

Politics course catalog

The following is the graduate program course catalog for the Princeton University Department of Politics. Please consult the [list of current courses](#) to determine which are being offered this semester and this year. Note that this list does not include seminars offered one time only.

POL 500 Research Methods

Robert Keohane

This is a course in research design. We'll discuss some issues in the philosophy of science, then analyze questions of conceptualization, proceeding to problems of descriptive inference, objectivity, and causal inference, including the role of causal mechanisms. The seminar will continue with analysis of how to avoid bias, then tackle issues of historical change. Students will present their own research designs and critique those of their colleagues. Emphasis will be on qualitative research, but the argument underlying the seminar is that the same basic principles of inference apply to qualitative and quantitative research.

POL 502 Mathematics for Political Science

Adam Meirowitz

Basic mathematical concepts essential for formal and quantitative analysis in political science. Prepares students for advanced courses offered in the department. Topics include calculus, linear algebra, and probability theory. Some applications to political science are introduced. There is no prerequisite. The course is aimed for both students with little exposure to mathematics and those who have taken some courses but who wish to gain a more solid foundation. This course is a prerequisite for POL 571 and POL 575.

POL 503 Survey Analysis

Martin Gilens

This course is both a reading course on survey design and analysis and a practicum on analyzing survey data. The course covers four major areas: (1) the nature of the survey response, including the psychology of political attitude expressions, issues of question wording and context, interviewer effects, and social desirability pressures; (2) general issues of quantitative research, including model specification, random and systematic measurement error, the logic of causal analysis, and the alternative meanings of statistical importance; (3) practical considerations in survey analysis, including identifying appropriate data, variable coding and transformations, missing values, and working with common statistical packages; and (4) applied statistics, including alternative measures of association, dummy variable, interaction terms, reliability assessment, scaling techniques, and the presentation and interpretation of statistical results. (This course does not prepare students for the general examination in formal and quantitative analysis.)

POL 506 Qualitative Methods

Evan Lieberman

Introduction to techniques used by political scientists in "small-N" research. Discusses the types of theoretical and empirical questions that are associated with in-depth analysis of a small number of cases. The emphasis is on systematic measurements and inferential strategies,

including case selection, periodization, structured comparison, analytic narrative, and the integration of qualitative and statistical methods in research design. Also includes discussion of the mechanics of qualitative research, including field methods, in-depth interviewing, and archival research. (This course does not prepare students for the general examination in formal and quantitative analysis.)

POL 511 Problems in Political Theory

Stephen Macedo

Selected concepts and problems in political theory. A different topic is treated each year. Topics include justice, equality, liberty, obligation, participation, the nature of political theory, and approaches to interpretation of political theory.

POL 512 Ancient and Medieval Political Theory

Staff

A seminar devoted to an analysis of the political thought of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and the theorists of the conciliar movement.

POL 513 Modern Political Theory

Maurizio Viroli

Selected issues and writers in political theory from Machiavelli to the present. The seminar does not survey this whole period, and concentrates instead on a limited number of theorists or problems.

POL 514 American Political Thought

Staff

Study of selected problems in the development of political ideas and institutions, from the Revolutionary era to the present.

517 International Political Theory

Charles Beitz

An examination of contemporary controversies in international political philosophy. Topics include the morality of war, intervention, human rights, global distributive and political justice, and the relationship between sectional and global values.

POL 519 Seminar in Political Philosophy (also PHI 529)

Philip Pettit

Selected issues or theories of common interest to students in the Politics and Philosophy departments. Taught by faculty members from the two departments, under the auspices of the political philosophy program.

POL 521 The Study of Comparative Politics

Carles Boix

A general introduction to the field of comparative politics, with an emphasis on principal theoretical approaches and major problems and theories.

POL 522 Politics and Modernization

Atul Kohli

An examination of alternative theoretical approaches to modernization, including interpretations of both the historical transformation of the western states and the efforts under way in the contemporary Third World.

POL 523 The Comparative Political Economy of Development (also WWS 561)

Atul Kohli

Political change and the operation of political institutions in the development process, with an emphasis on the interaction of political and economic factors. Various definitions and theories of political development are examined and tested against different economic, ethnic, geographic, and social contexts.

524 Ethnic Politics

Evan Lieberman

This course explores the political implications of the ethnic differences embedded within states in the contemporary world. We will be seeking to understand the nature of cultural identities, the driving forces underlying their persistence and change, and their intersection with the nation-state system. The course will include discussions of the issues of measuring ethnicity, the politics of ethnic mobilization and violence, and various institutional arrangements aimed at managing ethnic conflict.

POL 525 Comparative Bureaucracy

Ezra N. Suleiman

A seminar dealing theoretically and empirically with the role of bureaucracy as an integral part of the political system, with an emphasis on the relation of the governmental bureaucracy to other governmental institutions (political parties, executives, legislatures) and to nongovernmental institutions. All aspects are treated comparatively.

526 State Formation and Political Regimes

Carles Boix

Course surveys major topics and theoretical contributions in the construction of political order, the choice of constitutional regimes and the sources of citizens' compliance and examines: the formation and development of the modern state; democracy; authoritarianism; revolution and political stability; legitimacy and compliance; nationalism; and macro theories of political change. Each session assigns readings from both traditional macrohistorical and qualitative research and more recent analytical models, with the goal of exploring how research in comparative politics should be pursued in the future.

POL 527 State, Society, and Development

Lynn T. White III

The relation of development to regime types, authority, culture, and social integration. The syllabus includes recent sources as well as long-standing texts in social theory by authors such as Durkheim, Geertz, Hirschman, Huntington, W. A. Lewis, Madison, Marx, Polanyi, Schattschneider, and Weber.

POL 529 Seminar in Comparative Politics

Staff

One or more theoretical topics of current major concern in comparative politics are treated.

POL 531 European Political Systems and Cultures

Ezra N. Suleiman

A comparative examination of the political systems of the major European countries. The seminar discussion deals with specific issues and problems common to Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. The emphasis is on the relevance of theory to empirical observations.

532 Social Movements and Contentious Politics

Mark Beissinger

Explores the study of social movements as well as other forms of unconventional collective action aimed at achieving or preventing social and political change (riots, demonstrations, strikes, terrorist movements, etc.). After examining various approaches to the field, we will investigate a number of issues of abiding concern within the field: repertoires, violence, repression, and the transnational dimensions of mobilization. Finally, we will turn to empirical applications in the study of revolutions, democratization, and nationalism.

POL 535 Chinese Politics

Lynn T. White III

A survey of basic interpretative and methodological issues in Chinese politics. The specific focus varies from year to year.

POL 536 Chinese Development

Lynn T. White III

A consideration of policies for political and economic development during modern times, especially since 1949. Topics include traditional politics and agriculture, the revolutionary party, land reform and industrial socialization, tax and investment, the campaign method, the army, and the "four modernizations." Each subject is discussed in terms that allow comparison with other countries.

541 Introduction to American Politics: Political Behavior

Staff

This seminar is part of the two-course sequence of the core curriculum in American politics and provides an introductory survey of American political behavior. The course is designed to provide a sample of major theories and methods in the study of citizens' views and actions regarding politics.

542 Introduction to American Politics: Political Institutions

Staff

This seminar is part of the two-course sequence of the core curriculum in American politics and provides an introductory survey of American political institutions. Provides an overview of the various problems for which institutional solutions are sought (e.g., problems involving collective action, delegation, and social choice) as well as a detailed assessment of some of the scholarly literature that investigates political institutions.

POL 543 Party Politics

Larry M. Bartels

A study of political parties as institutions of politics: their emergence as such; organizational forms, activities, and important consequences that proceed from what they do. Attention is given to party politics in both democratic and nondemocratic countries, and developing as well as developed nations.

POL 544 Public Opinion

Staff

Public opinion surveys; the origin of political attitudes; conflict and consensus on basic issues; political participation, partisan choice, and other mass behavior; pressure groups; propaganda and the media; the influence of public opinion on governmental policy; and public opinion and democratic theory are studied.

POL 545 Democratic Ideals and Realities

Larry Bartels, Chris Achen, and Stephen Macedo

Democratic ideals are hotly contested and they also seem increasingly remote in practice. This course examines competing conceptions of democratic principles, and the considerable – some would say insuperable – practical hurdles to realizing them. We will consider challenges that democracy has long faced, including limited citizen competence and the need for rule on the basis of merit, and inequality of resources, and also newer problems including those associated with globalization and new forms of transnational governance. We will examine both “realistic” and more idealistic (deliberative, participatory, property-owning, etc.) conceptions of democracy. An important focus of the course will be assessing new work proposing more effective ways of designing democratic institutions, and new forms of accountability, deliberation, and participation. Various faculty colleagues will be invited to discuss their work.

Readings to include selections from Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, Joseph Schumpeter, Hannah Arendt, John Rawls, Robert Dahl, and others.

POL 546 Congress and Public Policy

R. Douglas Arnold

The role of Congress in national policy-making. Includes theoretical and empirical analyses of congressional elections, the committee system, congressional leadership, and roll-call voting. The second half of the course applies several theories about Congress to specific policy areas, including macroeconomic, tax, energy, and regulatory policies.

547 African American Political Thought (also AAS)

M. Harris-Lacewell

Politics has played a key role in the African American experience in the United States. This course offers an intensive introduction to black political thought. This course focuses on the various ideologies and strategies, which have informed the African American quest for human fulfillment, self-actualization, and equity in the United States of America. The readings will focus on thinkers and activists from the twentieth century.

POL 548 Political Psychology

Tali Mendelberg

An overview of psychological approaches to politics. It includes standard works in political science and psychology. Topics include prejudice and stereotyping, group identity, analysis of

elites, authority and social influence, communication and persuasion, rationality and political reasoning, ideology, and self-interest.

POL 549 Seminar in American Politics

Staff

Selected theoretical problems in American politics.

POL 551 Seminar in International Politics

Joanne S. Gowa

An introduction to the major debates in and the theoretical traditions of international relations. A wide range of works, from Thucydides to contemporary writers, are surveyed to give students a comprehensive grounding in the IR literature.

POL 552 Theories of International Politics

Staff

Theories of international politics are examined and compared in the light of the evolution of the modern international political system.

POL 553 Empire and State Power

Staff

The nature and components of power in the international arena. Considers how different empires have pursued power and coped with the challenges of imperial management. Readings address the dynamics of imperial rise and fall, how and why state power changes over time, and how states assess and allocate their resources.

POL 554 International Security Studies

Aaron L. Friedberg

Central topics in security studies, including the causes and nature of war, deterrence, alliance formation, military doctrine, civil-military relations, arms competition, and arms control.

557 International Organization

Christina Davis

The course addresses the role of international institutions, including both informal norms and formal organizations. Why do states establish institutions and what determines their design and evolution? Do these institutions merely reflect underlying power and interests? The course will introduce theories of international institutions, evaluate critical perspectives, and examine applications in security, economic, and environmental policy areas.

POL 558 International Cooperation

Robert Keohane

Theoretical frameworks that have been devised to account for the generation, maintenance, and breakdown of international cooperation in policy areas such as international trade, collective security and arms control, the environment, and regional integration.

POL 559 Problems in International Politics

Staff

Selected theoretical problems in international politics.

POL 561 Constitutional Theory

Keith E. Whittington

The specific focus of the course varies from year to year, but the principal concerns revolve around questions of what a constitutional democracy is, why a people should want to live in such a polity, and how political actors can create, maintain, and change such systems.

POL 562 American Law and Theory

Robert P. George

A study of the role of law and legal institutions in the American political system. The seminar considers theoretical perspectives from both legal theory as such and the application of political and social theory to problems of law.

POL 563 Philosophy of Law (also PHI 526)

Robert P. George

A systematic study of the salient features of legal systems, standards of legal reasoning, and the relation between law and morals.

POL 564 American Constitutional Development

Staff

Explores questions of order and change in American constitutional doctrine and institutional relations, and powers across time. Students consider diverse theories of constitutional and institutional change, including those drawn from comparative politics. Emphasis is on the relationship between paths of constitutional development and both conventions of legal and constitutional reasoning, and political, economic, social, and intellectual currents, settlements, and crises.

POL 565 Theories of Judicial Review

Keith E. Whittington

An introduction to the debate over the legitimacy and proper scope of judicial review and the empirical literature on judicial review and judicial politics, with the goal of connecting debates over what the Court should do with an understanding of what the Court can do and has done.

POL 571 Quantitative Analysis I

Staff

This is a first course in statistics for social scientists. Students will learn to explore data creatively and to conduct straightforward statistical analysis. Basic probability and statistical theory will also be taught. There is no prerequisite except high school mathematics and a willingness to learn elementary calculus.

POL 572 Quantitative Analysis II

Staff

Builds on the concepts introduced in POL 571. Topics include the linear probability model, probit and logit models, instrumental variables, systems of equations, maximum-likelihood estimation, time-series analysis, and the analysis of panel data. The emphasis is on the application of advanced statistical techniques to important problems in political science research.

Prerequisite: POL 571.

POL 573 Quantitative Analysis III

Staff

Builds on the material covered in POL 571 and POL 572. Provides an introduction to the use of maximum-likelihood methods in political science. Develops the probit, logit, and regression models within a maximum-likelihood framework, and introduces applications to count data, and scaling models applied to legislative voting data. Emphasizes the flexibility maximum-likelihood techniques provided to modelers. Familiarity with matrix algebra and calculus techniques is assumed.

POL 575 Formal Political Analysis I

Staff

An introduction to mathematical models of political processes. Develops the analytical foundations for examining problems in collective choice. The technical development focuses on the logical structure of formal models as well as their use to develop testable hypotheses. The presentation of technical apparatus is combined with a wide range of applications. Topics include models of majority rule, direct and representative democracy, political competition under various electoral systems, and political economy.

POL 576 Formal Political Analysis II

Staff

Further development of the analytical tools used in formal political analysis, with special attention given to the role of information, uncertainty, and dynamics in the design and performance of political institutions. Readings emphasize the current research literature. Typical applications include participation, legislative structure, political campaigns, multiparty government, and the interaction of economics and politics. Prerequisite: POL 575.

POL 577 Economics and Politics (also ECO 520)

Marco Battaglini

Focused on analytical models of political institutions, this course is organized around canonical models and their applications. These include voting models, menu auctions, models of reputation, and cheap-talk games. These models are used to explain patterns of participation in interest groups and other observed phenomena.

POL 578 Seminar in Quantitative Analysis

Staff

Selected problems in the theory and application of quantitative methods of empirical analysis. Normally its prerequisite is POL 572 or the equivalent, or by permission of the instructor.

POL 579 Seminar in Formal Theory

Staff

Selected problems in the application of formal theory to the study of politics. Normally its prerequisite is POL 576 or the equivalent, or by permission of the instructor.

581 Analysis of Political Institutions

Staff

Designed to expose students to substantive and methodological controversies that are currently engaging scholars of political institutions. Integrates theoretical and quantitative skills by focusing on the processes of extracting hypotheses from formal models, stating hypotheses in a manner conducive to tests, collecting data, conducting tests, and making inferences. Assumes prior completion of POL 542.

582 Government Decision-Making: Empirical Analysis of Formal Models

Brandice Canes-Wrone

This class will explore connections between formal theory and empirical analysis. A major goal of the class is to link the training students receive in methods classes to substantive questions from the literature. Readings will include articles and books that attempt these ends. In addition, we will consider a few specific topics of government decision-making, read works covering a range of methodological approaches to examining that topic, and consider how the testing of formal theory does and does not contribute to that literature.

POL 583 The Logic of the West

John Ikenberry

This seminar is on the nature of the Western interstate system that includes the liberal democracies of Western Europe, North America, and Japan. The course explores the proposition that this political system has a distinct logic and character that has been misunderstood by both dominant Realists and Liberal international relations theorists.

POL 584 Foundations of Political Economy (also ECO 576)

Thomas Romer

Focuses on modeling the interaction of politics and economics, with application to a variety of substantive areas. Topics include the politics of taxation and redistribution; governmental structure; and political economy of constitutional arrangements, development, and growth. Prerequisites: POL 575 or the equivalent, as well as familiarity with microeconomic theory.

POL 585 International Political Economy

Joanne S. Gowa

An introduction to the subfield of international political economy, covering basic topics in the politics of both trade and finance. Reviews several explanations advanced by political scientists and economists since the late 19th century for variations across trade and monetary systems, examines relevant issues at the nation-state level (e.g., endogenous tariff theory), and provides some background in the requisite economic theory through a set of required readings.

POL 591 Directed Research

Staff

During the third term, each student writes a research paper under the direction of a faculty member.

POL 593, 594, 595, 596, 597 Research Seminars

Staff

Enrolled graduate students in residence attend one of these seminars each year and present their research. First-year students sign up for POL 593; second-year students, POL 594; third-year

students, POL 595; and fourth-year students, POL 596. The seminars are offered in four fields: political philosophy, comparative politics, American politics, and international relations.