Political Science (POL) Courses

POL 5003. Political Inquiry. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An introduction to investigation and analysis in Political Science. A major objective is for students to learn how to frame a question, formulate a hypothesis, and review and apply the relevant literature. The course provides an introduction to research design and qualitative research methods, and may include questions in the philosophy of science and other methodological and theoretical questions central to political science.

POL 5013. Research Methods. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course provides students with the opportunity to develop a basic working knowledge of the empirical, quantitative approaches/techniques social scientists use in understanding social/political phenomena. The conceptual focus will be on classic hypothesis testing. The class will culminate with multiple regression analysis and its extensions.
Students will be given an opportunity to learn how to read the empirical, quantitative primary political science literature, and conduct a statistical analysis of a question in political science.

POL 5023. Political Economy. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Analysis of the interplay of politics and economics in the domestic and international arenas. Divergent theoretical perspectives and their basis in the work of classical and contemporary political economists and social theorists. Topics may include the policies and economics of international trade, technology policy, educational reform, industrial restructuring, privatization, environmental policy, and labor-market policy.

POL 5033. Political Communications and Behavior. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of major theories and research dealing with human behavior and interaction in politics, drawing on the literature of political sociology, political communications, political anthropology, and political psychology. Professional applications such as public opinion polling, political journalism, public relations, campaign management, political advertising, and political consulting are considered.

POL 5043. International Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course analyzes theories of international relations and/or comparative politics, with an emphasis on major theoretical paradigms and methodological approaches. Topics may include security, economics, the environment, and human rights.

POL 5063. Political Philosophy. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
A broad survey of central political issues and thinkers. Students will be introduced to the philosophies of thinkers such as Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx.

POL 5083. Geo-Political Context of Homeland Security and Defense. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
A broad overview of the geo-political dynamics of domestic and international crises and their relationship to homeland security and defense (HSD) policies. Course topics may include discussions of how U.S. political systems develop policies to reduce negative impacts of domestic and international crises, principles of federalism related to political responses to crises, political communications in times of crisis, domestic and foreign policy implications, geospatial factors, and foreign policy considerations. May include guest lectures by prominent practitioners and scholars.

POL 5093. Politics of U.S. National Security Policy Making. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of the political dynamics of national security decision making, placing particular emphasis on executive branch leadership and coordination with other institutions of government. Discussion of the history and politics, evolution, and institutional roles of the U.S. national security system. Includes discussion of policy initiatives, institutional decision making settings, constitutional and statutory controls on institutional powers, and policy outcomes. Course may explore a sample of major national security decisions in terms of political characteristics and principles.

POL 5103. Topics in American Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of an individual topic or set of issues in American politics. May be repeated for credit when topics vary.

POL 5113. Latino/a Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course examines the role of the Latino electorate in shaping state and national politics. Topics may include the political histories of various Latino national origin groups, public policy issues that concern Latinos, the successes and failures of Latino empowerment strategies, and the electoral impact of Latino votes.

POL 5133. Ethnic and Gender Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
How ethnic and gender differences influence political behavior, policymaking, and policy outcomes in the United States. Theories of ethnic relations and feminist and other theories of gender relations. Strategies for dealing with ethnic conflict and gender discrimination and harassment. (Formerly POL 5123. Credit cannot be earned for both POL 5133 and POL 5123.)

POL 5153. American Government and Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of the major issues, problems, and processes of American government and administration.

POL 5163. American Political Development. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course presents a macropolitical perspective on American politics. It introduces students to debates in political science about change and development in political authority relations since the founding of the Republic. Topics may include the nature of regimes and regime change; the relationship between ideology and political culture; developments in institutional authority and in the balance of power among institutions such as the three branches of government, federal and state authority, and the military; continental development; the emergence of the regulatory state; the United States as a world power; and the representative process and forms of popular organization.

POL 5173. Policy Process. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course examines theories of the policy-making and -executing process, and the actors, institutions, and politics that are involved in the process. (Credit cannot be earned for both POL 5173 and PAD 5323.)

POL 5183. Congress. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
The study of the U.S. Congress. Topics may include Congressional procedure and policymaking, representation, and elections. The course also considers the various approaches used in the scholarly study of Congress, including behavioral, rational choice, and historical methods.

POL 5193. Presidency. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course examines the origins and development of the presidency, the relationship of the institution of the presidency with major actors in the governmental process, and the modern practice of presidential leadership in the United States.

POL 5203. Topics in Political Theory. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of an individual topic, theorist, or set of issues in political theory. May be repeated for credit when topics vary.
POL 5213. Seminar in American Political Thought. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Consideration of American political thinking and its impact from the colonial era to the present with an emphasis on primary sources. Readings may include diverse works of a political, judicial, philosophical, theological, and literary nature. May be organized chronologically or topically.

POL 5233. Political Creativity. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course examines significant cases of institutional change and development. The course begins with a focus on theoretical debates about political innovation and institutional explanations of politics. We will review the debate about how institutions create political order and constrain individual action as well as leading critiques of order and constraint. We will consider how individual creative action is inseparable from the practice of politics and government. Individual action is partly about leaders and entrepreneurs, but innovation is also about other dimensions of political order which are subject to order-changing actions of a non-individualistic kind, involving embedded cognitive schemas, deliberative procedures and social learning, and historical conjunctures in which individual and collective agents create opportunities in concrete circumstances. Various cases will be taught in different semesters from the U.S. and other countries, such as race relations, political revolutions, policy innovations of various kinds, negotiation of equity commitments, post-crisis reconciliation exercises, and leadership.

POL 5253. Theories of Immigration. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course provides an overview of the most important concepts and trends in immigration, transnationalism, citizenship, and integration policies as it pertains to a particular country or region.

POL 5273. Contemporary Political Theory and Social Policy. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course explores contemporary social policy from a normative perspective. Topics may include the nature of a just educational system; justice of universal health care; normative issues relating to reproduction and genetic technologies; social security reform; the proper role of the state in regulating and supporting families; and other policy topics.

POL 5303. Topics in Comparative and International Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of an individual topic or set of issues in comparative and/or international politics. May be repeated for credit when topics vary.

POL 5323. Urban Geography. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An advanced social and economic geography of urban areas, emphasizing intra-urban inequality, the modeling of economic dynamics, and spatial mobility to and within the city. Topics may include social area analysis, residential segregation, migration, perception and personal space in the urban environment, urban transportation, the urban economic base and its dynamics, and consumer shopping behavior in cities.

POL 5333. European Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of the political systems and links between civil society and political institutions in several European nations in the post-WWII era. This course will focus on domestic politics, and will also introduce the European Union. Topics may include political institutions, policy processes, political representation, and public opinion in the European countries.

POL 5363. Mexican Politics. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course focuses on Mexico’s political and economic development, including the interaction between the state and civil society and the current challenges of the state. The course includes a historical overview of the development of Mexican national politics, institutions and the economy, and the emergence of civil society. Specific topics may include guerrilla movements, drug dealing, and U.S.-Mexico relations.

POL 5373. Human Rights. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course explores the meaning of human rights, analyzes cases of human rights violations in various parts of the world, and examines the roles that individuals, states, and international organizations play in committing and ending human rights abuses. Topics may include genocide, torture, the death penalty, honor killings, and the violation of children’s and workers’ rights.

POL 5403. Topics in Political Communications and Behavior. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of an individual topic or set of issues in political communications and behavior. May be repeated for credit when topics vary.

POL 5413. Seminar in Political Psychology. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
The study of psychological theories of political phenomena at individual, small group, organizational, and nation-state levels. Topics may include political socialization, personality and political leadership, the social psychology of mass participation, rational choice and symbolic politics paradigms of political behavior, psychological models of international conflict, and models of political cognition.

POL 5433. Electoral Behavior. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of political science theory and research on elections and voting behavior in the United States and other countries. Topics may include electoral cycles and realignment patterns; the impact of media coverage and campaign tactics on opinions, turnout, and electoral outcomes; and the sociodemographic and psychological variables influencing voting and nonvoting.

POL 5463. Lobbying and Government Relations. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course is explores both theoretical and practical themes related to the efforts of interest groups to shape the policy making process. Special focus is placed on the inner workings of legislatures at local, state, and national levels with the objective of increasing the governmental relations effectiveness of public interest groups, businesses, trade organizations, bureaucratic agencies, and unions.

POL 5503. Law and Courts. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Examination of the role of courts in American politics and administration. May focus on American constitutional development, constitutional and legal interpretation, or judicial politics and behavior. May also incorporate a comparative perspective on the role of courts in constitutional systems. (Formerly titled "Constitutional Law and Judicial Decision-Making.").

POL 5563. Seminar in Jurisprudence. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Examination of the philosophical and historical foundations of law. Topics may include theoretical accounts of the nature of law; competing theories of justice; problems of legal obligation and civil disobedience; and judicial modes of interpreting and applying law. Authors may include Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Austin, Holmes, Frank, Hart, Oakeshott, Rawls, Finnis, Dworkin, and Posner.
POL 5623. Federalism. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
The administrative and political effects of the division of authority among coordinate units of government. Federal-state, state-local, local-federal, state-state, local-local, and governmental-nongovernmental relations are examined. (Formerly titled "Intergovernmental Relations in the United States.").

POL 5703. American Foreign Policy. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course analyzes the domestic and international factors that affect American foreign policy, including explanations that focus on psychology, bureaucratic politics, lobbying organizations, public opinion, and national culture.

POL 5713. Comparative Political Systems. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Comparative analysis of theories and issues pertaining to political institutions and processes in post-industrial, developing, and transitional systems. Topics may include state theory, nationalism, new institutionalism, political economy, party systems, politics of contention, regional integration, and the internationalization of public policy.

POL 5723. International Organizations. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of international political and economic organizations, as well as major issues involving them. Topics may include alliance systems, regional development, common markets, peacekeeping, international conferences, United Nations, IMF, World Bank, and regional organizations.

POL 5733. Political Actors and Systems in Latin America. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An examination of politics in Latin America. The course centers the analysis around two axes: the interplay between civil society and the state and patterns of inter-American relations.

POL 5743. Electoral Systems in the Americas. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
A comparative study of campaigns and elections in the Americas. The course assesses similarities and differences of electoral systems in the region with particular emphasis on North American politics (Canada, the United States, and Mexico).

POL 5773. Foreign Policy Analysis. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course will compare worldviews, institutional processes, policies, and outcomes in foreign policymaking. Cross-national and thematic comparisons will be used to examine the foreign policies of major actors in international security, international organization, economic competition, and humanitarian issues. Regional comparisons may focus on political and economic issues in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and/or Latin America.

POL 5783. International Security. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course examines circumstances and issues leading to war and the conditions necessary to return nations and regions to stability and security in the world community. Topics may include causes of civil and international war, deterrence, nuclear and conventional weapons, terrorism, and conflict prevention and resolution.

POL 5793. International Political Economy. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course analyzes the interaction of politics and economics in the international arena, with a focus on international trade, investment, monetary, and financial relations. Topics may include the role of international economic institutions (such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization), regional integration, foreign debt, dependency and development, structural change in international economics, and critiques of economic globalization.

POL 5823. Economic Geography. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An advanced examination of the location of economic activities, their causes, and consequences. Includes the principles and practices of manufacturing and agricultural location and their impact on political subdivisions and economies; trade areas for retail and service activities; the role of transportation; the economic impact of globalization on local areas; and community economic base and shift-share analysis applied to local economies, with implications for planning and public administration. (Same as GRG 5303. Credit cannot be earned for both POL 5853 and GRG 5303.).

POL 5853. Economic Geography. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An advanced examination of the location of economic activities, their causes, and consequences. Includes the principles and practices of manufacturing and agricultural location and their impact on political subdivisions and economies; trade areas for retail and service activities; the role of transportation; the economic impact of globalization on local areas; and community economic base and shift-share analysis applied to local economies, with implications for planning and public administration. (Same as GRG 5303. Credit cannot be earned for both POL 5853 and GRG 5303.).

POL 5873. Global Governance. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
This course analyzes the ways in which various actors bring order to the international system. While traditional theories focus on the role of the state, this course gives greater attention to non-state actors, public and private institutions, and the many ways in which they interact in managing common affairs. Theoretical and empirical issues include, but are not limited to, contending perspectives and systems of rule-making in the areas of security, poverty, trade and finance, human rights and the environment.

POL 5903. Seminar in Political Geography. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Investigates the role of the political state in society and the evolution of state organization from classical times to the present. Topics may include centrifugal and centripetal forces, geopolitics, territorial morphology, boundaries, core areas, and emerging supranationalism. (Same as GRG 5903. Credit cannot be earned for both POL 5903 and GRG 5903.).

POL 5943. Threat Environments and Homeland Security and Defense. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
An in-depth analysis of political system responses to domestic and international threats in terms of homeland security and defense. Consideration is given to political systems direction of operations, planning, and policy making organizations as they conceptualize and develop homeland security and defense strategies. Course topics may include lectures on political systems responses to natural disasters and panic, transportation systems disasters, hostage takings, weapons of mass destruction, cyber attacks, human trafficking; and on threat modeling, law and legal institutions in crisis situations, communications systems and media roles in emergencies, dynamics of leadership and decision making under stressful conditions, and inter-organizational cooperation and response negotiations. May include guest lectures by prominent practitioners and scholars.
POL 6893. Research Proposal. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Permission of the Subfield Advisor, course instructor, and Graduate Advisor of Record. A course to assist students in developing a research proposal for a study in Political Science to be accomplished as either the Master’s Research Project or the Master’s Thesis. As part of this course, students will explore research questions and theoretical and methodological assumptions that characterize subfields in Political Science. Specific attention will be given to framing research questions, identifying an appropriate research methodology, organizing work tasks and timelines for completion, developing the relevant literature, and drafting a research proposal. Successful completion of this course requires passing an oral comprehensive examination that will include a defense of the research proposal conducted by a Research Project or Thesis committee. Students must complete this course before enrolling in POL 6993 or POL 6893. (Formerly titled “Master’s Thesis Proposal.”).

POL 6951. Independent Study. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission in writing (form available) of the instructor and the student's Graduate Advisor of Record. Independent reading, research, discussion, and/or writing under the direction of a faculty member. For students needing specialized work not usually available as part of the regular course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master’s degree.

POL 6952. Independent Study. (0-0) 2 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission in writing (form available) of the instructor and the student’s Graduate Advisor of Record. Independent reading, research, discussion, and/or writing under the direction of a faculty member. For students needing specialized work not usually available as part of the regular course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master’s degree.

POL 6953. Independent Study. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission in writing (form available) of the instructor and the student’s Graduate Advisor of Record. Independent reading, research, discussion, and/or writing under the direction of a faculty member. For students needing specialized work not usually available as part of the regular course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master’s degree.

POL 6961. Comprehensive Examination. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.
Prerequisites: Approval of the Faculty Subfield Advisor, Graduate Advisor of Record, and the student's Comprehensive Examination Committee. Students will select fields of study and prepare for examination under faculty supervision. Students will designate an exam committee and exam chair in the semester prior to enrollment. Enrollment is required each term in which the Comprehensive Examination is taken if no other courses are being taken that term. May be repeated once during a different semester. Credit earned in POL 6961 may not be counted toward the Master’s degree. The grade report for the course is either “CR” (satisfactory performance on the Comprehensive Examination) or “NC” (unsatisfactory performance on the Comprehensive Examination).

POL 6963. Internship. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Practical experience in a workplace setting in which classroom knowledge of political institutions, processes, and public policy can be deepened and applied. May be repeated for credit to a maximum of 6 hours.

POL 6966. Internship. (0-0) 6 Credit Hours.
Practical experience in a workplace setting in which classroom knowledge of political institutions, processes, and public policy can be deepened and applied. May be repeated for credit to a maximum of 6 hours.

POL 6973. Special Problems. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor. An organized course offering the opportunity for specialized study not usually available as part of the regular course offerings. Special Problems courses may be repeated for credit when topics vary, but not more than 6 hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master’s degree.

POL 6983. Master’s Thesis. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: POL 6893 and permission of Graduate Advisor of Record and Thesis Committee. Thesis research and preparation. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 3 hours will apply to the Master’s degree. Credit will be awarded upon completion of the thesis. Enrollment is required each term in which the thesis is in progress.

POL 6993. Master’s Research Project. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: POL 6893 and permission of the Graduate Advisor of Record and Research Project Committee. Research project and preparation. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 3 hours will apply to the Master’s degree. Credit will be awarded upon completion of the research project.