Political Science Department
Graduate Course Descriptions

Spring 2017
PSCI 452-301 Civil Wars
J Stanton

Monday 2:00-5:00 PM

This course examines the causes, dynamics, and resolution of civil wars. The first section of the course will examine competing theoretical arguments regarding the causes of civil war, looking at how economic and political grievances may motivate groups to rebel against the government; why political leaders may sometimes encourage violence; and what role ethnicity, national identity, and a sense of insecurity play in the initiation of internal conflict. The second section of the course will look at how civil wars are fought, with discussions of guerilla warfare, counterinsurgency strategies, terrorism and the role of humanitarian aid in conflict settings. In the third part of the course, focusing on the resolution of internal conflicts, topics will include international intervention and peacekeeping; negotiated political settlements such as power-sharing and partition; and post-conflict justice strategies such as domestic and international trials and truth commissions. Throughout the course, we will consider specific cases of civil war – for example, wars in Colombia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Mozambique, Russia, Sudan, Uganda, and the former Yugoslavia.

PSCI 498-301 Oil and Grand Strategy
R Vitalis

Wednesday 2:00-5:00 PM

The seminar is dedicated to developing your critical reading and writing skills in the areas of international relations and contemporary (comparative) history. The topic this semester relates to my own work-in-progress on conventional understandings of the role of oil in US grand strategy—the argument in a nutshell is that the conventional wisdom is wrong. You have to help me to demonstrate this error and develop an alternative account. This seminar requires a great deal from participants. You are expected to take charge of your learning, engaging with each other and the instructor in a process of knowledge creation through practice, inquiry, deliberation, criticism, and problem solving. You will produce two pieces of analytical writing: a brief 3-4 page book review and a 20-25 page paper drafted in stages. These are complementary and cumulative assignments that, combined, will enhance your understanding of some blinders and prejudices that infect current scholarly and non-scholarly writing about international politics today.

PSCI 498-302 The Politics of Empire
D McCormack

Tuesday 1:30-4:30 PM

This is a weekly seminar course that explores the political logic of hierarchical international organization. The course will have three primary goals. First, we will establish the logical underpinnings of political order in general, and ask why states establish formal empire rather than informal patterns of control. Second, we will use
these insights to illuminate a number of historical cases to examine how empires are formed, how they are maintained, and when and why they end. Finally, we will also spend some time exploring whether the United States is (or was) an empire and what implications this has for U.S. foreign policy in the future. There are no prerequisites for this course, but students should expect a heavy reading and writing load.

**PSCI 587-401 Black American Political Thought*  
A Reed  
Tuesday 6:00-9:00 PM**

This course has two objectives. On the one hand, we will explore the character and evolution of the strategic political discourse of black Americans. We will examine central debates among black American intellectuals and activists with focus on: 1) identifying issues considered and positions taken; 2) locating those debates in relation to American political and intellectual history and the changing situation of the black population; 3) analyzing characteristic principles that have undergirded political discourse among civically attentive black Americans; 4) examining the connections of social theory and political behavior among black Americans and, perhaps most important, 5) trying to establish links between debates in the past and the present political and ideological configuration in ways that can inform strategic thinking.

On the other hand, we will pursue a more formalistic objective as well. The study of black American thought as an academic field by and large has avoided concerns about the practice of interpretation in the history of political thought or the history of ideologies. (The fact that this subfield has retained its interpretive naïveté is itself an intellectually and ideologically significant circumstance, as we shall see.) Our second objective, therefore, will be to work toward establishing a foundation for a more historically careful scholarly discourse about Afro-American thought. Toward that end, we shall give substantial consideration to interpretive issues -- keeping the integrity of historical contextualization uppermost -- in the early weeks, when we discuss methodological questions directly. Those early discussions should set the stage for, and structure engagement with, subsequent assignments.

The course is organized chronologically. Although systematic expression of political ideas by civically attentive black individuals and within discourse communities is evident at least as early as the Second Party System, the discursive and ideological origins of what we might call modern black thought took shape in the late 19th and early 20th century period defined most consequentially by disfranchisement, the consolidation of the segregationist regime in the South, and the emergence of an elite stratum within the black population who were inclined to articulate programs and agendas for the race. We will begin with examining that fin-de-siècle context and reconstruct the trajectory of black political debate to the present.

*Cross-listed with AFRC 586*
PSCI 598-302 German Political Thought

L. Goldman

Thursday 3:00-6:00 PM

This course serves as an introduction to a number of figures and themes in modern Western political thought spanning from the Renaissance to the 20th century. It aims to give students a sense of the scope of the Western tradition along with many of the debates within it. Thinkers treated will include Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, among others, with a particular emphasis on questions about the relationship between nature and convention as well as the relationship between the individual and society. Other fundamental questions covered include the nature of freedom, equality, justice, property and revolution.

PSCI 605-301 Great Books in Comparative Politics

I Lustick

Friday 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

This seminar has two central purposes. One is to learn from books that have shaped fundamental conversations in the field of comparative politics about the domains, concepts, and theories analyzed and presented in the texts. The other is to gain a deep and detailed appreciation of authorial strategies by examining the relationship between the organization and presentation of arguments and the motivation and claims of the authors. The fact that a book is assigned in this course does not make it “Great” in every respect. Nor does its inclusion reflect a judgment by the instructor that it represents the truth, or even a treatment of its topic that is more effective than anything else available. It does represent a judgment that it is a text whose study can help provide, refine, and/or greatly improve the cognitive maps that graduate students specializing in comparative politics are each trying to construct. The books we read will be studied under three categories: How we got here? How Things Work? and How Do We Know Things?

PSCI 615-301 Political Economy of Development

G Grossman

Monday 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

This seminar provides an introduction to contemporary research on the political economy of developing countries. The major questions to be addressed during the seminar are: How central is politics to economic development? How do political institutions determine policy choices? Why do voters have a hard time holding governments to account? Does the widespread penetration of mobile technologies change citizen-constituency relations? How do windfalls (e.g., natural resources and international aid) affect development outcomes and the health of a country’s political institutions? One of the aims of the discussion in the class will be to test abstract theories of economic and political development using in-depth knowledge of cases, and to further our understanding of cases by applying lessons from theoretical and statistical work. Special attention would
be given to replicating results of seminal studies, and to identifying gaps in existing literatures.

**PSCI 637-301 Survey American Institutions**

**J Lapinski**

Friday 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

This course introduces students to a range of topics under the loose rubric of “American political institutions.” Obviously, this is a vast topic, one that encompasses Congress, the president, the courts, and the bureaucracy at the national level, and the corresponding institutions at the state level. Here are some of the features of the approach we’ll take:

Our emphasis will be on national-level political institutions. In some cases, however, we will read studies of state-level institutions in order to gain additional purchase on research questions and to understand the advantages or disadvantages of studying these institutions. Similarly, we will read some comparative studies in order to provide perspective. Some of the studies we will read focus specific institutions, with a noticeable tilt toward Congress. But many of them examine the relationships among institutions, which reflects both my own interests and where I think the study of institutions is headed. The readings will be weighted toward empirical studies of theoretical models. By and large, then, we will focus on empirical studies that use actual data about actual institutions. At the same time, it is important to note that these empirical studies are almost always informed by theory, either a theory developed in the paper or one developed elsewhere. We will focus on relatively current work (i.e., from the past two decades, and more recent than that after the first week) rather than reaching farther back in time.

**PSCI 638-401 Race and Criminal Justice**

**M Gottschalk**

Tuesday 1:30-4:30 PM

Why are African Americans and some other minority groups disproportionately incarcerated and subjected to penal sanctions? What are the political, social, and economic consequences for individuals, communities, and the wider society of mass incarceration in the United States? What types of reforms of the criminal justice system are desirable and possible?

This advanced seminar analyzes the connection between race, crime, punishment, and politics in the United States. The primary focus is on the role of race in explaining why the country’s prison population increased six-fold since the early 1970s and why the United States today has the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Topics to be covered include: the early history of race in the development of the criminal justice system, including an examination of lynchings and the convict-leasing system; the relationship between the crime rate, patterns of offending and arrests, and the
incarceration rate; public opinion and law-and-order politics; U.S. penal policies compared with other industrialized countries; the intersection of race and gender in penal policy; capital punishment; the growth of the prison-industrial complex; the war on drugs; the courts, prisoners’ rights, and political prisoners; felon disenfranchisement, elections, and democracy; and the future of penal reform.

The class will likely take field trips to a maximum-security jail in Philadelphia and to a state prison in the Philadelphia suburbs.

This seminar is designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students. The readings and assignments will be adjusted accordingly for graduate students. The 600-level is open to graduate students only.

*Cross-listed with PSCI 437

PSCI 697-301 Statistical Analysis for Political Science II
D Hopkins
Tuesday and Thursday 1:30-3:00 PM

Understanding and interpreting quantitative data is increasingly central in the social sciences, and in many governmental and private-sector settings as well. This second-semester Ph.D. statistics course aims to provide its students with a thorough, rigorous tour of some of the quantitative methods most commonly employed in political science. This course emphasizes two areas. First, causal inference: what can quantitative data tell us about the causal relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable? It also focuses on maximum likelihood as a theory of inference that underpins a wide variety of statistical models.

PSCI 798-301 Political Theory: Problems and Concepts
J Green
Wednesday 2:00-5:00 PM

This seminar covers both recent and "canonical" authors central to core debates in political theory--debates relating to liberty, democracy, normativity, the nature of political theory, and methodological approaches to the history of political thought. Readings will come from Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Luther, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, Paine, Constant, Mill, Tocqueville, Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Strauss, Dahl, Rawls, Skinner, and others. The course is designed for graduate students interested in political theory.