POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GRADUATE COURSES

Spring 2019

COURSE OFFERINGS

POSC 803 - 010  ProSeminar in American Politics

Jones #18835 M 0200 - 0500 PM

Graduate-level introduction to the subfield of American politics, providing an overview of the field of American Politics within Political Science. Foundational for students pursuing a concentration or minor in the field. Emphasizes both classic and current research on American politics, covering institutions (including Congress, the presidency, and the Supreme Court), mass behavior (including public opinion and political participation) and groups like parties and interest groups that link the two.

POSC 809 - 010  ProSeminar in Comparative Politics

Carrion # 18836 W 0530 - 0830 PM

This seminar has three specific parts. The first section will introduce graduate students to the scope and methods of comparative politics as a field of political science. This section includes an overview of the contributions of major figures in comparative politics by looking at the intersections of their life trajectories and their substantive research questions. This section will also address the question of whether a science of comparative politics is possible and how recent theoretical and methodological approaches improve the comparative method. The second section of the class will provide an overview of the different theoretical approaches in the field, including modernization theory, rational choice, political economy, and comparative-historical approaches. The last part of the seminar will examine some of the key issues associated with the study of political systems and regimes. In institutional terms, we will discuss the differences amongst presidential, semi-presidential, parliamentary systems. Then we will focus on issues of regime survival and regime change, and specifically the analysis of the process of democratization and recent trends towards democratic erosion, competitive authoritarianism, and the rise of global populism. Students will write four reaction papers and a term paper.
This course introduces students to international law (IL) through, primarily, case law. Despite academic debates about the utility of international law to regulate state behavior, municipal and international courts and tribunals amply demonstrate the applicability, utility, and effectiveness of legal rules and adjudicative procedures to resolve disputes and disputing claims between diverse kinds of actors in the international system. In this regard, we need to draw distinctions between legal and political reasoning, and their occasionally countervailing invocations and conceptions of the law. Though the emphasis will be on interpretation and application of the law, we will also consider broader, political science debates regarding the status and roles of international law in an increasingly complex global system. Among the topics explored will be the sources and subjects of international law; the relationship between international and municipal legal systems; international courts and tribunals; and thematic areas of the law such as IL and the use of force, human rights law, international criminal law, and the law of the sea. With respect to these latter topics, we will be especially attuned to the mutual constitution of law and politics. We will append to those more traditional IL course topics broader, International Relations/Political Science-related concerns regarding the role of international law in affecting political change; the common heritage of humankind concept to govern areas beyond national jurisdiction; the ambiguous legal status of UN General Assembly resolutions and the tendency of states, courts, and international organizations to accord legal effectiveness to even non-binding resolutions and declarations of principles; and how, moreover, international law constitutes and structures a global public space.

The subfield of political theory is perhaps the oldest in the discipline, spanning thousands of years and even more pages of text. This seminar does not attempt to provide a thorough history of the subfield but is instead a general course to introduce students to some of the most historically significant texts, current debates in the discipline, application of theoretical ideas in contemporary politics, and approaches to reading and interpreting texts. Students will get a grounding in the field that will provide a foundational understanding of the subfield for the purposes of teaching as well as serving as a base of knowledge for more advanced courses in political theory and political science. The course fulfills both the proseminar requirement and may be used towards the skills requirement.
This seminar immerses us into the subfield of CPE, which deals with the relationship between business and politics at the domestic level. It is based on two key assumptions: first, the economy is political. Second, there is not necessarily one best way to organize a capitalist economy. The focus of our course will be twofold: first, what are the institutional underpinnings of different socio-economic systems or “Varieties of Capitalism” across the world? We will explore theoretical debates between proponents and critics of “Varieties of Capitalism” and examine different Varieties of Capitalism in Europe, North America, Latin America, and elsewhere. How are these models changing? Are they converging? Can the egalitarian “social market” models of northern Europe based on high taxes, expansive welfare states and powerful unions survive in an increasingly integrated and competitive world, or are they converging on a leaner and meaner market model? In the second half of the course, we will focus on the commonalities of capitalism. How can we conceptualized and understand this system? What are its key characteristics? How can we understand the rise of finance during recent decades and how important is it for contemporary capitalism? In this seminar, we will probe these issues both empirically and theoretically. In search of answers to these questions, we will read at least eight innovative academic books (including star economist Thomas Piketty’s 700-page blockbuster “Capital in the Twenty-First Century”) and dozens of scholarly articles.

This seminar is designed to offer graduate students in political science an opportunity to learn the skills necessary to write a research design and conduct advanced social research. The seminar begins with a discussion of issues related to the philosophy of the social sciences and then moves to the study of conceptual issues associated with research design and the use of qualitative methods. A major objective of the seminar is to help students write a research design that could be a first draft of the dissertation proposal. More specifically, he following topics will be addressed: research design and inference in the social sciences using qualitative data; concept formation, case selection, and concept measurement; methodological issues in case studies and small-N analysis; mixed-methods research; as well as mechanisms and models of explanation in the social sciences. This course is strongly recommended for students interested in pursuing qualitative or mixed-method research agendas. Students will be responsible for producing a research design, several analytical briefs, as well as an oral presentation.
This seminar will consider human rights as an area of study from a global governance perspective. We begin with a brief review of normative IR theory as it relates to human rights. Seminar topics will also include women’s rights, group rights, indigenous rights, cultural relativism, corporate social responsibility, labor rights and development, and just war theory.

Course requirements include two papers and a take-home exam.

This course corresponds with the department’s annual speaker series. The theme of the colloquium varies from year to year, addressing important aspects of global governance. We will be welcoming 5-6 speakers over the course of the semester, in addition to presentations by graduate students. This course is required of all graduate students. MA students and PhD students in their first two years will take the course for one credit, attending the speaker series and preparing response papers for the talks. Third year PhD students will take the course for three credits as a research seminar and will present their work as part of the speaker series.