

Department of Political Science Spring 2016 Graduate Course Descriptions

RPOS 513 Field Seminar in Public Policy P. Strach
(8891)

This course introduces students to public policy and the policy process in the United States and in comparative context. In it, we focus on important *theories* of how policymaking works 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 American or comparative politics broadly or policy students looking for theoretical background.

POS 515 / R American Political Theory B. Miroff
(10012, 10013)

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.

RPOS 517 Quantitative Research Methods J. Karreth
(4699)

Assuming little to no participant familiarity with quantitative methods--and even some trepidation toward statistics--this course provides an introduction to basic statistical methods for the social sciences. Upon successful completion, course participants will be better consumers of statistical methods, have acquired competence and understanding of introductory statistics and be able to apply these methods to social science problems of interest to them. The course also prepares participants for taking more advanced and specialized quantitative methods courses. Special emphasis is placed on applied data analysis. Participants will work with a variety of hands-on exercises to prepare them to conduct their own research projects. Excerpt of topics covered: overview of quantitative approaches to empirical social science and causal inference; measurement; univariate statistics; probability; evaluating hypotheses; bivariate and multiple regression; assumptions underlying the linear regression model; data collection and data management. No prior knowledge in statistics is required or expected.

RPOS 540 Urban Policy in the United States Staff
(8117)

Characteristics of political behavior that are peculiar to, or more strongly pronounced in, urban settings including factions and bossism, city-town-county tensions, politics of planning, zoning, and other decisions, ward and precinct organization activity, and voting behavior. Cities in the Capital District are used for laboratory work.

RPOS 550
(9715)

Seminar in Comparative Political Systems

C. Chen

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.

RPOS 554/R
(8210, 8211)

Political Violence, Insurgency, and Terrorism

B. Nussbaum

This course examines the relationships among, and differences between the following activities in the international political system: political violence, insurgency, and terrorism. The course will include a consideration of the causes of these activities, their effects on national and international politics, and an evaluation of governmental responses to them.

RPOS 568
(19287)

Human Rights

D. Guinn

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, 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 571/R
(6849, 6903)

International Political Economy

G. Nowell

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.

RPOS 603/R Contemporary Political Theory M. Schoolman
(5112, 5113)

This course will have as its substantive focus works by Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead, and Gilles Deleuze, both of whom have become important influences in contemporary political theory in a wide range of theoretical and philosophical issue areas, such as the "new materialism," the politics of global climate change, art and politics, and others. In addition to reading the writings of Bergson, Whitehead, and Deleuze, we will read examples of recent works in political theory that have been influenced by their work and we will try to project what the future trajectory of contemporary political theory will look like in view of the increasing prominence of their influences.

RPOS 604 Inequality and Public Policy J. Dodge
(5995)

This course addresses the formulation and implementation of public 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. Prerequisite: Wss 525 (Feminist Thought and Public Policy) recommended.

RPOS 612 Preparing for the Professoriate B. Franchini
(7068)

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.

RPOS 697 SELECTED PROBLEMS - POS RESEARCH All Faculty
Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

RPOS 698 MASTERS ESSAY All Faculty
Arranged (Permission of Instructor)

RPOS 798 READINGS IN POLITICAL All Faculty
SCIENCE Arranged (Permission of
Instructor)

RPOS 897 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH All Faculty
POS Arranged (Permission of
Instructor) LOAD CREDIT ONLY

RPOS 899 DOCTORAL DISSERTATION All Faculty
Arranged (Permission of
Instructor)
LOAD CREDIT ONLY, ABD STATUS ONLY