

Department of Political Science Fall 2023
Undergraduate Courses updated- subject to change

Most up to date course list can be found in Schedule of Classes or in iGPS

P302	30989	Politics Economics Crisis & Reform Day and Time: TR 4:45-6:00pm Location: WEB	Winecoff
P303	30991	Challenges to Democracy Day and Time: T 3:00-5:30pm Location: GA 1106	Bielasiak
X299	10807	Course Title: DC Internship course Day and Time: R 6:00-8:00pm Location: TBA	Barbour
X471	4768	Course Title: Internship Practicum /Teaching Assistantship Day and Time: ARR	Spechler
X471	11199	Course Title: Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship Day and Time: ARR	Barbour
X477	8068	Course Title: Field experience in Political Science Day and Time: ARR	Dalecki
X477	11174	Course Title: Washington DC Internship Political Sciences Day and Time: ARR	Barbour
X490	8345	Course Title: Undergraduate Readings in Political Science Day and Time: ARR	Dalecki
Y100	3093	Course Title: American Political Controversies Day and Time: MW 11:30am-12:45pm Location: EP 257	Dalecki
Y105	3095	Course Title: Introduction to Political Theory Day and Time: TR 9:45-10:35am Location: ED 1120	Failer
Y107	3096	Course Title: Introduction to Comparative Politics Day and Time: TR 3:00-4:15pm Location: TH A201	Smyth
Y109	3097	Course Title: Introduction to International Politics Day and Time: TR 11:30-12:45pm Location: WEB	Winecoff
Y205	3968	Course Title: Analyzing Politics Day and Time: TR 3:00-4:15pm Location: WH 120	Brannon

Y208	30995	Leadership, Civil Society, Public Policy Day and Time: MW 9:45am-11:00am Location: BH 005	Craiutu
Y211	5872	Course Title: Introduction to Law Day and Time: MW 3:00-4:15pm Location: JH A100	Dalecki

Y212	10808	Course Title: Making Democracy work Day and Time: MW 11:30am-12:45pm Location: M C141	Isaac
Y239	10809	Course Title: US Foreign Policy & Muslim World Day and Time: MW 4:45-6:00pm Location: GA 0003	Sinno
241		Course Title: Honors 241 Day and Time: Location:	Bianco
Y300	11748	Course Title: IU POLS SCI internship fall 2023 Washington DC Day and Time: ARR	Barbour
Y300	13972	Course Title: Topics in Current Politics and Governance Day and Time: TR 1:15-2:30pm Location: BH 245	Weinman
Y304	11019	Course Title: Constitutional Law Day and Time: TR 3:00-4:15pm Location: GA 0001	Braman
Y307	34974	Course Title: Indiana State Government and Politics Day and Time: Location: WH 004	Reid
Y311	35780	Course Title: Democracy & National Security Day and Time: Location:	Zulauf
Y315	6107	Course Title: Political Psychology and Socialization Day and Time: MW 3:00-5:30pm 2 nd 8 weeks Location: M C141	Carmines
Y319	30996	Course Title: The United States Congress Day and Time: TR 11:30am-12:45pm Location: WH 120	Webster
Y335	3098	Course Title: Western European Politics Day and Time: MW 11:30am-12:45pm Location: GA 1112	Bichay

Y339	10810	Course Title: Middle Eastern Politics Day and Time: MW 1:15-2:30pm Location: GA 1112	Sinno
Y342	34979	Course Title: Human Rights Day and Time: MW 3:00-4:15pm Location: WH 004	Sudduth

Y344	34980	Course Title: Civil Wars Day and Time: MW 11:30am-12:45pm Location: ED 1225	Sudduth
Y352	30999	Course Title: Holocaust and Politics Day and Time: TR 11:30am-12:45pm Location: WH 003	Bielasiak
Y361	10953	Course Title: Contemporary Theories of International Relations Day and Time MW 11:30am-12:45pm Location: WH 106	Zajac
Y364	31000	Course Title: International Organization: Political and Security Aspects Day and Time: MW 3:00-4:15pm Location: WH 120	Koren
Y381	7195	Course Title: Classical Political Thought Day and Time: MW 1:15-2:30pm Location: GA 1134	Craiutu
Y395	9070	Course Title: Quantitative Political Analysis Day and Time: TR 9:45am-11:00am Location: WH 005	DeSante
Y490	7359	Course Title: Senior Seminar Day and Time: T 1:15-3:45pm Location: EP 256	Failer
Y490	31001	Course Title: Senior Seminar Day and Time: R 11:30am-2:00pm Location: WH 114	Braman
Y490	12427	Course Title: Senior Seminar Day and Time: R 2:30-5:00pm Location: BH 336	Isaac
Y499	8768	Course Title: Honors Thesis, 3 credits, Honors Colloquium Day and Time: W 3:00-5:00pm Location: WH 108	Razo

Course Descriptions

POLS-P302

Instructor: Winecoff

Course Description:

Politics Economics Crisis & Reform

Economic crises have been a recurrent feature of global capitalism since its beginning. These crises have significant effects on economic and political systems. Recent research suggests that crises are increasing in both frequency and severity, as evidenced by contemporary instability in North America, Europe, and the Arab World. Crises are frequently followed by calls for reform. Some reform efforts target specific market activities while others involve modifications to political institutions. Some reform efforts are instigated by international institutions while others are initiated by domestic politics. This course will consider the politics of crisis and reform from a comparative and international political economy perspective. In addition to learning general theories of crisis and reform, we will study in-depth "case studies" of important crisis episodes in the era of industrial capitalism and seek to understand both the causes and consequences of crisis events. We will examine the impact of various crisis responses, conducted under different political and economic systems.

POLS-P303

Instructor: Bielasiak

Course Description:

Challenges to Democracy

CAN IT HAPPEN HERE? Is American democracy in danger? Is democracy in crisis around the world? We examine why some democracies succeed, while others turn to authoritarianism. We first look at the principles and institutions that define political regimes. Then, we analyze contemporary challenges to democracy, such as populism, personalism, polarization, and misinformation. Requirements include participation in discussion of current politics, short reflection papers on key course themes, and a county study of de-democratization.

POLS-X299

Instructor: Barbour

Course Description:

Careers for Political Science Students Internship class

What can you do with a major in political science? In this course you'll explore your own career interests and skills, find out how to use on-campus opportunities to gain career-relevant experience, and hear from a series of IU alums with professional careers in law, government, business, non-profits and research institutes, international service, polling, and other fields about what they do in their careers. You will learn what is required to get these jobs. You'll write a resume' and find out how to excel in an interview. (1 credit, graded pass/fail) Open to: Political science majors and those considering majoring or minoring in political science.

POLS-X471

Instructor: Spechler

Course Description:

Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship

Consent of Instructor. Faculty-directed participation in the various aspects of academic teaching and research. Students will assist a faculty member in such activities as directing simulations, grading, teaching discussion sections, doing research. Individual assignments will vary by instructor. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits.

POLS-X471

Instructor: Barbour

Course Description:

Consent of instructor. Faculty-directed participation in the various aspects of academic teaching and research. Students will assist a faculty member in such activities as directing simulations, grading, teaching discussion sections, doing research. Individual assignments will vary by instructor. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of 6 credit hours.

POLS-X477

Instructor: Dalecki

Course Description:

Field Experience in Political Science

Credit can be used for internship experiences; students can register for 1-6 graded credit hours working with a Political Science faculty sponsor.

POLS-X477

Instructor: Barbour

Course Description:

Field Experience in Political Science

The above course is for students taking IU Pols DC internship in Washington DC spring 2022 semester X 477: P - Junior or senior standing; 15 credit hours of political science; and project approval by instructor

Above class reflects Internship or Practicum experience. For more information visit <https://covid.iu.edu/learning-modes/index.html>

POLS-X490

Instructor: Dalecki

Course Description:

Undergraduate Readings in Political Science (1-6cr.)

Individual readings and research. No more than 6 credit hours total may be taken only with consent of instructor.

POLS-Y100

Instructor: Dalecki

Course Description:

American Political Controversies

This course examines several controversies that have permeated American politics, ranging from contentions over the essence of public policies through debates about civil rights and liberties and disagreements over how political information should be communicated. We will focus on *what* types of arguments have been used to endorse/reject specific views and *how* arguments in favor of/against these views have been produced. The goal of the course is thus two-fold: to examine key debates present in American politics and appreciate the art of making effective political arguments.

Required Readings

All readings will be posted on Canvas.

POLS-Y105

Instructor: Failer

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory

If you want to understand what political theories such as "liberalism," "democracy," "socialism," "feminism," "conservatism," and "populism" actually entail, this course can help you do so. The course opens by addressing the most basic question of political existence: why should we obey government? More specifically: if we are to be expected to obey government, what can we legitimately expect from government in return? After examining how a host of thinkers from both ancient and modern times tackled these questions, we turn to the most influential modern answers, as formulated by those thinkers associated with what later became described as "liberalism." Considering the possibility that liberalism represents a failed political theory, we subsequently examine major critics, on both the left and right, who have argued that liberalism never sufficiently explains why people should obey their governments. In this context, we examine "feminism," "socialism," and (contemporary) "conservatism." Finally, we discuss how the political theories examined in this course can help us make sense of Donald Trump and other "populist" leaders around the world. The course format is relatively old-fashioned: you read, discuss, and write about a diverse collection of political thinkers, including Plato, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, M.L. King, and Friedrich Hayek. The aim is to provide you with a basic introduction to some of the most important political arguments, ideas, and theories, as well as help you become a more informed citizen.

POLS-Y107

Instructor: Smyth

Course Description:

World Politics: (Introduction to Comparative Politics)

The rise of social inequality, misinformation, and authoritarian values in modern day democracies begs the question: how long can they last? This course will explore the differences between democracies and autocracies, focusing on political systems, elections, protest, and propaganda. What systems prevail and why? Students will choose countries or regions that interest them to complete their assignments.

POLS-Y109

Instructor: Winecoff 100% Online

Course Description:

Introduction to International Relations

This course will introduce students to the study of international politics. To that end the course will explore the causes of war as well as the stable conditions of peace. It will also focus on issues such as terrorism, civil wars, human rights, trade negotiations and environmental security. No prior knowledge of the subject will be presumed but an interest in contemporary international politics is desirable.

POLS-Y205

Instructor: Brannon 3/21 sent email for CD meanwhile I am using the generic one

Course Description:

Analyzing Politics

Introduces the approaches and techniques used to study politics. Includes an introduction to social science language, concepts, and critical research skills. Overview of political science research approaches, including case study, surveys and model-building. Emphasizes skills such as interpreting the presentation of data in charts, graphs, and tables, and elementary analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.

POLS-Y208

Instructor: Craiutu

Course Description:

Leadership, Civil Society, Public Policy

Liberal democracy is in crisis. The social media has changed the political landscape in a way that was unimaginable only 20 years ago. Our political life is highly polarized at a moment when the political center is weaker than ever, and the traditional left/right political categories cease to apply. Tribalism and sectarianism drive our political scene, marked by overheated and hyperbolic political rhetoric. Paradoxically, this is also a good time to revisit old theories and ideas about civil society and leadership. The topics of polarization and leadership will be the core issues in our class. The difficult question is how to promote good leadership in a highly complex and divided environment, marked by high polarization and ideological intransigence. We will examine polarization through a variety of perspectives that bring to light related and relevant concepts such as disagreement, free speech, civility, incivility, moderation, and radicalism.

The class combines sources from several disciplines (political science, history, philosophy, and public policy) and combines theory and practice. Throughout the course, discussion about specific individuals and issues will be used to illustrate the roles of leaders and institutions at all levels (local, state, federal) of American public and political life. By focusing on the relationship between politics and civil society, we will also try to highlight the skills of effective political and civic engagement, deliberation, advocacy, and action.

The class will use a combination of traditional lectures, guest lectures, discussions, and student presentations. The requirements include short papers and group projects in lieu of traditional exams. The midterm will ask students to act as political consultants to a federal or state representative and write a memorandum on a specific political or public policy topic relevant to our contemporary concerns. The final exam will be group projects on revising the constitution.

POLS-Y211

Instructor: Dalecki

Course Description:

Introduction to Law

The goal of Introduction to Law is to provide an overview of the basic concepts of law and encourage students to appreciate law as a foundation of individual and group liberties and social order. Additionally, this course will introduce students to legal reasoning: how to make arguments on any side of legal questions, how to choose among competing legal arguments, and how to think with precision, rigor, and care.

Required Readings

All readings will be posted on Canvas.

Keywords

Law, history of law, rule of law, the United States court system

POLS-Y212

Instructor: Isaac

Course Description:

Making Democracy Work: Making American Great Again? The Declaration of Independence and the Meaning of American Citizenship

What does it mean to be an American? Who is an American citizen? What does it *mean* to be an American *citizen*?

These questions, brought to the fore by the 2016 election of Donald Trump as President of the U.S., are at the heart of current political debates about immigration, national security, civil rights, and economic policy, and they have been continuously debated throughout the course of U.S. political history. This class will trace and analyze the many ways that these questions have been posed and answered since 1776, and it will do so through a focus on alternative interpretations of the Declaration of Independence, which has sometimes been called the “birth certificate of American democracy.”

The Declaration is not the only important text in American political history. But it is a very important touchstone for many important historical debates and is an even more important symbol of American political identity. It is also a very instructive example of the fact that core political principles can be interpreted in many different ways and can thus be heavily contested. Such rhetorical contests play an important role in the evolution of democracy over time, as disenfranchised groups appeal to “foundational” texts, like the Declaration, to justify their demands for recognition and inclusion.

This course covers “big” topics, and it offers a broad, panoramic overview of the history of American democracy from 1776 to the present—a long historical time span. **The course’s primary purpose** is to highlight a few core questions related to the meaning of American citizenship; to expose students to a set of readings that help to illuminate these questions; and to encourage students to think for themselves, in a serious and self-reflexive way, about these questions. *These questions are particularly pressing right now, and so it seems particularly important to focus attention on them, and to integrate historical and theoretical discussion with discussion of relevant current events.* Each class session will have a clear theme, explicitly noted in the syllabus, to which the assigned readings are connected. The primary method of class instruction will be lecture mixed with discussion. If the syllabus furnishes the “skeletal framework” of the course, in-class lectures *and discussion* constitute its “flesh and blood.”

POLS-Y239

Instructor: Sinno

Course Description:

US Foreign Policy & Muslim

The course is divided in two broad parts: Part One introduces you to the analytical skills we need and to the geography, politics and cultures of the area we study. This is a very reading-intensive phase. We will deal directly with the big questions of this course in Part Two. I will first introduce you to the topic then we will begin an informed discussion. This is also a very reading-intensive phase. You will also become part of a discussion team of five students. Students are expected to attend class, engage in discussions and write short essays, write a six-page paper, and take two tests.

Key words for my Y239/N239 course: US Foreign Policy, Iraq War, Afghanistan War, Iran Nuclear Program, Arab Spring, Islam, Muslims, international relations, conflict, terrorism

POLS-Y300

Instructor: Barbour

Course Description:

Topics in Current Politics and Governance

Course for students taking IU POLS DC internship in Washington DC

Off Campus

POLS-Y300

Instructor: Weinman

Course Description:

The Politics of Identity

Beginning with the postulate that propriety, the normative basis and justification for property, is first and foremost about *belonging*, and only secondarily about *possession* or *ownership*, we will engage with texts written in a number of different disciplines—political theory, area and post-colonial studies, literary theory, and philosophy—and written by authors who self-identify or are identified as either “European” or “non-European” or “hybrids” of both in order to investigate two cases of this sort of belonging: nationality and the dream of cosmopolitan identity; and post-coloniality and long shadow of European imperialism. The first (nationality and cosmopolitanism) will be examined through the critical appropriation of Kant’s classical formulation by Nussbaum, Habermas, and then critiques thereof in the work of Appiah, Arendt, and Benhabib. What does it mean, we will ask, to belong to a nation, or to some entity that is post-national or trans-national? What, for instance, might “European identity” be and what might it be defined *against*? The second case (post-coloniality and imperialism) is examined through the historical and theoretical discussions of Du Bois, Arendt, Said and Spivak. What does it mean to say that a thought, a cultural practice, or a text belongs to an individual, or to some group, by virtue of some uniquely definable trait? How does this entitlement make possible the notion of “cultural (mis-)appropriation”?

Our in-class experience will blend discussion, guided practice, and brief presentations, given by students and instructor in rotating responsibilities. In addition to reading and reading about identity, we will view, listen to, and consider other forms of art and how their exploration of this concept intersects with words we will read. As both the works we will encounter, and the practices of silencing them all emerge from a unique place and time, we will discover how and why artworks and ideas that were once viewed as value neutral or “universal” have come to be seen differently.

POLS-Y304

Instructor: Braman

Course Description:

Constitutional Law

The Constitution and the decisions of Supreme Court justices who interpret it have defined the contours of government power in the United States for over 200 years. The precise scope and nature of that power is not always clear. Questions often arise about whether particular governmental entities have the authority to undertake specific actions. Conflicts sometimes arise between the branches or between the national and state governments concerning appropriate balance of power among different governmental bodies. In this course, we will examine the constitutional powers of our national institutions -- the United States judicial, legislative, and executive branches. We will also look at how our constitutional structure limits state and national government actors. Finally, we will consider how some of the specific tools the United States government has to address national problems have evolved over time through Supreme Court decision making.

POLS-Y307

Instructor: Griffin Reid

Course Descriptions:

Indiana State Government and Politics

Constitutional foundations, political development, organizational and functional process and growth, and current problems of Indiana government. Readings, case studies, problems.

POLS-311

Instructor: Barry Zulauf

Course Description:

Democracy & National Security-IU POLS SCI Internship fall 2023

Course for students taking IU POLS DC Internship

Registration requires permission from the department

Analysis of fundamental tensions between democratic values and the requirements of national security. Topics include homeland security and civil liberties in an age of terror, civil-military relations, oversight of intelligence operations, effects of interventions and wars on democracy abroad and at home, and debates over the morality of United States security policies.

POLS-Y315

Instructor: Carmines

Course Description:

Political Psychology and Socialization

Political psychology focuses on how psychological concepts and theories help us understand how people view and interpret political events and sometimes act in the political arena. We will begin the course by examining the basic concepts used in the study of political psychology including attitudes, beliefs and cognition. We will then focus on the main areas of research in political psychology including theories of personality, group dynamics, and individual decision-making. Our primary focus will be on the psychological underpinnings of the decisions and actions of political elites, specifically American Presidents. As the most important political office not just in the United States but today in the entire world, it is not surprising that the study of the presidency has attracted the attention of political psychologists. We shall see how they have used psychological models to explain presidential successes and failures and current attempts to provide psychological profiles of presidential candidates. Our ultimate objective is to assess the extent to which presidents' psychological backgrounds and makeup affect their political beliefs and actions.

This is a second eight-week course, so it is crucial that students attend class regularly. The course requirements consist of two essay-type exams plus several short papers. The class includes opportunities for group work and class discussion.

POLS-Y319

Instructor: Webster

Location:

Course Description

The United States Congress

This class will analyze legislatures and legislators, with a focus on the U.S. Congress. Topics covered will include congressional elections, polarization in congress, explanations of congressional voting behavior, and how Congress interacts with the executive and the courts.

POLS-Y335

Instructor: Bichay

Course Description:

Western European Politics

This course examines the politics and governing structures of Western European countries in a comparative perspective. We will consider how political and economic development, conflict, and institutions have shaped the current European political landscape. Students will gain an understanding of European political parties, the European welfare state, and challenges of European integration including contemporary issues like Brexit and rising populism.

POLS-Y339

Instructor: Sinno

Course Description:

Middle Eastern Politics

This course introduces you to the interaction among people, governments and outside powers in the Middle East and North Africa--a vast and complex area that stretches from Morocco to Afghanistan and from Turkey to the Sudan. Topics addressed include many of the following: Background (geography, history, culture and religion); the colonial era and legacy; the Cold War and post-Cold War eras; US involvement in Middle East; Wars and conflicts; Israeli-Palestinian conflict; War in Afghanistan; Regimes and revolutions; and the Arab Spring.

POLS-Y342

Instructor: Sudduth

Course Description:

Human Rights

TBD

POLS-Y344

Instructor: Sudduth

Course Description:

Civil Wars

TBD

POLS-Y352

Instructor: Bielasiak

Course Description:

The Holocaust and Politics

The course examines Nazi Germany's attempt to exterminate the Jews of Europe and other "undesirable" populations during WWII. We consider first the ideological arguments and political actions leading to the Final Solution. Second, we examine the responses to the annihilation by perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, and consider issues of responsibility and the legacy of the Holocaust.

The content presents us with an emotional, painful experience that must be harnessed for understanding. To that end, we will use a variety of sources, academic studies and survivors' testimonies, documentary and fictional accounts, films, and poems. Class requirements include exams, in-class quizzes, and assignments that go beyond the typical to personalize the tragedy.

POLS-Y361

Instructor: Zajac

Course Description:

Contemporary Theories of International Politics

Theories are like lenses. They help us see things that are not noticeable at first sight. They help us sift through the facts and seek the most plausible explanation as to why things are the way they are. Theories of international relations – through presenting a rigorous and systematic way of understanding situations, events, behaviors, and processes in the global arena – help us explain the world politics and make it logical and comprehensible. The goal of this course is to furnish you with such lenses. We will take a closer look at the key contemporary theories of international relations such as realism, liberalism, Marxism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism, constructivism, and the English School. We will also explore the debate on the future of international politics theories in the post-Western world order. By the end of the course, you will be familiar with main theories of international relations and have the intellectual tools and skills to understand, appreciate, and critique these (and other) theories of international relations, and apply them to the real-world phenomena.

POLS-Y364

Instructor: Koren

Course Description**International Organizations: Political and Security Aspects**

International relations are an integral part of our modern world and have a crucial effect on shaping our everyday life. Conflict and peace, physical and environmental security, prosperity and economic development are all affected as the interactions between different states and actors create new “winners” and “losers.” Who are the actors that shape the international arena? What factors govern the way in which it is being shaped? This course will systematically analyze different ways of international organization, with a focus on international security and the instruments that enable and facilitate international relations. Particular attention will be given to the contemporary role of international institutions, as well as their historical structuring and functioning; to security motivations and economic relations; to the requisites and limits of cooperation; and to emerging zones of international security. 3 credits.

POLS-Y381

Instructor: Craiutu

Course Description:**Classical Political Thought**

The course offers a close examination of some of the most important works and themes in classical political thought. It includes representative selections from Thucydides’s *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Plato’s *Republic*, Aristotle’s *Politics*, Cicero’s *On Duties*, St. Augustine’s *City of God*, and St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa*. We will also examine a major text in non-Western thought (ancient China) by Sun-Tzu (*The Art of War*). The class will use a combination of lecture and discussions and will have a midterm and a final exam.

POLS-Y395

Instructor: DeSante

Course Description:**Quantitative Political Analysis**

Introduction to methods and statistics used in political inquiry, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, probability, sampling, statistical inference and hypothesis testing, measures of association, analysis of variance and regression.

POLS-Y490

Instructor: Failer

Course Description:**Senior Seminar in Political Science –**

Senior standing or consent of department. Seminar sessions arranged to present papers for evaluation and criticism by fellow students. Subject matter varies by semester. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of 6 credit hours.

POLS-Y490

Instructor: Braman

Course Description

Senior Seminar in Political Science-

Senior standing or consent of department. Seminar Sessions arranged to present papers for evaluation and criticism by fellow students. Subject matter varies by semester. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of 6 credits.

POLS-Y490

Instructor: Isaac

Course Description:

Senior Seminar in Political Science - Democrats in Crisis

Does American democracy have a future? Is the U.S. even a democracy at all?

These questions have been debated since the early days of the American republic. Back then “democracy” was not a term of approbation. Indeed, many of the framers of the Constitution, including James Madison in his famous *Federalist* No. 10, insisted that the U.S. was best conceived as a republic—a limited and a representative government-- and *not* a democracy. But by the 1840’s the idea of “democracy” was ascendant throughout much of Europe and North America, as chronicled by Alexis de Tocqueville in his famous two-volume *Democracy in America*. From Lincoln’s famous Gettysburg encomium to “government of, by, and for the people” to Wilson’s “making the world safe for democracy” through to the recent past, the U.S. has long been considered by many to be a paragon of democracy. And “democracy” has widely been regarded as the most legitimate form of government.

And yet today many commentators are raising questions about whether the U.S. can any longer be considered a democracy.

It is now a commonplace that there is widespread civic disaffection with the American political system; that voter participation is low by the standards of most existing democracies; and that in many ways the political system seems no longer to “work” at all. “Gridlock” has replaced government. Many citizens experience a wide chasm separating them from political elites and public officials. The ascendancy of Donald Trump—a political outsider, a populist who claims to incarnate the authentic will of the people in a way that transcends established institutions—and the enduring effects of the Trump presidency are symptoms of this sense that things are awry with American democracy, and that something radical might be needed to set things right.

In this course we will address the question of whether the U.S. is a flawed democracy, a failing democracy, or not a democracy at all. In order to do this, we must first address the question of what “democracy” means, and whether and how it is a normative benchmark for judging the quality and determining the legitimacy of a political system. We will then employ this benchmark to assess the American system. We will focus on aspects of the Constitution; important institutional features not prescribed by the Constitution; and the broader economic and cultural context in which American democracy is currently facing some serious challenges. We will then consider the impact and legacy of the January 6, 2021, insurrection, and the ongoing effort to delegitimize the November 2020 election, and ask what these developments for the future.

POLS-Y499

Instructor: Razo

Course Description:**Honors Thesis:**

This yearlong seminar is required for undergraduate students who want to graduate with Honors in Political Science. Its primary purpose is to train and support students to successfully formulate and complete an undergraduate thesis project by the end of spring semester.

During the fall semester, you will learn the nuts and bolts of political thinking and social research to establish a solid foundation for your thesis project. Our weekly meetings will include a mix of hands-on activities including discussions, peer evaluations, and other collaborative exercises to hone your research and academic writing skills. Throughout the semester, you will learn to formulate clear research questions, write relevant literature reviews, and select appropriate research designs and methods to obtain good answers. With separate advice from a faculty advisor, you will assemble these basic components into a thesis prospectus with a clear outline and research completion plan.

During the spring semester, you will focus on implementing your prospectus with original research and thesis writing. We will initially have monthly meetings during January and February to discuss your progress and brainstorm solutions to common problems that students face during this active research phase. After spring break, we will schedule a few group meetings for student presentations to receive collective feedback before you start preparing final revisions and your thesis defense. Throughout the whole session, you will be working closely with a faculty advisor who will be supervising your individual thesis project.