

**Department of Politics**  
**Spring 2024 Course Descriptions**

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 10100-01, U.S. POLITICS & Public POLICY**

4 CREDITS

**INSTRUCTOR: Juan Arroyo, Muller 316, Ext. 4-3969**

ENROLLMENT: 25 per section

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Covers institutions, processes, and cultural/ideological roots of U.S. politics. We begin by studying a framework of ideologies that will help us to understand the political-economic institutions that have evolved to reflect the conditions of U.S. society. Then move to understanding the economic structures of the US that have shaped and been shaped by the political system. These provide the foundation for understanding the major institutions of US politics: Congress, the presidency, bureaucracy, judiciary, parties, interest groups, media, and the electoral process. We will often pause to discuss opposing positions on US political institutions. Throughout, we will constantly ask: how democratic is this place? What are your criteria for measuring democracy? Students will be invited to consider how money shapes effective citizenship.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion/lecture

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Readings, active participation in class discussions, 2 short papers (2-3 pages), 2 medium papers (5-7 pages), 1 final paper (7-10 pages).

**POLT 10100-02, U.S. POLITICS & PUBLIC POLICY**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Carlos Figueroa, cfigueroa@ithaca.edu**

ENROLLMENT: 25

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course delves into the development of the United States governmental system, the values upon which the system is founded, how the institutions within the system operate, and the intersection of politics, economics, and policy within the system. It also examines the system's impact on individuals and groups, highlighting historical and current power struggles surrounding national identity, class status, moral and ethical decision-making, civic culture, political affiliation, the media's role, and policy development within the context of a representative and neo-liberal democratic capitalist system.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Lecture/Discussion/Debate

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Regular attendance, participation and debate, 3 short assignments, a Policy analysis paper, and a final presentation

**POLT 12900-01 INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL AND POLICY STUDIES SS LA**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR:** **Peyi Soyinka-Airewele** (314 Muller | ext. 4-3508)

**ENROLLMENT:**25

**PREREQUISITES:** NONE

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Examines global issues, including culture and identity formation, globalization, human rights, the environment, and militarism. National and international public policies are examined critically, and policy alternatives are explored, as are individual responses and responsibilities. Utilizes country case studies, international simulations, literature, and film to interrogate our world. This will include the ongoing Ukraine-Russian conflict, the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the mass migration situation in Europe, the 2023 earthquakes in Syria and Turkey and the realities of climate change. Recently, the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, stated that "the era of global warming has ended, and the era of global boiling has arrived". Together, we will deepen our awareness of complex global realities and foster dialogue that contributes to our personal growth through the systematic questioning of old assumptions, the humanization of distant issues, and the search for policies that effectively address global problems.

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Lectures, Discussions, and Collaborative work.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:** Regular attendance, active participation| Presentations, Tests, Essays, and Projects.

**POLT 14100 01: Power: Race, Sex, and Class (also counts for Women and Gender Studies)**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR:** **Sumru Atuk**

**ENROLLMENT:** 25 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. Employing 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**

4 credits

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

**ENROLLMENT:** 25

**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, plenty of reading, three take-home essays.

## **POLT 21000-01 SLOW READ: LAUDATO SI' : On Care for Our Common Home. Pope Francis's Encyclical on the Environment**

**1 Credit**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Juan Arroyo , Muller 316, Ext. 4-3969

**ENROLLMENT:** 15

**PREREQUISITE:** none

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In 2015, Pope Francis issued *Laudato si*, an encyclical on the environment that was also a critique of our Western socio-economic system, with an update to come in the Fall of 2023. It was praised by progressives both within and outside of the Catholic Church, and criticized by conservatives/traditionalists both inside and outside the Catholic Church. This Slow-Read will examine questions raised by the encyclicals. How do they frame the overall questions? How do they build the arguments that lead to specific conclusions? What do the texts say to us as individuals and to society? How do you and others feel supported or targeted by these texts? How does the second letter differ from the first in tone and substance? Does the Pope even have 'standing' to comment on economics or environmental science? Do the analysis and conclusions have any relevance if we separate them from their religious inspiration?

### **POLT 30600-01 US FOREIGN POLICY**

Attributes: INBG, LMEL, LMSP, LSCO, SS

4 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; presentations; in class quizzes and exams.

### **POLT 31900-01 Selected Topics in US Politics: Elections in the U.S.**

4 credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Don Beachler**

**ENROLLMENT: 25**

**PREREQUISITES:** Sophomore standing or permission of instructor

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will examine political parties and the conduct of elections in the United States. The first portion of the course will consider various methods of conducting politics and elections. The primary purpose of this part of the class will be to question whether or not the procedures and practices of American politics facilitate the achievement of our political aspirations. The second section of the course is an intensive study of American party politics over the last fifty years. We will consider the development of American elections and political parties in the context of changes in race relations, the Vietnam War, feminism, gay rights, economic transformations, religion in politics, and the changing position of the United States in the world. Considerably time will be devoted to an attempt to understand the fervent support for and opposition to Donald Trump that has so animated politics in the United States over the last several years.

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Lecture/discussion

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:** 3 papers

### **POLT 33700-01 Politics of Memory and Transitional Justice SS LA**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Peyi Soyinka-Airewele (314 Muller | ext. 4-3508)**

**ENROLLMENT: 25**

**PREREQUISITES:** Sophomore Standing

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Exploration of the political and social dilemmas surrounding collective memory, truth, justice, confession, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation in polarized socio-political spaces. How, for instance, will the political suppression or exploitative

mobilization of memory oppose efforts to address unconscionable crimes against humanity and create a just peace? What lessons do the experiences of South Africa, the USA, Chile, Burma, Bosnia, and Rwanda offer other fractured societies? Students engage memory theory and the narratives of victims, witnesses, beneficiaries, and perpetrators in examining Czech writer Milan Kundera's suggestion that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Participants will engage the seminal work of Judith Herman on trauma and healing and if funding permits, travel to learn from other experts at the Center for transitional Justice. Counts as a Comparative & International Studies course for politics majors and international politics minors.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Lecture, discussion, and engaged research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Regular attendance, active participation| Presentations, Tests, Essays, and Engaged Community Projects.

### **POLT 33800-01 Terrorism and Insurgencies**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Chip Gagnon, Muller 324, [vgagnon@ithaca.edu](mailto:vgagnon@ithaca.edu)**

**PREREQUISITES:** Sophomore Standing

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Terrorism has been making headlines. What is it? Why do people become terrorists? How is terrorism related to insurgencies? We will be looking at these and other related questions to try to understand why people use violence and how they respond to violence. We'll also be looking at specific terrorist groups and insurgencies in various parts of the world.

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** discussion, lecture, presentations, films

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:** participate in discussions; biweekly reading reactions; presentations; in-class quizzes and exams.

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.

### **POLT 34051-01 The European Union**

4 credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Juan M. Arroyo Muller 316, Ext. 4-3969**

**ENROLLMENT:** 25

**PREREQUISITE:** Three courses in the social sciences, or equivalent

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The European Union is frequently in the news because it is either developing policy that breaks new ground in regulating the market, or being shaken by economic trouble, immigration, populism, and by nationalist sentiments. This course starts by asking what the EU is, and why it should matter to US students. What is Europe anyway? Should Turkey be included, or not? The bulk of the course is about how the EU works and what it does. It covers the institutions and rules of decision-making, as illustrated by many kinds of policies. More broadly, is there a democratic deficit that threatens the EU? Do citizens in Europe really have a say in what the EU does? How does the EU challenge our notions of national identity, of the nation-state, globalization, etc.? Specific topics may include the creation of the Euro currency, environmental regulations, and the formation of European foreign policy. A regular theme will

examine the backlash against the EU, as illustrated by Brexit, and a resurgence of both the far-right and far left.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Lecture with discussion

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Readings, three papers, on-line posts, class participation; A-F

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

### **POLT 34200-01 Liberalism and Marxism**

4 credits

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

ENROLLMENT: 25

PREREQUISITES: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is divided into two parts. In the first part we survey the historical development of liberal thought from John Locke to John Dewey. We focus on (1) the global context within which the core liberal values of individualism, freedom, and equality of opportunity emerged; (2) we explore how liberalism entwines with capitalism and modernity. In the second part of the course, we turn our attention to the work of Karl Marx. Our aim is to understand Marx's critique of liberalism and capitalism with an emphasis on its underlying philosophical assumptions. Over the course of the semester, we will seek to understand how different strands of Marx's work weave together: how his philosophical anthropology relates to his theory of history, how his theory of value is connected to his theory of exploitation, and how his conception of alienation is related to his theory of human freedom. While the main emphasis will be on seeing what Marx's theory was and how he arrived at it, the course will also explore how contemporary scholars have borrowed and adapted key Marxian concepts to better comprehend the workings and contradictions of capitalism in our 21st century world. We will select from the work of Locke, Dewey, Rousseau, Smith, Hegel, Marx, and Jaeggi among others.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion

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

### **POLT 40207 - Sem: Applied Political Theory: The Matter of Lives and Deaths**

4 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Sumru Atuk**

ENROLLMENT: 10

PREREQUISITES: Junior or Senior Standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION: What role does power play in deciding which lives and deaths matter? When does power "make live," "let die," and "make die"? What is the role of biopower in contemporary controversies over race, gender, vaccines, healthcare, disability, immigration, settler colonialism, and so forth? This course aims to understand contemporary politics of life and death from the perspective of the theories of biopolitics. We will use texts by Foucault, Agamben, Mbembe, Esposito, and their critiques posed by feminist, critical race, and queer theorists to interpret phenomena such as: (state) racism, (state) terrorism, the Black Lives Matter

movement, the Death with Dignity movement, femicide, racist and xenophobic violence, environmentalism/climate denialism, HIV, vaccines, immigration policies, and so forth.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Seminar, Discussions

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: papers, in-class presentations, participation, blog posts

### **POLT 40208-01 SEM: THE POLITICS OF U.S. LABOR**

4 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: **Carlos Figueroa, cfigueroa@ithaca.edu**

ENROLLMENT: 10

PREREQUISITES: Junior or Senior Standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Today, we spend most of our time at work. We take this fact for granted in the United States. As American citizens, our workplace shapes our daily social and political experiences and financial activities. Most Americans value democracy, or at least democratic processes, to organize and make critical life decisions. Some even view democracy as a form of collective power in the workplace through unions and cooperatives. Labor unions have played a significant role in promoting democracy in the workplace throughout the history of the United States. However, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, union membership has declined since the mid-twentieth century. Despite this, recent union activism has been gaining national and international attention. Workers at Amazon and Starbucks have been fighting for union representation, while autoworkers at General Motors and Hollywood writers and actors have gone on strike to demand better workplace conditions, improved wages and salaries, and comprehensive health benefits. This seminar aims to explore the extent of power workers have in their workplaces. It delves into the level of control workers have over their work production, pay grade scale, healthcare benefits, work conditions, and pensions. Additionally, it examines whether democracy in the workplace can lead to better goods and services, improved interpersonal relationships among workers and between workers and management, and effective conflict resolution. Finally, the seminar investigates whether worker democracy can serve as a collective mechanism to bring management or organization leaders to the bargaining table.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion-based

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: 2 papers, book review, in-class presentations, and participation/debates