

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS

**Course Descriptions, Fall 2024**

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).

*For the schedule of course offerings please go here: [Fall 2024 Politics Course schedule](#)*

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

4 CREDITS

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

ENROLLMENT: 30 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 10100-03 & 04 U.S. POLITICS & PUBLIC POLICY**

4 Credits

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

ENROLLMENT: 26

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This introductory discussion-based course delves into the United States governmental system's development, its values and principles, and how the interrelated public institutions operate at the intersection of politics, government, economics, and public policy. It also examines the system's impact on individuals and groups, highlighting historical and current power struggles surrounding national identity, civic culture, moral and ethical decision-making, political affiliation, class and racial politics (Race craft), campaign finance, media politics, and broader 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 group debates, 6 Quizzes, and a Final Policy Analysis paper

**POLT 12800-01 INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SS LA 1b, g;**

ICC: Social Sciences; Theme: World of Systems; Theme: Power & Justice

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Chip Gagnon, Muller 324, Ext. 4-1103**

ENROLLMENT: 26

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

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Peyi Soyinka-Airewele**

ENROLLMENT: 30

PREREQUISITES: NONE

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The course 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. We will utilize 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 14200-01: Ideas and Ideologies**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Evgenia Ilieva**

ENROLLMENT: 30

PREREQUISITES: none

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Why do people often accept, and even embrace, social and political conditions that seem to run counter to their own interests? How is it possible that we sometimes support forms of domination with our ways of behaving and thinking without intending or even realizing it? Where do our ideas and perspectives on the world come from? How do we know that our ideas are right? Why might it be useful to entertain doubt about our ideas? What is the relationship between our individual beliefs and broader systems of thought we call political ideologies?

In this course, we will seek answers to these questions by exploring the historical development and contemporary manifestations of several influential ideological perspectives including liberalism, conservatism,

socialism, anarchism, and fascism. In addition to exploring the key concepts and normative assumptions of these various “isms,” the primary goal of the course is to encourage us to begin thinking more deeply about our own worldviews. We will ask why and how we have come to hold these beliefs, and we will seek to understand the way that our beliefs inform our practical conduct in the world.

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** discussion

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:** 3 short take-home papers; weekly discussion posts

### **POLT 14200-02: Ideas and Ideologies**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Sumru Atuk

**ENROLLMENT:** 30

**PREREQUISITES:** none

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course provides students with a rigorous understanding of some of the major ideologies that shape political life, influence political behavior, and motivate political movements: liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and fascism. We will also touch upon other important “-isms” such as anti-racism, feminism, anarchism, and neoliberalism. Our reading list will include some of the canonical thinkers of “Western” political thought and their critics. We will have a “pop culture” approach and further investigate these thinkers' ideas through contemporary movies, TV shows, comics, and so forth. Finally, we will explore the concept of “ideology” itself, learn various meanings attributed to it, and discuss how it can help us understand our political milieu.

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Discussions, occasional lectures, in-class presentations

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

**ATTRIBUTES:** ICC (Humanities, Social Sciences), Liberal Arts, Legal Minor SPEC, Legal Studies Major Elect., SS, Theme (Power and Justice, World of Systems)

### ***300 level courses***

#### **POLT 31900-01 Selected Topics: Politics of Wealth & Poverty**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR:** Donald Beachler

**ENROLLMENT:** 20

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

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This class examines issues related to the distribution of wealth and income. We focus on the United States, but we will also delve into these issues from a comparative and global perspective. We will begin with a brief survey of the relationship between business and the state in a democratic market political economy. We will discuss inequality of wealth and income and consider various perspectives on its causes and possible measures to ameliorate growing inequality. The financial crisis and the housing bubble that plunged the U.S. into a prolonged recession are investigated at some length. The first section of the course will be followed by a consideration of the role of labor unions and the current state of workers in the American political economy. The consequences of the decline and possible resurgence of labor unions will be explored. The politics of health care and issues of cost and access are examined from a comparative perspective. We will also consider policies and politics of retirement security. A portion of the course will consist of an intensive study of the problem of poverty in the United States.

*Counts as a US Politics course for Politics majors and minors.*

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

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:** one exam and two papers

**POLT 30300-01 CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: Civil Rights and Liberties** H, LMEL, LSCO, NAPP, NASE, SS

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Donald Beachler**

**ENROLLEMENT: 25**

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

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** An introduction to constitutional law as it develops in the context of the U.S. political process. Emphasis is placed on civil rights and liberties (freedom of speech, press, and thought; equal protection; rights of the accused; etc.). Court decisions in these areas are related to attitudes and behaviors in the political and social system.

*Counts as a US Politics course for politics majors and minors.*

**POLT 33200-01 AFRICA THROUGH FILM: REPRESENTATION AND REALITY** SS LA

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR:** Peyi Soyinka-Airewele

**ENROLLMENT: 20**

**PREREQUISITES:** Sophomore Standing

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The course challenges popular Western representations of the African continent through a study of representation and reality and interrogates the foundation of these constructs. It emphasizes the need for media literacy and exposure to counter-narratives in studying and understanding the histories, cultures, societies and politics of African countries. Students will explore African and African Diaspora histories, politics and contemporary issues through extensive readings and rigorous exploration of the narratives and contexts for diverse films emerging from popular African cinema, the nationalist and radical African film industry, and Western cinema. The course will include a range of genres including comedy, drama, documentary, historical and historical fiction etc. Students will learn to apply sociopolitical analysis to the subject matter, uncovering for instance, apartheid ideology behind the portrayal of Africans in the film "The Gods Must Be Crazy."

*Counts as a Comparative & International Studies course for politics majors and international politics minors, and as a "place" course for the concentration in international studies and for international politics minors.*

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Film Screenings, Lecture, Discussion, and Engaged research.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:** Regular attendance, Active participation, Presentations, Tests, Essays, and Engaged Projects.

**POLT 34005-01 ST: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

4 CREDITS

**INSTRUCTOR: Juan Arroyo,** Muller 308, Ext. 4-3969

**ENROLLMENT: 20**

**PREREQUISITES:** Three courses in social science or the equivalent

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course studies international organizations that have emerged over time to pursue solutions to cross-national problems, and help to provide rules and structures to manage inter-state and other kinds of global interactions. This will encompass institutions that bring together states, but also international non-governmental organizations. The first part of the semester will be dedicated to the key concepts (sovereignty, cooperation, norms, order) and theoretical approaches to and criticisms of international organizations. These paradigms differ on several dimensions, including the purpose and value of the institutions, when and how they are formed, how autonomous and effective they are, and how they are organized. We will then use these frameworks to understand a number of specific international organizations. Students will learn not just how these institutions are organized and make decisions, but also how to explain and evaluate the outcomes of their work. Students will learn about the histories of these organizations, and about

controversies and challenges surrounding their roles. Throughout the semester we will address different types of issues, including problems of war and peace, the definitions and management of economic development, and questions of environmental protection. A wide variety of organizations may come up in the class, including the United Nations, treaty organizations (like NATO), regional organizations (such as the EU or the African Union), economic organizations (e.g., ILO, IMF) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), such as the International Red Cross and Amnesty International.

*Counts as a Comparative & International Studies course for politics majors and international politics minors.*

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Discussion/lecture

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:** Readings, active participation in class discussions and in a simulated negotiation, 2 medium papers (5-7 pages), 1 final paper (10-12 pages)

### **POLT 35001-01: Selected Topics in Political Theory: Governing Gender**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Sumru Atuk

**ENROLLMENT:** 20

**PREREQUISITES:** none

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Gender and sexuality have always been political issues that concern the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government. Recently, we have witnessed the global rise of what is called “anti-gender ideology,” a sort of backlash that intends to revert the gains of feminist and LGBTQ+ movements locally and transnationally. Authoritarian populist regimes adopt this discriminatory approach, which has significant consequences for the lives and rights of women and LGBTQ+ individuals. This course focuses on governing practices that concern gender and sexuality with a focus on the recent political context. The questions we will ask in this course include but are not limited to: What is the relationship between governance and gender? What practices do states engage in to regulate gender? How do institutional practices legitimize and normalize certain performances of gender while delegitimizing others? How do social justice movements mobilize against discriminatory government practices?

*Counts as a Political Theory course for Politics majors and minors.*

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Discussions, occasional lectures, in-class presentations

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

### **POLT 35002-01: ST in Political Theory: Dialogue & Dialectics**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR:** Evgenia Ilieva

**ENROLLMENT:** 20

**PREREQUISITES:** none

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

What are dialogue and dialectics? How are they related to one another? Can dialogue and dialectics furnish the tools for not only understanding our social and political world, but also, for changing it? Taking these questions as its starting point, this course explores the relationship between dialogue and dialectics as two distinct yet interrelated methods of reasoning and analysis. We begin by exploring how the method of dialectic emerges historically from the open-ended practice of dialogue. Although many now think that dialectics was invented by Hegel and later transformed by Marx, in fact it has a much longer genealogy stretching all the way back to the ancient Greeks (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle). After briefly examining their origins in ancient political philosophy, the bulk of this course will be dedicated to tracing the modern arc of the relationship between dialogue and dialectics. We will explore why and how dialectical thinking was pronounced dangerous and unfashionable in middle of the 20th century, and why it is now coming back in vogue. In a similar vein, we will

explore why dialogical approaches have sometimes been deemed naïve and politically irrelevant, and why, despite such claims, we cannot afford to discard the practice of dialogue either.

The best way to study dialogue and dialectics is to see them in application. To this end, we will study works by several prominent as well as lesser-known political thinkers who have anchored their analyses in these two approaches. We will focus on how they have used dialogical and dialectical methods to enhance our understanding of colonialism and to inform its critique; how they have used dialogue and dialectics to comprehend the relationship between realism and idealism in International Relations, and to illuminate our understanding of the causes of war; how feminist scholars have employed dialectical and dialogical reasoning to theorize and critique relations of domination.

Possible texts may include:

Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love*

E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*

Geo Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics*

Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*

Dmitri Nikulin, *Dialectic and Dialogue*

Plato, *Five Dialogues*

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*

Iris Young, *Responsibility for Justice*

*Counts as a Political Theory course for Politics majors and minors.*

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: discussion

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: 3 take-home papers; weekly discussion posts.

#### ***400 level courses:***

**POLT 40105-01 SEMINAR: Nationalism, Populism, and Conflict CP/IR SS LA**

4 Credits

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

**ENROLLMENT: 10**

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

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This seminar will be focused on the rise of nationalism and right-wing populism and their relationship to conflict, both violent and nonviolent. We'll look at the political, military, and cultural origins of the nation-state and the role of culturally defined violence in constituting state, national, and group boundaries. We'll also look at the relationship between populism and nationalism. Cases will include Yugoslavia/Bosnia, Rwanda, Australia, Europe, the United States and others.

*This course counts toward the 400-level course requirement for the Politics major, the Politics major with the International Studies concentration, the Politics minor, and the International Politics minor.*

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Seminar discussion

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:** Attendance and active participation in Seminar; reaction papers for each reading; presentation on research topic; final research paper

**POLT 40106-01 Seminar: CONSPIRACY POLITICS, THEORY AND RESEARCH LA SS 1h**

4 Credits

**INSTRUCTOR: Peyi Soyinka-Airewele**

**ENROLLMENT: 10**

**PREREQUISITES:** Junior/Senior Standing

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the universe of Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theories (CTs) as comprising some of the most troubling and fascinating phenomena of our age. Participants will study actual socio-political and corporate conspiracies and also conduct research into mysteries that fall within Barkun's classification of Event conspiracy theories; Systemic conspiracies (e.g. corporate schemes and political hegemony plots); and Super-conspiracy theories that link multiple events and systemic CT's together in a pattern that points to a complex master plan (for instance beliefs that link the COVID pandemic to various racial and nationalist masterplans).

Conspiracy thinking has transformed the nature and dynamics of politics as we know it. Scholars speculate that it will become a core paradigm of the future, manipulated by politicians, derided by cynics but increasingly influential in defining and motivating political actions, voting behavior, responses to oppression, global tensions, violence, and even genocides. Other scholars caution that we are all embedded in and affected by conspiracy thinking to the extent that it is a natural part of human survival instinct and certainly a part of US history. To better grapple with its significance on contemporary sociopolitical spaces, we will study cases drawn from within the United States and other parts of the global system. By the end of the semester, each participant would have deepened their understanding of our individual and collective vulnerability to conspiracies and conspiracy thinking, examined the impact of such beliefs on our social and political systems and interpersonal relationships, grappled with a range of debunking techniques and approaches, and hopefully, developed some additional skill sets in working in community and institutional settings to protect others from potential harm.

*This course counts toward the 400-level course requirement for the Politics major, the Politics major with the International Studies concentration, the Politics minor, and the International Politics minor.*

**COURSE FORMAT/STYLE:** Seminar Format Discussions

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:** Regular attendance, Active participation, Problem-based Projects, Presentations, Essays.