Political Science Courses

Political Science

PLSC 106 Explorations in Politics (4)
This course explores contemporary political issues in the context of a diverse and globalized world. Issue areas explored may vary depending on political events at the time. (WCore: WCSBS, WE)

PLSC 107 Exploring Global Challenges (4)
This course explores the complex interaction among global issues and challenges across multiple fields like ecology, economy, culture, society, politics, and health. (WCore: WCSBS, DE)

PLSC 203 Courts, Law, and Social Justice (4)
In this course, students use the tools of social science and legal analysis to understand and analyze the role of law and the courts in American society and politics. Students come away from this course with an appreciation for the role of law in American society, an ability to use the basic tools and principles of legal analysis, and a perspective on US courts that is informed by social science theory. (WCore: WCSBS)

PLSC 300 Special Topics in Political Science (1-4)
Courses may be taught as either workshops or seminars. Significant themes are explored in certain sub-disciplinary areas of political science. Recent offerings and/or suggested topics have included Conflict Management, Language and Politics, Politics of Federalism (State and Local Government), Topics in Political Thought, Political Issues Analysis, Politics of Argentina, Central Asian/Eurasian Politics, International Political Economy, and Methods of Political Analysis.

PLSC 306 Comparative Politics (4)
This course focuses on the comparative interdisciplinary study of different forms of power, politics, government, and governance across space, culture, time, and levels of analysis. Because the field of Comparative Politics is extremely broad and diverse, each edition of the course focuses on only certain regions and specific themes (e.g., Global South, Former Eastern Bloc, Global North). Course participants will learn how to employ the different perspectives of the interdisciplinary comparative approach to conducting comparative political analyses across different historical cases, cultural spheres, geographical areas, thematic fields, and levels of political aggregation (from local, to national, regional, and global). With its focus on the challenges of globalization, democratization, diversity, social justice, and ecological sustainability across time, space, and cultures, this course will enable participants to critically assess the merits and demerits of the different forms which power and politics can take in its structural, institutional, ideological, social-transformational and practical or policy dimensions. (WCore: EWRLD)

PLSC 315 Theories of Global Politics (4)
This course explores the different theories and approaches to the study and practice of International Relations and Global Politics. It employs a critical, intercultural, and global framework that enables participants to learn and understand the growing diversity of Western, Non-Western, feminist, and ecological perspectives on planetary affairs. The overall purpose of this course is to equip participants with the various theoretical compasses needed to creatively navigate and proactively participate in the emergent global polity. (WCore: EWRLD)

PLSC 318 Humanitarian Politics (4)
This course addresses the historical transformation of, and contemporary controversies concerning humanitarian law and politics, human rights, humanitarian intervention, and human security in a global context. In order to explore these fields, we will focus on several themes, topics, and issues of concern such as debates concerning the historical and political emergence of humanitarian law, the different theoretical, cultural, and ideological perspectives on human rights, the controversies over humanitarian intervention, and the contestations regarding the emerging framework of human security. In order to illustrate these fields and issues, we will explore historical accounts, Western and non-Western perspectives, environmental perspectives, gendered perspectives, and various contesting theoretical and ideological stances in the contemporary legal, political, diplomatic, and policy spheres regarding humanitarian law, human rights, humanitarian intervention, and human security. There are no prerequisites for this course. (WCore: EWRLD)

PLSC 327 Environmental Politics and Policy (4)
Focuses on continuity and change in the politics of environmentalism within the United States. Includes an in-depth look at the Environmental Protection Agency as a means of examining institutional and public policy activities in the environmental arena, an overview of environmental legislation, and a consideration of pollution prevention strategies.

PLSC 348 Congress and the Presidency (4)
An examination of the role of Congress and the presidency in government, and their effects on the entire political process. Includes a look at various approaches to the study of Congress and the presidency.

PLSC 355 Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties (4)
Analysis of key civil liberties cases and the decision-making process followed by the Supreme Court. Overview of the impact of Supreme Court decisions on the political process and of the Court as a political institution.

PLSC 359 Law, Politics, and Bureaucracy (4)
This course provides an in-depth examination of the historical, legal, and political environment within which US regulatory agencies operate. Case law and other primary source materials are used extensively.

PLSC 367 Contemporary Political Philosophy (4)
This course introduces a selection of crucial approaches and issues in contemporary political philosophy. Themes are addressed from a global, intercultural, and ethical diversity of perspectives. The course critically addresses topics as varied as global justice, power and democracy, violence and human rights, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, disability, poverty and inequality, animal rights and ecology.

PLSC 375 Indigenous Knowledge and Lifeways (4)
This course will introduce indigenous knowledge systems, worldviews, and lifeways from various regions of the world. The course will be structured so students experience indigenous ways of learning and social-environmental organization. Students will explore epistemological questions, relationships (economic, social, governance, with nonhuman life forms), and historical and contemporary practices. Students will apply their learning to addressing global crises through their specific discipline(s) and reflect on their own cultural identity, values, and practices. (WCore: EWRLD)

PLSC 390 Research Methods (4)
This course endows students with the skills needed to engage in fruitful political and justice research. In order to foster research competency the course addresses Philosophy of Social Science Inquiry, Research Design, Critical Research Strategies, Qualitative Methods, and basic skills in interpreting quantitative data. (WCore: RE)

PLSC 401 Directed Studies (1–4)
A tutorial-based course used only for student-initiated proposals for intensive individual study of topics not otherwise offered in political science. Requires consent of instructor and school dean. This course is repeatable for credit.

PLSC 415 Issues in Global Politics (4)
This course explores key intersecting topics, issues, and controversies in global politics. It enables students to learn and employ different disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to global affairs by addressing various critical matters in fields such as global education, global political economy, global governance, global resource politics, global diversity, global political ecology, global health politics, or global security. The overall purpose of this course is to empower students to critically, proactively, and creatively engage in the crucial debates and complex processes shaping the emergent global polity. (WCore: EWRLD)

**PLSC 440 Internship (1–8)**

Offers students the opportunity to integrate classroom knowledge with practical experience. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing (for transfer students, at least 15 hours completed at Westminster or permission of instructor), minimum 2.5 GPA, and consent of program director and Career Center internship coordinator. This course is repeatable for credit.

**PLSC 490 Senior Capstone (4)**

A required course for all senior political studies majors. Students select, research, analyze, and discuss a topic or problem. The results of each student’s project will be written as a senior thesis and presented for a discussion in a seminar setting. Required for all majors in their senior year. (WCore: SC)