

# Department of Political Science

## Graduate Course Descriptions – Fall 2019

---

**RPOS 501  
9559**

**Field Seminar in Politics  
T 5:45PM- 9:25PM**

**P. Breiner  
HS 015**

This seminar provides an overview of some of the fundamental questions and fundamental texts in political theory, both past and present. It also addresses some of the major debates about how political theory should be studied, including problems of methodology in interpreting political theory. This semester the seminar will rotate around a series of questions central to the political theory of citizenship and political equality: What counts as citizenship? To what degree does citizenship require political equality? Who should be included as a citizen? Can inequality of citizenship or differential citizenship ever be justified? If political equality requires equality of civil and political rights, equality of membership and respect, and equality of political influence and power, do liberal democratic states live up to their claims to be “democratic”? In addressing these questions we will first be reading a number of classical canonical works from the history of political theory, among them Plato, Rousseau, and de Tocqueville and Mill. We will then read a number of contemporary works in political theory that address the problems of citizenship and inclusion raised by these classical arguments. Some of these works will address contemporary problems such as social rights, immigration, and political participation. Thus the course should be relevant not just for political theorists, but also for any student in political science who is interested in exploring the problems of citizenship and inclusion.

**RPOS 509/509R  
9460/9461**

**Citizen Participation and Public Policy  
M 5:45PM-9:25PM**

**V. Eubanks  
DR 313B**

What counts as citizen participation: Voting? Social movements? Participatory budgeting? Hashtag activism? Widespread engagement — both in and outside formal politics — plays a crucial role in securing support for public policies and institutions in the United States. This course examines historical and contemporary controversies about who counts as a political subject, what actions are deemed ‘participation,’ and the implications for democracy. Using an intersectional framework, we’ll explore how race, class, gender, sexuality, physical ability, and migration status shape the experience of political engagement. The course seeks to provide students with both a theoretical framework for understanding citizen participation and real-world examples of political involvement.

**RPOS 516  
8685**

**Introduction to Political Inquiry  
M 1:15PM-4:55PM**

**C. Chen  
HS 015**

This course is designed to provide students with a solid intellectual foundation for conducting political inquiry across the subfields in the discipline of political science. The first part of the course examines the classic ontological and epistemological debates that underpin and shape contemporary social science methodology. It covers some of the major works in philosophy of social science that are most relevant to the discipline of political science. The second part of the course starts with concept formation and measurement, and then exposes students to a wide range of approaches and methods most frequently employed by contemporary political scientists, including experiments and quasi-experiments; large-n statistical analysis; historical case studies; field research and ethnography; and interview and survey research. The third part of the course introduces students to some of the most salient ongoing debates on political science methodology, such as the call for unified standards for social science research, and the recent ascendance of multi-method approaches. This course is required in the Political Science doctoral program curriculum. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to identify the foundational assumptions of various research traditions and methods; evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a wide range of methods in different research settings; and construct original research designs employing appropriate research methods.

**RPOS 523  
7494**

**Urban Community Development  
M 7:15PM-10:05PM**

**R. Murphy  
AS 123**

This research seminar examines policies and programs designed to reduce social and economic distress in U.S. communities. Last semester, we focused on actual local and neighborhood-based efforts to address problems of inadequate housing, unemployment, lack of community services and facilities, crime, etc. We will consider the roles of the government starting at the grassroots level of neighborhood associations, community leaders, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations in community revitalization. We have the possibility to pick up where the team left off last semester and working on actual urban community development issues. We will have speakers from the Urban League, Albany Law, and Neighborhood Association leaders, as well as, local politicians.

Note: This course is designed for masters' students and will not count towards the credit requirements of the Ph.D.

**RPOS 526  
9523**

**American Constitutional Law: Federalism and Separation of Powers J. Novkov  
TTH 01:15\_PM-02:35\_PM BBB 014**

This graduate course has two functions. First, it addresses how the Constitution works as a structure for government. This historically organized course will discuss constitutional structure, constitutional interpretation, and constitutional development, analyzing the major periods in American constitutional development from the founding through the present. The second aspect of the course for graduate students is the pedagogy seminar. Students will learn how to teach constitutional law, though discussions and assignments will cover political science pedagogy more broadly. Students will review textbooks, prepare syllabi, develop model assignments, and learn how to construct examinations. Ideal for public law students but appropriate for any graduate student interested in pedagogy.

**RPOS 534/534R  
9462/9463**

**American Political Parties  
W 5:45PM-9:25PM**

**J. Cruz  
DR 246**

This seminar will examine the relationship between the development/decay of party systems and popular government. Our approach will be historical and theoretical, looking at the emergence and development of party systems, the explicit and implicit rationales behind partisan alignments, the emergence, development, and role of third parties, the emergence and implications of the rise of southern Republicans, the forces underlying party decomposition, the role of money, the role of race, partisan polarization, and alternative representational systems.

**RPOS 549/549R  
9464/9465**

**The Welfare State  
T 1:15PM-4:55PM**

**Z. Barta  
DR 313B**

From the 1960s, governments in developed countries progressively widened the scope of their involvement in the life of citizens. The state assumed responsibility for the welfare of people not only through public pensions, health care, education, unemployment benefits and the like, but also through interventions in the economy to smooth out business cycles, stimulate growth and mitigate unemployment. By the 1980s, the tide turned and many countries attempted to retreat from the path of the ever-growing welfare state. The order of the day became retrenchment, privatization and market principles. This course studies the politics of both processes, with special attention to the cross-national differences within the general patterns. It seeks to explain the driving forces behind the expansion of the welfare state from the 1960s and the differential success of countries in reversing that trend since the 1980s.

**RPAD/RPOS 554/RPOS 554R/RINT543 Political Violence, Insurgency and Terrorism  
8679/8686/8687/7884 TH 1:15PM – 4:55PM**

**N. Siddiqui  
DR 313B**

This course addresses the causes and consequences of political violence, insurgency, and terrorism. Topics include: causes of civil war, electoral violence, social and psychological effects of violence, ethnic conflict, determinants of participation in violence. Case studies will be drawn from Asia, Africa, and South America.

**RPOS 561/561R  
9469/9470**

**Nationalism and Nation-Building  
W 11:30AM-3:10PM**

**C. Chen  
HS 008**

This course is designed to cover different conceptualizations of “nation” and “nationalism”; interpretations of historical and social developments associated with the building and emergence of nations and nationalist movements, and strategies for locating the study of nationalism in a more general theoretical framework. The course begins with discussions over the essential characteristics of nation and nationalism and the relevance of the problem of identity. It then provides a survey of major scholarly models and theories of nationalism, such as instrumentalist, constructivist, and primordialist views of nationalism. The third part of the course examines the theoretical and historical evolution of nationalism, nationalist movements, and nation-building. Specifically, it explores nationalism’s encounters with major political traditions such as liberalism, communism, and anti-colonialism, and the consequences of these encounters. The fourth part of the course addresses some of the most salient contemporary issues related to the national question, including the effects of globalization and the resurgence of nationalism in the West and elsewhere, including the United States. The course concludes by situating the study of nationalism and nation-building in broader comparative inquiries of social change. The objectives of this course are to familiarize the student with both classical and recent scholarly debates regarding nationalism and nation-building, and to help the student develop an appreciation for historically-grounded comparative theory-building.

**RPOS 568/RPOS 479Z/RPAD 568/RINT 512  
9595/9598/9597/9595**

**Human Rights  
W 5:45-9:24**

**D. Guinn  
HS 304**

This course examines the legal, political, and social dimensions of the modern human rights movement, its relationship to International Criminal Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Law as a whole and its implications for international affairs. It provides both an introduction to basic human rights philosophy, principles, instruments, and institutions, and an overview of several current issues and debates in the field. The course also seeks to analyze the ways in which allegations of human rights violations are dealt with and to expose some of the limitations in the architecture of the international system. Case studies will be used to illustrate contemporary debates regarding hierarchy among rights, conflicts between individual rights and societal priorities, human rights in single-party states, rights and transitions to democracy, amnesty for human rights violations, and the linkage between human rights and other national interests.

**RPOS 582/582R  
9467/9468**

**Global Security  
W 5:45PM-9:25PM**

**B. Early  
HS 008**

This is a course about the nature, causes, effects, and prevention of war and political violence in the modern world. Students taking the course will be asked to critically analyze contemporary global security problems. Why do wars occur despite their cost? How dangerous is the proliferation of nuclear weapons? What causes terrorism? When do civil wars emerge and how do they end? Political violence causes enormous suffering. The course aims to provide theoretical tools and analytical approaches to help make sense of why that suffering occurs, and the manner in which it can be alleviated.

**RPOS 583/RPAD 583R  
8702/9468**

**Global Governance  
T 5:45PM-9:25PM**

**B. Greenhill  
HS 202**

This course examines the organization of world politics in the context of globalization and provides an overview of international organizations, such as the United Nations, and regional organizations, such as the European Union. The course reviews the historical evolution of the international system and the basic concepts of international relations. It then examines international cooperation beyond the confines of formal organizational structures with particular emphasis on international regimes, institutions and norms that govern state practices in particular issue areas - from trade and weapons proliferation to the environment and refugees. The course also examines transnational relations of non-state actors such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations as well as transgovernmental relations of subnational governments and government agencies that shape policymaking at a global level.

**ACAS 601 / RPOS 611 / RPAD 590 Seminar in College Teaching  
6233 W 12:35PM-2:35PM**

**B. Franchini  
DR 246**

Most faculty have never been taught to teach, and it is easy to believe that it takes natural talent to be good at it. But great teachers are great because they approach teaching as systematically as they approach their research: they study empirical evidence, apply it thoughtfully to their own teaching, and reflect on how it affects their students. You will take that approach in this class as you design a course using the research we have about human learning and motivation. That research shows that undergraduate students are capable of learning, will work hard, and bring valuable knowledge and experience to courses that are well designed. If you are planning a career in academe, teaching will take up large amounts of your time, even at research institutions. Our course will help you make the most of that time, so that teaching can be energizing and rewarding for you and your students!

**Course Objectives:** By the end of this course, students will be able to

- describe and differentiate among best teaching practices according to specific learning goals,
- design a course to facilitate student learning, and
- produce a teaching statement that demonstrates a reflective attitude toward the process of teaching.

**ACAS 603/ RPOS 613 / RPAD 592 Becoming a Reflective Teacher  
5338/6235/6234 M 12:35PM-2:35PM**

**B. Franchini  
HS 17**

Even if you aren't yet on the market, you should be already thinking about how you will communicate your teaching to busy search committee members. For both the job market, and eventually for tenure, you will need to concisely articulate your values and strengths as a teacher and be ready to provide evidence to show that these guide your classroom practice. In this course, you will work with your colleagues to thoughtfully reflect on your beliefs and practices as a teacher, and work together to refine the documents that will eventually become your teaching portfolio (and which will serve as an initial draft of what may become your tenure portfolio!).

The course is structured to prepare for the kind of collaborative work that occurs regularly in departments and committees in higher education. Much of class time will be spent giving feedback to your peers and using the feedback they give you. You will benefit not only by receiving feedback, but in seeing how others teach. By helping them clarify their ideas, you will further refine your own thinking and become better at communicating your strengths as a teacher.

**Course Objectives:** Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

- Articulate their beliefs about teaching in a statement of teaching.
- Select the artifacts (e.g., evaluation data, assignments, activities, syllabi, etc.) that provide evidence that their beliefs inform their teaching practice.
- Create a written narrative for each section of a teaching portfolio that connects these artifacts and renders a picture of an effective teacher.
- Provide useful feedback to their peers

**RPOS 618 Qualitative Methods  
6238 TH 5:45PM-9:25PM**

**P. Strach  
HS 208**

This seminar covers the research process from its design to final analysis, focusing on qualitative and mixed-methods research. That is, we look at how to collect, analyze, and interpret data outside of or in addition to statistical techniques. Throughout the course, we will look at questions of methodology to understand the important differences within qualitative research and between qualitative and quantitative frameworks. Students should come away from the course with an understanding of: (1) what qualitative research is and how it fits in the broader discipline of political science; (2) the logic of qualitative and mixed-methods research design; (3) the nuts and bolts of conducting qualitative research; and (4) how to analyze the results. This seminar is designed to be an important step in the logic and practice of qualitative and mixed-methods research.

**RPOS 695  
6238**

**Research & Writing Seminar  
M 1:15PM-3:05PM**

**T. Weaver  
HS 006**

This is the first part of a required year-long course for all third-year doctoral students in political science. Before taking this course, students should have already taken POS 516 and either POS 517 or POS 618, as the knowledge they gained from these courses will play an important role in this class. This year-long course is designed to help advanced graduate students formulate and execute a major research project that could potentially be developed into a future dissertation or a journal article. Students are encouraged to use this opportunity to produce a working draft of a dissertation proposal by the end of the year. During the fall semester, the course will begin with a review of fundamental issues of conducting social scientific research, and then proceed to discuss what constitutes a good dissertation; what the essential elements of a dissertation prospectus are; how to situate a research project within the existing literature and debates; how to craft specific, relevant, and doable research questions; and how to design a viable research plan to adequately answer these questions. Students will also participate in, and benefit from, peer review processes as they develop the skills of providing informed feedback to, and accepting constructive criticisms from, their colleagues. By the end of the fall semester, students should be able to produce a solid draft that they can build on, expand, and improve upon in the spring semester.

**RPOS 697**

**Selected Problems in POS Research**

**All Faculty**

Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

**RPOS 698**

**Master's Capstone**

**All Faculty**

Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

**RPOS 797  
5734**

**Graduate Service Learning**

**TBD**

Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

**RPOS 798**

**Readings in Political Science**

**All Faculty**

Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

**RPOS 897**

**Independent Research POS**

**All Faculty**

Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

Load Credit Only

**RPOS 899**

**Doctoral Dissertation**

**All Faculty**

Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

Load Credit Only, ABD Status Only