Department of Political Science

Chair

• William Howell

Professors

• John J. Brehm
• Cathy Cohen
• Michael Dawson
• Andrew Eggers
• Scott Gehlbach, Public Policy
• John Mark Hansen
• Gary Herrigel
• William Howell, Public Policy
• John McCormick
• John J. Mearsheimer
• J. Eric Oliver
• John F. Padgett
• Robert Pape
• Jennifer Pitts, Social Thought
• James Robinson, Public Policy
• Susan Stokes
• Nathan Tarcov, Social Thought
• Lisa Wedeen
• Dali Yang
• Linda Zerilli

Associate Professors

• Michael Albertus
• Chiara Cordelli
• Benjamin Lessing
• Sankar Muthu
• Monika Nalepa
• Paul Poast
• Jon Rogowski
• Paul Staniland

Assistant Professors

• Ruth Bloch Rubin
• Austin Carson
• Adom Getachew
• Robert Gulotty
• Demetra Kasimis
• Matthew Landauer
• Zhaotian Luo
• Andrew McCall
• Molly Offer-Westort
• Patricia Posey
• Anton Strezhnev
• Rochelle Terman
• James Wilson

Emeritus Faculty


The Department of Political Science offers a course of study leading to the PhD degree. A departmental faculty committee makes admission decisions based on an assessment of all the material required in the University application: biographical data, statement of interests and goals in graduate school, transcripts of grades, letters of recommendation, Graduate Record Examination scores, and a writing sample. Committee members want to know what applicants find intellectually exciting and why applicants want to study at the University of Chicago.

The department is committed to training doctoral students in political science, broadly conceived. Our department has a long history of defining some of the most enduring empirical and theoretical debates within political science. We further believe that the best work in political science often crosses subfields and disciplines. Our aim is to help students develop and pursue their intellectual interests while grounding them in the various approaches and methodologies that characterize the modern discipline. Program requirements include a mix of research papers, coursework, and exams so that students can achieve these goals as they proceed expeditiously towards the PhD degree.

THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Students must complete sixteen courses for quality grades by the end of the second year. Twelve of the sixteen courses must be courses taught by Department faculty, which includes visiting and associate members. In the first year, students should plan on completing a total of nine courses for quality grades. In the second year, students should plan on completing at least seven courses for quality grades. PLSC 50000 Dissertation Proposal Seminar is required of third year students and does not count as one of the sixteen required courses.

The Department strongly recommends that all graduate students acquire the skill set necessary for successful progress as producers of research within the first two years of coursework. The notion of a skill set will vary with the specific research interests of the students. Students are expected to discuss with their advisors the skill set they will need, and together they will agree on a program of study. The normal expectation for first-year quantitatively-oriented graduate students will include courses on matrix algebra, programming, linear models, and causal identification. Such students also regularly take courses in social choice and game theory. For those students who intend to pursue political theory and qualitative research, the skill set is less established but may entail language training, ethnography training, interpretive methods, archival research, or other methodological courses.

The Department currently offers comprehensive exams in six fields: Theory, American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Quantitative Methods, and Formal Theory.

Students are required to take and pass a comprehensive exam in the main field by the beginning of the third year. Course prerequisites for comprehensive exams typically include either a field seminar that is offered no less than once every other year or a sequence or collection of courses that are offered over two years. All fields provide the materials students should master in order to be considered "certified" in that area. The Department offers exams during the month of September each year. Some students—such as those entering the program with prior graduate work in political science or who complete the necessary prerequisites for an exam in their first year of study—may take the exam after the first year. Students are also required to meet a course distribution requirement for the secondary subfield by the end of the second year. Courses and criteria for meeting the requirement will be determined by each subfield.
The MA thesis offers an early opportunity for students to undertake a substantial work of independent research and advances a number of objectives, some substantive, others more procedural. The MA thesis can offer an opportunity to launch dissertation research, to secure a publication in a professional journal, to test the viability of an idea or topic that might possibly lead to a dissertation, or to conduct work in an area students know will not be part of the dissertation but that they would like to investigate more deeply than is possible in coursework. The MA thesis gives students the experience of independent research at a manageable scale, before developing a full-fledged dissertation topic. The thesis also can help students to gain a sense of how the germ of an idea becomes an article-length piece of writing (through literature review, the IRB process, operationalization of a question, elaboration of a distinctive argument in relation to existing literature, etc.).

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their MA paper in the context of their courses, and to consider seminar papers as bases for an MA paper. Students also may choose to enroll in PLSC 40100 Thesis Preparation with their main thesis advisor. Students may take up to two units of Thesis Preparation to count toward the sixteen required courses. The final draft of the MA paper is due no later than May 15 of the second year, though in consultation with advisors students may choose to submit the MA well in advance of this deadline.

Students who have prior graduate work may use as many as five graduate courses completed at other universities to count towards fulfillment of the department’s course requirement. Graduate courses previously completed within our department will count on a one-to-one basis towards the fulfillment of the department’s course requirement. Students may not use an MA thesis written elsewhere as a substitute for the MA thesis here. The only exception is MA theses written at the University of Chicago, where one of the faculty advisors is in the Department. Students may use a prior MA thesis as the basis for the MA paper with the consent of faculty advisors, following the above deadlines.

Mentored practical pedagogical experience is a program requirement. To satisfy the requirement, students can serve as teaching assistants in undergraduate lecture courses and in the department’s methodology sequence. Advanced graduate students, selected as Grodzins Prize Lecturers, offer their own undergraduate courses. There are also opportunities to serve as teaching interns and instructors in the College’s undergraduate core curriculum and as preceptors who assist the undergraduate majors with the writing of BA papers.

After completing courses and exams, students turn to the PhD dissertation. The first step is a dissertation proposal that briefly outlines the research question, significance, argument, and method of the dissertation. PLSC 50000 The Dissertation Proposal Seminar, required in the winter quarter of the third year, is a weekly seminar devoted solely to the presentation and collective discussion of several drafts of each student’s dissertation proposal. The proposal must be approved by a committee of three faculty who agree to supervise the dissertation research and present the proposal for departmental approval. The deadline for this approval is the end of Autumn Quarter of the fourth year.

Although advanced graduate research and writing is often a solitary enterprise, students in the department also typically continue to participate in one or more workshops, which are mainly devoted to students’ presentation of research in progress for discussion and constructive criticism. Political science students participate in workshops devoted to American Politics, Comparative Politics, East Asia, Political Economy, Political Psychology, Political Theory, and International Politics, to name just a few. There are many other interdisciplinary workshops throughout the University ranging from Law and Economics, to Gender and Sexuality, to Russian Studies, all of which are open to political science students.

Upon receiving final approval of the dissertation by the members of the dissertation committee, the candidate gives a formal presentation based on the dissertation. Following the presentation, which is open to the public, the candidate is questioned by an examining committee at least three faculty members.

For more information about current faculty, students, requirements, and courses, consult the department webpage at http://political-science.uchicago.edu/.

INFORMATION ON HOW TO APPLY

The application process for admission and financial aid for all Social Sciences graduate programs is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines, and department specific information is available online at: https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/.

Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to ssd-admissions@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-8415.

POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES FOR 2021-22

PLSC 30102. Introduction to Causal Inference. 100 Units.

This course is designed for graduate students and advanced undergraduate students from the social sciences, education, public health science, public policy, social service administration, and statistics who are involved in quantitative research and are interested in studying causality. The goal of this course is to equip students with basic knowledge of and analytic skills in causal inference. Topics for the course will include the potential outcomes framework for causal inference; experimental and observational studies; identification assumptions
for causal parameters; potential pitfalls of using ANCOVA to estimate a causal effect; propensity score based methods including matching, stratification, inverse-probability-of-treatment-weighting (IPTW), marginal mean weighting through stratification (MMWS), and doubly robust estimation; the instrumental variable (IV) method; regression discontinuity design (RDD) including sharp RDD and fuzzy RDD; difference in difference (DID) and generalized DID methods for cross-section and panel data, and fixed effects model. Intermediate Statistics or equivalent such as STAT 224/PBHS 324, PP 31301, BUS 41100, or SOC 30005 is a prerequisite. This course is a prerequisite for "Advanced Topics in Causal Inference" and "Mediation, moderation, and spillover effects."

Instructor(s): G. Hong Terms Offered: This course is not offered in 2021-22.
Equivalent Course(s): CHDV 30102, PBHS 43201, MACS 51000, STAT 31900, SOCI 30315

PLSC 30301. American Politics Field Seminar I. 100 Units.
A survey of some of the main themes, topics and approaches in the study of American politics and government.

Instructor(s): R. Bloch Rubin, J. Rogowski Terms Offered: Autumn

PLSC 30401. American Politics Field Seminar II. 100 Units.
A survey of some of the main themes, topics and approaches in the study of American politics and government.

Instructor(s): C. Cohen, J. Rogowski Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 30500. Introduction to Quantitative Social Science. 100 Units.
This is the first course in the quantitative methods sequence in political science. Students will build skills to execute and evaluate key research designs for causal and descriptive research. The course also lays the necessary foundation for future coursework in quantitative methods.

Instructor(s): A. Egggers, M. Offer-Westort Terms Offered: Autumn

PLSC 30521. Sociology of urban planning: cities, territories, environments. 100 Units.
This course provides a high-intensity introduction to the sociology of urban planning practice under modern capitalism. Building upon urban sociology, planning theory and history as well as urban social science and environmental studies, we explore the emergence, development and continual transformation of urban planning in relation to changing configurations of capitalist urbanization, modern state power, sociopolitical insurgency and environmental crisis. Following an initial exploration of divergent conceptualizations of "planning" and "urbanization," we investigate the changing sites and targets of planning: struggles regarding the instruments, goals and constituencies of planning; the contradictory connections between planning and diverse configurations of power in modern society (including class, race, gender and sexuality); and the possibility that new forms of planning might help produce more socially just and environmentally sane forms of urbanization in the future.

Instructor(s): N. Brenner Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 20521, PBPL 20521, SOCI 30521, PPHA 30521, ARCH 20521, CHST 20521, ENST 20521, PLSC 20521, GEOG 20521

PLSC 30600. Causal Inference. 100 Units.
This is the third course in quantitative methods in the Political Science PhD program. The course is an introduction to the theory and practice of causal inference from quantitative data. It will cover the potential outcomes framework, the design and analysis of experiments, matching, weighting, regression adjustment, differences-in-differences, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity designs and more. Students will examine and implement these approaches through a variety of examples from across the social sciences. The course will use the R programming language for statistical computing.

Instructor(s): A. Strezhnev Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 30700. Introduction to Linear Models. 100 Units.
This course will provide an introduction to the linear model, the dominant form of statistical inference in the social sciences. The goals of the course are to teach students the statistical methods needed to pursue independent large-n research projects and to develop the skills necessary to pursue further methods training in the social sciences. Part I of the course reviews the simple linear model (as seen in STAT 22000 or its equivalent) with attention to the theory of statistical inference and the derivation of estimators. Basic calculus and linear algebra will be introduced. Part II extends the linear model to the multivariate case. Emphasis will be placed on model selection and specification. Part III examines the consequences of data that is "poorly behaved" and how to cope with the problem. Depending on time, Part IV will introduce special topics like systems of simultaneous equations, logit and probit models, time-series methods, etc. Little prior knowledge of math or statistics is expected, but students are expected to work hard to develop the tools introduced in class.

Instructor(s): R. Gulotty, J. Hansen Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 30901. Game Theory I. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to games of complete information through solving problem sets. We will cover the concepts of dominant strategies, rationalizable strategies, Nash equilibrium, subgame perfection, backward induction, and imperfect information. The course will be centered around several applications of game theory to politics: electoral competition, agenda control, lobbying, voting in legislatures and coalition games.

Instructor(s): S. Gehlbach Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 29102
PLSC 31000. Game Theory II. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to games of incomplete information and several advanced topics through solving problem sets. We will cover the concepts of Bayes Nash equilibrium, perfect Bayesian equilibrium, and the basics of mechanism design and information design. In terms of applications, the course will extend the topics examined in the prerequisite, PLSC 30901. Game Theory I to allow for incomplete information, with a focus on the competing challenges of moral hazard and adverse selection in those settings.
Instructor(s): Z. Luo Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): PLSC 30901 or equivalent and consent of instructor. Undergraduates by consent only.
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 29105

PLSC 31410. Advanced Theories of Gender and Sexuality. 100 Units.
This seminar engages concepts and lineages central to the interdisciplinary study of gender and sexuality. We begin by tracing genealogies of feminist and queer identity formation, including those developed from theories of performativity, affect, and deviance alongside postwar social movements such as gay liberation and Black feminism. We then explore varieties of precarity and normalization through cases such as pornography, consent, the administration of trans lives, and anti-Black figurations of “the human.” Generally, our aims are to gain familiarity with key theoretical anchors for the study of gender and sexuality; to question our obligations to the “classics” of the field; to examine how structures are reproduced and reconfigured around identities; and to explore innovative pedagogies. We will read aesthetic objects alongside theoretical works such as those by Gayle Rubin, Lauren Berlant, Hortense Spillers, C. Riley Snorton, Heather Love, José Muñoz, Paul B. Preciado, Mel Chen, Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak, Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler, and Saidiya Hartman.
Instructor(s): R. Terman Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Undergraduates by Consent Only
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 29103

PLSC 31510. Introduction to Text as Data for Social Science. 100 Units.
Social scientists increasingly use large quantities of text-based data to address problems in industry and academy. This course provides students with an overview of popular techniques for collecting, processing, and analyzing text data from a social science perspective. We will first learn how to collect text data from a variety of sources, including application programming interfaces (APIs) and web-scraping. The second portion of the class provides an overview of popular methods to analyze text data, including sentiment analysis, topic models, supervised classification, and word embeddings. The course is applied in nature. While many of the techniques we discuss have their origins in computer science or statistics, this is not a CS or statistics course. Ultimately, the goal is to introduce students to modern techniques for computational text analysis and help them apply these methods to their own research.
Instructor(s): Rowan Bayne Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 21410, GNSE 31400, MAPH 36500, ENGL 30201, ENGL 21401, GNSE 21400

PLSC 31915. Aristotle’s Politics. 100 Units.
In this course we will read together Aristotle’s Politics, along with some of the important secondary literature on that work. We will supplement our reading with short excerpts from other Aristotelian texts, including the Rhetoric, the Nicomachean Ethics, the Topics, and the History of Animals. We will pay particularly close attention to the less studied, “empirical” books of the Politics (IV-VI) as of central importance for understanding Aristotle’s political philosophy and his broader political project.
Instructor(s): M. Landauer Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 21510

PLSC 32100. Machiavelli’s Discourses on Livy. 100 Units.
This course is devoted to reading Machiavelli’s Discourses on Livy supplemented by substantial selections from Livy’s history of Rome. Themes include princes, peoples, and elites; republics and principalities; pagan and Christian religion and morality; war and empire; founding and reform; virtue, corruption, liberty, and fortune; ancient history and modern experience; reading and writing; and theory and practice.
Instructor(s): Nathan Tarcov Terms Offered: Winter. Course scheduled for Winter 2022.
Prerequisite(s): Familiarity with Machiavelli’s, Prince.
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 21915

PLSC 32736. Economics, Politics and African Societies. 100 Units.
This course has two objectives. First, we will try to convince ourselves that the lenses through which economics and political science have tried to explain “African” “development” are charged with presuppositions that have limited our ability to grasp the logic of those societies. There is nothing specific to those disciplines in that regard, they are part of a given cultural and historical context. In doing that, this course is also about the rich diversity of the societies lumped in the term Africa. Second, we will try to undo the learnings weaved through that lens, but at the same time engage with a fertile ground for research, with a focus on generating new research ideas that carry less, we hope, the heavy veil of our assumptions. It is open to Masters students but it is primarily aimed at PhD students who want to know about Africa and can imagine themselves doing research there. We hope that it will help them identify new and interesting questions. The Masters students will be examined by an exam. The
PhD students will have to write a short research proposal on some question on Africa and the last two lectures will be devoted to presentations. - This course is previously PPHA 37235 - African Development.

Instructor(s): Robinson, J; Sanchez de la Sierra, R
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PPHA 32736, ECON 35585

PLSC 32740. Order and Violence. 100 Units.
Most countries in the world have been independent for about 50 years. Some are peaceful and have prospered, while some remain poor, war-torn, or both. What explains why some countries have succeeded while others remain poor, violent, and unequal? Moreover, fifty years on, a lot of smart people are genuinely surprised that these countries’ leaders have not been able to make more progress in implementing good policies. If there are good examples to follow, why haven’t more countries followed these examples into peace and prosperity? Finally, we see poverty and violence despite 50 years of outside intervention. Shouldn’t foreign aid, democracy promotion, peacekeeping, and maybe even military intervention have promoted order and growth? If not why not, and what should we do about it as citizens? This class is going to try to demystify what’s going on. There are good explanations for violence and disorder. There are some good reasons leaders don’t make headway, bureaucrats seem slothful, and programs get perverted. The idea is to talk about the political, economic, and natural logs that lead to function and dysfunction.

Instructor(s): Blattman, C
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PPHA 32740

PLSC 33300. Interpretive Methods in the Social Sciences. 100 Units.
This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to interpretive methods in the social sciences. Students will learn to “read” texts and images while also becoming familiar with contemporary thinking about interpretation, narrative, ethnography, and social construction. Among the methods we shall explore are: semiotics, hermeneutics, ordinary language theory, and discourse analysis.

Instructor(s): L. Wedeen
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CCCT 33300

PLSC 33615. Reconstructing Democracy: Tocqueville and Du Bois. 100 Units.
Over the last few years, ideas of democratic crisis and democratic breakdown have been pervasive in public and scholarly discussion. This course examines two classical texts on American Democracy-Tocqueville’s Democracy in America and Du Bois Black Reconstruction. We will think through central puzzles of democratic politics-from majoritarianism to the role of racial identity and imperial expansion guided by Tocqueville and Du Bois.

Instructor(s): A. Getachew
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 23615, CCCT 23615, CCCT 33615

PLSC 33917. Anticolonial Political Thought. 100 Units.
This course examines three canonical figures in history of anticolonial thought-Gandhi, Fanon and C.L.R James to reconstruct their political visions of decolonization and independence. Along with each of these thinkers, we will explore key secondary sources that illuminate key interpretive debates.

Instructor(s): A. Getachew
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 23917

PLSC 35205. Racial Justice and Injustice. 100 Units.
The course will explore moral and political problems of racial justice and injustice. Topics may include antidiscrimination theory, the fair political representation of racial minorities, reparations for racial injustice, racial segregation, the use of racial preferences in various practices of selection, and the evaluation of practices of law enforcement and punishment. We will use reflections on particular problems such as these to inquire about the uses of racial concepts in political theory; the connections between racial justice and ostensibly more general conceptions of justice; and the connections between racial equality and other egalitarian ideals.

Instructor(s): J. Wilson
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 25205, CRES 25205, PLSC 25205

PLSC 35705. Radical Enlightenments. 100 Units.
An examination of some of the roots of radical critical theory in the writings of a variety of European eighteenth-century thinkers on topics such as despotism, prejudice, oligarchic interests, slavery, empire, sex/gender equality, private/public goods, state power, and revolution/reform.

Instructor(s): S. Muthu
Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 35807. Plato’s Symposium. 100 Units.
The seminar is devoted to close readings and extended discussions of Plato’s Symposium. We will explore the views on Eros presented in the various speeches comprising the dialogue, among them: love’s relationship to physical beauty and human desire; its potential for prompting heroic action and forging moral education; its significance for the soul and place in the cosmos. We will also analyze the literary aspects of the work (plot, action, allegory); the dialogue’s historical setting (democratic Athens beset by domestic conspiracies and engaged in an apocalyptic war); its implications for political philosophy; and the function of a symposium in classical Athens. We will devote several sessions at the end of term to major interpretations of the dialogue.

Instructor(s): D. Kasimis, J. McCormick
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 25807, FNDL 25002
PLSC 36100. Civil War. 100 Units. 
Civil war is the dominant form of political violence in the contemporary world. This graduate seminar will introduce students to cutting edge scholarly work and to the task of carrying out research on internal conflict. We will study the origins, dynamics, and termination of civil wars, as well as international interventions, post-conflict legacies, and policy responses to war. A variety of research approaches will be explored, including qualitative, quantitative, and interpretive methods, micro- and macro-level levels of analysis, and sub- and cross-national comparative designs. Our emphasis throughout will be on designing rigorous research that persuasively addresses important questions.
Instructor(s): P. Staniland Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 36205. Formal Models of Race and Ethnic Politics. 100 Units. 
This course will examine ways in which the methods of formal theory can deepen our insight into questions concerning race and ethnic politics. It will cover both models developed to address racialized phenomena, as well as classes of models well suited to studying classic questions within REP.
Instructor(s): A. McCall Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Completion of PLSC 30901 and PLSC 31001 recommended

PLSC 36301. Ethnographies of the Middle East. 100 Units. 
This class focuses on ethnographies published in the last two to three years, so they represent some of the prevailing questions researchers of the Middle East are working on now. The texts selected cover a variety of topics (revolution, authoritarian retrenchment, the politics of artistic production, gender and sexuality, migration, violence, state infrastructure, and environmentalism) and the books include efforts to learn something about various countries in the region (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, and Morocco). Among the questions we shall ask are the following: What makes ethnography a distinctive sensibility, a particular form of writing or a specific genre of address? What kinds of themes predominate and why? What types of questions can ethnographies grapple with especially well? What skills does one need to produce a compelling ethnography? How does theory tend to get deployed in these works? How well do ethnographies speak to general concerns that extend beyond a particular case or, for that matter, any one discipline’s preoccupations? No previous background in anthropology or Middle East studies is necessary. Attendance is mandatory. Students will be required to produce one in-class presentation and to write either a take-home final or a research paper.
Instructor(s): L. Wedeen Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 24115, CCCT 26301, ANTH 31906, CCCT 36301, PLSC 26301

PLSC 37600. War and the Nation State. 100 Units. 
The aim of this course is to examine the phenomenon of war in its broader socio-economic context during the years between the emergence of the modern nation-state at the end of the eighteenth century and the conclusion of World War II in 1945.
Instructor(s): J. Mearsheimer Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 27600

PLSC 37815. Politics and Public Policy in China. 100 Units. 
This course offers a historical and thematic survey of Chinese politics and of salient issues in China’s public policy. We review the patterns and dynamics of political development or lack thereof in the Mao and reform eras, including the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the politics of reforms. Later sections of the course look at China’s political institutions, leadership, as well as various issues of governance and public policy, including state-society relations, the relationship between Beijing and the provinces, corruption, population and environment. Emphasis is on how institutions have provided the incentives for change as well as how institutions have been transformed.
Instructor(s): D. Yang Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 27815, LLSO 27815

PLSC 38602. American National Security Strategy. 100 Units. 
This course surveys contemporary National Security Strategy around the world, focusing on the most urgent and important issues of the U.S. national security agenda. The purpose of the course is to help students better understand how the U.S. formulates national security strategy, key debates over how the U.S. should handle contemporary challenges, and provide important conceptual frameworks that will enable students to grapple with the security challenges of the decade ahead. The course covers recent changes in American grand strategy, nuclear policy, and the use of conventional forces in contemporary conflicts.
Instructor(s): R. Pape Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 28602

PLSC 38765. The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes. 100 Units. 
This course provides an overview of topics related to politics in authoritarian regimes. We begin by introducing the concept of authoritarianism: how it differs from democracy and how authoritarian regimes differ from each other. We then investigate the tools authoritarian rulers employ to maintain power, including institutions, policies, and tactics, and we examine the effects and side effects of these tools. Finally, we study transitions of power and of institutions, both on the way out of authoritarianism (democratization) and on the way in (democratic backsliding). Students who take this course will acquire a broad understanding of authoritarian politics and how it is covered in the literature.
Instructor(s): Scott Gehlbach; Zhaotian Luo Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s):
Note(s): Prior recommended coursework for undergraduates: one semester in Statistics (Stats 220 or equivalent) and current or prior training in game theory (PBPL 222, Social Science Inquiry core, or equivalent). Prior recommended coursework for graduate students: one semester of statistics and current or prior training in game theory.
Equivalent Course(s): PBPL 28765, PPHA 38765, PLSC 28765

PLSC 39501. International Political Economy. 100 Units.
This graduate seminar focuses on the prevailing theoretical and empirical research programs in international political economy (IPE). The course will introduce a variety of frontier research problems that animate current work in the field as well as provide experience evaluating empirical research. We will discuss relations between international markets and politics; mass politics, domestic political institutions, and international politics. A central goal of the course is to generate ideas for student research, including papers and dissertation topics.
Instructor(s): R. Gulotty
Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 40000. Readings: Political Science. 100 Units.
This is a general reading and research course for independent study.

PLSC 40100. Thesis Preparation: Polsci. 100 Units.
This is an independent study course related to master’s paper or dissertation research.

PLSC 40244. Climate change, history and Social Theory. 100 Units.
This course considers some of the major approaches to climate change and society that have been elaborated by contemporary social and environmental theorists. Key topics include the legacies of environmental thought in classical social theory; the histories and geographies of environmental crises under capitalism; the conceptualization of "nature" in relation to societal dynamics; the role of capitalism and fossil capital in the production of "metabolic rifts"; questions of periodization and associated debates on the "Anthropocene," the "Capitalocene" and the "Plantationocene"; the interplay between urbanization and climate emergencies; the (geo)politics of decarbonization; insurgent struggles for climate justice; and possible post-carbon futures.
Instructor(s): N. Brenner, F. Albritton Jonsson
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Some previous course work in classical and/or contemporary social theory, preferably at the graduate level
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 40244, CHSS 43204, CCCT 40244, HIST 43204

PLSC 40510. Political Violence in America Today. 100 Units.
Political violence is rising in America, but there is great confusion about why. The purpose of this graduate seminar is to help understand our current situation by studying literature that bears on a number of crucial questions: How do violent mass movements evolve? How does the political violence America has experienced in 2020 and 2021 differ from past periods of heightened right-wing political violence in the 1970s and 1990s and heightened racial tensions in the 1960s? What are the impact of structural factors such as changing American national identity and the evolution of social capital in American society on contemporary political violence? What roles does technology and media play in spreading dissent and organizing protests? The main requirements for this seminar are to participate actively in weekly class discussion and write a 20 page exploratory research paper.
Instructor(s): R. Pape
Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 40600. Seminar on IR Theory. 100 Units.
This course is a PhD-level introductory survey of the major scholarly traditions in the field of International Relations. It provides an introduction to the central theoretical approaches including realism, liberalism, and constructivism and their variants. The course also exposes students to more recent non-paradigmatic research programs, reflections on the field’s development over time, and the recurring “meta-debates” which underlie many of the differences in applied areas. Seminar discussion will identify and criticize the central arguments advanced by different scholars in order to assess the relative merits of different theoretical perspectives. The course is designed to help students prepare for the Department’s IR general exam: assigned and suggested readings are a starting point for building a reading list; the course offers practice with answering exam questions; students will exercise modes of critical analysis during seminar critical to passing the exam.
Instructor(s): A. Carson
Terms Offered: Autumn

PLSC 40610. Seminar on International Security Affairs. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to a selection of the principal literature that forms the foundation of contemporary international security affairs. One set of topics focus on traditional war-related topics, including the causes of war, sources of military effectiveness, and civilian victimization in war. A second set of topics focuses on pre-war and short-of-war issues, including coercive threats, arms racing under the security dilemma, the nuclear revolution thesis, and grey zone or covert uses of force. A third set of topics focuses on ideas, individuals, and institutions, including security-related international organizations, norms, and leader-level dynamics. Each week, our purpose will be to critically assess the strengths and limits of the central arguments of the readings, on their own terms.
Instructor(s): R. Pape
Terms Offered: Autumn
PLSC 40815. New Directions in Formal Theory. 100 Units.
In this graduate seminar we will survey recent journal articles that develop formal (mathematical) theories of politics. The range of topics and tools we touch on will be broad. Topics include models of institutions, groups, and behavior, and will span American politics, comparative politics, and international relations. Tools include game theory, network analysis, simulation, axiomatic choice theory, and optimization theory. Our focus will be on what these models are theoretically doing: What they do and do not capture, what makes one mathematical approach more compelling than another, and what we can ultimately learn from a highly stylized (and necessarily incomplete) mathematical representation of politics. The goal of the course is for each participant, including the professor, to emerge with a new research project.
Instructor(s): Z. Luo Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): PLSC 30901, PLSC 31000 or consent of instructor.

PLSC 41102. Inequality and Redistribution. 100 Units.
Inequality is a defining issue of our time. Why are some societies more unequal than others, and why are some more proactive in tackling inequality through policies of redistribution? This graduate seminar will introduce students to the scholarly literature on inequality redistribution, focusing primarily on recent work. We will study the causes and consequences of inequality and redistribution, focusing both on the institutions that shape incentives for governments to implement redistribution, as well as the mechanisms, actors, and international conditions that can erode government incentives or capabilities to redistribute. The emphasis of the course will be twofold: rigorously examining the inferences we can draw from existing work, and designing research that can contribute to a better understanding of the fundamental questions regarding redistributive policies.
Instructor(s): M. Albertus Terms Offered: Autumn

PLSC 41105. Political Economy I: Formal Models of Domestic Politics. 100 Units.
This course provides an overview of formal models of domestic politics—that is, the theory of domestic politics as formalized using the language of game theory. Building on Professor Gehlbach's textbook of the same name, the course covers nine classes of models: electoral competition under certainty and uncertainty, special interest politics, veto players, delegation, coalitions, political agency, nondemocracy, and regime change. The material assumes prior coursework in game theory and proficiency in differential and integral calculus.
Instructor(s): Gehlbach, S Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): PhD Students Only
Equivalent Course(s): PPHA 40102

PLSC 41203. Political Regimes and Transitions. 100 Units.
Despite a shift toward democracy in much of the world, many states have remained solidly autocratic while others are plagued by political instability. This graduate seminar will introduce students to fundamental questions in the study of political regimes: What distinguishes democracy from dictatorship? How does the functioning of democratic institutions affect democratic survival? Why are some dictatorships more stable than others, and what role do institutions such as legislatures, parties, and elections play in their stability? What political and economic factors explain regime transitions, and why do transitions tend to cluster both spatially and temporally? The course will examine how these questions are addressed in current scholarship, with an emphasis on enabling students to design research projects that contribute to our understanding of how political regimes function, persist, and change.
Instructor(s): M. Albertus Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): LACS 41203

PLSC 42420. Approaches to the History of Political Thought. 100 Units.
This course will examine some of the most influential recent statements of method in the history of political thought, alongside work by the same authors that may (or may not) put those methods or approaches into practice. We will read works by Quentin Skinner, Reinhart Koselleck, J.GA. Pocock, Leo Strauss, Sheldon Wolin, Michel Foucault, and David Scott among others, with some emphasis on writings about Hobbes and questions of sovereignty and the state. (E)
Instructor(s): J. Pitts Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 42420, CCCT 42420

PLSC 42701. Seminar in Chinese Politics. 100 Units.
This is a research-oriented seminar for graduate students interested in exploring current research on China and in conducting their own research. Our emphasis will be on the changing nature of the Chinese Party-state, and the relations between state and economy and between state and society as the Chinese society, economy and the level of technology have undergone dramatic changes in recent decades. Throughout the course we'll also pay attention to the course, dynamics, and challenges of making reform. Though the readings are on China, we are to consider China's development comparatively and in view of recent developments in political science.
Instructor(s): D. Yang Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 42805. Law and Empire. 100 Units.
This course will consider the entangled histories of international law and European imperialism from the early modern period to the present. Some of the earliest texts of modern international law were written to grapple with questions about the justifiability of European imperial and commercial practices. Later arguments that states are equal and independent under international law were used both to justify and to obscure imperial relations as well as to criticize it, as, arguably, were human rights arguments in the twentieth century. We will
read authors including Vitoria, Montesquieu, Vattel, Bentham, Mill, Du Bois, and Mohammed Bedjaoui as well as recent writings on the history of empire and international law.

Instructor(s): J. Pitts Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 22805, CCCT 22805, CCCT 42805, SCTH 42805

PLSC 43301. Democracy and Equality. 100 Units.
Democracy has often been celebrated (and often criticized) for expressing some kind of equality among citizens. This course will investigate a series of questions prompted by this supposed relationship between democracy and equality. Is democracy an important part of a just society? What institutions and practices does democracy require? Is equality a meaningful or important political ideal? If so, what kind of equality? Does democracy require some kind of equality, or vice-versa? The course will begin by studying classical arguments for democracy by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, and then focus on contemporary approaches to these questions. The course will conclude with some treatment of current democratic controversies, potentially including issues of race and representation; the fair design of elections; the role of wealth in political processes; and the role of judicial review. The course aims to deepen participants’ understanding of these and related issues, and to develop our abilities to engage in argument about moral and political life. This course is part of the College Course Cluster program, Inequality.

Instructor(s): J. Wilson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 23313, LLSO 29705

PLSC 43701. Constructivism. 100 Units.
This seminar traces the development of the constructivist program in international relations in order to better understand its elements, assumptions, and methods, and apply those to current issues. We start by uncovering the roots of constructivism in sociology and philosophy and examining structuration theory, the English School, world systems theory, regime theory, and sociological institutionalism. The second part of this course focuses on the constructivist agenda in international relations, its boundaries and its critics. In the last part of the course we examine current research in international relations that draws on constructivist methods, including work on the role of norms, epistemic communities, transnational civil society, and the origins of the state.

Instructor(s): R. Terman Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 45505. Agriculture, Environment and Political Economy. 100 Units.
This course will look at the industrialization of Agriculture both as an historical phenomenon and as a contemporary problem in the debate about climate change. Literatures on peasants and economic development, anti-monopoly and cooperatives, food regimes, economic planning, shifts in employment and the changing relations between rural and urban economic life will be surveyed. In general, the aim will be to explore the extent to which agricultural development, particularly in advanced political economies, has been shaped by political economic struggles and changing clusters of ideas about employment, food, the environment and democracy.

Instructor(s): G. Herrigel Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 40245

PLSC 45605. Political Theories of the Corporation. 100 Units.
This course will survey political ideas about the corporation in Europe, the US and Japan. The first part of the course will explore historical debates about the relationship between the corporation and democracy, while the second part will be devoted to a range of contemporary debates on the democratization of the corporation itself and to problems of monopoly in contemporary democratic order.

Instructor(s): G. Herrigel Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 40246

PLSC 45710. Race and Capitalism. 100 Units.
This course will address issues of race and capitalism.

Instructor(s): M. Dawson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 45700

PLSC 45804. Feminists Read the Greeks. 100 Units.
Since the 1970s, thinkers writing on gender, sex, and sexuality have staged a series of generative, critical, and sometimes controversial encounters with ancient Greek thought, politics, and culture. As one classicist puts it, feminist theory has “gone a long way … toward inscribing classical Greek philosophy at the origins of some of the most tenacious assumptions about sexual difference in the Western tradition.” This course explores the ways that the texts and practices of ancient Greece, if not the idea of “the Greeks,” have provided theoretical and symbolic resources for feminists and others to think critically about gender (and sexuality) as a conceptual and political category. What sorts of interpretive and historical assumptions govern these engagements? To what extent might the trajectories of gender studies, feminism, and classics be intertwined? Was there a concept of
“gender” in ancient Greece? Of sexuality? Is it fair to say, as many have, that classical Greek ideas about gender and the sexed body are wholly opposed to those of the moderns? What other oppositions could this habit of thought be working to keep in place? Sample reading list: Sophocles’ Antigone, Plato’s Republic, Foucault’s The Use of Pleasure, Ann Carson’s Oresteia, Judith Butler’s Antigone’s Claim.

Instructor(s): D. Kasimis Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 45804, GNSE 25804, PLSC 25804, CCCT 25804, KNOW 25804, CCCT 45804

PLSC 46401. Co-evolution of States and Markets. 100 Units.
This course will focus on the emergence of alternative forms of organization control (e.g., centralized bureaucracy, multiple hierarchies, elite networks, and clientage) in different social structural contexts (e.g., the interaction of kinship, class, nation states, markets and heterodox mobilization). Themes will be illustrated in numerous cross-cultural contexts.
Instructor(s): J. Padgett Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 40232

PLSC 46600. Political Economy of Development. 100 Units.
This course is intended as an introduction for Ph.D. students to the research literature in the political economy of development. Its purpose is to give students both a sense of the frontier research topics and a good command of how social science methodological tools are used in the area.
Instructor(s): Blattman, C; Robinson, J Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Harris PhD or instructor permission required
Equivalent Course(s): PPHA 41120, ECON 35570

PLSC 48001. Field Seminar in Comparative Politics I. 100 Units.
This seminar broadly surveys the study of comparative politics in contemporary political science.
Instructor(s): S. Stokes Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 48101. Field Seminar in Comparative Politics II. 100 Units.
This seminar broadly surveys the study of comparative politics in contemporary political science.
Instructor(s): A. Eggers Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 48401. Quantitative Security. 100 Units.
Since Quincy Wright’s A Study of War, scholars of war and security have collected and analyzed data. This course guides students through an intellectual history of the quantitative study of war. The course begins with Wright, moves to the founding of the Correlates of War project in the late 1960s, and then explores the proliferation of quantitative conflict studies in the 1990s and 2000s. The course ends by considering the recent focus on experimental and quasi-experimental analysis. Throughout the course, students will be introduced to the empirical methods used to study conflict and the data issues facing quantitative conflict scholars. For students with limited training in quantitative methods, this course will serve as a useful introduction to such methods. For students with extensive experience with quantitative methods, this course will deepen their understanding of when and how to apply these methods.
Instructor(s): P. Poast Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PPHA 39830

PLSC 48700. Crime, Conflict and the State. 100 Units.
Scholars of civil war emphasize the importance, and perhaps primacy, of criminal profits for insurgencies, especially in the post-cold war era. But theories of civil war generally rest on an assumption that insurgents aim to replace state power. This seminar approaches the issue from the other end of the spectrum: armed conflict between states and “purely” criminal groups--particularly drug cartels. Cartel-state conflict poses a fundamental puzzle: Why attack the state if you seek neither to topple nor secede from it? After a brief survey of the literature on civil war and organized crime, we will study recent work on criminal conflict, particularly in Latin America. We also consider the related topics of prison-based criminal networks and paramilitaries, and explore how crime and political insurgency interact in places like West Africa and Afghanistan. Throughout, we evaluate the concepts, questions and designs underpinning current research.
Instructor(s): B. Lessing Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): LACS 48700, PPHA 37105

PLSC 49100. On Violence. 100 Units.
This seminar begins by covering major theorists of and debates about violence. Among the authors we shall read are Arendt, Fanon, Sartre, Benjamin, Foucault, Mbembe, Zizek, and Butler. We shall then explore a few ethnographies that explore issues related to violence in theoretically motivated, grounded research, including works by Masco, Schepers-Hughes, Siegel, and Taussig. The aims of the course are to combine political theory and comparative politics concerns with theoretically-motivated work in anthropology and literary studies. Considering the relationship between overt coercion and systemic violence, attending to genres of writing about violence, and focusing on the everyday lived experiences of violence, the course grapples with questions of race, class, gender, mediation, representation, and political power. The course will also reflect on the cathartic pleasures, ethical conundrums, and anti-political dimensions of violence. Students will participate avidly in class discussions and write one seminar paper OR take a final take-home exam.
Instructor(s): L. Wedeen Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 52515, CCCT 49100
PLSC 50000. Dissertation Proposal Seminar. 100 Units.
A weekly seminar devoted to the presentation and collective discussion of several drafts of each student's dissertation proposal.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Winter

PLSC 50901. Qualitative Methods and Research Design. 100 Units.
This course examines small-N research designs and methods for engaging in qualitative research. We will discuss concept formation, case selection, comparative case studies, process-tracing, combinations with other methods, and the virtues and limitations of different approaches to theory development and causal inference. We will then consider some of the tools that are often associated with qualitative research, including ethnography, interviews, archival work, and historiography. Because other courses in the department and university cover some of these methods in greater depth, this class will particularly emphasize their relationship to research design.
Instructor(s): A. Carson, P. Staniland Terms Offered: Autumn

PLSC 51900. Feminist Philosophy. 100 Units.
The course is an introduction to the major varieties of philosophical feminism. After studying some key historical texts in the Western tradition (Wollstonecraft, Rousseau, J. S. Mill), we examine four types of contemporary philosophical feminism: Liberal Feminism (Susan Moller Okin, Martha Nussbaum), Radical Feminism (Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin), Difference Feminism (Carol Gilligan, Annette Baier, Nel Noddings), and Postmodern “Queer” Gender Theory (Judith Butler, Michael Warner), and recent writing on trans feminism. After studying each of these approaches, we will focus on political and ethical problems of contemporary international feminism, asking how well each of the approaches addresses these problems. (A)
Instructor(s): M. Nussbaum Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduates may enroll only with the permission of the instructor. Only junior or senior philosophy concentrators are eligible, and you will need a letter of recommendation from a faculty member in the Philosophy department who has taught you.
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 21901, GNSE 29600, PHIL 31900, HMRT 31900, GNSE 39600, RETH 41000

PLSC 53025. Philosophy of Animal Rights. 100 Units.
A close study of some recent philosophical classics about animal ethics and animal rights, including Christine Korsgaard’s Fellow Creatures, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka’s Zoopolis, and a manuscript of my own, Justice for Animals, that is due at the end of 2021. We will also read some of the recent work by scientists such as Frans De Waal, Mark Bekoff, and Victoria Braithwaite on animal cognition.
Instructor(s): M. Nussbaum Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): An undergraduate major in philosophy or some equivalent solid philosophy preparation. Ph.D. students in Philosophy and Political Theory may enroll without permission.
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. Admission by permission of the instructor. Permission must be sought in writing at least ten days before the beginning of Law School classes, Monday, September 20. The class will be offered on the Law School calendar.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 53025, RETH 53025

PLSC 53101. Seminar: Democracy and the Information Technology Revolution. 100 Units.
The revolution in information technologies has serious implications for democratic societies. We concentrate, though not exclusively, on the United States. We look at which populations have the most access to technology-based information sources (the digital divide), and how individual and group identities are being forged online. We ask how is the responsiveness of government being affected, and how representative is the online community. Severe conflict over the tension between national security and individual privacy rights in the U.S., United Kingdom and Ireland will be explored as well. We analyze both modern works (such as those by Turkle and Gilder) and the work of modern democratic theorists (such as Habermas). An emphasis in this course will be the methodologies and research agendas utilized by scholars in this field.
Instructor(s): M. Dawson Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 53300. Seminar on Nuclear Weapons and International Politics. 100 Units.
The aim of this course is to examine how nuclear weapons have affected the conduct of international relations. Special attention will be paid to subjects like: 1) nuclear deterrence, 2) the causes of nuclear proliferation, 3) the consequences of nuclear proliferation, 4) strategies for employing nuclear weapons, 4) the role of nuclear weapons in the Cold War, 5) how nuclear weapons will affect relations among the great powers in the emerging multipolar world, and 6) whether there has been a “nuclear revolution.”
Instructor(s): J. Mearsheimer Terms Offered: Spring

PLSC 57200. Network Analysis. 100 Units.
This seminar explores the sociological utility of the network as a unit of analysis. How do the patterns of social ties in which individuals are embedded differentially affect their ability to cope with crises, their decisions to move or change jobs, their eagerness to adopt new attitudes and behaviors? The seminar group will consider (a) how the network differs from other units of analysis, (b) structural properties of networks, consequences of flows (or content) in network ties, and (c) dynamics of those ties.
Instructor(s): J. Padgett Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 50096
PLSC 59903. Modern Indian Political and Legal Thought. 100 Units.
India has made important contributions to political and legal thought, most of which are too little-known in the West. These contributions draw on ancient traditions, Hindu and Buddhist, but transform them, often radically, to fit the needs of an anti-imperial nation aspiring to inclusiveness and equality. We will study the thought of Rabindranath Tagore (Nationalism, The Religion of Man, selected literary works); Mohandas Gandhi (Hind Swaraj (Indian Self-Rule), Autobiography, and selected speeches); B. R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution (The Annihilation of Caste, The Buddha and his Dhamma, and selected speeches and interventions in the Constituent Assembly); and, most recently, Amartya Sen, whose The Idea of Justice is rooted, as he describes, both in ancient Indian traditions and in the thought of Tagore.
Instructor(s): M. Nussbaum Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. Students not from Law or Philosophy need instructor’s permission. Undergraduates are not eligible.
Equivalent Course(s): RETH 59903, PHIL 59903