

# Course Handout for Political Science

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Department of Political Science

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2024-2025



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## Advising

Advising begins Monday, April 1, 2024. Begin by making an appointment with your major advisor. Your advisor will indicate on Banner Web that you are eligible to register AFTER you have met with them. Without this notice, you will not be able to register for classes online. The registration rotation is available at:

<https://registrar.richmond.edu/registration/undergraduate/rotation.html>

If Political Science is not your primary advisor, but you would like advice about course selection and opportunities in Political Science, please consult with the Department Chair, Dr. Tracy Roof, to be directed to a faculty member with expertise in your areas of interest.

## Major Requirements

Ten units in Political Science, at least six of which must be at the 300 or 400 level. The GPA of the coursework in Political Science comprising the major must be at least 2.00 with no course grade below C-. The specific requirements are:

PLSC 240: Introduction to Comparative Politics, or  
PLSC 250: Introduction to International Relations

PLSC 220: Introduction to American Government, or  
PLSC 260: Introduction to Public Policy

PLSC 270: Social Science Inquiry

One unit of the following:

PLSC 311: Classical Political Thought, or  
PLSC 312: Modern Political Theory, or  
PLSC 315: American Political Theory

5 units of electives in PLSC

- Four elective units at the 300 level.
- The fifth elective may be taken at the 200 or 300 level.

PLSC 400: Senior Seminar, or  
Honors sequence (PLSC 490, 491, and 492)

The major must include a minimum of six units of University of Richmond political science courses. No more than two units of credit toward the major can be given for courses, including cross-listed courses, offered by other departments or schools at the University. Students may transfer credit for up to three courses to count toward the Political Science major including credit by exam (such as AP scores accepted for credit by the University) and courses given departmental approval (typically by the Chair) from study abroad or domestic universities.

A&S policy stipulates that no more than 1.5 units of internship credit can be taken in the same department. PLSC 395 The Virginia General Assembly Internship does not count toward this limit.

**\*For students subject to 2021-22 catalog or earlier, see**

[https://registrar.richmond.edu/common/PDF/4\\_5%20Previous%20Catalogs/printedition\\_UGcatalog\\_2021-22.pdf](https://registrar.richmond.edu/common/PDF/4_5%20Previous%20Catalogs/printedition_UGcatalog_2021-22.pdf)



### **Political Science 388 (Individual Internship) and 390 (Independent Study)**

These courses require departmental approval. The student and academic supervisor must fill out a contract form available with the links below, or contact Ms.

Emilee Papa ([emilee.papa@richmond.edu](mailto:emilee.papa@richmond.edu)) for the form

before the end of Friday of the first week of the semester so that the department can grant the approval the student needs for registration in these classes.

Link to the Individual Internship form:

<https://richmond.box.com/s/zdyrhx69k6vtpxvff6fgdofvnglg0xxc>

Link to the Independent Study form:

<https://richmond.box.com/s/p2xvabzf3y8n937m36hl70611sh7papy>

## Honors Program

The minimum cumulative GPA is 3.5, and the minimum GPA for Political Science coursework is 3.7. The honors program requires students to take a 0.5-unit independent study, PLSC 490 Research Prospectus, in which they will develop a full proposal for their honors thesis under the supervision of their thesis advisor. The honors thesis will be completed in PLSC 491 and PLSC 492, taken in the fall and spring semesters, respectively, of senior year.

Ideally, honors students will take PLSC 490 in the spring of their junior year. However, if students expect they will not be in residence that semester, they should take PLSC 490 in the fall of their junior year.

If you plan to take PLSC 490 in Fall 2024, the deadline for application was March 15. If you plan to take PLSC 490 in Spring 2025, the deadline for application is October 15.

Applicants should develop a topic for their honors thesis and secure the support of a thesis advisor who can supervise the research and writing of their senior thesis. Please complete the application form and submit it to the Honors Coordinator, Dr. Dan Chen ([dchen@richmond.edu](mailto:dchen@richmond.edu)). Feel free to reach out to Dr. Chen with any questions.

Link to Honor's Application:

<https://richmond.box.com/s/z5cdd210q98f7xi63ga2trjilfrqbtjs>



## PLSC 400: Senior Seminars

Senior Seminars are required for all senior Political Science majors who are not enrolled in the Honors Program. Five sections will be available in the 2024/25 academic year, three in the fall and two in the spring. You must reserve a spot in a senior seminar and receive departmental approval before registering.

When you go to reserve, please list your top two preferences. Every effort will be made to give students their first preference, but this is not always possible.

In the event the department is unable to provide students with their first choice, students will be assigned in the order they signed up, so reserve your seat early. Note that reserving a seat does not automatically register you for the course; it simply puts you on the list to receive an override for registration. Please reserve your seat in senior seminar using the Google link below:

<https://forms.gle/aGykJfF4uXQy6A5m6>

Prior to registration, you will receive an override, which will allow you to register for the seminar you have been assigned to. If you run into difficulties registering, contact Ms. Emilee Papa ([emilee.papa@richmond.edu](mailto:emilee.papa@richmond.edu)).

## Post-graduate Opportunities

The Chair of the Department, Dr. Tracy Roof, your academic advisor, and your faculty mentors in your areas of interest are available to advise on graduate programs in political science and related fields. In addition, the department lobby has several brochures for graduate programs in political science, public administration, public policy, international studies, court management, and urban affairs. For information on other professional opportunities, see also the Career Services liaison for Political Science, Ms. Beth Chancy, and the Political Science Department Bulletin Boards.

# FALL 2024 SENIOR SEMINARS

## PLSC 400: MEDIA POLITICS RECONSIDERED

Chen

This seminar is designed to guide students in absorbing existing theoretical insights and employing them to reconsider how politics relates to the media and vice versa. We will explore questions regarding the evolving role of the media in the operation of politics. We will discuss examples from countries across the democratic spectrum. Theories from the fields of political communication, comparative authoritarianism, campaigns and elections, public opinion, and journalism will be discussed and critically applied to analyze current events.

## PLSC 400: POLITICS OF INEQUALITY

Erkulwater

The United States is the most unequal of advanced, industrialized democracies – so much so that many political scientists’ question whether this degree of economic inequality is compatible with democracy, especially because it overlaps with long-standing social inequalities. In this course, students will learn the main debates in political science on the causes and consequences of inequality, understand the ways in which political scientists study inequality, and produce a capstone thesis that contributes to this ongoing scholarly conversation.

## PLSC 400: UNDERSTANDING WAR

Long

This course is a senior seminar examining the causes and patterns of international conflict. Rather than covering specific conflicts in depth, the course takes a theoretical, analytical approach to understanding war as a generalized phenomenon.

# SPRING SENIOR SEMINARS

## PLSC 400: POLITICS, SPORTS, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Palazzolo

Over the past decade sports have become increasingly politicized, serving as a platform for social protest and a battleground for political debates about divisive cultural, ethnic, and social issues. In Politics, Sports and the Pursuit of Happiness, we assess the causes,

consequences and limits of the politicization of sports. In addition, we will explore a variety of parallels between politics and sports. How, if at all, do sports help us to understand citizenship, federalism, American ideals of liberty and equality, the relationship between individuals and organizations, party polarization, the behavior of sports politicians (high profile athletes who have been elected to public office), the use of sporting metaphors in campaigns and policy debates, and public policy choices? The intersection of politics and sports is a rich and fertile ground for research projects.

### **PLSC 400: PROTEST IN THE ARAB WORLD**

**El Kurd**

This course will focus on protest and social movements in the Arab world. We will delve into key protest waves that had an impact on the region, including the Arab Revolt under the Ottoman Empire, the Arab Revolt in Mandate Palestine, anti-colonial resistance in Algeria, the Bread Riots in Egypt, the Arab Spring, and more. We will learn about the theories of social movements and protests from a political science perspective, and put the case studies from the Arab world in global comparison. Students will learn what political science research tells us about why people protest, what determines the success or failure of such movements, and the transnational dimensions of uprising.

## **FALL 2024 COURSES**

### **PLSC 220: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**Palazzolo,  
McGowen**

This course introduces students to the structure and functions of American national government. It emphasizes the institutional roles of the presidency, the Congress, and the Supreme Court as well as the more informal political roles of political parties, interest groups, the media, and elections. (PLSC 220 is a prerequisite for some 300-level courses in American politics and public policy.)

### **PLSC 240: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

**Sznajder Lee,  
Pribble**

The main objective of this course is to familiarize students with the analytical tools needed to study domestic politics cross-nationally, as well as acquaint them with the political arrangements of various regions of the world. In particular, this course will introduce you to three topics: 1) the major themes of comparative politics (e.g. the origins of the modern state, social movements, and democratization); 2) the major concepts used in comparative politics, and 3) the methodologies political scientists use to evaluate rival theories. By comparing how political systems develop and function in different countries, we will theorize about the historical development and future trajectories of domestic politics in the various parts of the world. (PLSC 240 is a prerequisite for some 300-level courses in comparative politics.) FSSA

### **PLSC 250: INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**El Kurd, Long,  
Datta**

This course assists the beginning student in developing a coherent framework for the analysis of international relations. Particular emphasis is given to the nature of the international political system and to the implications of this system for a world of increasing complexity, interdependence, and rapid change. The goals pursued and the

methods used by nation-states and other actors are also examined, as are critical issue areas that pose problems for world order. (PLSC 250 is a prerequisite for some 300-level international relations courses.) FSSA

**PLSC 260: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY****Miller**

This course introduces students to some of America's most pressing domestic problems (such as the federal deficit, crime, poverty, and health care), government policies and proposals aimed toward solving those problems, and the methods used to analyze public policy. The student plays the role of policy analyst operating within the broader context of the American policy making process. The course combines lectures and class discussion. Students will be evaluated on the basis of exams, papers, and classroom participation. (PLSC 260 is a prerequisite for some 300-level courses in public policy and American government.) FSSA

**PLSC 270: SOCIAL SCIENCE INQUIRY****Allarackia**

This course introduces students to the process of inquiry and research in the social sciences. Students will learn how to form research questions and hypotheses, prepare literature reviews, design research studies, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. (PLSC 270 is required of all Political Science majors and before registering for PLSC 400.)

**PLSC 311: CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT****Cherry**

This course examines enduring basic issues in political theory studied through the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and other thinkers from ancient Greece through the Renaissance. (Fulfills the major requirement for political theory.)

**PLSC 315: AMERICAN POLITICAL THEORY****Cherry**

Political thought in America from colonial times to present with an emphasis on issues relating to liberty, equality, federalism, community, and national purpose.

**PLSC 326: UNITED STATES CONGRESS****Palazzolo**

Organization and functions of American Congress. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 with a minimum grade of D-.

**PLSC 329: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS****McGowen**

Analysis of institutions and process of American electoral system and behavior of American electorate. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 with a minimum grade of D-.

**PLSC 333: CIVIL RIGHTS & CIVIL LIBERTIES****Simon**

Analysis of contemporary legal status and interpretation of constitutional rights and liberties. Emphasis on landmark Supreme Court decisions involving various provisions of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 or 260.

**PLSC 342: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA****El Kurd**

This course covers the politics of the Middle East and North Africa region. This includes topics such as oil and climate change, authoritarian regimes, civil war and

sectarian conflicts, and Muslim societies.

**PLSC 345: POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY CHINA**

**Chen**

Study of China's political system and policies in the reform era. Topics include party and state institutions, policies of reform, and politics on China's periphery. Implications for social relationships, national identity, popular culture, and morality will be explored.

**PLSC 349: POLITICS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**Pribble**

Influence of historical, social, and cultural forces on contemporary politics of Latin America and the Caribbean. Effects of social structure and underdevelopment on processes of democratization, institution building, national integration, and economic development. Case studies of selected countries illustrate major themes and issues explored.

**PLSC 351: GLOBALIZATION**

**Petrova**

Analysis of the political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions of globalization. Considers how globalization has affected the nation state, interstate relations, and the democratization and development of countries around the world. Students will evaluate different definitions of globalization; analyze to what extent globalization limits the autonomy of national governments; and consider whether the effects of globalization vary across different regions of the world. (Same as International Studies 351.) Prerequisites: PLSC 240, 250, or GS 290.

**PLSC 356: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY**

**Joireman**

Politics, processes, and institutions underlying contemporary global economic interdependence, with special focus on international trade, finance, and assistance; alternative theoretical models for understanding these events, processes, and institutions. Prerequisites: PLSC 250 with a minimum grade of D-.

**PLSC 361: THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL WELFARE**

**Erkulwater**

Study of the development and effectiveness of programs in the United States that seek to promote economic equality and alleviate need. A focus on programs for both the poor and the middle class. Prerequisites: PLSC 220, 260, or SOC 101.

**PLSC 362: ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY**

**Miller**

Examines legal aspects, both regulations and case law, of environmental policy. Central are whether legal responses (1) effectively address the needs of the parties most affected; (2) properly weigh such facts as economic efficiency, protection of nonhuman species, and the possibility of unintended consequences; and (3) are diluted by the political process. (Same as Environmental Studies 362.) Prerequisites: PLSC 260 or ENVR 201.

**PLSC 390: UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF POLITICS**

**Chen/ El Kurd**

This course is for students selected as editors and staff of the Department's undergraduate journal of politics. Selected students earn 0.5 units in the fall and 0.5 units in the spring. Students must have instructor's permission to register for this course. Students interested in working on the journal should contact Dr. Dana El Kurd or Dr. Dan Chen.



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# FALL SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

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## **PLSC 379: HUMAN RIGHTS AND MODERN SLAVERY**

**Datta**

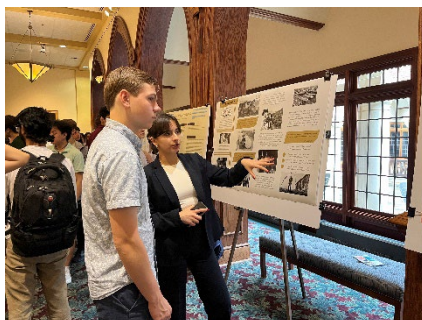
This course introduces students to the topic of human rights from an international relation's lens and explores human security challenges, focusing on Target 8.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development goals. Target 8.7 aims to eradicate all forms of contemporary slavery, from child soldiers to forced labor to sex trafficking. Students will be exposed to different debates in the contemporary anti-slavery movement, including questions over how to best estimate the prevalence of enslavement, its causes, and the best policy solutions in finding ways to mitigate, and eventually eradicate enslavement. The course also examines the legacy of enslavement in the City of Richmond, Virginia and assesses what we can learn from the botched emancipation of 1865. The course also explores the epistemology of survivorship and what we can learn from the wisdom and experiences of formerly enslaved persons, past and present. Students will also be exposed to the professor's ongoing research (e.g., the legacy of Japanese militarized enslavement and contemporary slavery and armed conflict).

## **PLSC 379: THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE CRISIS CRUCIBLE**

**Sznajder Lee**

The course explores the political dynamics of one of the greatest achievements of modern international politics: the European integration project. You will examine why and how the European Union arose, how it governs itself, and how the recent economic and geopolitical challenges have forced the entity and its member states to grapple with the principles of democracy, solidarity, and national sovereignty at both supranational and national levels.

# SPRING COURSE (TENTATIVE)



## **PLSC 220: INTRO TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**McGowen**

Basic roles, structures, and functions of American political institutions and introduction to American political process.

## **PLSC 240: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT**

**Sznajder Lee,  
Chen,**

Concepts, approaches, classifications, and models useful in comparing political structures and processes. Political systems characteristic of countries with different cultures and levels of economic development. Fulfills General Education Requirement (FSSA)

## **PLSC 250: INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**El Kurd, Long  
Petrova**

Framework for analyzing contemporary international system: goals of nation-states and other actors; how such actors attempt to achieve their goals; and some forces that help or hinder attainment of goals. Fulfills General Education Requirement (FSSA)

## **PLSC 260: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY**

**Erulwater**

Contemporary social and economic problems in America, public policies adopted or proposed to deal with them, and ways of analyzing those problems and policies. Fulfills General Education Requirement (Social Analysis (FSSA))

## **PLSC 270: SOCIAL SCIENCE INQUIRY**

**Datta, Allarakia**

Introduction to the process of social science research and inquiry. Includes instruction on forming a research question, preparing a literature review, developing a research design, and undertaking analysis using selected quantitative or qualitative empirical analytical tools.

## **PLSC 312: MODERN POLITICAL THEORY**

**Lopez-Guerra**

Ideas of major political philosophers from the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Hegel, Marx, Tocqueville, and J. S. Mill.

## **PLSC 331: CONSTITUTIONAL LAW**

**Bowie**

Role of United States Supreme Court in American politics studied through examination of landmark constitutional decisions pertaining to distribution of governmental powers. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 or 260.

**PLSC 333: CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES****Bowie**

Analysis of contemporary legal status and interpretation of constitutional rights and liberties. Emphasis on landmark Supreme Court decisions involving various provisions of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 or 260.

**PLSC 339: JURISPRUDENCE AND CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POLITICS****Simon**

Explores basic questions about the nature and function of law as an instrument of state power that are deeply interconnected with a wide range of political and legal problems.

**PLSC 343: POLITICS OF ASIA****Chen**

Study of historical, cultural, and social forces shaping contemporary politics of Asia. Comparative survey of major political systems and critical examination of key issues. Attempts to link Asian studies with mainstream political science. Prerequisites: PLSC 240 with a minimum grade of D-.

**PLSC 344: EUROPE TODAY****Sznajder Lee**

An examination of political, social, and economic developments in Europe (both western and east-central) since World War II. Topics include European integration and the development of the European Union institutions, post-communist transitions and their consequences, and the domestic politics of selected European states.

**PLSC 350: AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY****Long**

Analyzes the traditions, processes, substance, and goals of American foreign policy, in addition to exploring national security and defense policy, foreign economic policy, international diplomacy, and foreign policy ethics. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 or 250.

**PLSC 359: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE****Datta**

Analyzes themes and selected topics in global governance. It explores how state and non-state actors work together to confront and solve contemporary transnational challenges. (Same as International Studies 359). Prerequisites: PLSC 250 with a minimum grade of D-.

**PLSC 365: U.S. HEALTHCARE POLICY AND POLITICS****Roof**

Examination of political and economic evolution of the American healthcare system: doctors, hospitals, managed care, Medicare, Medicaid, health insurance, public health, epidemiology, mental health, pediatric health, tort reform, and psychopharmacology, among other topics. Includes comparative analysis of other countries' healthcare systems.

**PLSC 395: LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP****Palazzolo**

Combines weekly seminar on the state legislative process with work as assistant to a state legislator, government agency, interest group, or press during session of the Virginia General Assembly. Prerequisites: PLSC 220 with a minimum grade of D- and permission of the instructor.

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# SPRING SPECIAL TOPICS COURSE

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## PLSC 379: DEMOCRATIC THEORY

Lopez-Guerra

Democracy is rule by the people. But who exactly are “the people”? What are the legitimate boundaries (based on age, law abidingness, competence, residence, nationality) for considering someone to be entitled to participate in political decision making? How can territorial or national self-determination disputes be settled democratically? Assuming we have an account of “the people,” how exactly are they to rule? What is the best system to process the input of citizens? What kinds of inputs should citizens provide? Current methods aggregate ordinal preferences. But some democratic theorists propose aggregating judgments or grades over the alternatives. Are such proposals compelling? Should all inputs be counted equally? What exactly are the requirements of the ideal of political equality? Should citizens make political decisions unconstrained, or should there be constitutional limits on what they can do? Democracy is said to be in crisis today. Is this assessment correct? What exactly threatens democracy today? Why is democratic backsliding a problem, that is, why should we value democracy in the first place? And how can we make it work better—how can we rescue it from its predicaments? These are the questions at the core of this course.

## PLSC 379: DEMOCRACY IN AMERICAS

Pribble

According to the [2023 Varieties of Democracy \(V-dem\) report](#), 42 countries experienced democratic erosion in 2022. The Americas – the region of the world that encompasses both North and South America – has not been immune to this trend. Countries as diverse as Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, and the United States have all experienced autocratization in recent years. What does democratic backsliding entail and why does it occur? This course will focus on these questions, providing students with an overview of how political science conceptualizes democratic erosion and the primary theories that have been developed to explain democratic backsliding. Students will study the process of autocratization in a range of cases in the Americas, including the United States. In this way, the course will push students to place the U.S. in comparative context, highlighting similarities and differences with the Latin American experience. By the end of the semester, students will have an understanding of concepts such as electoral authoritarianism, polarization, party system breakdown, populism, and subnational authoritarianism. Moreover, through writing assignments and in-class activities, students will have the opportunity to use real-world data to assess the validity and relevance of existing theories of democratic backsliding and brainstorm effective opposition strategies for safeguarding democracy. Though not required, having taken PLSC349 (Politics of Latin America and the Caribbean) will prove helpful.

## PLSC 379: DEMOCRACY AROUND THE WORLD

Allarackia

Democracy can sometimes be frustrating and confusing. Not only do the outcomes we desire sometimes take a long time to materialize, but we may even end up with suboptimal outcomes. The aim of this course is shed light on the inner working of democratic processes, with a particular focus on institutions. The aim is to understand that democracy is neither a direct process nor a simple one. It is complex web of institutions that interact in both cooperative and acrimonious ways to reach collective decisions. By the end of the course you will understand

what democracy means, it's value and the different processes that underlie the democratic process starting from: elections, executive -legislative relations, legislative politics, judicial politics, local politics and direct democracy initiatives. Most importantly you will understand why the link between democracy and outcomes desired by citizens is by no means direct or simple.

**PLSC 379: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE****Miller**

This course explores the causes and effects of the climate crisis on a global scale, framed by the issues of justice that they raise. Our approach is interdisciplinary, delving into concepts from not just political science but the natural sciences, ethical theory, economics, and more. The issues we'll discuss share a fundamental insight: our current approach to climate issues, strongly dominated by short-term market incentives, is not solving the problems we face, and innovative collective action through law and policy will be necessary to secure a more equitable and sustainable future. We are living through volatile and uncertain times, but it remains possible to envision societies better suited to sustainable human well-being than the ones we have now.