

GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: SPRING 2012
Department of Political Science
University at Albany, SUNY

POS501 (9440)	Field Seminar in Political Theory. T 5:45-8:35	P. Breiner HS 12
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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.

POS509/R (9442/9443)	Citizen Participation and Public Policy W 5:45-8:35	P. Strach HS 13
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This class examines the role of citizens in a democratic society. Scholars are divided on normative and empirical questions about how much influence citizens ought to and do in fact exert. We focus on three major points. First, we look at how citizens influence the policy process through elections, interest groups, and public opinion. Next, we turn look at which citizens are likely to influence policy and in what ways. Finally, we reverse the causal arrows and look at a new body of literature on how public policies affect citizen participation more generally. This class builds across subfields and will be useful to MA and PhD students interested in democratic theory, public policy, mass political behavior, and political development.

POS 517 (5831)	Empirical Data Analysis M 2:45 – 5:35	DC Shim DR 15
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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.

POS 521 **Field Seminar - American Political Systems** **J. Cruz**
(4060) **W** **5:45 – 8:35** **DR 313B**

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** **J. Walker**
(8830) **Th** **7:15-10:05** **HU 22 (uptown)**

POS 533/R **Women and Politics** **S. Friedman**
(9444/9445) **MWF 1:40-2:35** **HU 19 (uptown)**

Recent electoral events as well as contemporary policy debates raise important considerations as to the role of women in politics. What factors enhance the chances for women's political participation? Do women bring different perspectives to politics and leadership? Do they behave differently while in office? Are their "interests" being adequately represented? Beginning with debates about the roles of women in the larger society and then considering women's activities in a variety of political settings (electoral participation, institutions and the policymaking process), it will be the purpose of this class to consider and disentangle the multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives on the above often difficult questions. Thus, we will highlight the multiple perspectives (both theoretical and methodological) which have been used to study women and politics, and we will consider women's roles in a variety of (mostly domestic but also some international) political settings.

POS 540 **Urban Policy in United States** **C. Scally**
(9446) **Th** **7:15-10:05** **AS 121**

POS 544 **American Political Development** **B. Miroff**
(9429) **M** **5:45-8:35** **HS 12**

This seminar in American Political Development examines one of the fastest-growing approaches to the study of American Politics, the historical approach. Popularly known as APD, American Political Development as a field sweeps across the entire terrain of American politics rather than concentrating on only a single area. In the seminar, we will consider APD scholarship on American institutions, political culture, political economy, race and gender, and public policy. Readings will be substantial but writing assignments will be modest.

POS 550 **Field Seminar – Comparative** **M. Weiss**
(5173) **Political Systems** **HS 12**
TH **5:45 – 8:35**

This field seminar will address major theoretical, methodological, substantive issues in comparative political studies. Diverse theoretical paradigms, research methods, and substantive foci will be analyzed, compared, and evaluated. Ample attention will be paid to the history of ideas and ideologies and of theories and meta-theories. All of political science's subfields (especially international relations) and several cognate disciplines (especially economics, sociology, and history) will help us describe and explain the norms and forms of state-society relations in various contexts. The purpose of this seminar is not only to survey contentious issues but to help students develop reasoned and informed views on these issues and to enhance students' analytical and critical skills.

POS 554/R **Political Violence, Insurgency** **B. Nussbaum**
(8461 / 8462) **Th 5:45 – 8:35** **HS 13**

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 563 **Government and Politics in People's** **C. Chen**
(9430) **Republic of China** **HS 13**
M 5:45-8:35

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, nationalism, 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.

POS 571/R **International Political Economy** **G. Nowell**
(9441 / 9725) **W 5:45 – 8:35** **HS 12**

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.

**POS 583 / R
(8601 / 8602)**

**Global Governance
T 5:45 – 8:35**

**B. Early
DR 313B**

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.

**POS 585
(10099)**

**Information Technology & Homeland Security
TH 5:45-8:35**

**R. Koslowski
HS 204**

This graduate course primarily examines the political, legal and policy aspects of the use of information technologies by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) but also considers non-technological dimensions of information collection, use and management as well as the use of technologies other than computing in the homeland security domain. Topics include: the DHS enterprise architecture; data-mining, information sharing and data-integration; risk assessment and risk management; project management, system development and acquisitions; information technologies used for screening people, goods and conveyances at borders; managing immigration, investigations and forensics; cyber-terrorism, critical infrastructure protection, data security, privacy and civil liberties; international standard setting and information sharing; robotics and potential applications of nanotechnology. The course is primarily focused on information technology use by the US federal government but will also examine state and local governments and other countries as well as international issues such as information sharing and international technical standards.

**POS 603 / R
(6451 / 6452)**

**Contemporary Political Theory:
Political Theory and Time
TH 2:45 – 5:35**

**M. Schoolman
HS 13**

The topic for this course will be “political theory and time.” Among the range of concepts of time we will explore, we will begin by considering concepts of temporality in Greek thought (Plato and Aristotle), proceed to the dominant early Christian notion of time (Augustine), then take up early modern and modern conceptions of time (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, Kant, and Nietzsche), and complete our investigations with the theories of temporality in Heidegger and Arendt, Bergson and Deleuze. With each concept of time considered we will take up the political philosophy to which it corresponded and on the basis of this study attempt to map out the relations between concepts of time and visions of political order over time. While the first half of the course will be devoted to the political theory of time from Greek through modern political thought (Plato and Aristotle through Heidegger and Arendt), the second half of the course will be dedicated to a study of Bergson and Deleuze and postmodern political theory tied to time as “duration.”

**POS 604
(7534)**

**Inequality & Public Policy
W 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.

POS 696 **Selected Problems in Political** **V. Asal**
(6409) **Science Research: Research and** **HS 13**
 Writing Seminar Part II (2)
 T 2:45-4:35

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.

POS 697 **SELECTED PROBLEMS - POS RESEARCH** **All Faculty**
 ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST.)

POS 698 **MASTERS ESSAY** **All Faculty**
 ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST.)

POS 798 **READINGS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE** **All Faculty**
 ARRANGED (PERM OF INST.)

POS 897 **INDEPENDENT RESEARCH POS** **All Faculty**
 ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST. - LOAD CREDIT ONLY)

POS 899 **DOCTORAL DISSERTATION** **All Faculty**
 ARRANGED (PERM. OF INST. - LOAD CREDIT ONLY)
 ABD STATUS ONLY (1 credit constitutes full-time study)