

Political Science, Catalog 2025-26

MAJOR

PROFESSOR: Edward A. Lynch (chair, global politics & societies, Professor of Political Science)

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS: Ashleigh Breske, Jaeyeon Lee, Amelia Meli

The political science major emphasizes the relationship between politics in theory and politics in action. The major has four areas of focus: international relations, comparative politics, political theory, and American politics. In addition, students can, with the guidance of their departmental advisor, opt to develop a special interest, such as the American judicial system or politics of the developing world. Political science is an excellent preparatory major for those planning to pursue careers in such fields as law, journalism, international business, or public service.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A MAJOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE:

10 courses (40 credits)

- GPS 216: Research Methods (4)
- Three courses from the American focus (12)
- Three courses from the international focus (12)
- Three of the above six courses must be chosen from:
 - POLS 101: American Government (4)
 - POLS 102: International Relations (4)
 - POLS 103: Modern Comparative Politics (4)
 - POLS 104: Political Theory (4)
- Two courses from among 300-level courses in addition to above (8)
- Senior Thesis, honors or non-honors (or one additional 300-level course) (4)

Courses satisfying the American politics focus within the political science major are labeled (A) at the end of the respective course descriptions. Courses satisfying the international relations focus within the major are labeled (I). A few courses are labeled (A or I) because they contain material from both focus areas. These courses can be used to satisfy either area of focus.

PREREQUISITES

Courses at the 100 level, and some at the 200 level, are open to all students. Students who wish to take other courses at the 200 or 300 level should have taken at least one of the

following courses: POLS 101, POLS 102, POLS 103, or POLS 104, or received permission from the instructor. In addition, courses in economics, history, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and computer science are strongly recommended.

COURSES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE:

POLS 101: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (4)

The American myth of individualism, the cyber-generated sense of impatience and the attendant inability for deferred gratification, the Internet world of individuation and disaggregation, rising income gaps, increasing demographic diversity, limited upward social and economic mobility, atrophying social groups, educational inequality, and increasing activism on the part of women - how do these and other factors influence the structure, function, and interaction of the elements of the American political system, and the actions and responsibilities of the president, Congress, the courts, and the voters, some of them with shrill voices of dissent? Open to first-year students. Offered Term 2. (A) (MOD)

POLS 102: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (4)

An introductory course to familiarize students with major concepts and problems of the international political system. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 1. (I) (o, GLO, MOD)

POLS 103: MODERN COMPARATIVE POLITICS (4)

The first part of this course examines the basic concepts used in comparative politics (e.g., political culture, political actors, political decision making, political performance, etc.). The second part of the course uses these concepts to analyze the politics in various country case studies. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. Offered Term 1. (I) (f, w, GLO, MOD, DJP)

POLS 104: POLITICAL THEORY (4)

An examination of some of the political theories that have influenced Western civilization from Aristotle through Marx and into the present. This course will offer first-year students and sophomores an opportunity to practice their critical analysis and writing skills. Open to first-year students. Not recommended for juniors and seniors. (A or I) (o)

POLS 118: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN POLITICS (4)

An in-depth examination of selected issues of controversy in American politics today—e.g., capital punishment, abortion, gun control, school violence, voucher system, electoral college, campaign finance, PACs, mass media, term limits, faith-based governmental

initiatives, health policy, environmental policy, energy policy, and politics and morality. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. (A) (MOD)

POLS 160: MODEL UNITED NATIONS (2)

We study the history and functions of the U.N., as well as the current major political, social, and economic issues. The course focuses on preparation for Hollins' delegations to the American Model U.N. Conference in Chicago, which is held the weekend before Thanksgiving. Participation is recommended but not required for all class members. The course may be taken more than once since the countries and issues change from year to year. Also listed and described as INTL 160. May be repeated for credit. Open to first-year students. Offered both terms. (I) (o, GLO- 4 credits required for GLO)

POLS 208: GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND CLASS (4)

Survey of the history, theories, and recent research integrating these key concepts for modern society; explores gender, ethnic, and class political participation, movement politics and empowerment; gender, ethnicity, and class policy and law. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. (A) (DIV, MOD)

POLS 210: ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM, AND CONFLICT IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE (4)

From Turkey to Darfur to Spain to Chiapas, ethnic conflict represents the most common expression of large-scale political violence within and across states. This course explores themes and conceptual issues of identity, ethnicity, and nationalism from a comparative perspective. Examining case studies where ethnicity and nationalism variously fuel popular support of political regimes or genocide will contextualize the ways that these socio-political constructs create differences between groups. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. (I) (o, r, GLO)

POLS 214: MEDIA AND POLITICS (4)

What role do the media play in the process of governance—the so-called “fourth estate” of the print and broadcast media—and now the “fifth estate” that includes the internet world and blogosphere? How do they influence and are influenced by the government? How do they shape the beliefs and policies of elected and appointed government officials, citizen political socialization, and ultimately elections, campaigns, and all that concerns the relationship between the government and its citizenry? Exploration of these and other issues through videos, movies, lectures, and discussions. Open to first-year students. (A) (f, w, x, o, MOD)

POLS 217: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST (4)

The history and politics of the Middle East. Special emphasis given to the cultural background of various countries of the region as well as nationalism, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the politics of oil. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. (I) (o, GLO, MOD)

POLS 221: GLOBALIZATION AND LOCAL RESPONSES (4)

Also listed and described as ES/INTL 220. Open to first-year students. Prerequisite: q. (Q, GLO)

POLS 225: CONQUEST (4)

Students will analyze examples of forcible imposition of political power, from the ancient Romans to modern dictators. Making other people accept political authority is difficult, especially when power is seized. We will not focus on the military exploits of dictators or conquerors, but rather what happens when the fighting is over. How did Caesar conquer Gaul? How did Europeans conquer so much of the world in the 19th century? Can one person really rule a modern nation-state? Through lectures, class discussions, and individual research, we will address these and related questions. Prerequisite: one 100-level POLS course or permission. (I) (GLO, MOD)

POLS 226: INTERNATIONAL LAW (4)

This course introduces the student to the basic concepts, both traditional and conjectural, of international law and its study. We will do this both by reading and discussing texts on politics and international legal relations and by discussing current international political issues. Classes are a mix of lecture, discussion, and respectful debate. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. Offered Term 1. (I) (o, GLO, MOD, DJP)

POLS 238: GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT (4)

In this course, students will learn how grassroots movements impact political outcomes and how to engage the public in order to make political change. Students will understand and execute a grassroots stakeholder analysis that identifies family, friends, foes, and strangers in an advocacy campaign. We will also cover the three types of grassroots advocacy: community advocacy, legislative advocacy, and grassroots in electoral campaigns.

Open to first year students. Offered Term 1. (A) (DJP)

POLS 247: PARTIES, ELECTIONS, AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR (4)

Political activities and behavior of individuals and groups in regard to electoral processes. Emphasis on the American experience but includes comparisons with other systems. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 1. (A) (DJP)

POLS 254: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (4)

Also listed and described as PHIL 254.

POLS 255: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (4)

Structure and functions of state governments in the federal system. Cooperation and conflict between levels of government. Problems of constitutional law, of decision making and administration, of political power and resources. Viability of state government today and proposals for reform. Open to first-year students with permission. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. (A)

POLS 258: CONGRESS (4)

POLS 258, the United States Congress, offers a comprehensive exploration of the United States Congress, with a focus on understanding the complexities of congressional politics beyond surface-level media narratives. Students examine how laws are made, the impact of legislative rules, public perception of Congress, and possible reforms. Students will also explore dynamics between Congress and other political institutions, including the executive branch, interest groups, and political parties to gain a deeper appreciation of the inner workings of Congress and the scholarly approaches used to study it. Open to first-year students. Offered Term 2. (A) (DJP)

POLS 261: POLITICAL ECOLOGY (4)

In this course, students will develop an understanding of political ecology, a framework that takes perspectives from anthropology, economics, and political science to understand how historical and systemic structures impact the way that people use, protect, and relate to their environments. Focusing on American environmental politics and policy, this class will introduce students to key policies, including NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and the Wilderness Act. Although this class includes components of policy, it focuses on the history of the American landscape, dispossession, and the way current policy is premised on historical values. Also listed and described as ES 261. Open to first year students.

Prerequisite: ES 104 or 117. Offered Term 1. (MOD)

POLS 262: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA (4)

This course is designed to introduce the student to the most important issues in sub-Saharan African politics, both current and perennial. It will be divided into four sections. In the first, students will examine the global context of African politics to identify the most significant obstacles to African prosperity. The second section will cover representative African Independence movements. The third section will examine the continent's experience with democratic governance, while the fourth section will examine diverging economic paths in Africa. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. (I) (GLO, MOD)

POLS 271: POLITICS OF THE WORLD'S OCEANS (4)

This course is designed to introduce the student to the most important contentious issues, including environmental issues, concerning the world's oceans. Since human beings learned to travel great distances across the seas, they have found themselves in conflict over bases, colonies, and resources, and also over the handling of environmental issues related to the exploitation of the resources. We will begin by looking at the early European presence in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, and how international law and the international political system sought to handle those conflicts. We will move on to current issues concerning the oceans, from fishing to cruising. Open to first years. Also listed and described as ES 271. (I) (MOD, GLO)

POLS 290: INDEPENDENT STUDY (2 OR 4)

Independent study conducted below the advanced level. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. Offered any term.

POLS 302: COMPARATIVE URBANISM (4)

Also listed and described as INTL 302. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. Offered Term 2. (I) (GLO, MOD)

POLS 303: CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN POLITICS (4)

This seminar examines contemporary issues in European politics. Special attention is given to political issues in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. The issues vary depending upon events in Western Europe, but such topics as European integration and ethnic nationalism are representative. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. (I) (GLO, MOD)

POLS 304: GEOPOLITICS (4)

Also listed and described as INTL 303. Open to first-year students with permission. Offered Term 1. (I) (GLO, MOD)

POLS 310: SEMINAR IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (4)

A study of the American national government, including the philosophical foundation; the making of the U.S. Constitution; public opinion, voting, and elections; parties and interest groups; the presidency; Congress; and the Supreme Court. Open to first-year students with permission. Prerequisites: any 100-level POLS course or permission. (A) (w, x, o, Q, MOD)

POLS 311: SEMINAR IN CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN POLITICS (4)

An in-depth analysis of the political, legal, economic, social, and ethical aspects of selected issues of controversy in American politics today [e.g., senate filibuster (unanimous consent), legislative-judicial conflict, religion and politics, electoral college, abortion, gun control, capital punishment]. Prerequisite: POLS 101 or permission. (A) (w, x, o, MOD)

POLS 315: ANGER, TERRORISM, AND REVOLUTION (4)

Investigation of some of the causes of revolutions and political violence. Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. Offered Term 1. (I) (DJP)

POLS 340: ELECTIONS AND VOTING (4)

Study of the history of elections; the place of elections in the theory of democracy; various influences on the outcome of elections such as campaigns, campaign finance, party politics, candidates and their policies and images; the nature of the times; media; the voter profile as a function of political, psychological, social, and economic factors; and institutional factors such as primaries, the Electoral College, and laws governing the election process. Prerequisite: POLS 101. Open to first-year students with permission. (A)

POLS 350: SPECIAL TOPIC: CLASH OF THE TITANS (4)

This course is designed to introduce the student to the most important issues in 21st century superpower relations. As the century opened, the United States found itself, somewhat reluctantly, the world's sole superpower. In 2025, Russia and China are acting out their own aspirations for superpower status.

POLS 363: CONSTITUTIONAL LAW (4)

In this course we will read and analyze constitutionally based arguments and court decisions resolving cases about the powers and limits of government in the United States. We will pay attention to fundamental concepts (i.e., executive power, judicial review, equal protection of the law, and federalism) as well as current applications and debates related to these fundamental concepts (e.g., Internet privacy, same-sex marriage, immigration, warrantless wiretapping, campaign finance, and environmental regulation). Prerequisite: any 100-level POLS course or permission. Offered Term 2. (A)

POLS 390: INDEPENDENT STUDY (2 OR 4)

Independent study conducted at the advanced level. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. Offered any term.

POLS 399: INTERNSHIP (4)

Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. May be proposed in any term.

POLS 450: DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLAR PROGRAM (4)

Designated for senior honors majors only, the invited departmental scholar may undertake one of the following: jointly designing a course and/or teaching it with a faculty supervisor of her choice; assisting the faculty supervisor with a research project that bears relevance to her area of interest; or proposing an extension of her honors thesis by engaging in specialized readings. This program is by invitation only.

POLS 490: SENIOR HONORS THESIS (4, 4)

Offered to qualified political science majors. Research begins during first term, continues through Short Term, and is completed during second term. GPA requirements: 3.33 in political science and 3.0 overall. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration.