POLT 10100 U.S. Politics and Public Policy
4 Credits
INSTRUCTOR: Michael Gorup
ENROLLMENT: 26
PREREQUISITES: None.
COURSE DESCRIPTION: This introductory course offers an overview of the basic principles, historical development, and present functioning of the American political system. We will examine how the structure of government organizes political conflict, how citizens form political opinions, how people participate in politics (e.g., via voting, political parties, protest, and interest groups), the distribution of power between local, state, and national governments, and more. Our aim is to work together to better understand the major challenges facing U.S. politics and how institutions and citizens might be able to meet them.
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Lecture.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: Regular attendance, participation and group activities, weekly quizzes, reader response paper, two exams.

POLT 10100 U.S. POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

4 CREDITS
INSTRUCTOR: Juan Arroyo, Muller 316, *jarroyo@ithaca.edu*
ENROLLMENT: 28 per section
PREREQUISITES: None
OBJECTIVES: Covers institutions, processes, and cultural/ideological roots of U.S. politics, and look at the outcomes in the form of policies. 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. 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: Open to all students.
FORMAT AND STYLE: Discussion/lecture
REQUIREMENTS: Readings, active participation in class discussions, 2 short papers (2-3 pages), 2 medium papers (5-7 pages), oral exam, 1 final paper (7-10 pages)

POLT 10100-01 U.S. Politics and Public Policy
(4 Credits)
INSTRUCTOR: Carlos Figueroa, Ph.D. (Dr. Fig)
ENROLLMENT: 28
PREREQUISITES: none
COURSE DESCRIPTION: This introductory discussion-based course **explores** a) the development of the U.S. political system, b) the values it is rooted in, c) how it works, d) how politics and policy intersect within it, and e) the political system's impact upon individuals and groups within an evolving neoliberal capitalist system. The
course **focuses** on *democracy*, *representation*, *governance*, and *capitalism*, as well as
the *values*, *beliefs*, and *principles* that support these concepts and systems across various

political, economic, and historical contexts. In the classroom, we take a *social deliberative approach* to U.S. Politics and Public Policy. Taking a social deliberative approach to U.S. Politics and Policy at the undergraduate level means we emphasize inclusive, reflective, and collaborative dialogue and debate—rather than rote memorization of political or historical facts. It draws on the principles of *deliberative democracy*, which views governance as rooted in reasoned discussion among citizens and policymakers within institutional spaces, aiming for mutual understanding and more informed decisions.
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Lecture/Discussion
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: participation; debates; 4 tests; and final exam or policy paper

POLT 14100 01 & 02: 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. 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 31901-01 ST: US Presidential Power and Leadership
(4 credits)
INSTRUCTOR: Carlos Figueroa, Ph.D. (Dr. Fig)
ENROLLMENT: 22
PREREQUISITES: Sophomore standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Donald Trump's reelection in 2025 and the subsequent structural and policy changes have forced a national *reexamination of the U.S. presidency*. This **course explores** the origins, development, and operations of the U.S. presidency in light of these changes.

The course has **two premises: a)** that many debates regarding the U.S. presidency remain unresolved, and the role of the presidency continues to evolve; and **b)** that understanding the U.S. presidency requires looking beyond the office itself. To truly grasp a president's power and leadership, one must consider the influence of various groups and organizations, including legislators, bureaucrats, judges, and numerous external factors.

The **course analyzes** the sources of power that U.S. presidents rely on, and the development and modern practice of presidential leadership by: **(1)** examining the evolution of the modern presidency, the process of presidential selection, and the structure of the presidency as an institution; **(2)** considering how and why presidents make the decisions they make, when they make

them, as they seek to shape domestic, foreign, and economic policy; and **(3)** exploring the relationship of the presidency with other major government institutions, organized interest groups, the press, and the public. Beyond providing historical context for recent presidencies, the class will examine several theories of the presidency and how the world's most powerful executive office works.

This **course invites students** not only to examine the institution of the presidency but also to consider the personal ambitions of those who hold the office, the political norms they face, and how chance events affect their ability to lead the country. By the end of this course, students will better understand several political science concepts, theories, and methods that help explain presidential power and leadership.

COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion-based; writing intensive
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: student-led discussion (4x); midterm exam; 3 quizzes; and final research paper (10-12 pages)

POLT 34100 U.S. Political Thought
INSTRUCTOR: Michael Gorup
ENROLLMENT: 25
PREREQUISITES: Sophomore or above standing or permission of the instructor.
COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course offers a survey of political ideas in the United States from the colonial period to the present. We will read classic texts in the history of American political thought—including religious sermons, revolutionary pamphlets, public oratory, slave narratives, philosophical treatises, and other primary sources—with the goal of understanding how politics and ideas have interacted in American life. Over the course of the semester, we will interrogate the "multiple traditions" of American political thought, such as republicanism, liberalism, conservatism, and radicalism, and we will discuss a range of topics, including the contested meanings of political freedom and equality; civic inclusion and exclusion; popular sovereignty and revolution; democracy and individual rights; constitutionalism and political representation; race, nation, gender, and identity; and the role of religion in public life.
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: Regular attendance, participation in discussion, weekly reader responses, two essays, final exam.

POLT 34200 - Liberalism and Marxism
4 credits
INSTRUCTOR: Evgenia Ilieva, 311 Muller, ext. 4-7092
ENROLLMENT: 22
PREREQUISITES: none
COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is divided into two parts. In the first part we will survey the historical development of liberal thought from John Locke to Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. We will focus on (1) the global context within which the core liberal values of individualism, freedom, and equality of opportunity emerged; (2) we will also 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 immanent critique of liberalism and capitalism with an emphasis on its

underlying philosophical assumptions and arguments. Over the course of the semester, we will try to develop a picture of how different strands of Marx's political philosophy and social theory weave together: how Marx's 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 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. No previous knowledge of liberalism, Marxism, political philosophy, social theory, or political economy is required.
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion
COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Participation, plenty of reading, discussion posts, three papers.

Possible texts may include:
Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*
John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*
Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*
Martin Hägglund, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*
Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*
Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*

POLT 40106 - Seminar: Empire and Political Theory
4 credits
INSTRUCTOR: Evgenia Ilieva, 311 Muller, ext. 4-7092
ENROLLMENT: 10
PREREQUISITES: junior/senior standing
COURSE DESCRIPTION:
In this course we will explore some prominent theoretical justifications, critiques, and debates concerning Western imperial expansion from the era of early political modernity to the present. We will analyze the conceptual resources with which various canonical thinkers approached, and often legitimated, imperial rule. We will examine how European political thought traveled around the globe, and how anticolonial intellectuals, activists, and statesmen participated in and diverged from European frameworks. While both defenders and critics of empire tend to focus on the costs and benefits of empire for the subject populations, in this course our goal will also be to understand how the building and maintenance of empire can damage the imperial power itself, often implicating it in acts of violence that are antithetical to its constitutive values.
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Discussion
COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Participation, plenty of reading, discussion posts, final research paper.

Possible texts may include:
Asish Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*
Svetlana Alexievich, *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War*
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (*Imperialism* chapter)
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*
Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire*
Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate all the Brutes*

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. The topics we will discuss include but is not limited to (state) racism, (state) terrorism, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Death with Dignity movement, femicide/feminicide, racist and xenophobic violence, environmentalism/climate denialism, HIV, vaccines, and immigration policies. We will approach political theory as a method of understanding the world and an analytical tool that provides insights to transform the status quo. At the same time, it is vital to acknowledge that we cannot neatly "apply" theories to political phenomena. Contextual knowledges inform, challenge, and improve our theoretical approaches. We will use this productive tension between the field and theory to develop a better understanding of the pressing social and political issues of our time.
COURSE FORMAT/STYLE: Seminar, Discussions
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: papers, in-class presentations, participation, blog posts