

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: SPRING 2010

INTRODUCTORY COURSES

POS 101 **INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS** **J. CRUZ**
(11574) **MWF 9:20 – 10:15** **HU 137**

STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR THIS SECTION MUST FIRST REGISTER FOR A DISCUSSION SECTION

Introduction to the study of politics, focusing on American national government. Our review will cover a wide range of subjects, from the politics of the American founding, the struggle for equal rights, political institutions, civic and political organizations, to U.S. foreign policy. Requirements include attendance, pop quizzes, one short essay, and a final exam. The goals of the course are to enable students to understand how the American political system works, to evaluate the workings of the system, and to explore the practical expressions of the concepts of citizenship and power.

POS 102 **INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE &**
(17438) **INTERNATIONAL POLITICS** **R. TYNES**
TTH 8:45 - 10:05 **LC 21**

STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR THIS SECTION MUST FIRST REGISTER FOR A DISCUSSION SECTION

This course is an introduction to the theories and practices of international relations and comparative politics. We will explore how various actors (for example, states, individuals, and non-governmental organizations) interact with one another in the international arena, as well essential issues and problems that comparativists wrangle with, including war and democratization. We will consider questions such as: What is a state? What is a nation? Why do wars occur? How does anarchy in the international system affect the behavior of states? What causes terrorism? By the end of the course you should develop a better understanding of many of the essential issues, theories, and problems that political scientists research, and you should acquire a rudimentary knowledge of the methods that are used.

POS 102Z **INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE &**
(16640) **INTERNATIONAL POLITICS** **G. NOWELL**
MWF 12:35 – 1:30 **LC 2**

STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR THIS SECTION MUST FIRST REGISTER FOR A DISCUSSION SECTION

Political Science 102 is the introductory course to comparative politics and international relations. This course provides a broad survey of the theoretical concepts essential to a sound understanding of global politics. These concepts include power, the state, sovereignty, nationalism, democratization, international cooperation and conflict, globalization, and international economics. There are three broad objectives for this course. The first is to prepare students to make better sense of past and present events in global politics, and to understand how theories of comparative and international politics are used to make sense of war, peace, political and economic development. The second is to prepare students for upper-level courses in global politics. The third objective is to fulfill the University General Education requirement for methods in social science. We will therefore also explore various methodologies used to analyze politics, including historical interpretation, construction of theory, data collection, and hypothesis testing. Gen. Ed: Global and Cross Cultural Studies, Social Sciences.

POS 103 **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY** **P. BREINER**
(8648) **TTH 11:45 – 1:05** **LC 24**

STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR THIS SECTION MUST FIRST REGISTER FOR A DISCUSSION SECTION

This course will focus on some of the central questions of political theory: what is justice?; what is democracy? what is the relation of property to politics? what is the nature of power?; what is the relation of politics to morals? Much of the course will be devoted to understanding the competing answers to each of these questions. Thus the course is as much an introduction to the ways we might argue about these fundamental political questions as it is about great political thinkers. We will be reading major works by Plato, Marx, Rawls, Locke, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Weber, and Arendt. The course will combine lecture, discussion, and close reading of texts. Gen. Ed: Humanities, Europe.

POS 140 **INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY** **H. JARMAN**
(16653) **TTH 1:15 – 2:35** **LC 23**

STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR THIS SECTION MUST FIRST REGISTER FOR A DISCUSSION SECTION

In high school civics courses you may have learned how a bill becomes a law. But where do ideas for laws come from in the first place? Why do some ideas get attention while other problems are ignored? What does it take to get a law enacted AND successfully implemented? What are the roles of the executive, legislature, courts, interest groups, business, the news media, and other actors in the policy process? Why do some policies, even after extensive research and analysis, seem so irrational and haphazard? This course introduces students to the process of public policy making. Because the policy process engages nearly all elements of politics, this course analyzes public policy making as the outcome of a number of political actors and processes. Students will gain a greater appreciation for the complexity of policymaking, the vast number of actors involved in policy making, and the factors that make policies more or less successful. Because public policy affects all fields of human activity, this course is a good introduction to policy for students in political science as well as other social sciences, criminal justice, social work, business, and related disciplines. Previously POS/PUB 240. Gen Ed: Social Sciences.

TOPICS COURSES

You may register for more than one of these; they are repeatable.

POS 204 **CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS** **S. FRIEDMAN**
(13846) **MWF 10:25 – 11:20** **CH 151**

What's the first thing you think of when you think about politics? For many of us, the answer to that question might have to do with current and controversial issues—health care, energy, etc. In this course, we will take a look behind the rhetoric and examine/debate those issues in more detail and think about the political and policy factors that come into play to produce a more thorough understanding of these controversies. The bottom line concept to our discussions will be that of political power—what does it mean? Who has it? How does it impact our policy choices? What does a lack of power mean and how can it be overcome? Throughout the course, we will enhance our understanding through engaging in a series of simulations, debates and discussions, thus deepening the feel for the political process.

COURSES IN POLITICAL THEORY

POS 302 **HISTORY OF POLITICAL THEORY II** **T. SHANKS**
(7592) **MWF 9:20 – 10:15** **HU 128**

Modern political thought begins with the idea of a radical break with the past: with custom, tradition, and a natural order for social and political relations. For the social contract tradition such a radical break meant inventing political authority anew based on the authority of human reason. We inherit from this tradition a new understanding of revolution and political resistance that echoes today in the language of constitutions, human rights, and the rule of law. What kind of political freedom issues forth from such revolutionary reason? Are freedom and equality better achieved by breaking with our social roles and practices or by acknowledging and engaging them? In response to these questions, we will consider the various meanings of political freedom and equality given by theorists of the social contract tradition (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau) their critics (Hume, Wollstonecraft, Burke), and their heirs who seek to consider political rationality and freedom anew (Mill, Marx, Arendt).

POS 310 **CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY** **M. SCHOOLMAN**
(17281) **TH 2:45 – 5:35** **SS 116**

Politics and Film. What political images, attitudes, beliefs, values, and understandings are conveyed through film? Does film create a culture of somewhat politically thoughtful people who learn to think about their society in different ways and often critically as the consequence of the films they see? Or does film promote conformity to the same attitudes, beliefs, values, and understandings, so that a politically undifferentiated mass of people is created? Or perhaps films are merely entertainment and contribute absolutely nothing to how we think, which in itself would be politically significant since we spend so much time watching films. This course will be concerned with how political theorists understand film, and will try to construct a political theory of film. Most classes will feature a film watched in part or in its entirety, such as the film "Judgment at Nuremberg," and readings will be available at Mary Jane books and posted on Blackboard.

POS 314 **JUSTICE IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY** **Y. SOHN**
(13678) **MWF 11:30 – 12:25** **ES 147**

Is there indeed *something right*, justice, we *ought to* do? In this course, we will learn how to answer one of the most essentially contested questions, "what is justice?" We will see the pillars of justice that have upheld modern democratic societies like ours. The principle guiding lights for our inquiry concerning justice will be selective texts of great contemporary political thinkers such as Peter Singer, Derek Parfit, Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick, John

Rawls, Thomas Nagel, Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Walzer, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and William Connolly. Each week of this course will consist of two lecture classes, usually on Mon. & Wed., and one discussion class, usually on Friday. The regular Friday discussion will take up present-day political controversies, and you are required to participate in class discussions and to share your views on these issues. All assigned texts for our course are directly downloadable from the course website on the Blackboard Learning System (BLS).

**POS 419Z
(9706)**

**SEMINAR IN POLITICAL THEORY
MWF 10:25 – 11:20**

**T. SHANKS
HU 108**

John Locke figures auspiciously and notoriously in the history of political thought as a founding figure of Anglo-American liberalism, an agent of British imperialism, a spokesman for early capitalism society, theorist of freedom, and defender of individual rights and religious toleration. Locke's legacy continues to be invoked today by critics and admirers alike, weighing in on questions of gender, racial, and class equality, religious freedom, and the limits of state power. What should we make of this legacy? How do Locke's ideas help us to better understand our political practices and assumptions today? How do contemporary political questions shed new light on Locke's ideas?

COURSES IN AMERICAN POLITICS

**RPOS 303
(16655)**

**PUBLIC POLICY THEORY & PRACTICE
TTH 10:15 - 11:35:00**

**R. NAKAMURA
HU 39**

This is a course in the policy process. It is organized along the conventionally accepted sequence that begins with agenda setting and moves through policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. While a simplification of how the world works, this sequence offers a convenient and useful way of dividing issues and problems into manageable bits for analysis and instruction.

There are three distinct perspectives found in the policy process literature. First, is an incrementalist view derived from the literature on decision making under conditions of uncertainty, high information costs and limited power. Second is a view from political science and that stresses the primacy of politics in raising issues for consideration, in shaping preferences, and determining which choices are made. This view seeks to explain why things happen the way they do. Finally there is a more rationalistic and prescriptive view drawn from economics and is more concerned with making efficient choices and improving outcomes. All three perspectives will be incorporated into the course because they all influence the way we think about and seek to influence the policy process.

We will begin with the question of where political problems come from or how issues get on the public agenda. A variety of models will be discussed at this point including: incrementalist, garbage can, market and government failure perspectives. In the policy formulation section which is about how policy decisions get made, we will cover topics ranging from the rudiments of policy and risk analysis, available policy tools, and major generic arguments typically found in policy debates. We will conclude with a review of the elements and issues encountered during policy implementation and evaluation.

**POS 320
(7594)**

**AMERICAN FEDERALISM
TTH 10:15 – 11:35**

**J. ZIMMERMAN
SS 116**

The course focuses on the theoretical, constitutional, and political dimensions of American federalism, including the tensions between the planes of government, interstate relations, and the problem-solving capabilities of the federal system. Particular emphasis is placed upon the formal powers of each plane of government and the limitations upon these powers. The reasons for the political significance of the increasing use of preemption powers by the Congress will be examined. Three equally weighted examinations and periodic quizzes will be administered. Each student must write a research paper on a congressional preemption statute.

**POS 329Z
(13396)**

**BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS
TTH 4:15 – 5:35**

**S. GRANT
AS 13**

Examinations of political behavior within and among administrative agencies, focusing on the sources of power in the bureaucracy, and the ways in which agencies use their political resources to shape public policy. Considers the tension that arises between hierarchical, expertise driven public bureaucracies and pressures for democratic participation and representation. Only one of RPAD 329 & RPOS329 may be taken for credit. Prerequisite(s): RPOS 101 or 101z and 102, or junior or senior class

**POS 332
(16656)**

**THE PRESIDENCY
MWF 12:35 – 1:30**

**B. MIROFF
CH 151**

This course will explore the many dimensions and meanings of the American presidency. It will look at theories of the presidency, constitutional and institutional facets of the office, and the role of the individual in the Oval Office. Case studies will treat recent presidents and the policy dilemmas they faced.

**POS 365
(16753)**

**GOVERNMENT AND MASS MEDIA
MW 2:45 – 4:05**

**J. BLOOM
CH 151**

This is an upper-division undergraduate course on the various roles played by mass media in American political life. In addition to covering nuts-and-bolts topics related to how the media work, we will make a special point of focusing on larger normative questions related to the role mass media are expected to play in a democratic society and whether our media live up to those expectations. Important questions include: do the media simply report on what is happening, or do they also decide what is important and what is not? Is their coverage unbiased, or is it tainted by a pro-establishment, pro-power position derived from their corporate ownership or a liberal bias derived from the views of reporters? How does media coverage affect the way the public views public policy debates, public officials, and candidates for office? Do our mass media merely inform a docile populace, or do they engage an active citizenry? Throughout we will look both at different views of how the media *actually* behave and compare and contrast that with different views of how media *should* behave in a democratic society. We will also spend some time looking at the recent growth of new web-based media such as blogs, twitter, and facebook, and examine whether they are beginning to play important roles related to media and political agendas, and whether they increase citizen engagement.

**POS 399
(12362)**

**THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF NEW YORK CITY
T 5:45 – 8:35**

**F. MAURO
LC 1**

This course will cover the origins, evolution and functioning of New York City's major political and governmental institutions, with an emphasis on the recurring efforts (1) to provide for greater local input into the city government's policy making processes without undoing the results of the 1898 consolidation that created the current five-borough city; and (2) to increase inter- and intra-party competition in a city that is overwhelmingly Democratic in its political preferences. Among the specific developments to be examined are the growth and decline of the borough presidents' power; the establishment and institutionalization of the community board system; the creation and later elimination of community school boards; and, the establishment and functioning of Mayoral control of the school system under Mayor Bloomberg. Also to be examined are the decline in recent decades in the power of New York City's political "machines;" the ways in which competition within the Democratic Party has changed over time; the periodic efforts by "reformers" within the Democratic Party to join with "good government" groups and Republicans, and the Republican Party in "fusion" campaigns against Tammany Hall and its counterparts in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx; and the efforts over time to make structural changes in the electoral system (such as the use of proportional representation from 1937 through 1949) that would reduce the influence of the Democratic Party's county leaders. Attention will also be given to the impact of state and federal policies on New York City; how NYC is represented in Albany and Washington; and how NYC attempts to influence policy making at the state and federal levels.

**RPOS 399
(17439)**

**SELECTED TOPICS: VOTING TRENDS IN NATIONAL AND
STATE ELECTIONS
MW 4:15 – 5:35**

**B. GYORY
PH 123**

This course will study voting trends nationally and in state politics, with a particular focus on NYS. This course will meld an exploration of well established political science postulates for explaining voter behavior, with a study of key data points underlying and explaining voting in terms of political demography, emphasizing: population, registration, partisanship (including the rise of independent voting), race, ethnicity, gender, as well as regional voting patterns and polling. The focus will be on charting and predicting the potential for political realignment both nationally (and in certain swing states) as well as here in NYS.

**POS 439W
(17302)**

**POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
MWF 1:40-2:35**

**S. FRIEDMAN
HU 19**

What factors determine how individuals participate in politics? Assuming that political participation matters, why do some people become active in politics while others choose not to? What role does early socialization and learning from a variety of sources (i.e., one's family, school experiences, interactions with peers) compared to later experiences (i.e. attending college, beginning a job, experiencing the events of the day) play in influencing our political actions? Focusing on literature in political socialization (our early learning) and participation, this course will examine and debate these important questions. In addition to examining these topics, we will address the following questions: how can we motivate more young people to become interested in politics? What role does/can the internet play in encouraging participation? Are differences in participation influenced by various demographic groups? This course is writing intensive and meet the standards for oral discourse credit.

COURSES IN PUBLIC LAW

**POS 336
(16752)**

**CIVIL LIBERTIES
MW 2:45 – 4:05**

**J. FREDETTE
LC 20**

Learn about the construction of our nation's most hotly contested freedoms in this course. Readings will be challenging, and combined with two short analytical papers that demand high quality work from you. Additionally, summaries, or "briefs," must be prepared for each court case read. Come learn about US Constitutional law and how it's inextricably tied to politics. Portions of the course will be taught in the socratic style traditional to law schools; expect a demanding but stimulating semester.

**POS 346
(17461)**

**LAW, CIVIL RIGHTS, & SEXUAL ORIENTATION
MWF 9:20-10:15**

**N. KAPUR
HU 109**

The course will examine relevant court cases as well as local, state and federal laws that define the boundaries for legal recognition of sexual orientation and personal sexuality in the 20th Century. The course includes examination of the recent court cases in Hawaii, Alaska, New York, and Vermont as well consideration of the current case in Massachusetts. We will examine the legal assumptions behind current and historical cases defining personal sexuality and sexual orientation. As well, we will consider the social and political impetus in each era that drove the courts and legislatures to make such decisions. This course highlights an interesting area of law and politics that is the modern equivalent of the original civil rights cases from the turn of the 20th century involving race. As such, this topical issue is sure to be increasingly an important aspect of state and federal court decisions and legislative battles. This is a good course for students interested in the law and the development of legal and political ideas over time. **Crossed with Women's Studies = A WSS 346**

**POS 437z
(11528)**

**LAW, SOCIETY AND COLONIALISM THROUGH
LITERATURE AND FILM
MW 4:15 – 5:35**

**J. FREDETTE
HU 114**

Colonialism and its lasting consequences are around us everywhere, but we often fail to see them. Like the law, the world's colonial history pervades so much of our daily lives, that we can somehow not see how we're surrounded by it. The law and colonialism have much in common, actually - the law was a primary instrument of subjugation for colonizers, and its hold on nations long decolonized remains. Come learn about law and colonialism and their relationship to society and politics in this unique class that uses both literature and film to educate and enlighten. An intimate class setting with few students guarantees lots of time for thoughtful group discussion and exploration of ideas. Students will be required to write a carefully composed, one-page analytical response paper each week that will be evaluated for its content and presentation. If you are serious about improving your writing, and want an unusual class that combines the artistic with the analytical, this could be the course for you.

COURSES IN GLOBAL POLITICS

**POS 362
(13588)**

**NATIONALISM & NATION BUILDING
TTH 10:15 – 11:35**

**C. CHEN
CH 151**

This course is designed to cover different conceptualizations of "nation" and "nationalism"; to trace the historical and social developments associated with the building and emergence of nations and nationalist movements; and to examine the complex role of nationalism and nation building in the contemporary world. The first part of the course is an overview of the major theories of nationalism and nation building. The second part of the course focuses on the development of nationalism and nation building in different perspectives, such as democracy, communism, anti-colonialism, ethnic conflicts, and globalization. Next, concrete manifestations of contemporary nationalism in Western Europe, Middle East, Russia and Eastern Europe, and the United States will be examined. The course will conclude with the assessment of the prospects for nationalism in today's changing world.

**POS 368
(16670)**

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & WORLD POLITICS
TTH 1:15 – 2:35**

**R. KOSLOWSKI
CH 151**

This upper-level undergraduate course provides a broad overview of the information revolution and its impact on global politics. We will examine previous episodes of transformative changes in communications to place contemporary changes in a broader historical context, examine the development of new information technologies and consider theoretical explorations of the relationship between information technologies and world politics. The bulk of the course, however, will examine the practical impact of the information revolution on state sovereignty, democratization, international political economy, national security, diplomacy, and international organization. There

What are the consequences of the recent financial crisis for global politics? Why do industrialized countries feel the need to give grants, loans and special trade preferences to developing countries? How do political factors shape global markets? The course tackles these questions by analyzing some broad themes: part one places the course in the context of the recent crisis, part two examines domestic pressure to change the system, and part three deals with multiple levels of policymaking. By the end of the course, you should have an appreciation of the underlying structural and political differences between modern industrial countries and how these affect the allocation of aid, finance, and trade preferences. This course combines elements of global politics, comparative politics and public policy, and is aimed at upper level undergraduates who want to write about and reflect on these topics in some depth. This course is a writing intensive version of POS350 Comparative Foreign Economic Policy, and is not recommended for students who have already taken that class.

POS 479Z **WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND** **B. EARLY**
(14094) **INTERNATIONAL SECURITY** **CH 151**
MWF 1:40 – 2:35

This course will evaluate the threats to international security posed by chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons by state and non-state actors. Students will be introduced to the scientific and technical issues involved in the construction of such weapons and how those issues relate to the threats they pose. The class will explore why states seek to possess CBRN weapons, the risks entailed in their possession, the consequences of their use, and efforts to regulate their proliferation. The course will also investigate the regional security issues created by countries' CBRN weapons programs and individual cases studies of terrorist groups' pursuit and use of such weapons. Students will be evaluated with short writing assignments, class participation, a midterm exam, a final exam, and a research paper.

HONORS & ARRANGED COURSES

POS 300 **HONORS TUTORIAL IN POLITICAL SCIENCE** **(PERM. OF INST.)**
Students in the Political Science Honors Program take this one-credit tutorial in conjunction with any 300-level course they take that they wish to count toward the requirements of the honors program. Specific sections are grade A-E others S/U

POS 338 **POLITICAL INTERNSHIP** **P. SMITH**
(12624) **ARRANGED**
Internship work in a governmental agency (legislative, executive, or judicial) or in a politically or legally oriented non-governmental organization. The department will provide assistance in obtaining internships in positions that are relevant to students' interests. Includes both internship work and an academic component that involves class sessions, readings, and written assignments. Interested students should contact the coordinator of undergraduate studies in political science and submit an application indicating their interests. We will try to match student interests with agency needs. Internships are only open to qualified juniors and seniors who have an overall grade point average of at least 2.50. This course may be taken only once for credit toward the political science major or minor.

POS 341 **WASHINGTON IN PERSPECTIVE** **M. MALBIN**
(11694) **ARRANGED**
A course using current government and politics as a basis for studying and evaluating political science treatments of the process. Offered as part of the department's Semester in Washington program. Admission by application. For information and applications: see department office or website. Co-requisites: POS 342 and either 495 or 498. Counts toward the major or minor.

POS 342 **WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP** **M. MALBIN**
(11696) **ARRANGED**
This is the internship component of the department's Semester in Washington program. Admission by application. For information and applications: see department office or website. Co-requisites: POS 341 and either 495 or 498. Unlike the other Semester in Washington courses, this does not count toward a major or minor.

POS 400 **HONORS TUTORIAL IN POLITICAL SCIENCE** **(PERM. OF INST.)**
Students in the Political Science Honors Program take this one-credit tutorial in conjunction with any 400-level course they take that they wish to count toward the requirements of the honors program. Specific sections are grade A-E others S/U

POS495Z **RESEARCH & WRITING IN WASHINGTON** **M. Malbin**

(11698) ARRANGED

This is the research and writing component of the department's Semester in Washington program. The major work product is a multi-draft research paper based on primary sources. Admission by application. For information and applications: see department office or website. Co-requisites: POS 341, POS 342. Counts toward the major or minor.

POS 498 INDEPENDENT STUDY (A-E) (PERM. OF INST.)

POS 498 INDEPENDENT STUDY (S/U) (PERM. OF INST.)

POS 498Z INDEPENDENT STUDY (PERM. OF INST.)

POS 499Z HONORS THESIS (PERM. OF INST.)

Restricted to students in the Political Science Honors Program. Reading, research, and writing an honors thesis under the direction of an individual faculty member. Overseen by the chair of the department.