

# Department of Political Science

## Graduate Course Descriptions

Fall 2017

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**RPOS 501**  
**10252**

**Field Seminar in Political Theory**

**Th 5:45 – 9:25 pm**

**P. Breiner**

**Husted 15**

This seminar provides an overview of some fundamental questions and fundamental texts in political theory, both past and present though focused around a particular problem in political theory. The theme of the seminar this semester is the meaning of “realism” in political theory. Recently, there has been a fierce debate in the field on what political theory should look like: Should political theory focus on normative arguments laying out what a just or egalitarian polity might look like (for example the work of John Rawls)? Or alternatively should our political principles (justice, equality, democracy) be made subject to “realism” in politics, that is the typical features of ordinary politics (power, coercion, conflict, ideological struggle, political effectiveness, judgment) and the political sociological dynamics of politics (for example, conflicts over power in the state, the struggle between politicians and administrators, the problem of political legitimation, conflicts over citizenship inclusion and political equality, the logic of collective movements). We will read examples of both kinds of political theory as well as commentators who argue for and against the “realist” turn in political theory. Included in the list of political theorists for the course will be Max Weber, Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, and John Rawls. Needless to say, the debate over “realism” in political theory is also very much a debate within political science as a whole. So students in other subfields are welcome to take the seminar.

**RPOS 516**  
**3250**

**Introduction to Political Inquiry**

**T 5:45 – 9:25 pm**

**S. Stohler**

**Husted 217**

This course is designed to serve as a foundational introduction to empirical social science research. Students will learn how to formulate appropriate research questions and design strategies to answer them. These exercises will serve as a basis for evaluating the merits and demerits of individual approaches, and the deeper philosophical foundations of empirical research itself. These exercises will also allow students to explore the ethics of empirical legal research. Students can expect to present regularly and offer feedback to others about ongoing research projects. Students will be required to develop two research prospectuses and one grant proposal.

**RPOS 523**  
**9738**

**Urban Community Development**

**M 7:15 – 10:05 pm**

**Hilary Papineau**

**AS 123 (Uptown)**

Examination of policies and programs designed to reduce social and economic distress in U.S. communities. Focuses on local and neighborhood-based efforts to address problems of inadequate housing, unemployment, lack of community services and facilities, crime, etc. Considers role of government, private sector, and nonprofit organizations in community revitalization.

**RPOS 529**  
**6810**

**Law & Public Policy**

**M 5:45 – 9:25 pm**

**Mark Leinung**

**Husted 6**

This seminar introduces students to the interrelationships of law, courts, and public policy. There are thus two broad sets of issues to be examined in this course: First, the policy implications, the strengths and weaknesses, of the specific legal tools available to government – private law, tort law, criminal law – and, second, the special role of regulation, the legislature, judges and courts in making public policy in a democratic political order.

**RPOS 530**  
**10551**

**Founding the American National Government**

**T 5:45PM – 9:25PM**

**Michael Malbin**

**Husted 214**

How many times in contemporary politics have we heard references to what “the Framers intended”? Many of the disputes in American politics today reflect ongoing debates that were articulated during the drafting and ratification of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. (Some examples: small versus large government; executive, legislative and judicial power; factions and political parties; direct democracy, citizenship, and representation; the role of “elites”; the freedoms of speech and religion; etc.)

Scholars and lawyers debate the role that the Framers' intentions *should* play today. Whatever one may think about that issue, there is no question that *understanding* the 1787 debates, their philosophical underpinnings, and their practical aftermaths will give invaluable insights into what happened later, what is still happening, and why.

**RPOS 531/R**                      **The Legislative Process**                      **S. Friedman**  
**10253/10254**                      **M**                      **5:45 – 9:25 pm**                      **Husted 219**

As one of the three Constitutionally-mandated branches of government, members of Congress play critical roles as they collectively make decisions inside the institution and also as they communicate with people in their individual districts. Paying attention to the historical roots and the importance of the idea that Congress is first and foremost supposed to be the “representative branch” of government, we will examine in detail the many aspects of the two Congresses (legislators working in and outside their districts). Considering a number of alternative perspectives, we will examine alternative theories of what legislators are supposed to do compared to what they actually do. We will consider the reasons for some important modern trends, including the increased partisanship that has become a hallmark of what happens in Congress, and in the modern day where we have unified government, it is particularly important to consider Congress's broader role in the checks and balances system. In short, you will come out of this course with a better sense of the many aspects of legislative life; you will be asked to hone your ideas about what we really mean by the often-used term “representation; and you will in the end consider different perspectives on a fascinating institution.

**RPOS 549**                      **The Welfare State**                      **Z. Barta**  
**10498**                      **Th**                      **1:15 – 4:55 pm**                      **Husted 15**

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.

**RPOS 563/R**                      **Government & Politics in People's Republic of China**                      **C. Chen**  
**10255/10256**                      **T**                      **1:15 – 4:55 pm**                      **Husted 214**

This is a graduate course designed to provide an in-depth survey of the main theoretical, empirical, and methodological approaches to the study of Chinese politics, and to situate these approaches within the broader field of comparative politics. Although familiarity with China's political history or culture may be helpful and even desirable, it is not a prerequisite. The first part of the course covers the recent political history of China, emphasizing the period after 1949. In the second part of the course, we turn to a closer examination of key issues in the contemporary study of Chinese politics, including elite politics, political institutions, economic reform, political participation, social movements, national identity, and international factors. Students will be exposed to the key secondary literature on these subjects. Finally, we will conclude with an assessment of the nature and the future of the current Chinese regime. The course aims to prepare interested graduate students not only for further research and teaching about China, but also for research that involves comparison with other cases and on comparative politics more generally.

**RPOS 568**                      **Foundations of Human Rights**                      **D. Guinn**  
**10370**                      **M**                      **5:45 – 9:25 pm**                      **Husted 15**

This course examines the legal, political, and social dimensions of the modern human rights movement 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, amnesty for human rights violations, and the linkage between human rights and other national interests and provide participants with the analytic and rhetorical skills to engage as advocates and scholars in the human rights project.

**RPOS 570**                      **Field Seminar in International Political Systems**                      **B. Early**  
**10453**                      **M**                      **1:40 – 5:20 pm**                      **Husted 6**

This course will provide a survey of the major concepts and theories employed in the study of international relations. It will cover the bedrock assumptions undergirding most theories of international relations, the actors and structures they rely upon, and the concepts they leverage. Students will receive an overview of the grand theories of international relations and be introduced to the study of foreign policy. Students will gain a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the major theoretical approaches of international relations, how the theories relate to one another, their intellectual origins, and their empirical track records. Students will also develop foundational skills in identifying areas in need of additional research to which IR theory can be applied. Emphasis within the class will be placed upon preparing students for the comprehensive examination in international relations.

**RPOS 582**                      **Global Security**                      **C. Clary**  
**10455**                      **M**                      **5:45 – 9:25 pm**                      **Draper 246**

This is a course about the nature, causes, effects, and prevention of political violence in the modern world. Students taking the course will be asked to critically analyze contemporary global security problems. How do modern armies fight and win wars? How dangerous is the proliferation of nuclear weapons? What causes terrorism? When do civil wars emerge and how do they end? How will cyber capabilities change the global security environment? 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. The course is designed for Political Science PhD students though open to other graduate students.

**RPOS 586**    **International Health and Human Rights: an Interdisciplinary Approach**    **K. Alaei, A. Alaei**  
**7956**                      **W**                      **5:45 – 8:35 pm**                      **LC 3C (Uptown)**

This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to global health and human rights and the contemporary challenges and solutions associated with them. The course will be taught by physicians and human rights champions, with guest lectures from experts in political sciences, international health, philosophy, social welfare, international law, gender studies, and public policy, among others. Through lectures, discussion, and case studies, students will develop a broad theoretical understanding of health as a human right, become familiar with legal and policy frameworks to support public health for disadvantage populations, and acquire skills in the application of these concepts and the implementation and evaluation of solutions to our modern health challenges.

**RPOS 611**                      **Seminar in College Teaching**                      **B. Franchini**  
**7627**                      **W**                      **12:35 – 2:35 pm**                      **TBD**

An overview of the scholarship of teaching and learning, students will develop and practice teaching skills. Course will be taught in conjunction with the Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership. Emphasizes the skills and knowledge necessary to design and teach a course that effectively facilitates student learning. Topics include: student learning styles, encouraging critical thinking, assessing student learning, designing assignments, active learning & group work, course design, efficient grading, how to run a lecture, and the use of writing in the classroom. *Prerequisites: Admission to a terminal degree program and permission of instructor.*

**RPOS 613**                      **Becoming a Reflective Teacher: The Teaching Portfolio**                      **B. Franchini**  
**7629**                      **M**                      **12:35 – 2:35 pm**                      **TBD**

Students will build on the skills developed in CAS 601, PAD 590 or POS 611 as well as gain a familiarity with scholarship and techniques to help them develop as reflective teachers. Students will construct a teaching portfolio that can be used as part of a job search and as the foundation of a professional portfolio which can be used as a part of the tenure process. This course will be taught in conjunction with the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership. Topics will include: The Teaching Portfolio and Teaching Statement as Formative and Summative Document; Peer Evaluation Training; Designing Courses for Significant Learning; Teaching Materials—Activities and Assignments; Coaching Students as Learners; The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; Teaching Evaluations; and From Teaching Portfolio to Tenure File. *Prerequisites: Admission to a terminal degree program; CAS 601, PAD 590 or POS 611; and permission of instructor.*

RPOS 618 8495	<b>Qualitative Methods</b> W 5:45 – 9:25 pm	P. Strach Draper 246
<p>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 <i>within</i> 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. <i>**Prior to starting the course, you must complete the online human subjects training. You may have done this already in POS 516, if not please see: <a href="http://www.albany.edu/research/compliance/Training.htm#IRB">http://www.albany.edu/research/compliance/Training.htm#IRB</a></i></p>		
RPOS 695 8925	<b>Research &amp; Writing Seminar I</b> W 11:30 am – 1:20 pm	C. Chen Husted 15
<p>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.</p>		
RPOS 697	<b>Selected Problems in POS Research</b> Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	All Faculty
RPOS 698	<b>Masters Essay</b> Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	All Faculty
RPOS 797 7031	<b>Graduate Service Learning</b> Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	TBD
RPOS 798	<b>Readings in Political Science</b> Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	All Faculty
RPOS 897	<b>Independent Research POS</b> Arranged (Permission of Instructor) Load Credit <u>Only</u>	All Faculty
RPOS 899	<b>Doctoral Dissertation</b> Arranged (Permission of Instructor) Load Credit <u>Only</u> , ABD Status <u>Only</u>	All Faculty