

GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: SPRING 2013

Department of Political Science

University at Albany, SUNY

RPOS500 and R Political Philosophy
(9509, 9510) T/Th 2:45-4:05

P. Breiner
LC 3B (uptown)

Equality and Politics—Right and Left: This course will focus on how we should understand equality and the role of politics in realizing it or preventing its achievement. But this course is not merely about equality as a concept. It will assume that it is the differing attitudes toward equality across many dimensions that continue to define the political conflicts between right and left and all positions in between. Thus we will deal with equality in two ways in this course: first as a principle that defines distributive justice and second as a principle of democratic citizenship—political equality. We will first examine various arguments for and against equality of treatment and equality in the distribution of significant political, social, and economic goods. We will then examine the same problem from the vantage point of political equality by asking the following questions: What do we mean by political equality—political rights, voting, active influence on agenda setting and decision-making? What kinds of distribution follow from the notion that we are all equal citizens? As we examine both ways of discussing equality, we will constantly be addressing the conflict between proponents of equal distribution of fundamental goods and proponents of the market.

RPOS501 Field Seminar in Political Theory
(8547) T 2:45-5:35

T. Shanks
HS 12

This seminar provides an overview of some of the fundamental issues 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. I have structured the course so that it will alternate between three dimensions of political theory: in-depth textual examination of certain key political thinkers; textual commentary on the works we will read; and contemporary work that uses these thinkers as a point of departure but presses the problems they raise in new directions. At the end of the course, we will discuss a number of ways of practicing political theory including historical approaches, analytic conceptual analysis, treating political theory as ideology, and reading political theory as discourse. This course is intended not just for Political Theorists, but for any graduate students interested in discussing the kinds of questions informing research in political science.

RPOS513 Field Seminar in Public Policy
(9362) T 5:45-8:35

P. Strach
HS 12

This course introduces students to public policy and the policy process in the United States. In it, we focus on important theories of how policymaking works in the United States from pressures on legislators to make policy, adapt policy, implement it, and the effect it has on citizens' individual lives. We take a broad overview of the classics as well as look at new directions in contemporary policy research. This course is recommended for students who are interested in American politics broadly or policy students looking for theoretical background.

RPOS515 and R American Political Theory B. Miroff
(9360, 9361) M 5:45-8:35 HS 12

This seminar in American political theory has three major objectives. First, we will examine the historical development of American political theory from the Revolution to the present. Second, we will concentrate on some of the central themes in this history: the founding debate over the size, character, and institutional structure of the republic, individualism, equality, race, gender, the problems and prospects for democracy in industrial and post-industrial America, and more. Third, we will explore contemporary academic debates over the nature of American political theory, especially the debate between the liberal and republican schools.

RPOS517 Empirical Data Analysis S. Friedman
(5632) M 2:45 – 5:35 DR 15

Assuming little to no student familiarity—and even some trepidation—this course provides an overview of basic statistical methods for the social sciences. We begin at the beginning, examining simple but nonetheless critical univariate statistics. With a primary focus on OLS regression, we then spend the majority of the class studying techniques designed to test hypotheses involving an increasing number of independent variables. We also spend considerable time highlighting the importance of the assumptions on which these techniques are based, consider methods of statistical significance to generalize from samples to larger populations and provide an introduction to more advanced though increasingly popular techniques including probit and logit analysis. Throughout, the focus will be consumer friendly; we will critique social science articles based on statistical methods and, using STATA, we will get a lot of practice applying what we have learned to some interesting data sets. By the end of the course, students should thus become better consumers of statistical methods, demonstrate competence and understanding of introductory statistics and show some facility toward applying these methods to social science problems of interest to them.

RPOS521 Field Seminar - American Political System J. Cruz
(3989) W 5:45 – 8:35 HS 12

The Field Seminar in the American Political System introduces graduate students to the basic methods, theories, and normative concerns of scholars in American politics. The seminar is organized in two parts. Part I explores theories of power applied to American politics, each encompassing a distinctive approach for studying power, unique assumptions about society, specific techniques for analyzing data, and normative implications for democratic theory and democracy. Part II consists of guest lectures by members of the Political Science department. This segment gives students a chance to sample the different styles, approaches, research interests, and normative concerns of professors in the department. The seminar requires weekly reaction papers, active class participation, and a major essay critically reviewing and synthesizing the literature in a chosen area pre-approved by the instructor.

RPOS528 U.S. Housing Policy C. Scally
(9596) Th 7:15-10:05 AS 121 (uptown)

United States housing policies since the New Deal, especially their distributional impact and their ability to expand housing production. Emphasizes policy options available to state and local governments and community organizations to expand affordable housing and revitalize inner-city neighborhoods.

RPOS536 and R Comparative Judicial Politics
(9704, 9705) W 5:45-8:35

M. Ingram
HS 13

This course exposes students to the comparative turn in the public law subfield. The course: (1) introduces the three main systems of law in the world and explains how these systems shape how legal professionals and politicians view the political role of legal institutions; and (2) examines justice reform, emphasizing how and why laws and legal institutions change over time, and judicial behavior. In both of these latter sections, we'll cover individual cases of justice reform and judicial decision-making, and study the causes and consequences of justice reforms and judicial behavior from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Throughout the course, materials emphasize how actors and institutions in different systems of law interact with various patterns of democracy and democratization. Course requirements include participation, leading occasional discussions, short reflection papers each week, and a final research paper.

RPOS537 The Legal Process
(9724) T/Th 11:45-1:05

J. Novkov
BA 209 (uptown)

This course addresses the relationship between law and society, focusing particularly on this relationship as it affects politics. The main themes of the course include law and identity, law and power, and legal consciousness. Some questions we will consider are the following: how does law constrain individuals and institutions? How does law construct identities, and how do cultural understandings of identity influence the development of law? How does law channel power, and what forms of power manifest themselves through the law? How do ordinary individuals understand law and its significance, and what potential does law have as a tool to transform society?

RPOS550 Field Seminar – Comparative
(5055) Political Systems
M 5:45 – 8:35

C. Chen
HS 12

The objective of this seminar is to provide a critical survey of the field of comparative politics, exposing the student to different methodological approaches and to substantive areas of research. The first half of the course traces the intellectual history of the field with a focus on the bifurcation between theories that emphasize the “universal” (the homogenizing effects of specific processes or variables) and the “particular” (the persistence of distinctive historical legacies and trajectories). It then examines the recent debates between rational-choice, cultural, and structuralist scholars, and discusses the major methodological issues in comparative politics, considering the trade-offs between varieties of formal, quantitative, and qualitative methods. In the second half of the course, the focus shifts to substantive areas of research in the field of comparative politics, including the complex relations among nationalism, nation-states and societies; the origins, consolidation, and patterns of democratic governance; the dynamics behind revolutions and other forms of “contentious politics”; the political economy of development and the emergence of varieties of capitalism; and the relationship between international/global economy and domestic politics and policies. Overall, the course is designed to introduce important issues and debates that comparativists have regularly engaged in, and to provide a broad intellectual map of an extremely heterogeneous field so that the relationships between different kinds of problematiques and approaches can be better understood.

RPOS571 and R International Political Economy

G. Nowell

(8779/7930)

Th 5:45 – 8:35

HS 13

This seminar will deal in international financial crises from the nineteenth century to the present. Attention will be given to banking, central bank behavior, trade and trade deficits, as well as economic recovery programs. This is a politics class, not an economics class, but some economic theory will be presented. There are no pre-requisites.

**RPOS583 and R
(7930/7931)**

**Global Governance
T 5:45 – 8:35**

**B. Early
HS 13**

The organization of world politics in the context of globalization. Overview of international organizations such as the United Nations and regional organizations such as the European Union. Examination of the historical and current international legal frameworks. Analysis of 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. Also examines transnational relations of non-state actors such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations as well as transgovernmental relations of sub-national governments and government agencies that shape policymaking at a global level.

**RPOS603 and R
(6197/6198)**

Contemporary Political Theory
Memory, Perception, and Critique
TH 5:45 – 8:35

**M. Schoolman
HS 12**

The focus of this course will be the work of Henri Bergson, an early twentieth-century French thinker whose ground breaking philosophical investigations have become increasingly important in the field of contemporary political theory during the past decade. Bergson's intellectual range included work on memory and perception and their interrelationships; a new theory of time that challenged not only the universal standard practice of chronological time but Einstein's theory of relativity; a radical theory of causality that poses significant challenges to conventional linear notions of causality used in all social sciences; and a concept of change that is Hellenic in character, stressing the idea of becoming rather than being, the world and everything in it as constantly changing images rather than fixed entities. Our course will take up each of these issues in Bergson's thought, among others, though we will bring all of his work studied to bear on the theory and practice of critique in the late modern world, focusing especially on the organization and functioning of advanced technological societies. Readings: *Time and Free Will; Matter and Memory; Creative Evolution.*

**RPOS604
(7201)**

Inequality & Public Policy
M 5:45 – 8:50

**J. Dodge
HS 6**

Examines the politics of formulating and policies that seek to end inequalities based on gender, race, class, sexual identity and/or other categories of marginalization. Theoretical and case study readings focus on the challenges, paradoxes and successes of a variety of social change initiatives.

**RPOS612
(9218)**

Preparing for Professoriate
Th 1:15-3:15

**S. Doellefeld
BA 224**

Students will develop a working knowledge of the American system of higher education, an understanding of what it means to be a professional academic, and the processes common to tenure-track academic positions. This course will be taught in conjunction with the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership. Topics include: Transitioning from Student to Professional, Understanding Institution Types, The Academic Job Market, What Successful New Faculty Know, Understanding the Tenure Process, Balancing Faculty Commitments of Research, Teaching and Service, Movements in Institutional Change to Improve Learning, Department and Institutional Assessment. Prerequisites: Admission to a terminal degree program; CAS 601, PAD 590 or POS 611; and permission of instructor.

**RPOS696
(6162)**

**Selected Problems in Political
Science Research: Research and
Writing Seminar Part II (2)**
Th 2:45-4:35

**M. Schoolman
HS 12**

This course, which is taken in the spring of the second year of the PhD program, focuses on the implementation of the research design created in POS 695 and the production of a final paper suitable for publication or conference presentation. Students will conduct and analyze original research as well as produce drafts under the guidance of a course instructor and faculty mentor from their subfield. Students will present their final results in a research conference at the end of the spring semester. RPOS 695 is a prerequisite for this course.

RPOS697	SELECTED PROBLEMS - POS RESEARCH ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST.)	All Faculty
RPOS698	MASTERS ESSAY ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST.)	All Faculty
RPOS798	READINGS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE ARRANGED (PERM OF INST.)	All Faculty
RPOS897	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH POS ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST. - LOAD CREDIT <u>ONLY</u>)	All Faculty
RPOS899	DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST. - LOAD CREDIT <u>ONLY</u>) ABD STATUS ONLY (1 credit constitutes full-time study)	All Faculty