of global environmental politics with a focus on three areas: (1) historical analysis of the "road from Stockholm to Rio" and the

connected concept of sustainability, (2) international environmental regimes and diplomacy, and (3) the role developing countries do and might play in global environmental governance. It begins by examining the scope of environmental agreements and the language of international environmental cooperation. The focus then shifts to the global level by analyzing the actors in the international arena and the differing approaches to world politics. Prerequisite: POLS 110.

POLS 346 – North American Environmental Policy (4) Since the late 1980's, the concept of the state has regained currency in the study of comparative politics. By focusing on the state, scholars examine its political structures, political culture, relationships between interest groups, and perspectives of sovereignty as they relates to the economy and individual rights. The point of departure in this course will be the study of environmental policies in Canada, Mexico and the United States. By stressing one substantive policy area that encompasses both individual and state decision making in the marketplace, students will be introduced to these important concepts, facilitating both their understanding of the subfield of politics and their understanding of North American environmental policy. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Occasionally.

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POLS 420 – Recent U.S. Foreign Policy (4) Political process by which foreign policy is made; origins and character of Cold War; and role and interests of the United States in a post-cold war world. Prerequisite: POLS 200. Occasionally. Gen Ed: WI credit.

POLS 432 – Politics of Global Inequality (4) This course provides a historical overview of the evolution of the international capitalist system. Several competing explanations for the division of the global economy into "haves" and "have-nots" are evaluated. We also explore contemporary issues such as the debt crisis, economic development strategies, the role of transnational corporations, and environmental degradation, with an emphasis on specific country examples. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing. Alternate years. Gen Ed: XC credit.

Comparative Politics Courses

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POLS 334 – Democracy & Democratization (4) This course explores the process of building or transitioning to a democratic political system, and the different ways democracy is practiced around the world. We will examine the political, economic, and social forces that have enabled more countries to abandon authoritarianism and embrace democratic reforms. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

POLS 335 – Peace and Conflict Resolution (4) Conflict is a natural part of human life that can be a positive force for change, but can also be destructive and eventually lead to violence and war. This course explores different forms of conflict – from non-violent to violent – and their underlying dynamics. The following questions will be addressed: Why can some conflicts be managed in a peaceful way, while others end in genocide? What are origins, stages, and causes of conflict? What role does the cultural context, the state, the military, the economy, the gender order and ethnicity and nationalism play in conflicts? What are techniques to

mediate and transform conflicts? And how in the aftermath of a conflict, can peace be made sustainable? Prerequisite: Junior standing. Occasionally. Gen Ed: Occasionally taught for WI and SI credit.

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POLS 433 – African Politics (4) This course explores topics in sub-Saharan African Politics with special reference to post-independence events. We examine state formation; how political power is distributed on the continent; and issues of government in-depth. We also study the nature of African economies and how domestic and international political issues have shaped development. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing. Alternate years. Gen Ed: XC credit.