

Department of Politics

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 45 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 100 – Introduction to Politics (4) Introduces the fundamental questions, answers, and methods of discovery surrounding the creation of a civilized society. The perennial questions that this class addresses include - What is the good life? What is justice? And how should we balance individual rights and the broader interests of society? Classic and contemporary methods of investigating these questions are explored. Emphasis will vary with instructor. Gen Ed: FC (some sections PI) credit.

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

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. Cross-listed as WMST 100.

POLS 130 – Introduction to Comparative Politics (4) Gives 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. Gen Ed: XC credit. Most semesters.

POLS 140 – Introduction to International Relations (4) 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. Gen Ed: PI credit. Fall and Spring.

Capstone Courses

POLS 289 – Approaching Political Puzzles (4) Introduces students to the process of writing an original undergraduate research paper in the field of Political Science. Part 1 of the course is devoted to reading and understanding professional research reports. The focus of part 2 is writing a literature review in response to a research question. In Part 3, students become familiar with common research designs and methods of analysis. Prerequisites: any 2 of the following: POLS 110, 130, 140, or 200. Spring

POLS 400 – Senior Seminar (4) Acquaints students with principles of performance and research in the discipline of political science. Students write a major research paper. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. 12-16 semester hours in Political Sci

ence recommended. Prerequisites: POLS 110, 130, 140, 200 and 289 as well as one of the following: STAT 100, MATH 125, or CIS 125. Gen Ed: WI credit. Fall and Spring.

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 110 or 200. Gen Ed: SA credit.

POLS 347 – Post-Colonial Theories and Societies (4) Demonstrates 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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Gen Ed: XC credit. Occasionally.

POLS 353 – Feminist Political Thought (4) 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 are 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, WMST 100, or POLS 200. Gen Ed: PI credit. Alternate years.

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. Gen Ed: PI & WC credit. Alternate years.

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: POLS 110.

U.S. Politics Courses

POLS 301 – U.S. Parties, Elections & Interest Groups (4) 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) Allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the interrelationships between mass media, the mass public and public officials. We will 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. Pre-requisite: POLS 110. Occasionally.

POLS 306 – Congress and the Presidency (4) 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. Gen Ed: SA credit. Occasionally.

POLS 312 – Crime and Justice (4) Gives an introduction to the U.S. legal system with emphasis on the criminal justice system. This course will focus on the rights of the accused as found in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th and Fourteenth Amendments. Prerequisite: POLS 110 or SOCI 103. Gen Ed: SA credit. Every year.

POLS 313 – U.S. Public Opinion (4) Examines public opinion and mass political behavior in the United States. Among the topics to be explored are the ways in which ordinary citizens make sense of their political world, the quality and sophistication of public opinion, the interplay between mass attitudes and public policy, and the motivations that underlie political participation and electoral choice. Prerequisite: POLS 110.

POLS 318 – Congress & Legislative Process (4) Advances student understanding of the legislative process of the U.S. Congress and analyzes the many institutions that affect both the Congress and the various state legislatures: elections rules, committees, political parties, organized interests, the media, party leaders, chief executives, and courts. Prerequisite: POLS 110 Gen Ed: SA credit

POLS 321 – Politics and the Judicial Process (4) Gives 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. Alternate years.

POLS 322 – State and Local Government (4) 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. Gen Ed: SA credit. Alternate years.

POLS 323 – Welfare Policy Research (4) Examines U.S. welfare policy with an emphasis on factors influencing the development of the modern social welfare state and its effects on the poor. Students engage in original research in order to analyze and assess contemporary welfare policy in the light of the historical, economic, and regional contexts in which it operates. Each student group orally presents its research results at the end of the semester and each student writes a paper summarizing his or her contribution. Prerequisite: POLS 110, 125, SOCI 101, or 325.

POLS 324 – Natural Resource Policy (4) Examines historical and current natural resource policy and management in the U.S. Emphasis will be placed on the political, legal, economic, ecological, and social context in which public land management decisions are made at the national, state, and local level. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Every year.

POLS 325 – U.S. Public Policy & Administration (4) 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 327 – Law and Society (4) Examines how society and the courts intersect with each other when controversial policies, such as racial integration are being implemented by judges. It will also explore strategies of defiance of judicial rulings and how courts respond to cues from other political institutions and the manner in which new social developments influence judicial thinking and behavior. Prerequisite: POLS 110. Alternate years.

POLS 329 – Introduction to Genomics (4) Focuses on the theory and methods of analyzing large genetic data sets and their application to biological problems, including sequence alignment and search methods, gene prediction, phylogenetic trees, and transcriptomics. Lab required. Prerequisite: BIOL 311. Spring.

POLS 348 – Water Policy (4) Provides an overview of water resource policy and management at the global, national, and regional scale. Course will begin with a focus on global water issues and the complexity in managing this increasingly important resource. Course will highlight U.S. water policy and management issues and will emphasize the historical roots of today's water resource policies; as well as, explore regional water issues. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Fall

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: POLS 110.

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

POLS 413 – Civil Liberties I: Freedom of 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. Gen Ed: SA credit. Alternate years.

POLS 414 – Environmental Law (4) 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 II: Race, Sex & Privacy (4) Gives a focus 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. Gen Ed: SA credit. Occasionally.

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. Gen Ed: WI credit. Occasionally.

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 or 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 or senior status and permission. Open to all majors.

International Relations Courses

POLS 332 – Women and Politics (4) 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/WMST 100 or 200. Gen Ed: SI credit. Alternate years.

POLS 335 – International Conflict (4) Explores different forms of conflict – from non-violent to violent – and their underlying dynamics. It addresses the following questions: Why can some conflicts be managed in a peaceful way, while others end in genocide? What are 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: POLS 140. Gen Ed: Occasionally taught for WI and SI credit. Occasionally.

POLS 337 – International Political Economy (4) Examines 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. This course is concerned with the interactions and tensions between states and markets. Alternate years.

POLS 338 – International Human Rights (4) Introduces Human Rights as an international concern. It sheds light on the theoretical contestations of the concept and on political practices to make human rights a reality, such as the monitoring system of the United Nations, domestic and foreign policies of selected states and transnational organizations' efforts to work for human dignity, e.g. in the field of indigenous or women's rights. Prerequisite: junior standing. Gen Ed: XC credit. Every year.

POLS 340 – International Environmental Policy (4) 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 344 – Global Climate Change (4) Explores the human dimensions of global climate change (GCC) and highlight current U.S. policies related to GCC. We will investigate the expected impacts and the diversity of proposed mitigation and adaptation strategies. The class will develop group projects to educate the local community on climate change issues and conduct hands-on activities on Earth Day. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Every year.

POLS 346 – North American Environmental Policy (4) Since the late 1980s, 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.

POLS 347 – Post-Colonial Theories and Societies (4) Demonstrates 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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Gen Ed: XC credit. Occasionally.

POLS 348 – Water Policy (4) Provides an overview of water resource policy and management at the global, national, and regional scale. Course will begin with a focus on global water issues and the complexity in managing this increasingly important resource. Course will highlight U.S. water policy and management issues and will emphasize the historical roots of today's water resource policies; as well as, explore regional water issues. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Fall

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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. Gen Ed: WI credit. Occasionally.

POLS 432 – Politics of Global Inequality (4) Provides a historical overview of the evolution of the international capitalist system. Several competing explanations for the unequal division of wealth and poverty in the global economy 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. Gen Ed: XC credit. Offered occasionally.

Comparative Politics Courses

POLS 326 – Political Intolerance (4) Explores the sources of both political tolerance and intolerance within the general public, including the role played by inter-group prejudice. Cases include Russia, South Africa, and the United States. Emphasis on developing the ability to conduct and speak about social science research. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Gen Ed: SI credit. Alternate years.

POLS 332 – Women and Politics (4) 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/WMST 100 or 200. Gen Ed: SI credit. Alternate years.

POLS 334 – Democracy Lab (4) Investigates what makes democratic political systems effective, responsive, and accountable to the people. Alternative cultural and theoretical perspectives on democracy are also explored. Cases include national

and regional political systems in the United States, Europe, and the former Soviet Union. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Alternate years.

POLS 335 – International Conflict (4) Explores different forms of conflict – from non-violent to violent – and their underlying dynamics. It addresses the following questions: Why can some conflicts be managed in a peaceful way, while others end in genocide? What are 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: POLS 140. Gen Ed: Occasionally taught for WI and SI credit. Occasionally.

POLS 339 – Citizen Politics (4) Explores why, when and how ordinary citizens participate in democratic politics. We will study what motivates participation—that is, why individuals get involved—when citizens choose to join the political process, and how the modes of participation in advanced, industrial democracies may be changing from traditional party politics to new forms of involvement. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Alternate years.

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Pre-Law Electives (w/in Politics Dept.)

Note: Please check w/ the Pre-Law adviser about any 395 and 495 courses.

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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.

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Pre-Law Electives (outside the Politics Dept.)

PHIL 332 Philosophy of Law

MGMT 330 Legal Environment of Business

MGMT 360 Corporate Law

GREd 503 Educational Law