Political Science (PLSC)

Courses

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 the basic concepts of comparative politics, emphasizing both history and theory, and it designed to give students the intellectual tools necessary to understand the forces that shape governance in countries at varied stages of political and economic development. The course’s key questions include: are countries becoming more democratic, and will all states follow something akin to the model of the United States? Or are differences between countries becoming even more apparent, with old ethnic rivalries, styles of governance, and religious movements having an impact on the divergent evolution of regimes? The class compares politics primarily in four countries: the United Kingdom, Japan, China, and Nigeria. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 1610 Introduction to Political Thought: Power, Liberty, and Justice (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 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 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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2005 Voices of Self, Soul, & Public (4 Credits)
This course examines the place of the individual in relationship to public life, systems of knowledge, and the natural world. It asks basic questions such as, Who am I? What is my place in the world? What is free will? What is the place of spirituality and contemplation in a secular society? Drawing from the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, the course provides foundational material for responding to these questions. The methodology of the course is first-person experiential inquiry involving sustained periods of contemplation and meditation.

PLSC 2050 Anarchy or Order? World Politics (4 Credits)
World politics is characterized by the absence of any overarching governmental authority; the "sovereignty" of individual states creates an international anarchy. This anarchy creates a permissive environment that influences how states and other global actors relate to each other. This course introduces the evolution of the modern international system and provides an overview of the major concepts and theoretical approaches used in the study of world politics. The principle aim of the course is to provide an analytical framework to understand and evaluate international events and issues. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 2200 Politics of China (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, this class explores the rise of democratization movements in East Asia and examines the various forms of democratization in different political and economic settings.

PLSC 2215 East Asia in World Politics (4 Credits)
This course focuses on East Asia and tests how accurately major international relations theories describe what is going on in this part of the world. The region is home to two of the world's most influential players, namely China and Japan. South Korea, another key player in the region, is another global economic powerhouse. East Asia also has two potentially explosive issues, namely the Korean Peninsula and the Chinese sovereign claim over Taiwan. We discuss what the region's economic might and security importance mean to the rest of the world and America, in particular. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

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.
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 2240 Political Economy: The Welfare State (4 Credits)
Explores the range of policies and programs associated with the contemporary welfare state in the U.S. and other postindustrial democracies, comparing the differentiated and private emphasis of the U.S. welfare state in contrast to more universal and public welfare states in Europe. Questions the class considers include the following: Are contemporary social programs sustainable? Who benefits the most from particular policies and how does this affect the political costs associated with reform? How effectively do welfare states reduce poverty and equalize opportunities for advancement? What justifies the redistribution of wealth inherent in the welfare state? Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

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 2280 Comparative Social Movements (4 Credits)
Types of social/political issues and forms of interest intermediation represented by new social movements in Western industrial society. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2300 Public Policy (4 Credits)
This course explores the politics associated with the process of making and implementing public policy in the United States. Substantive topics vary with instructor. Sophomore standing required.

PLSC 2360 Comparative Race Politics: State Power and Indigenous Rights (4 Credits)
This course explores historical and contemporary aspects of racialized power structures as they have specifically impacted indigenous peoples in different countries. 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? 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. Because you will be doing quantitative, statistical analysis and research, you will be required to acquire some basic statistical knowledge.

PLSC 2400 Political Behavior: Attitude and Public Opinion (4 Credits)
This course focuses on a core feature of democratic government: the mass public. It examines how political attitudes are formed and measured, how these broad public preferences are communicated to government, and what impact public opinion has on policy development. Sophomore standing required.

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. Prerequisite: PLSC 1000 or equivalent.

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. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

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. 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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.
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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

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.

PLSC 2480 U.S. Congress (4 Credits)
Structure and functions of U.S. Congress and congressional behavior. 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 2610 Rise of Political Individualism (4 Credits)
Political experience and reflection from 1450 to 1800; medieval background; Machiavelli and Renaissance; Reformation; Anglican and Puritan thought; Hobbes; Locke; Enlightenment; Rousseau. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2615 Crisis of Authority and Values (4 Credits)
This course explores how authorities in the modern era have found it increasingly difficult to justify their decisions, and even their very offices, in the face of increasingly skeptical and diverse publics. Much of this difficulty reflects a "crisis of values," a rejection by many of traditional beliefs about what is good and sacred, together with an inability of political leaders and philosophers to find alternative ends or procedures that command universal assent and that could be appealed to by authorities to guide and justify their decisions. Sophomore standing required.

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 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? 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 through the historical canon of American political thought, with an eye to the competing strains of Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian philosophy that have influenced American thought for centuries. Starting before the Founding and continuing to political thinkers of the present day, this seminar-style course will examine the broad strains of liberalism, radicalism, and conservatism—and the unique ways they intersect—in American political speech and theory.

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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2700 Topics in Political Science (4 Credits)
Nonseminar format focusing on specific issues in political science. Depending on content, PLSC 2700 may be counted toward concentrations. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2701 Topics in Political Science (1-4 Credits)
Nonseminar format focusing on specific issues in political science. Depending on content, PLSC 2701 may be counted toward concentrations. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2702 Topics in Political Science (4 Credits)
Nonseminar format focusing on specific issues in political science. Depending on content, PLSC 2702 may be counted toward concentrations. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2703 Topics in Political Science (1-4 Credits)
Nonseminar format focusing on specific issues in political science. Depending on content, PLSC 2703 may be counted toward concentrations. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2704 Topics in Political Science (4 Credits)
Nonseminar format focusing on specific issues in political science. Depending on content, PLSC 2704 may be counted toward concentrations. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2708 American Political & Foreign Policy (4 Credits)
Contemporary American foreign policy; its formulation and implementation. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.
PLSC 2815 Comparative Courts (4 Credits)
Who goes to courts, and what do courts achieve? This course examines the role of courts in a variety of legal traditions, comparing how constitutional, civil, and criminal disputes relate to political conflict and change in contemporary democracies. We then explore the role of courts in regime changes, including both the demise of democracy and transitions to democracy after experiences of colonialism, authoritarianism, fascism, and communism. Finally, we consider how international tribunals are transforming the nature of sovereignty. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2820 Civil Rights and Liberties (4 Credits)
Civil rights have emerged as central to contests over governance. How have civil rights laws and movements emerged, particularly in the United States? This course addresses both how courts address questions and social movements around rights. Substantive areas include freedom of speech and religion, the prohibition on establishing a religion in the United States, and claims to equality.

PLSC 2830 Law and Social Policy (4 Credits)
Examines how law and courts shape and reflect social policy, exploring policy formulation and implementation across a range of social issues such as gender, poverty, welfare, economic justice, and social control. Sophomore standing required.

PLSC 2840 International Law & Human Rights (4 Credits)
Legal and philosophical status of human rights worldwide; socioeconomic barriers to achieving global human rights. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2850 Constitutional Law & Politics (4 Credits)
What are the fundamentals of constitutional governance? How have they been debated? How have institutions of the state understood constitutional requirements? Focus is on the United States, but not exclusively. Topics include judicial review; federalism; racial, sexual, political and economic equality; rights of the accused. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2860 Taming Tyranny: How Constitutions Frame Freedom (4 Credits)
Comparative analysis of legal systems including constitution making, distribution of governmental powers, nature of individual rights and analysis of specific substantive areas such as abortion rights. 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 2992 Directed Study (1-10 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)
Students may work in campaigns and elections, neighborhood associations, the state legislature, or for members of Congress, to name recent placements. 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, and write a research paper integrating their experience with relevant scholarship.

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 3992 Directed Study (1-10 Credits)