

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: FALL 2011**

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**POS 513 FIELD SEMINAR IN PUBLIC POLICY P. STRACH
(7182) F 12:45 – 3:35**

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.

**POS 514 INTRO TO DISCIPLINE OF M. WEISS
POLITICAL SCIENCE
(6623) T 2:45-5:30**

This course introduces the discipline of political science. It covers the history of the discipline and provides exposure to the individual fields. It also incorporates weekly discussion of professional issues in the discipline and in the academy more generally.

**POS 516 INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL INQUIRY A. HILDRETH
(3968) M 11:45 – 2:35**

This course is designed as an introduction to study design, strategies, data collection and measurement in empirical political science. This course will introduce students to a wide range of methods of inquiry, including qualitative case studies, large-N statistical analysis, survey research, formal models, laboratory experiments, computer simulations, content analysis, and interviews. This course will examine the strengths and weaknesses of individual approaches, as well as the benefits of multi-method designs. Finally, the course will explore ethical considerations in research.

**POS 520/R AMERICAN FEDERALISM & J. ZIMMERMAN
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REALTIONS
(9202/9204) M 2:45 – 5:35**

The seminar examines the constitutional, political, and theoretical dimensions of American federalism, including the tensions between the planes of government, interstate relations, state-local relations, and the problem-solving capabilities of the federal system. Particular emphasis is placed upon the formal powers of each plane of government, the politics of employing these powers, and the limitations upon these powers. The major focus of the seminar is the political significance of the use of preemption powers by Congress to restructure national-state-local relations.

**POS 525Q FEMINIST THOUGHT & PUBLIC POLICY V. EUBANKS
(8729) T 5:45 – 8:35**

Examines 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.

POS 531/R **THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS** **M. MALBIN**
(9206/9207) **W** **5:45 – 8:35**

This course focuses on power relations at the local level. During the first part of the course we will examine three classical political theory texts to glean insights about power, decision-making, and political leadership. We will use these insights as the theoretical context for our critique of contemporary community politics during the second part of the course. This part will primarily but not exclusively use case studies of small cities and neighborhoods within cities to take a critical look at the issues that local decision-makers face, the interests and interactions that shape how these issues are discussed, the processes whereby issues are negotiated and decisions made, the politics of inclusion and exclusion that structure these processes, and their outcomes.

POS 534/R **AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES** **J. CRUZ**
(9211/9212) **T** **5:45 – 8:35**

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 undergirding 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, and alternative representational systems.

POS 541 **FIELD SEMINAR IN PUBLIC LAW** **J. NOVKOV**
(9213) **M** **2:45 – 5:35**

Field seminar in public law. Covers major approaches to public law, including attitudinalism, strategic behavior, political development, and law and society. Required for students majoring or minoring in public law.

POS 554/R **POLITICAL VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY** **V. ASAL**
(8915/8916) **T** **5:45 – 8:35**

Insurgency and terrorism have become the key violent conflict problem of the post cold war period, outpacing since the late 1980s international conflict as the key international problem and for more and more countries it has become a key domestic problem. This course will explore key theories and methods in the study of insurgency and terrorism. We will focus on the key why's how's and what's in the study of terrorism and insurgency. The focus in the class is less on a specific geographic or substantive area than on learning to think conceptually and theoretically and how to produce analytical research. Each week we will read foundational works in the field and also discuss not only the findings but how they were found. This will be then applied to the ongoing research efforts students will be making in the class.

POS 564/R **RUSSIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS** **E. HOFFMANN**
(9189/9190) **M** **2:45 – 5:35**

This is a seminar on the domestic politics and foreign policy of Russia and the Soviet Union in the late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries. We will begin with an overview of the late tsarist period, examine closely the Lenin and Stalin periods, and analyze in greatest

detail the post-Stalin and post-Soviet periods. We will focus on domestic-international linkages, state-society relations, and continuity and change in the core elements of the Soviet political system. Attention will be paid to the interaction of political-administrative, socioeconomic, ideological-cultural, geographic-demographic, scientific-technological, and military-security variables in changing international environments. In addition, the interrelationships between social science theories and interdisciplinary Russian studies will be explored. Comparative analyses (e.g., cross-national and cross-temporal) and diverse paradigms (e.g., theories of democratic and technocratic modernization) will enhance our understanding of Russian politics and society. Seminar requirements include a 25-page analytical essay based primarily on the assigned readings, seminar discussions, documentary films, instructor's occasional lectures, and students' weekly seminar presentations.

**POS 565
(9187)**

**FEMINIST THEORY
T 5:45 – 8:35**

T. SHANKS

The entry of women into the political sphere produces a challenge to the core concepts of political thought. Feminist political thought thus provides an important vantage point from which to think critically about the nature and limitations of key political concepts such as rights, equality, identity, and agency as well as the nature of politics itself. Feminist politics and theory pose deep challenges to some of the major commitments of modern political thought, particularly to those of liberalism, e.g. freedom as free choice and equality as formal and gender-neutral. But feminism is not as unified as its challenge to liberalism might suggest. It continually faces questions with regard to its boundaries, agendas, and even the subjects of feminism itself – what is a woman? How does the category of gender illuminate or eclipse power relations involving other categories of difference, such as those of culture, race, class, and sexual orientation? This course will explore the variety of feminisms emerging out of women's struggles for political inclusion (liberal, Marxist and radical feminisms) as well as more recent feminist theoretical challenges to the category of woman, identity politics, and rights-centered political discourse. Students from all fields of Political Science and Women's Studies are welcome.

**POS 567/R
(9577/9578)**

**CONTENTIOUS POLITICS
TH 5:45 – 8:35**

M. WEISS

This class will explore the politics and societies of Southeast Asia through a focus on significant texts on the region. We will begin with a brief overview of the region as a whole and prevailing theoretical lenses, then move on to a series of classic works covering a range of themes. Each student will write a substantial, comparative paper on one dimension of Southeast Asian politics. The course is designed for Southeast Asianists as well as those interested in comparative politics broadly or other economically and politically developing regions. Prior knowledge of Southeast Asia is helpful, but not required.

**POS 570
(3969)**

**FIELD SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL
POLITICAL SYSTEMS
TH 5:45 – 8:35**

G. NOWELL

This purpose of this course is two-fold. First, the survey course is designed to introduce graduate students to a wide range of theories of international politics. During the course of the semester we will examine a wide variety of theories, including among others neo-realism, power transition theory, hegemonic stability theory, neo-liberalism, interdependence, the democratic peace,

bureaucratic politics, organizational theory, constructivism, and decision making theory. Second, the course will sharpen students' research design skills. The written assignments require students to take the often abstract theories presented in the readings and develop practical research designs for testing hypotheses derived from the theories. The papers will not include data collection or the execution of actual tests. Rather, they will focus on the conceptual problems of designing tests which eliminate competing hypotheses, operationalizing variables, and identifying potential sources of data. Students' grades will be based on three short research designs and discussion leadership.

POS 582 **GLOBAL SECURITY** **R. KOSLOWSKI**
(9188) **W** **5:45 – 8:35**

This graduate course introduces students to the basic concepts of the subfield of international security and considers the contemporary challenges posed by the potential use of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors in a globalizing world. We review the evolution of national security politics of the United States after WWII and the development of nuclear deterrence within the context of the Cold War with the Soviet Union as the basis for the development of deterrence theory as the dominant conceptual framework of international security of the latter half of the 20th Century. The course will then consider alternative approaches such as human security and societal security that developed as the changing circumstances of the post-cold war world called into question certain postulates of international relations theories associated with the nuclear superpower conflict. The course then analyses in detail emerging transnational threats such as international terrorism, transnational organized crime, the challenges of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, the tensions between economic globalization and the imperatives of homeland security.

POS 618 **QUALITATIVE METHODS** **P. STRACH**
(9200) **TH** **2:45 – 5:35**

This seminar covers the research process from its design to final analysis, focusing on qualitative and mixed-methods research. 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. Though no course can be the definitive answer to “how do I write my dissertation,” this seminar is designed to be an important step in the logic and practice of qualitative and mixed methods research.
Prerequisites: POS 516 and POS 517 or the equivalent.

POS 695 **RESEARCH & WRITING SEMINAR I** **V. ASAL**
(6943) **T** **2:45 – 5:45**

This required course, taken in the fall of the second year PhD program, guides students toward the completion of a major research paper, fit for submission to an academic conference or journal. Students examine strategies of effective research questions, literature review, research design, and persuasive argument while they develop a research proposal and a journal article. Students workshop drafts of their work throughout the semester.

POS 697	SELECTED PROBLEMS - POS RESEARCH Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	All Faculty
POS 698	MASTERS ESSAY Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	All Faculty
POS 798	READINGS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE Arranged (Permission of Instructor)	All Faculty
POS 897	INDEPENDENT RESEARCH POS Arranged (Permission of Instructor) LOAD CREDIT <u>ONLY</u>	All Faculty
POS 899	DOCTORAL DISSERTATION Arranged (Permission of Instructor) LOAD CREDIT <u>ONLY</u>, ABD STATUS <u>ONLY</u>	All Faculty