**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS**

**Course descriptions Spring 2023**

All Politics Department courses are open to all students who meet the prerequisites. For information on requirements for any Politics major or minor, please email Chip Gagnon, Chair of the Politics Department [vgagnon@ithaca.edu](mailto:vgagnon@ithaca.edu).

**POLT 10100-03, 04 U.S. POLITICS**

Attributes, H, HM, LMSP, LSCO, SO, SS, TPJ, TWOS, H

*3 Credits*

INSTRUCTOR:  **Carlos Figueroa**, [cfigueroa@ithaca.edu](mailto:cfigueroa@ithaca.edu)

ENROLLMENT:   25

PREREQUISITES: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This introductory discussion-based course explores:

1. the development of the U.S. political system,
2. the values it is rooted in,
3. how it works,
4. how politics and policy intersect within it, and
5. the system's impact on individuals and groups alike.

We focus on the historical and present power struggles concerning national and social identity, civic and political culture, political affiliation, the role of media and new technologies, the competing national institutions, and the process of policy development within the context of a representative and neo-liberal U.S. democratic capitalist system.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion-based; group work; guest speakers; films/documentaries

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: 2 short essays (4-5 pages), 3 in-class exercises, and 1 group project

**POLT 12800-01 INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Attributes:SS LA 1b, g;  
ICC: Social Sciences; Theme: World of Systems; Theme: Power & Justice  
3 Credits  
INSTRUCTOR: **Chip Gagnon**, Muller 324, [vgagnon@ithaca.edu](mailto:vgagnon@ithaca.edu)  
ENROLLMENT: 25  
PREREQUISITES: None  
COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We examine and discuss issues of security ranging from security of the state to security of individuals. Issues include the future of war, terrorism, the global economy, nationalism, ethnic and religious conflict, and the role of the media in how we think about the international. We also study how different perspectives lead us to see different worlds, looking specifically at realism, liberalism, global humanism, and theories of identity. *This course counts as a Comparative and International Studies course for the purposes of the Politics major, the Concentration in International Studies, and the International Politics minor.*COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Lectures, discussions, films.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Attendance and participation in class discussions; quizzes; readings for each class; three take-home exam essays.

**POLT 14100-01 & 02 POWER: RACE, SEX, AND CLASS (also counts for Women and Gender Studies)**

Attributes: 1, AN3, DV, G, HM, LMSP, SO, SS, TIDE, TPJ, WGS, WGSI

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Sumru Atuk**

ENROLLMENT: 23 per section

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION**:**

What is power? How is it acquired and maintained? Why do individuals and groups comply with or resist power? How is it distributed along the lines of race, gender, and class? How do we reproduce relations of power in our daily lives? This course introduces some of the major theoretical perspectives on power, reading some of the foundational texts of political theory with the interdisciplinary works of critical-race, feminist, and socialist scholars. Treating intersectionality as a method of analysis, we explore how racism, patriarchy, and capitalism relate to one another. We problematize their impact on the contemporary practices of citizenship, democracy, violence, and security. We also discuss to what extent these “-isms” dominate our own political imagination, and how we contribute to power relations that we problematize.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussions, occasional lecture

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: papers, in-class presentations, participation

**POLT 14400 - 01, 02 GLOBAL POLITICAL THOUGHT**

Attributes: HM, HU, SO, SS, TIDE, TPJ

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Evgenia Ilieva**, 311 Muller, ext. 4-7092

ENROLLMENT: 23

PREREQUISITES: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the global context within which contemporary sociopolitical relations unfold. It brings together a wide array of texts and thinkers who, in different ways, have all engaged in careful and thoughtful analyses of a range of issues that are integral to the study of political thought: race and the enduring legacies of colonialism; exile, displacement, and the fracturing of identity; the relationship between colonizer and colonized; the meaning of freedom and historical struggles for liberation and human dignity; the role of global violence as a catalyst for political and cultural change, as well as its effects on the lives of ordinary individuals. In exploring these themes we will pursue three main objectives: (1) to understand the constitutive role that colonialism, racism, and dispossession have played in shaping core ideas about order, government, justice, power, authority, historiography, civilizational difference, individuality, and freedom in western social and political thought; (2) to analyze how these ideas have been discussed, challenged, and reimagined across various national and geographical boundaries; (3) to learn how to critically compare, contrast, and put into productive dialogue different worldviews and perspectives.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Participation, reading, three take-home essays.

**POLT 30600-01 US FOREIGN POLICY**

Attributes: INBG, LMEL, LMSP, LSCO, SS3 Credits  
INSTRUCTOR: **Chip Gagnon**, Muller 324, [vgagnon@ithaca.edu](mailto:vgagnon@ithaca.edu)  
ENROLLMENT:  25  
PREREQUISITE:  Sophomore standing  
COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We'll be looking at US foreign policy from theoretical, historical, and contemporary perspectives. We start with different views of what drives US actions in the world.  We then look at the evolution of US foreign policy over the past 240 years.  We'll look at some current issues -- including international trade, Iran, North Korea, Russia and China -- and their historical roots.  And we'll finish up the course looking at the current debates about the future of the international order and of US foreign policy.  We'll do this through readings -- both primary documents as well as secondary analysis -- and films.  
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:  Lecture and Discussion  
COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:  Attendance and participation in class discussions; presentation; reading reflections; two take-home exams.

**POLT 34300-01 FEMINIST THEORY (also counts for Women and Gender Studies)**

Attributes**:** SS, WGS, WGS3

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Sumru Atuk**

ENROLLMENT: 23

PREREQUISITES: Sophomore standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Why do we study feminist theory? What is its value beyond an academic endeavor? What is the relationship between feminist theory and political praxis? How can theory be useful in interpreting contemporary events, such as the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements? This course equips students with the skills necessary to understand some of the core texts of feminist theory and use them to interpret contemporary political and social phenomena. Hence, in this class, we will approach feminist thought as a method of understanding the world and an analytical tool that provides insights to transform the status quo. Some of our thematic focal topics will include the feminist approaches to and criticism of “Western” political thought, the “woman question,” performativity, contestations over the meaning of feminism, consciousness raising, public/private divide, feminist theories of the state, intersectionality, black feminist thought, Mestiza feminism, post-colonial feminism, transnational feminism and solidarity, and current feminist debates.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussions, occasional lecture

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: papers, in-class presentations, participation

**POLT 37000-01 ST: US POVERTY & PUBLIC POLICY**

LA, SS, LMEL, LMSP, LSCO, H, Non-ICC SS

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Carlos Figueroa**, [cfigueroa@ithaca.edu](mailto:cfigueroa@ithaca.edu)

ENROLLMENT: 20

PREREQUISITES: Sophomore standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the nature and extent of poverty in the United States. We examine the causes and consequences of poverty, discuss how these are complex and interwoven, and interpret how people can experience poverty at different points in their lives. We will investigate how *conceptions* of poverty are historically, socially, and politically constructed and fluid over time. We also examine how and why poverty is defined and measured for various policy purposes. Through case studies of different U.S. cities and regions, we will debate the role of labor markets, family structure, social organizations, and political institutions in shaping policy controversies around the issue of poverty and related concerns -- food insecurity, homelessness, drug addiction, crime, etc.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion-based; group policy framing and resolution exercises; guest speakers; films/documentaries

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: policy literature review, policy framing paper, and final interpretive policy analysis report.

**POLT 40101-01 SEMINAR: WRITING AND CRITICISM**

Attributes: LA SS

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Naeem Inayatullah**, Muller 325, Ext. 4-3028

ENROLLMENT: 15

PREREQUISITE: Junior or Senior standing; 3 courses in social sciences or equivalent, one of which must be Politics.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Grasping the technical, political, theoretical, and psychodynamic motivations for writing. Understanding the meaning, purpose, and practice of criticism. Students will evaluate their written work via collaborative and individual assessments of others’ work. Together, we will seek to write and criticize well as a means to living meaningfully. *This course counts as a Comparative and International Studies course for the purposes of the Concentration in International Studies, and the International Politics minor.*

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: willingness to accept alternative teaching methods.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: 5 short critiques (3-4 pages) and a final paper (8-12 pages).

**POLT 40103-01 SEMINAR: POLITICS & THE HOLOCAUST**

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Don Beachler**

ENROLLMENT: 15

PREREQUISITES: Junior/Senior Standing. One Politics course. Others may be admitted with permission of the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The seminar will examine several issues that arise from close and critical examination of the Holocaust. How does the Holocaust compare to other genocides? Why do some genocides receive so much more attention than others? Why do citizens support genocidal regimes? Why do many humans engage in genocidal violence even when they are not required to do so? How did people rationalize their participation in the Holocaust? Why is much of the world often indifferent in the case of mass killing? *This course counts as a Comparative and International Studies course for the purposes of the Concentration in International Studies, and the International Politics minor.*

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: Complete readings and write three short papers.

**POLT 40106-01 SEMINAR: EMPIRE AND POLITICAL THEORY**

3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Evgenia Ilieva**, 311 Muller, ext. 4-7092

ENROLLMENT**:** 10

PREREQUISITES:Junior or Senior standing; and 3 courses in social sciences or equivalent, one of which must be Politics

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this seminar we will explore some of the most influential theoretical justifications, critiques, and debates concerning European imperial expansion from the era of early political modernity to the present. We will analyze the conceptual resources with which canonical, democratic, and liberal thinkers approached, and often legitimated, imperial rule. We will examine how European political thought traveled around the globe, and how anticolonial political thinkers participated in and diverged from European frameworks. Along the way, we will tackle some of the big questions in empire and anticolonialism studies: how did European understandings of empire and colonialism change from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century? What were the theoretical assumptions that helped reconcile empire and democracy? Can imperialism be a good thing and if so, for whom?  What does it mean to be a citizen of an empire? Is the US an empire? We will seek answers to these questions by paying particular attention to the ways in which various political thinkers responded to and sought to understand the diversity of cultures, practices and ways of life encountered during the long period of European colonial expansion. Possible readings may include works by Hannah Arendt, Svetlana Alexievich, Tzvetan Todorov, Franz Fanon, W.E.B. DuBois, C.L.R. James, and Merze Tate. *This course counts as a Comparative and International Studies course for the purposes of the Concentration in International Studies, and the International Politics minor.*

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Participation, plenty of reading, three take-home essays.