Politics, American Courses (POL AMER)

Courses

Politics is about the exercise of power. This course examines the basic structure, organization, and institutional powers of American government. We will also examine how diverse citizens of the U.S. are linked to government through such things as political parties, interest groups, and elections. (Fall and Spring)

Most government employees who are making decisions, running programs and spending taxpayer money are not elected officials, but public servants. The purpose of this course is to examine the role of these bureaucrats in American government by developing an understanding of the history of the system, the tension between expertise and democracy, and the related issues that affect the American people and others around the globe. (Fall and Spring)

POL AMER 2131. American State Politics — 3 hrs.
Analysis of organization, functions, and operation of state and local governments. (Fall)

POL AMER 2147. Law, Politics, and Society — 3 hrs.
Law structures our personal, business and civic lives, and when courts resolve disputes about the law their decisions affect our politics and society. This course examines how the legal system works and explores its social and political effects. Includes discussion of topics such as racial and socioeconomic barriers to access to justice, tort reform, policing strategies, and crime policy. (Spring)

POL AMER 3112. Campaigns and Elections — 3 hrs.
Systematic examination of structure and functions of modern electoral campaigns for national, state, and local offices. (Even Falls)

POL AMER 3132. Community Politics — 3 hrs.
Introduction to structure, functions, and policies of American local government in context of economic, social, and intergovernmental forces. (Variable)

POL AMER 3134. Congress: The First Branch — 3 hrs.
Congress is the first branch, by virtue of being specified in Article I of the Constitution. We will think critically about the role of Congress in the American system of government, how we get it, what it does, and what it does not do. Students will assess evidence of whether Congress can properly be viewed as broken, or not. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1014. (Odd Falls)

POL AMER 3141. Constitutional Law — 3 hrs.
Analysis of U.S. Supreme Court decisions and changes in doctrine over time and the political forces affecting these changes. Emphasis on the powers and constraints of the federal government, separation of powers, and federalism. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1014 or POL AMER 2147 or POL AMER 3146. (Fall)

POL AMER 3144. Civil Rights and Liberties — 3 hrs.
Examines the Supreme Court's role in establishing and protecting individual rights and liberties from government intrusion. Emphasis on the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. Includes issues of free speech, freedom of religion, discrimination, and privacy. (Spring)

Theoretical and empirical examination of the role of appellate courts, especially the U.S. Supreme Court, within the American political system. Examination of theories of judicial decision making, the influence of politics on law and judges, and the impact of court decisions on public policy. (Even Falls)

Theoretical and empirical analyses of public opinion, political attitudes, political socialization, as well as voting behavior and political participation. (Spring)

POL AMER 3151. Modern Presidency — 3 hrs.
Examination of constitutional, electoral, administrative, and political aspects of the modern American presidency as they have evolved from FDR to the present. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1014. (Spring)

POL AMER 3153. Leadership and Management in Public Service — 3 hrs.
This course provides students the opportunity to study the political nature, characteristics and operation of American public organizations. You will analyze the internal and external factors that explain how public organizations operate, including theories and models of leadership and internal dynamics of public organizations and their role in the American political system. (Fall)

POL AMER 3166. Political Parties and Interest Groups — 3 hrs.
The history and evolution of political parties and interest groups in the American political system with a focus on their impact on the policy process. This course emphasizes how changes in the political environment including the rise of Super PACs, increased polarization and the use of social media for political mobilization are influencing the role each plays in elections and policy adoption. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1014. (Variable)

POL AMER 3172. Public Budgeting — 3 hrs.
Historical development of current budgeting practices; politics of budgetary process at federal, state, and local levels; current methods of budgeting for public agencies, focusing on integration of budgeting into program planning. (Spring)

Development of current government personnel practices; contemporary issues in personnel administration; techniques of job analysis; recruitment and selection of employees; and problems of supervision and evaluation. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1014; POL AMER 1048. (Variable)

POL AMER 4130/5130. Iowa Politics — 3 hrs.
Emphasis placed on the origins of Iowa's governmental structure, the three branches of government, and its unique role in presidential politics. Will examine some of the perennial issues facing the state. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Spring)

POL AMER 4142/5142. Problems in Juvenile and Family Law — 3 hrs.
Aspects of juvenile and family law; how legislature and courts have developed juvenile and family law, including marriage and divorce, adoption, and competency of minors. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Fall and Spring)
POL AMER 4143/5143. Citizen Participation and Civic Engagement — 3 hrs.
Introduces the key issues and problems affecting citizen participation and engagement at the community and national levels. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Variable)

POL AMER 4160/5160. Political Communication — 3 hrs.
Study of the elements of national and/or local political communication, including the rhetoric of political campaigns, and/or the rhetoric of elected officials. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Same as COMM 4216/5216) (Fall)

Can we predict public policy? The short answer is “no.” Public policies are the result of human decisions, a process which is not always rational. This course will examine why by focusing on biases in human decision making and how such biases can help improve our understanding of the policy process. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1014; POL AMER 1048; junior standing. (Fall)

POL AMER 4176/5176. Topics in Public Policy — 3 hrs.
Explores the latest developments in the field of public policy research. Ongoing policy issues may be used as examples to illustrate theoretical developments or to introduce applications of course material. May be repeated under different topics. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Variable)

POL AMER 4177/5177. Political Psychology — 3 hrs.
Explores the connections between psychology and political phenomena, including leadership, decision making, intergroup relations, and persuasion. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Variable)

POL AMER 4188/5188. Seminar in Public Administration — 3 hrs.
Advanced topics in public administration, such as essential and nonessential service delivery, fiscal administration, and community development. Introduces students to issues not covered in other public administration courses. Prerequisite(s): POL AMER 1048; junior standing. (Spring)

POL AMER 5154. Public Service Leadership and Management — 3 hrs.
This course focuses on the theories and practice of leadership and management in the public and nonprofit sectors. Particular attention will be paid to the history behind the theories and concepts used in the analysis and discussion of leadership and management to understand their development, to what degree they may be applicable to other settings, and their strengths and weaknesses. The course will enable students to understand variations in different organizational settings, alternative bases of authority, diverse communication styles, as well as the exercise of leadership and its connection with management. (Variable)

This course provides students the opportunity to study the local budgetary process and to explore with the following topics: budget document and budget process; the budget cycle; operating and capital budget; evolution of budget; the balanced budget; functions of the budget office; planning, adopting, implementing and controlling the budget; performance measures for public budgeting and budgeting for capital improvements. (Variable)