

## Fall 2020 Course Descriptions

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**POLS 1120      American National Government**

**Michael Rocca**

This course is designed to introduce students to the institutions of American national government and the processes of American political life. We will be concerned with analyzing how well this political system operates in light of its democratic goals and what it actually accomplishes in terms of policy results. To fulfill these objectives, we will examine the constitutional basis of American government and the institutional structure of the Presidency, Congress, and Supreme Court which was built on that political foundation. Complementing this institutional focus will be an exploration of how U.S. citizens translate their political aspirations into governmental action. For example, what is the role of interest groups and political parties in representing the views of the citizenry? And how do elections and shifts in public opinion affect governmental decision-making?

**POLS 1120      American National Government**

**Michael Hess**

This course is an introduction and survey of the institutions and processes of American politics. We will examine the structures, goals, actions and impacts of American governments, as well as look at the basic questions that drive our political processes today. Through readings, online lectures and presentations, exams and individual and group participation, we will explore answers together. Political Science majors will find this course to be a building block to more advanced courses. Non-majors will gain a greater understanding of our various levels of government and the processes behind them.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to understand the basic principles that drive politics in America. The course starts with the definition of politics, moves through the institutions of government, and finally focuses on those who are affected by and participate in the political process.

**POLS 2110      Comparative Politics**

**Samantha R. Cooney**

This course offers an introduction to the academic field of comparative (global) politics. It covers the historical, core concerns of the field including the development of the modern state democratization, authoritarian regimes, nationalism and multiculturalism, political parties and electoral systems, racial formation and ethnic conflict, the relationship between the state, and the market, the politics of gender, and the political economy of development. Readings and examples are drawn from all regions of the world.

**POLS 2120      International Relations**

**Yury Bosin**

This course will introduce students to the field of International Relations. The course will cover key definitions, central topics and debates, principles, concepts, theories, as well as practical policy issues essential for understanding global politics in the modern age. The students will become familiar with historical, geographical and demographic background of international processes and events. The course will help students develop critical thinking and analytical skills for further study of international politics.

**POLS 2120      International Relation****Fatemehalsadat Shafiei**

This course provides a general overview of international relations and examines key concepts, theories, historical events and issues central to the field. This course explores features of international relations and contemporary issues and problems, including international security, war, peace and terrorism, international organizations, international political economy, international law and human rights, and international environmental politics.

**POLS 2130      Political Ideas: Intro to Political Theory****Matthew Simpson**

This course investigates key questions concerning the nature and justification of political systems. What are the purposes of political institutions? What constitutional arrangements can best achieve those ends? What are the advantages and disadvantages of democracy as a form of government? What are the duties of citizenship? We will take up these questions by reading canonical and contemporary works in political theory with a special focus on theories concerning the foundations, strengths, and limitations of constitutional democracy.

**POLS 2140      Introduction to Political Analysis****Wendy Hansen**

This course is an introduction to the scientific methods used by researchers to study a wide variety of social and political processes. The goal of this course is to help you develop basic skills for conducting research and to make you a more informed and savvy consumer of research findings reported in political science journals, but also newspapers, magazines, media, and other sources. We will begin with an overview of the basic principles of scientific inquiry and how to apply these principles to the study of political science questions. ***The balance of the course will focus on probability, statistics and data analysis techniques important to doing research.*** Students will learn how to design a research project, develop your own hypotheses, generate or collect data, test your hypotheses through data analysis, and explain your findings. You will learn basic statistical skills using STATA, a statistical software package widely used in political science and other disciplines. No prior math, computer or statistical skills are required, but a basic college or solid high school level math background will be useful.

**POLS 2140      Introduction to Political Analysis****Alexis Adams**

Statistics and data are increasingly important to society, from economic forecasts that shape policy to decisions of whether or not a new drug should be approved by the FDA. This course aims to provide students with the tools to critically evaluate empirical research presented both in academic political science and in the news media. Additionally, students will learn basic statistical analysis techniques. No knowledge of statistics, computers or research methods assumed.

**POLS 2150      Public Policy and Administration****Jerome Stermer**

The objective of this introductory course in public policy and public administration is to provide students with a basic understanding of the ways that government deals with problems affecting society. We will explore the political tools used to address public policy problems, as well as the political environment in which public policies are formed. Additionally, several specific public policy problems will be discussed during the semester. For each topic, we will try to understand the goals that the government and society seem to be seeking, alternative means for achieving those goals, the costs and benefits of the various

alternatives, and the impact of politics on those goals. We will primarily examine policymaking at the national level, but we will also look at some examples at the state and local level.

**POLS 291/491 Internship**

**Michael Rocca**

Internships place students with professionals working in political parties, government agencies, or other public organizations. Interns work closely with both the field supervisor in the public organization and with the faculty instructor. Internships allow students to observe how professionals and professional organizations operate on a daily basis and afford to students multiple opportunities to apply academic skills and knowledge while contributing to an organization's operation. Through an internship, students have the chance to learn through experiences, insofar as the workplace, office, or agency becomes a text for analysis and reflection. POLS 496: For DC interns only.

**POLS 300 T: Constitution and How it Got That Way**

**Peter Kierst**

The ideas underlying the Constitution of the United States are much discussed but little understood. Since each generation must take on itself the task of ratifying the Constitution, an accurate understanding of its premises is essential. As free people, you may accept or reject these ideas as you see fit. But to do either you must first understand them. That is the premise of the course.

**POLS 300 T: European Nationalism**

**Lucio Lanucara**

The course will examine current nationalisms and consider them in the light of the more generalized recent successes of nationalistic and populist movements in the Western World, including the United States. Analysis and in-class discussion will be aimed at these movements and at understanding what they can lead to in terms of domestic politics, EU integration, transatlantic cooperation, and international relations with Russia and other geopolitical competitors.

**POLS 300 T: Congressional Processes**

**Ellen Grigsby**

A course designed to provide analytical reading and writing assignments that address different aspects of your Fred Harris Washington, DC internship. The assignments are designed to help you analyze your personal experiences in relation to broader scholarly topics in political science and political theory.

**POLS 300 Transitional Justice**

**Kathy Powers**

Post-conflict societies face many challenges in the aftermath of conflict. For example, in post-apartheid South Africa, Bishop Desmond Tutu once said the "Allies could go home but we in South Africa must learn to live with one another again." In the aftermath of political violence and mass violation of human rights, how do people, communities and societies come to terms with these atrocities and reconstruct society? How people live together again after suffering and inflicting lethal violence is an important question. In the context of state-sponsored violence, how do successor regimes make a break with the past, establish a new set of social norms, and work toward the administration of justice, redress and reconciliation are important questions we will consider. Course participants will consider what constitutes post jus bellum (justice after war) and assess the determinants and implications of transitional justice globally.



# DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

## **POLS303      Law in the Political Community**

**Peter Kierst**

This course examines a branch of government that has a great effect on your daily life but whose policy-making process is often misunderstood. The aim of the course is to introduce you to how the system is organized and why, how it is supposed to work, some basic principles of law and policy on which it operates, and some of the issues facing it. In sum, this course is intended to help you to better understand your legal system and its role in the larger political system.

## **POLS 305      Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior**

**Lonna Atkeson**

This course focuses on understanding political behavior through survey research and quantitative research. We focus on learning about human decision-making through the lens of political psychology. Our goal is to understand where political attitudes come from and acquire intellectual humility in the process. The course focuses on skill development and learning how to manipulate public opinion data to answer questions about political behavior. Students must have a laptop to complete the public opinion assignments.

## **POLS 315      Constitutional Law: Powers**

**Peter Kierst**

This course examines the ways in which the Constitution allocates power between the branches of the general government, and between that government and those of the states. This allocation, both as originally framed and as it has evolved over the past 230 years, sheds significant light on the nature of American democracy, and the role of the Supreme Court in shaping that democracy. So this course is at once about political theory and practical politics. In fact, like the Constitution, it denies that those are different things. Particular emphasis will be laid on why the Framers allocated power as they did, how the allocation has shifted over time.

## **POLS 320      T: Political Violence**

**David Nunnally**

This course will delve into the academic study of political violence and contentious politics -- political activities and tactics that fall outside what the state deems institutionally acceptable. Weeks will cover a wide array of topics. We will begin by covering the concepts of violence and nonviolence, and theories of social psychology and collective action. The rest of the semester will focus on specific violent and nonviolent actions by state and non-state actors, including various aspects of civil conflicts, genocides, anti-regime protests, riots, and much more. We will also devote time to understanding the effects of these actions on politics and society, and different violence prevention strategies in the domestic and international arenas. Case examples come from all over the world.



**POLS 320 T: Politics of Water in Latin America**

**Jami Nelson-Nunez**

This course examines the politics of water in Latin America. The challenges of managing water pollution, governing increasingly scarce water resources and addressing the increased risk of natural disasters related to water are critical concerns at local and global scales. This course draws on different aspects of water governance and policy to examine core concepts in political science including state-building and government capacity; privatization and market reforms; government accountability and responsiveness; clientelism and distributive politics; and state-society relationships and collective action. It will focus on water-related issues within Latin America, and through the lens of water, students will learn about major shifts in the role of the state over time, influence from international actors, and the effects of democratic deficits on well-being and development. The course will center around water services, e.g. drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, but we will also examine water resources more generally, particularly around development paradigms and the implications of climate change. The course will culminate in student-led final projects that will deliver new material about water-related problems to the class.

**POLS 324 The Politics of Poverty and Inequality**

**Jami Nelson-Nunez**

The issue of inequality is at the heart of politics. Historically, some scholars have viewed inequality and poverty as unavoidable outcomes or stages that countries experience as they industrialize. However, other scholars, such as Thomas Piketty, have called into question the direction of global and national economies, arguing that without any policy intervention inequality will continue to deepen with devastating consequences. What constitutes the “fair” distribution of resources is a debate many are uncomfortable engaging. Perceptions of poverty and inequality are often inaccurate and their causes poorly understood.

This course aims to dig into the issues of inequality and poverty at macro and micro levels in both international and U.S. contexts. We will delve into the facts of what we know and do not know about poverty and affluence and consider the causes and consequences of wealth disparities. We will further explore related policies that aim to address income gaps and ensure that people have the ability to meet their basic needs. Lastly, the course will engage the politics behind the creation and execution of policies, examining institutional arrangements that reinforce or ameliorate poverty and inequality.

The class will culminate with a policy analysis students will conduct on an issue of their choice. Students will be encouraged to engage professionals working on these issues and to critically assess the possible impact and limitations of different policy approaches. For example, a student interested in homelessness in Albuquerque could look at local policies or an organization addressing the issue and assess the shortcomings and possibilities for particular approaches. The class is highly participatory and will invite robust discussion and debate

**POLS 340 T: International Organization**

**Kathy Powers**

This course details the essential structures, actors, and processes in international organizations. The first segment of the course provides a general overview of international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. The second segment of the course focuses on the roles of international organizations in several key issue areas: international security, international political economy, and the

global environment. Particular attention will be given to the role of international organizations in human rights, war crimes, and transitional justice.

**POLS 340 T: Insurgencies and Rebellions**

**Yury Bosin**

Why do insurgent movements emerge and end? How do they fight? How do governments and foreign armies respond? This course will address these questions from different perspectives and in different historical and geographic contexts. The course will cover theories and concepts of security and insurgency, strategies and tactics of insurgency and counterinsurgency, and case studies of the most formidable insurgencies of our era. The course will combine lectures, discussions and activities to help students develop critical thinking and analytical skills for further study of insurgency movements and other related topics of international politics.

**POLS 340 T: Mediterranean Politics**

**Lucio Lanucara**

The course will cover the intricacies of politics in the Mediterranean region and examine both the historical contexts that have led to the modern situation and the current issues that are driving the geopolitical climate in the region. Discussion and writing projects will focus primarily on these themes, how they relate to one another, and what implications they have for the future of the region.

**POLS 372 Urban Politics**

**Timothy Krebs**

This course is about urban politics in the United States, which means it focuses on the politics of cities, among other local governments. Cities are remarkable places where people, commerce, entertainment, culture, danger, and design merge to generate massive amounts of economic activity, cultural variety, threats, and new ways of living and responding to the challenges of modern society. The decisions that shape cities are not guided solely by things beyond the control of local elected and appointed officials. Indeed, they are influenced by the same kinds of political tugs of war that characterize higher levels of government.

**POLS 496 For Washington, DC Fred Harris Congressional Interns only**

**Michael Rocca**

**POLS 496/521 Sem: Central American Politics**

**William Stanley**

The countries of Central America share history, location, and linkages to global markets, yet they show marked contrasts in political, social, and economic institutions and conditions. The region has been both heavily affected by US policy, especially political and military intervention, but also intermittently neglected with respect to economic development and diplomatic engagement. The region has been subject to other powerful external influences as well. The region experienced three prolonged civil wars that affected the whole region, and despite negotiated settlements and significant political reforms, faces ongoing challenges of severe inequalities, criminal violence, impunity, and contested democratic institutions. This seminar will focus on critiquing and conducting research on Central American politics. We will explore a wide range of literature drawing on disciplines including anthropology, history, sociology, and political science. Participants will write short literature review papers, a research proposal, and an article length paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

**POLS 581      Statistics for Social Research****Christopher Butler**

The scientific study of politics relies heavily---though not exclusively---on the statistical analysis of data to ascertain whether a theoretical argument is supported by real-world evidence. Is there really a difference in income levels between two groups? Does level of education really affect voting behavior? Important questions could be endlessly debated by "just looking at" the data. Statistics provide a more decisive arbiter of these questions. This course is an intensive introduction to statistics and the scientific study of politics. Students will learn about the scientific method, data management, descriptive statistics, data presentation, statistical inference, and a variety of methods of testing theoretical arguments against data.

**POLS 582      Survey of Political Science as a Discipline and a Profession      Christopher Butler**

This is a required course for all graduate students in political science. First year students are expected to enroll in this 1 credit hour course. The Department offers this course to provide an orientation to graduate school and a structured (but informal) context for learning about the discipline and the profession. This course offers graduate students an opportunity to bring their questions about graduate school and graduate study in political science to the attention of the Graduate Advisor, while at the same time-sharing their concerns and experiences with their fellow graduate students.