

POLITICAL SCIENCE (PLSC)

PLSC 1000 Introduction to American Politics (4 Credits)

Philosophical traditions, historical background, structure and functioning of American government, and political attitudes and behavior. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 1110 Comparing Politics around the World (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the study of comparative politics, a sub-field within political science that uses a "comparative method" to compare and contrast countries to understand questions such as Where do 'states' come from? Why are only some democratic? How do states promote economic development? Why are some states increasingly rich while others remain poor? Why do people mobilize peacefully to influence politics in some places while they violently attack the established order in others? How do distinct identities rooted in ethnicity, gender, race, and religion influence politics differently around the world? How does globalization affect various countries, and why do some seem to cope with contemporary challenges more effectively than others? This course counts toward the "Scientific inquiry: Society and culture" requirement.

PLSC 1610 Introduction to Political Thought (4 Credits)

This course presents an introduction to some of the key ideas and questions in the study of politics. As an introductory course, it cannot present a systematic overview of the entire study of politics; rather, it seeks to introduce students to some central concerns in the study of politics. In this course we learn about the basic principles of human conduct in social contexts and explain how social scientific methods are used to understand these underlying principles. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 1810 Introduction to Law and Society (4 Credits)

This course introduces the relationship between law and society, exploring principles of legal conduct in social contexts and explaining how social scientific methods are used to understand these principles. Questions discussed include what is the relationship between the "law-on-the-books" and "law-in-action," and what can we learn from gaps between formal law and the "real" law that is experienced in society? Empirical examples may include international comparisons and the evolution of law over time. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 1988 Study Abroad Resident Credit (0-18 Credits)

PLSC 2001 Law and Politics (4 Credits)

Introduces the relationship between law and politics, describing the basic principles of legal conduct in political contexts and explaining how social scientific methods are used to understand these underlying principles. Questions explored may include the following: Where does the law come from? Whose interests does it reflect? Does formal legal change lead to practical political and social change? Why do we comply with the law? What are the limits of enforcement? This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. It also satisfies the department distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2002 Abortion Politics and Law (4 Credits)

Abortion has been, and continues to be, a defining issue in America politics and law. As the traditional story goes, the country has been locked in a high-stakes and highly controversial fight over abortion since the Supreme Court legalized access in 1973 via the Roe v. Wade decision. While a convenient story, it egregiously oversimplifies both the past and present of abortion politics and law. This class aims to explore the cyclical and complex relationship between law and politics of abortion in America: how it came to become a national issue; how and why its contours have changed over time; what effects it has had on people's lives and the country's politics; and how we can constructively think about the new, post-Roe US. In doing so, we will also consider how the case study of abortion can inform our more general understandings of American politics, law, movements, and political parties.

PLSC 2200 Politics of China (4 Credits)

Napoleon Bonaparte allegedly said, "let China sleep, for when she wakes up, she will shake the world." Two hundred years later, China is indeed waking up, and the world is feeling the dragon's hot breath. In this class we will examine the fall and rise of the Chinese state, with a focus on its political and economic trajectories after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Some of the key issues to be examined are: China's "economic miracle," when, if ever, will China democratize, its potentially explosive relations with Taiwan, its challenges to America's global hegemony, etc.

PLSC 2220 Comparative Democratization: East and West (4 Credits)

This course brings the contested notion of democratization into the East Asian context and tests its relevance for countries at various stages of political and economic development in the region. After introducing the general debates over what democratization is and tracing its emergence in Western Europe and North America, class explores the rise of democratization movements in East Asia and examines the various forms of democratization in different political and economic settings. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in comparative/International politics. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2225 European Political Economy (4 Credits)

Examines major challenges facing European political economies from the postwar era, including transformations in the welfare state, liberalization in light of market transitions and European integration, and global pressures. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2235 Politicized "Ethnicity": Cross-Disciplinary Approaches to the Study of Identity Politics (4 Credits)

What are racial and ethnic identities? Are they more likely to influence political outcomes than other types of identity (e.g., gender, profession, class), and if so, why? This course introduces competing concepts of ethnic identity and connects them to the historical construction of race and national identities. By studying these issues in cases outside of the United States, you will gain unique comparative perspective about the idiosyncrasies of U.S. politics and history. Course materials include readings, podcasts, videos and documentary footage from political science, sociology, legal studies, and other disciplines. Why take this course? Gaining insight into the construction of ethnic, racial, and national identities will help you better understand yourself, your relationships, political campaigns, activist tactics, and episodes of political violence, among other things. The course satisfies the departmental sub-field requirement for majors in comparative/international politics. Recommended before taking this course: one introductory level course in political science.

PLSC 2250 Democratic Erosion: Comparing Experiences Across Countries and Over Time (4 Credits)

As the conclusion of the Cold War spurred a tidal wave of democratization around the globe, western policy makers and pundits often assumed that even in weak, poverty-impacted states attempts to democratize were bound to succeed – at least eventually. By 2008, however, the discourse of democratization had been transformed. "Celebrations of democracy's triumph are premature," wrote a noted scholar of democratization; "in a few short years, the democratic wave has been slowed by a powerful authoritarian undertow." Recently, both the quality and quantity of "democratic" states have declined. Even the world's oldest, most taken-for-granted liberal democratic regimes increasingly flout democratic norms and policies. We consider a range of comparative cases from across world regions. Along the way, we engage with several prominent theories of democratic backsliding or authoritarianization. The course satisfies the departmental sub-field major requirement in comparative/international politics.

PLSC 2260 Politics of Japan (4 Credits)

How did Japan rapidly catch up with more advanced industrial powers? Can other developing countries copy the Japanese model? What was the "darker side" behind Japan's economic miracle? How do we come to terms with the sudden burst of Japan's "Bubble Economy?" Will Japan's current economic recovery process, which started in 2002, be sustainable? Is a genuine international reconciliation between Japan and its neighbors possible? These are just some of the questions we will examine in this class. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Cross listed with ASIA 2601.

PLSC 2290 Latin American Politics (4 Credits)

Latin America is home to the uneasy marriage between politics and economics. This course will focus on two major themes in Latin American politics. First, this course will examine why Latin American countries swing between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Second, the course will examine how local and global economic forces interact with politics in the region. The course will also cover some contemporary issues in Latin America such as corruption, inequality, migration, and climate change.

PLSC 2360 Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Resistance in Three Continents (4 Credits)

This course explores historical and contemporary aspects of racialized power structures as they have specifically impacted indigenous peoples in Australia, the United States, and Latin America. How did the dynamics of imperialism, capitalism, liberal state-building, and racist (and racist) ideology combine to devastate indigenous communities around the world? How did distinct perspectives on time, space, property, and community allow colonizing populations to conquer native populations even while advocating the most egalitarian political structures ever attempted? Satisfies department distribution requirement in comparative/international politics. Sophomore standing required.

PLSC 2370 Global Political Economy (4 Credits)

Global Political Economy (GPE) examines the interplay between politics and economics within and across nation-states in response to international politics and economics. The course explores the effect of political factors on international economic relations and the impact of international economic factors on domestic and international politics. The objective is to evaluate various theories of the global political economy through observation of the global political-economic system. Satisfies the department's distribution requirement in comparative/international politics. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2410 American Government Simulation (4 Credits)

This course explores American politics by simulating the legislative process of the federal government. Students play either a member of the House of Representatives or a member of the Executive Branch. The simulation requires that students seek the goals related to their position. By putting theory into practice, students gain a better understanding of Washington politics. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2415 Campaigns and Elections (4 Credits)

The U.S. holds hundreds of elections every year, but presidential elections stand alone as the only truly national contests. What influences presidential selection? What information can we gain as citizens and scholars from national presidential debates? These elections are guided by distinct rules (including nominations via primaries and caucuses, evolving campaign finance laws, and the strict requirements of the Electoral College) with ever-changing strategies to maximize support under these rules. This class provides students with the historic context and political science concepts and theories to better understand the many steps involved in electing U.S. presidents.

PLSC 2420 American Presidency (4 Credits)

Historical development and current role and powers of the U.S. presidency. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2425 Religion in American Politics (4 Credits)

This course offers a broad, critical overview of the relationship, and some of the tensions, between religion and politics in the United States. We first review how the historical presence of a variety of American religious groups and perspectives on the relationship between church and state have impacted the nation's often conflicted sense of identity as well as the tenor of our ongoing debates about - and within - religion in American politics. That gives us a foundation for exploring a number of current "hot button" issues like debates over "moral values" and faith-based initiatives. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2430 Political Parties & Interest Groups (4 Credits)

Evolution and structure of political parties; how they mobilize voters and provide leadership of political issues. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2450 Latinx Politics in the United States (4 Credits)

Examines the history and contemporary role of the Hispanic/Latinx population in the U.S. political system, exploring themes including identity, racialization, immigration, social movements, public opinion, political behavior, and public policy.

PLSC 2460 Re-Inventing Europe (4 Credits)

Politics, economics and culture of Europe of today including basics of parliamentary democracy, contemporary political economy and national identities of major European countries as well as developments in the European Union and Eastern Europe. This course counts toward the sub-field requirement for PLSC majors in the comparative/international politics.

PLSC 2470 State and Local Politics (4 Credits)

This course examines the general and the unique traits of the politics, institutions, and policy processes of state governments. We will, in addition, take advantage of our location and focus on the government and politics of Colorado. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2480 U.S. Congress (4 Credits)

Structure and functions of U.S. Congress and congressional behavior. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2500 Political Psychology (4 Credits)

This course examines the intersection of politics and psychology. Students will examine how emotion, cognition, and group psychology influence political actors and policy outcomes. Students will apply these concepts to voting, foreign policy decision-making, and the formation of belief systems.

PLSC 2510 Women in U.S. Politics (4 Credits)

This course focuses on the role of women in U.S. politics, with an emphasis on voting, elections, and representation. Topics include the woman suffrage movement, women's voting patterns, women as candidates, and women holding elected office. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2611 Neoliberalism: The Privatization of Everything, and its Problems (4 Credits)

This course examines the origins, evolution, and implementation of "neoliberalism," the policy persuasion that advocates privatizing, marketizing, and deregulating the provision of almost all goods and services. Special attention will be given to the privatization of the provision of national security, what historically has been viewed as the most central function of government. This course satisfies the department's political theory distribution requirement.

PLSC 2620 Quest for Community (4 Credits)

This course explores how political theory over the past several decades has grappled with the benefits, limitations, and paradoxes of liberalism in the post-modern world. Inquiry revolves around whether and how liberalism can deal with the identities, differences, and distributive inequalities that complicate our world today. Is liberalism -or its successor ideology, neoliberalism- an appropriate model for political community, or should it be replaced with a different paradigm? What would it mean to think beyond liberalism to something more radical and democratic? Satisfies the department distribution requirement in political theory. Junior standing required.

PLSC 2630 American Political Thought (4 Credits)

Where do distinctly "American" values and beliefs come from and why are they so fiercely held? Are there viable alternatives to the classic ways in which Americans tend to address our social and political problems? This course offers an exploration of these questions from the perspective of a diverse array of American political thinkers. Starting before the Founding and continuing to political thinkers of the present day, this seminar-style course will examine different interpretations of American identity—and the unique ways they intersect—in American political speech and theory. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in either American politics or political theory. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2650 Democracy and the Corporation (4 Credits)

Corporations have emerged as dominant governance institutions. The largest of them reach into virtually every country in the world and exceed most governments in size, wealth, logistic capabilities, and influence. Their governance is directed both inward, structuring the environment in which most modern adults work, and outward, influencing government policy and the broader social landscape. This course will focus on the special features of corporations as governance institutions, and on the process through which corporate managers have attained significant autonomy from government and from shareholders in exercising their governance powers. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in political theory. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2660 Feminist Political Thought (4 Credits)

This course surveys political theory literatures on feminist thinking and activism. Readings will survey historical and contemporary theories of gender, identity, patriarchy, misogyny, and liberation. Course will center trans and of-color feminist narratives thinking and practices. Emphasis on critical analysis of various feminist texts in writing and in class discussion.

PLSC 2670 Radical Democracy (4 Credits)

What does it mean to say "the people acted"? What is democracy, or what could it be? This course pursues answers to these questions through an exploration of works in political theory. We will read texts that attempt to move beyond procedural forms of democracy such as elections and representation and argue for more substantive forms of democracy in the form of deliberation, racial justice, and democratic agonism (or contestation). To think about the ideas in these texts as resources for enacting radical democracy from within less than democratic institutions, we will also conduct voter registration and or education on or off campus.

PLSC 2701 Topics in American Politics (4 Credits)

Focuses on specific issues in politics of the United States. PLSC 2701 satisfies the department's distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2702 Topics in Comparative Politics (4 Credits)

Focuses on topics in comparative and/or international politics. Satisfies the departmental sub-field requirement in comparative/international politics. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2703 Topics in Law and Politics (4 Credits)

Focuses on topics in law from a political science perspective. Satisfies departmental distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2704 Topics in Political Theory (4 Credits)

Focuses on topics in political theory. Satisfies departmental sub-field requirements in political theory. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2755 Legal Actors and Institutions (4 Credits)

This course examines the legal system from the points of view of those who work within it. It considers the social characteristics of lawyers, judges, regulators, elected officials and non-state actors, and how they matter to the social construction of law. The emphasis is on the social organization of law and the everyday interactions that bring meaning to the legal system. It considers and seeks to understand how legal roles, legal institutions and power relations within the law influence its development and practice. Throughout the course, students are required to think critically about how society and the social relationships of law influence law's outcomes. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2820 Constitutional Law: Civil Rights and Liberties (4 Credits)

This course addresses major ideas and principles of U.S. constitutional law, with a focus on equal protection of the law, fundamental rights, and freedom of speech and religion. Within each of these areas, we will consider the development of court rulings over time, economic and political influences on court decision-making, and policy implications of these rulings. While PLSC 2860 complements this course, it is not necessary to take both courses. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2825 The Politics of Rights (4 Credits)

This course examines rights and rights-claims as complex and contingent resources for political actors. The class aims at equipping students to be better able to identify, understand, and critically evaluate how, why, and to what end rights claims are used in politics. Particular attention is paid to social and political movements that use rights-claims, as well as the various advantages, limitations, and problems that can accompany rights-based political appeals. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or above.

PLSC 2830 Judicial Politics (4 Credits)

This course considers the role of courts, especially the Supreme Court, in the U.S. political system. Topics include the the potential dangers and benefits of allocating significant power to un-elected justices, judicial decision-making, Court-Congress interaction in developing public policies, the social and political effects of court rulings, and legal interest groups.

PLSC 2840 International Law & Human Rights (4 Credits)

This course explores the role that international law plays in promoting human rights. Why did states first commit to international human rights protections after the Second World War? Why did states voluntarily surrender their sovereignty by signing and ratifying human rights treaties that limit their freedom to act domestically? Does this international law influence governments' human rights practices? Who enforces international human rights law? Which countries are leaders or laggards when it comes to international human rights? This course can count toward the sub-field requirement for PLSC majors in either law or comparative/international politics.

PLSC 2850 Politics of Criminal Justice in the US (4 Credits)

Problems and reforms in American criminal justice system; causes and extent of crime, excessive use of force by police, systemic racism, bail reform, probation and parole; prisons and police/community relations. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2855 Conservative Politics and the Courts (4 Credits)

This course focuses on the reasons for and uses of litigation and judicial politics in the pursuit of conservative ends. As such, the class critically examines the different major sub-groups that define modern American conservatism; how these subgroups compare to and interact with one another; the conditions that allow for political movements generally to use courts in pursuing policy ends; and the specific steps that various American conservative groups have taken in order to influence courts, law, and policy. Introduction to American Politics (PLSC 1000) is recommended, but not required.

PLSC 2860 Constitutional Law: Governmental Structures and Powers (4 Credits)

This course addresses major ideas and principles of U.S. constitutional law, with a focus on federalism, the growth of national power, and separation of powers. Within each of these areas, we will consider the development of court rulings over time, economic and political influences on court decision-making, and policy implications of these rulings. While PLSC 2820 complements this course, it is not necessary to take both courses. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2870 Theories of Law (4 Credits)

Approaches to law, courts and judges focusing of various theories of law including legal realism, feminist legal theory, law and society, law and economics, behavioralism. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2901 Political Inquiry (4 Credits)

Introduces political inquiry within the discipline of political science, examining quantitative, qualitative, and historical research methods with a focus on basic principles of effective research design and data analysis; no previous mathematical background is necessary. By the end of the course, students are able to evaluate scientific research, frame a research question, and design a research study. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2988 Study Abroad Resident Credit (0-18 Credits)**PLSC 3290 Capstone Seminar in Politics (4 Credits)**

This capstone seminar is required for all majors and explores theoretical and empirical issues of politics with application to specific political developments. Topics vary by section and instructor. All students complete a significant independent research paper based in part on analysis of primary source materials. Senior standing required. Political Science majors only.

PLSC 3701 Topics in Political Science (1-4 Credits)**PLSC 3702 Topics in Political Science (1-4 Credits)****PLSC 3703 Topics in Political Science (1-4 Credits)****PLSC 3704 Topics in Political Science (1-4 Credits)****PLSC 3982 Political Internship (1-4 Credits)**

This is a hybrid on-line/in-class internship course. Students may work on political campaigns at the federal, state, or local level. Students will keep journals structured by questions from a faculty member, meet in a seminar with others doing an internship to reflect on service in their placement, respond to on-line assignments and writing prompts, and write a research paper integrating their experience with relevant scholarship.

PLSC 3985 Legal Internship (4 Credits)

This is an online class for students working in internships related to the legal profession. Students may work in the local courts, advocacy organizations, the public defender's office, or the district attorney's office, either in Denver or elsewhere in the U.S. Students will complete internship hours in addition to engaging in an online course that focuses on professional development, reflections on the internship experience, and relevant legal scholarship. Students are responsible for applying to and securing their own internships (with assistance from the professor), and should plan to begin this process early, typically in advance of registration.

PLSC 3988 Study Abroad Resident Credit (0-18 Credits)**PLSC 3990 Honors Thesis (2-8 Credits)**

Independent work on honors thesis. Prerequisite: senior standing.

PLSC 3991 Independent Study (1-4 Credits)

Independent scholarship on a theoretical or empirical project. Prerequisite: faculty approval.

PLSC 3995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)

Students must get instructor permission and fill out an Independent Study/Research form in order to enroll in an independent research course.