

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Department Overview

The Political Science Department seeks to instill in its students a lively interest in politics, in how political systems work and how we can make them work better, in contemporary political issues, in international relations and foreign policy, in political theory, and in the law. We offer a comprehensive program that reflects the broad discipline of political science. Students take three required introductory courses followed by intermediate and advanced courses in four areas:

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory

The major is designed to serve students who wish to concentrate in a particular area, those who aspire to go on to graduate school, and those who want merely to explore the field of politics.

Our main goal is to help students think analytically about political issues. We do this by developing students' knowledge of the four subdisciplines of political science, by cultivating in them the skills they need to understand political issues, and by enhancing their abilities to assess political situations and problems from both empirical and normative perspectives.

We aim to provide students with the historical and contemporary information they need to understand national and international political structures, behaviors, and ideas. In terms of analytical skills, we seek to

- offer students the methodological and technical training they require to read texts carefully;
- collect, analyze, and interpret data; and
- communicate their conclusions effectively and elegantly.

We, finally, teach students to examine political issues and problems from both empirical and ethical viewpoints as a first step toward developing policy recommendations that can improve political participation, processes, and outcomes.

Pi Sigma Alpha, Tau Gamma Chapter

Founded in 1920 as the national political science honor society, Pi Sigma Alpha receives into membership students of political science and related disciplines who attain high standards of scholarship and academic distinction. Eligibility requirements include:

- at least six political science and/or political science-history (PLH) courses for which letter grades were assigned;
- a combined 3.5 GPA from all of these courses; and
- a 3.25 cumulative GPA.

Faculty

Chair of Department of Political Science: Natalie Taylor

Professors: Beau Breslin; *The Joseph C. Palamountain Chair in Political Science*, Katherine E. Graney

Associate Professors: Emmanuel Balogun, Christopher Mann, Yelena Biberman-Ocakli, Feryaz Ocakli, Ronald P. Seyb, Flagg Taylor, Natalie

Taylor; *Douglas Family Chair in American Culture, History, and Literary and Interdisciplinary Studies*, Robert C. Turner

Assistant Professors: Adam Thal

Visiting Assistant Professors: Kristen Morrow, Ben Sehnert, Charmaine Willis

Administrative Assistant: Barbara McDonough

Political Science B.A.

For Students Who Entered Skidmore Prior to Fall 2025

Requirements for a major in political science are 10 courses and 33 credit hours.

These courses include:

Code	Title	Hours
PL 101	Introduction to American Politics	3
PL 102	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
PL 103	Introduction to Comparative and International Politics	3
Select at least one course in each of the following four areas:		12-16
American Politics (p. 2)		
Comparative Politics (p. 2)		
International Relations (p. 2)		
Political Theory (p. 2)		

Three additional political science courses totaling at least 11 credits 1-15

Note: To fulfill College maturity-level requirements, at least 6 credits of 300-level political science courses must be taken in the senior year.

For Students Who Entered Skidmore in Fall 2025 and Beyond

Requirements for a major in political science are 10 courses and 33 credit hours.

These courses include:

Code	Title	Hours
PL 101	Introduction to American Politics	3
PL 102	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
PL 103	Introduction to Comparative and International Politics	3
Select at least one course in each of the following four areas:		12-16
American Politics (p. 2)		
Comparative Politics (p. 2)		
International Relations (p. 2)		
Political Theory (p. 2)		
Select one of the following:		9-15
Three additional political science courses totaling at least 11 credits		1-15
Total Hours		41-55

Note: To fulfill College maturity-level requirements, 300-level political science courses must be taken in the senior year.

American Politics

Code	Title	Hours
PL 211	Courts, Politics, and Judicial Process in the United States	3
PL 222	State and Local Government	4
PL 224	Campaigns and Elections	4
PL 225	Politics and News Media	3
PL 231	Environmental Politics and Policy	4
PL 251C	Topics in Political Science: American Politics	4
PL 252	The Psychology of Politics	3
PL 305	Politics and Policy of Inequality	4
PL 311	Constitutional Law	4
PL 312	Contemporary Constitutional Problems	3
PL 314	Civil Liberties	4
PL 315	Immigration Politics and Policy	4
PL 317	Real Democracy	4
PL 331	State and Local Economic Development Policy	4
PL 332	The American Party System	4
PL 333	American Political Research	3
PL 334	The United States Presidency	4
PL 335	Election Research	4
PL 336	Voting in the US: Access, Fairness & Reform	4
PL 362	Politics of Congress	4
PL 367	Topics in American Politics	4

Comparative Politics

Code	Title	Hours
PL 203	Comparative European Politics	3
PL 209	The Latin American Puzzle	4
PL 213	Comparative Constitutional Systems	4
PL 214	Comparative Policing	3
PL 227	From Genghis Khan to Gorbachev: Power and Politics in Russian History	4
PL 233	Political Islam	4
PL 239	Middle Eastern Politics	4
PL 241	Ethnic Conflict and the Global System	4
PL 244	Race, State and Nation in Comparative Perspective	4
PL 245	Hip-Hop, Politics, and Protest	4
PL 246	Contemporary African Politics	4
PL 251A	Topics in Political Science: Comparative Politics	4
PL 326	Coasts of Bohemia: The Politics and History of the Czech Lands and People	4
PL 327	Politics in Russia and the Soviet Successor States	4
PL 347	Making States, Building Democracies	4
PL 348	Politics of Modern South Asia	4
PL 349	States, Markets and Politics in Developing Countries	4
PL 365	Topics In Comparative Politics	4

International Relations

Code	Title	Hours
PL 201	Principles of International Politics	4
PL 207	They Might Be Giants: Global Rise of BRICS	4

PL 226	States, Rebels, and, Warlords	4
PL 228	United States Foreign Policy in a Changing World	4
PL 229	International Law	3
PL 251B	Topics in Political Science: International Relations	3
PL 309	Latin America and the United States	3
PL 339	International Political Economy and the Environment	4
PL 340	The International Human Rights Regime: Promise and Peril	4
PL 346	Politics of Modern Warfare	4
PL 357	Sexing Global Politics: Gender and International Relations	4
PL 366	Topics In International Relations	4

Political Theory

Code	Title	Hours
PL 204	Classical Political Thought	3
PL 205H	Modern Political Thought	3
PL 236	American Political Thought	4
PL 242	Liberty, Commerce, and the Moral Life	3
PL 251D	Topics in Political Science: Political Theory	3
PL 308	Contemporary Political Thought	4
PL 323	Dissident Political Thought	4
PL 341	French Liberal Tradition	3
PL 351	Topics in Political Thought	1-4
PL 354	Feminist Political Thought	3
PLHI 322	The History and Political Thought of the American Revolution	3

The Writing Requirement in the Political Science Major

The Political Science Department at Skidmore College is committed to helping its students become skilled writers. Recognizing that an important part of learning to write well in political science and government is learning to write well overall, the Political Science Department places considerable emphasis on both quantity and quality of writing opportunities in our courses and has adopted a wide-reaching and thorough set of Standards and Expectations for Written Assignments in Political Science and a Uniform Code of Notation for Providing Feedback on Written Work. Students in Political Science Department classes expect to be held to the expectations and standards established in these documents. Thus, by successfully completing the requirements for the Political Science Major, students fulfill the Writing Requirement in Political Science.

Interdepartmental Majors

In conjunction with the relevant departments, the Political Science Department offers majors in business-political science, political science-French, political science-German, and political science-Spanish. See Interdepartmental Majors (<https://coursecatalog.skidmore.edu/departments-programs/interdepartmental-majors/>). *The department also participates in the International Affairs major* (<https://coursecatalog.skidmore.edu/departments-programs/international-affairs/#majorstext>).

Political Science Minor

The political science minor consists of six courses with a minimum of 18 credits to be determined in consultation with the department chair or a political science department faculty member.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
Select two of the following:		6
PL 101	Introduction to American Politics	
PL 102	Introduction to Political Philosophy	
PL 103	Introduction to Comparative and International Politics	
Select four additional courses; at least two of these courses must be taken at the 300 level and must each be at least 3 credits ¹		12-16
Total Hours		18-22

¹ Students who enroll in PL 383 New York State Assembly Program or PL 384 New York State Senate Program may only count 6 credits from these courses toward the political science minor.

Honors

To be recommended for honors in political science, students must meet the College requirements of a GPA of 3.0 overall and 3.5 in the major. Students must also receive at least an A- on a senior thesis in political science. Specific requirements for the senior thesis are established by the department. A senior thesis in political science is also required for interdepartmental majors.

Course Listing

PL 101 - Introduction to American Politics

Credits: 3

An analysis of United States national government with emphasis on constitutionalism, the presidency, Congress, and the judiciary. Reference will also be made to the impact of political parties and pressure groups on the contemporary political system.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 102 - Introduction to Political Philosophy

Credits: 3

Study of seminal works in political philosophy. Students will examine texts by thinkers such as Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Bacon, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Marx, Tocqueville, Madison, Jefferson, and Nietzsche in an effort to uncover both classical and modern answers to enduring human questions. We seek to find, through these texts, comprehensive and consistent answers to the question of human happiness and its relation to political life, justice, friendship, obligation, regimes, political and moral virtue or excellence, science, and religious faith. Students will learn how to read texts carefully, to think critically, and to write well.

Note(s): Please note that this course does not fulfill any requirements for the philosophy major or minor. This course is not an equivalent or a substitution for PH 110W. Fulfills Humanities requirement; fulfills Humanistic Inquiry requirement.

PL 103 - Introduction to Comparative and International Politics

Credits: 3

A survey of the key concepts and principles of comparative politics and international relations. Issues covered include state building and state failure; the functioning of democratic and non-democratic regimes and the ideologies that support them; the changing nature of the international system; the causes of war and search for peace; and problems of national and transnational security, such as terrorism, globalization, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and environmental challenges.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 201 - Principles of International Politics

Credits: 4

An essential foundation for advanced study in international relations. Students investigate the tumultuous international political events from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century and the big concepts of the period—balance of power, extreme nationalism, diplomacy, and international organization. Students explore the causes and effects of the Napoleonic Wars, the 99 Years' Peace, German and Italian unification, the arms race, and World Wars I and II. The League of Nations and the United Nations are central themes. Students study the Cold War and its thaw following the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or IA 101.

PL 201H - Hon: Prin Internat Pol

Credits: 4

PL 202 - Introduction to Political Research

Credits: 4

An introduction of the wide range of research approaches used by political scientists to study American, comparative, and international politics. Students will discuss principles of data analysis and statistical tools frequently used in political science with an emphasis on skills to read, understand, and critique research. From this course students will be able to understand research techniques, interpret findings, assess appropriateness of research designs, and identify challenges to valid inferences.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or PL 103 or ES 100 and placement at the AQR level or completion of an FQR course.

Note(s): Fulfills Applied QR requirement.

PL 203 - Comparative European Politics

Credits: 3

A survey of the governmental and political features of France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and other European states.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or PL 103 or permission of instructor.

PL 204 - Classical Political Thought

Credits: 3

Political thought of Plato and Aristotle. This course will treat the character of the political thought that Socrates initiated. Consideration will be given to the reasons for the original tension between wisdom and politics and to the manner in which theory can inform practice. Selected Greek comedies and tragedies as well as Roman and medieval political thought may also be considered.

Prerequisites: PL 102 or permission of instructor.

PL 205H - Modern Political Thought

Credits: 3

Political thought of the Early Modern period to that of the mid-nineteenth century. Selected thinkers include Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Tocqueville, and Marx. Particular emphasis will be placed on the aspirations of classic liberalism and the successive criticism these aspirations inspired. Provides foundation for upper division work in political theory.

Prerequisites: PL 102 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills humanistic inquiry.

PL 207 - They Might Be Giants: Global Rise of BRICS

Credits: 4

An examination of a new breed of global giants, THE BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The BRICS are the main source of economic growth in the world, and are projected to dominate international affairs. They also exhibit remarkable political, social, and economic diversity. Students will tackle major questions facing international relations: Is the rise of BRICS fundamentally transforming the world we live in? What would a world no longer dominated by the "West," and in particular the United States, be like?

Note(s): Fulfills global cultural perspective.

PL 209 - The Latin American Puzzle

Credits: 4

A comprehensive analysis of Latin American political, social, and economic processes and institutions from a multidisciplinary perspective. The course examines Latin America's political development, ethnic problems, gender roles, and economic strategies as well as the changing role of institutions such as the state, socioeconomic organizations, the church, and the military. It considers how Latin American societies changed after independence while noting those political, social, and economic aspects that remain unchanged. The objective of the course is to provide a critical examination of the evolution and transformation of Latin America while offering the analytical elements necessary to interpret similar processes in other geographical areas and historical periods.

Note(s): Fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 211 - Courts, Politics, and Judicial Process in the United States

Credits: 3

A survey of the role of courts in contemporary American politics and society. Students will explore the organization and functions of state and federal courts and their relation to other political institutions and to society generally. Topics will include the decision-making processes of judges, attorneys, and litigants in various judicial settings, the role and impact of courts as policymakers, the selection and recruitment of judicial personnel, access to judicial power, courts and the media, and contemporary trends in litigation.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 212 - Intro to Bill of Rights

Credits: 4

PL 213 - Comparative Constitutional Systems

Credits: 4

An examination of several different constitutional systems from around the world, using cases such as the United States, Israel, Canada, Poland, and South Africa. All constitutional systems are unique; but when studied comparatively, they help illuminate some of the fundamental principles of modern politics: constitutionalism, democracy, justice, citizenship, liberty, and community. As part of the course, students will consider how constitutional structures influence ethnic, religious, and personal identities.

Note(s): Fulfills social science requirement; fulfills global cultural perspective.

PL 214 - Comparative Policing

Credits: 3

Explores basic questions at the heart of modern police institutions: Why do we have police forces? Why are different police forces in different countries structured the way they are? Are police able to "protect and serve" all the citizens of their states equally, or are they biased in terms of race, gender and sexual identity, class and other social identities? This course examines these questions in comparative political context; specifically, by comparing the experience of policing in the United States with that of in Russia, Brazil, Germany, the Philippines, and other states. The course is attuned to the question of how and why police institutions either empower citizens by providing safety and justice, or threaten citizens by exercising their power unequally, illegally or unjustly. Pays particular attention to the way that world historical trends such as colonialism, chattel slavery, the Cold War, and globalization produce understandings of both domestic and international security and powerful practices of white supremacy and anti-Blackness that influence the structure and functioning of policing in different states.

Prerequisites: PL 103 and SSP 100.

Note(s): Fulfills Bridge Experience requirement.

PL 222 - State and Local Government

Credits: 4

The study of state and local government, politics, and policies within the United States federal system. Emphasis on connections between government structure, politics, and the economy, with special attention to questions of public policy.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 224 - Campaigns and Elections

Credits: 4

An overview of campaigns and elections in the United States for students with an interest in understanding elections, campaigns, and voting in the United States. Students will study the institutions governing voting, political communication, public opinion, political participation, and political behavior.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 225 - Politics and News Media

Credits: 3

An introduction to the role and influence of the news media in politics. Students will study political communication theories about news media, identify important news media institutions that shape political communication, and explore how the news media influences political attitudes and behavior. The class will provide an introduction to how scholars study politics and media, and how politicians, public officials, interest groups, and campaign operatives interact with the media.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): This course is not open to those who have taken JPPL-225 in Paris. Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 226 - States, Rebels, and, Warlords

Credits: 4

An examination of violent conflict in modern societies. Students will explore the role of the state as well as non-state actors in causing, escalating, and mitigating violence. Students will also address major questions underlying national and international security, such as: When does conflict turn violent? Under what conditions do victims become perpetrators, and perpetrators become victims? What are the causes of terrorism, and what is the state's role in terrorist activity? Is violence the only way to bring about major political change, or can nonviolent methods work? Are private military contractors changing the way we fight? Students will evaluate theoretical approaches to and empirical assessments of the role of violence in global politics.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 227 - From Genghis Khan to Gorbachev: Power and Politics in Russian History

Credits: 4

A comparison of traditional Russian society with Soviet society after 1917. The course will focus first on the political, economic, and social characteristics of the authoritarian tsarist empire. Then we will turn to the revolutionary changes initiated by Lenin, the terror of Stalin, the reforms of Khrushchev, and the stagnation under Brezhnev. The course will focus in particular on changes in political structures and participation, economic organization and equality, and cultural life, including gender roles. Readings will include novels, memoirs, and press translations.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 228 - United States Foreign Policy in a Changing World

Credits: 4

This course examines the development and current features of American foreign policy focusing on the international challenges and opportunities faced by the United States after the end of the Cold War. It analyzes some of the major patterns of United States foreign policy, reviews some important interpretations and methodological approaches to the study of United States foreign policy, discusses the ideological components of these policies, examines the foreign policy actors and the decision-making process in which they participate, and evaluates the changing objectives and circumstances shaping recent American international initiatives. Special attention will be devoted to the impact of the end of the Cold War and the rise of interdependence and globalization on recent United States economic, strategic, and environmental foreign policies as well as in the formulation of specific approaches to different regions of the world.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

PL 229 - International Law

Credits: 3

An introduction to and survey of the history, principles, instruments, theory, and practice of international law. Students explore the reach of and limits to international law with regard to the use of force, arms control and disarmament, human rights, and criminal justice in light of transnational crime and terrorism.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or IA 101.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Science requirement.

PL 231 - Environmental Politics and Policy

Credits: 4

An exploration of how political, economic, and social interests contend for influence and exert power in the realm of environmental policy. We look at the ways in which local, regional, national, and international governmental institutions, nongovernmental organizations and interests groups, and the public interact in defining environmental problems, and formulating and implementing solutions. The course uses case studies on timely environmental issues ranging from cleaning up toxic waste pollution to protecting endangered species to understanding the clashes between science and politics at local, state, federal, and international levels.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or ES 100.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement; fulfills Bridge Experience requirement.

PL 233 - Political Islam

Credits: 4

Examines the rise and development of Political Islam. Students explore the roots of radical and reformist Islamist movements by analyzing major ideological, economic, social, and political transformations in Muslim-majority states. Students debate the causes and consequences of radical Islam, whether and how Islamist movements may participate in governance, and, more broadly, the role of religion in political life. Cases examined in the course are drawn from the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America.

Note(s): Fulfills non-Western Cultures and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 236 - American Political Thought

Credits: 4

An examination of the writings of selected thinkers in the American political tradition. The course will place particular emphasis on the thought of the framers and on the response of succeeding political leaders and thinkers to the framers' principles.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or PL 102, or permission of instructor.

PL 239 - Middle Eastern Politics

Credits: 4

Survey of politics in the broader Middle East region. This course examines the evolution of the Middle Eastern state system, emergence of different political regimes, causes of uneven economic development, and consequences of social and military conflicts. Special attention is paid to the role of contending nationalisms, ethnic conflict, revolutionary movements, oil economies, Islamist groups, and civic activism in the region.

Note(s): Fulfills Non-Western Cultures requirement; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 241 - Ethnic Conflict and the Global System

Credits: 4

An exploration of the major approaches to the study and understanding of ethnic conflict and nationalism. Students examine sociobiological and psychological "primordialist" theories, realist and instrumentalist approaches, and normative/ideational explanations. These theoretical approaches will be illustrated through case studies, which may include: "troubles" in Northern Ireland; sovereignty movements in Quebec and Chechnya; ethnic violence in Indonesia, Nigeria, and the former Soviet bloc; indigenous people's movements in Mexico; separatism, racism, and anti-immigrant violence in Europe; or others.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 242 - Liberty, Commerce, and the Moral Life

Credits: 3

Examines the distinctive understandings of liberty in the midst of the emergence of a new world of commerce in the eighteenth century. Students will focus on the writings of David Hume and Adam Smith, comparing their ideas against the backdrop of other thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Locke, Hobbes, Mandeville, and Rousseau. Students will also judge the debates and disagreements among key figures in modern political philosophy. What are the origins of political liberty? Is vice or virtue the animating force of what Smith called the "system of natural liberty"?

Prerequisites: PL 102.**PL 244 - Race, State and Nation in Comparative Perspective**

Credits: 4

An examination of how the wielding of political power and ideas about justice have shaped the experiences of people with different racial identities in three countries: the US, Brazil and South Africa. Students will come to understand how white supremacy was used historically as the basis of state and nation-building in these three states and how BIPOC and white citizens have challenged white supremacy and fought for more inclusive and democratic forms of nation-statehood in these three cases, up to and including the contemporary moment.

Prerequisites: PL 103 and SSP 100.

Note(s): Fulfills Cultural Diversity requirement; fulfills Bridge Experience and Global Cultural Perspectives requirements.

PL 245 - Hip-Hop, Politics, and Protest

Credits: 4

An exploration of how Hip-Hop music and culture emerges as a tool of resistance and empowerment in political and social movements in the United States and the broader African Diaspora, becoming an outlet for marginalized populations to mobilize and express political and social injustices. The course also explores specific instances of protest and the ways in which hip-hop's popularity sustains, supports, and sometimes disrupts political mobilization. Students will explore the ways in which hip-hop culture spans various scales of governance, from the global to the local, to indicate how hip-hop's inherent political undertones are brought to the mainstream.

Prerequisites: SSP 100.

Note(s): Fulfills Cultural Diversity and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Bridge Experience and Global Cultural Perspectives requirements.

PL 246 - Contemporary African Politics

Credits: 4

This course provides students an opportunity to engage with the historical and present intricacies of the African continent and examine the lived experiences and multitude of perspectives on social and political life on the continent. This course provides students with a historical and contemporary context for understanding politics in Africa and encourages students to consider the linkages between their own experiences in politics and those within Africa. Emphasis is placed on the practical application of Africa-specific theories to understand the politics and governance in pre-colonial Africa, the enslavement of African people, and colonialism in Africa. Students will also explore the rise of nationalist movements, decolonization and the implications of competition between US, China, and Russia on the continent.

Prerequisites: PL 103.

Note(s): Fulfills Cultural Diversity and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 251 - Topics in Political Science

Credits: 3

PL 251A-D - Topics in Political Science: Comparative Politics

Credits: 3-3

Topically organized courses focused on selected problems, areas, and issues of special interest in political science at the intermediate level. Topics vary from year to year, depending upon specialization and research interests of the instructor. Students may take the course more than once, with the approval of the department, if the topic is different each time.

Prerequisites: PL 103.**PL 252 - The Psychology of Politics**

Credits: 3

An examination of how citizens' and public officials' attitudes, values, beliefs, experiences, and cognitive capacities shape political behavior and influence the actions of American political institutions. Topics include political socialization, political personality, attitude formation and change, and political decision-making.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.**PL 299 - Professional Internship in Political Science**

Credits: 1-4

Internship in government, political, or legal offices for students with appropriate academic preparation. The intern is required to produce a substantial research paper related to the area of the internship, on a topic approved by the faculty sponsor and the on-site supervisor.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or PL 103 depending on the area of the internship and one other government course in the area of the internship - American, comparative, or international.

PL 302 - Experiments in Political Science

Credits: 4

An exploration of how political science uses experiments to understand the causes of behaviors, attitudes, and events. Students will discuss the logic of experiments, its strengths and weaknesses compared to other ways of studying political science, and the ways in which experimentation has been-- and could be-- used to investigate political, social, and economic phenomena. Students will learn how to interpret, design, and execute experiments, with an emphasis on field experiments and survey experiments.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or PL 103 or ES 100 and placement at the AQR level or completion of an FQR course.

Note(s): Fulfills Applied QR requirement.**PL 304 - Modern Pol Thought**

Credits: 4

PL 305 - Politics and Policy of Inequality

Credits: 4

An exploration of different aspects of economic inequality, the different ways of measuring it, the implications for Americans' lives, and how they relate to social and political justice. Americans are now living in what has been called a "second gilded age," with higher levels of economic inequality than any time in the past hundred years. In this course, we will focus on why our political institutions seem to be so unresponsive to the increase in inequality and what it says about the nature of our democratic system. We will also examine how different public policies shape and refract the social and political effects of inequality.

Prerequisites: PL 101 and SSP 100.

Note(s): Fulfills Cultural Diversity and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Bridge Experience requirement.

PL 308 - Contemporary Political Thought

Credits: 4

Political thought of the twentieth century. Primary attention will be given to the influence of Nietzsche as reflected in existentialism, postmodernism, and postmodern feminism. Additional topics might include the influence of Freudianism on political thought, the debate between Rawls and Nozick on social justice, and the claims of communitarianism.

Prerequisites: PL 102. *Recommended preparation:* PL 204 or PL 205H.

PL 309 - Latin America and the United States

Credits: 3

An examination of the relations between Latin America and the United States, including their political, strategic, and economic aspects. The course reviews some of the major theoretical interpretations of these relations and analyzes some crucial historical events and developments before focusing on crucial contemporary topics including collective security, revolutionary change, imperialism and nationalism, economic issues, human rights and democracy, drug traffic, and migration.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

PL 311 - Constitutional Law

Credits: 4

A survey of the American constitutional system emphasizing sources and uses of governmental power, the political role of the Supreme Court, the Court's jurisdiction, and the allocation of powers between the federal government and the states.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 312 - Contemporary Constitutional Problems

Credits: 3

An examination of selected constitutional issues, including the proper role of the Supreme Court in our political system. The course covers theories of judicial review, as well as many of the complexities of modern civil rights and civil liberties.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

PL 314 - Civil Liberties

Credits: 4

An analysis of recent Supreme Court decisions interpreting our civil liberties, civil rights, guarantee of due process of law, and equal protection of the laws.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

PL 315 - Immigration Politics and Policy

Credits: 4

An examination of immigration and the issues arising from it-the reshaping of cities, suburbs and rural areas, and the altering of racial dynamics, labor markets, politics, and culture in the U.S. Students will address varied topics, such as the historical evolution of American immigration policy, theories of immigration, the economic costs and benefits of immigration, the assimilation of recent immigrants, and the future direction of U.S. immigration policy.

Prerequisites: PL 101.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 317 - Real Democracy

Credits: 4

An exploration of how democracy works in Saratoga Springs. Students will use the Saratoga Springs City Council elections as a real life laboratory for studying the practice of democracy in 21st century America. Students will design and implement several research projects, including mapping voter turnout, surveying City Council meetings, analyzing local campaign strategies, interviewing local political elites, and conducting an exit survey of citizens' vote choice in the Saratoga Springs City Council election. Students will make presentations of their analyses to the general public and candidates at the end of the semester.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

PL 323 - Dissident Political Thought

Credits: 4

This course will examine the writings of several dissidents of the twentieth century (including Milosz, Solzhenitsyn, and Havel) and their unique contributions to the enduring themes of political theory.

Prerequisites: PL 102.

PL 326 - Coasts of Bohemia: The Politics and History of the Czech Lands and People

Credits: 4

Examines the political fortunes of the Czech people from the Austro-Hungarian Empire through the founding of the First Republic after World War I, the periods of Nazi and Communist rule, and the return to democracy in 1989. Students study key figures such as Jan Hus (fifteenth-century religious reformer), Tomas Masaryk (founder of the First Republic), and playwright-turned communist dissident, who became president of a reborn Czech state-Vaclav Havel. Students read the narrative history of the period and explore relevant political analyses; they also watch films by famed Czech directors such as Milos Forman and Jiri Menzel.

Prerequisites: one of the following courses: PL 103, IA 101, HI 104, HI 105, or HI 106.

PL 327 - Politics in Russia and the Soviet Successor States

Credits: 4

An analysis of politics in Russia and in the post-communist republics of the former Soviet Union. After analyzing the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. under Gorbachev, the course will focus on the attempts since 1991 to create democratic political systems. Special attention will be paid to elections, constitutions, political party formation, parliaments, leadership strategies, and nationalism.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

PL 331 - State and Local Economic Development Policy

Credits: 4

An introduction to the concepts, ideas, and strategies employed in the pursuit of state and local economic development. We will survey and critically review the range of strategies commonly used to improve the economic prospects of neighborhoods, cities, and regions, including luring corporations with tax breaks, emulating Silicon Valley, promoting high technology, building sports stadiums and prisons, and community development. This course will rely heavily on interviews of policymakers and analysis of state policies and problems to help students appreciate the importance and complexity of economic development policy. A background in economics is not required.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

PL 332 - The American Party System

Credits: 4

An examination of the influence of our political parties at critical moments of the formation of the American democracy. The course explores how political parties emerged almost immediately after the ratification of the Constitution and engaged in public debate on the meaning of republican government as well as the meaning of citizen participation and representation. Students will learn to appreciate the distinction between American political development and the historical study of politics. They will also become familiar with party realignment and be able to recognize the unique character of the elections of 1800, 1828, 1860, 1896, and 1932. Students will also learn to appreciate the challenge of finding the appropriate role for political parties in our democracy.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

PL 333 - American Political Research

Credits: 3

A senior seminar in which each student will conduct individualized research into a topic or question in contemporary American politics. Each student will prepare a research design, class progress reports, and a final paper. Special attention will be given to primary sources, such as government documents, and to computer-based research techniques and resources, such as Internet and databases.

Prerequisites: Senior political science major status or permission of instructor.

PL 334 - The United States Presidency

Credits: 4

An analysis of the presidential role in United States politics. The course will examine the expansion of the constitutional and political powers of the president in the light of contemporary politics.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 335 - Election Research

Credits: 4

Research into the operation of polling places and the administration of elections by local election officials. The course will define the quality of polling places by several categories of characteristics developed in the scholarly literature. Students will develop a research design to investigate the operation of polling places on election day, execute the research design, and then analyze the data collected.

Prerequisites: PL 101 and placement at the AQR level or completion of an FQR course or permission of the instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills QR2 and Social Sciences requirements; Fulfills Applied QR requirement.

PL 336 - Voting in the US: Access, Fairness & Reform

Credits: 4

An exploration of how elections are run in the United States. Students will examine the state and federal laws and regulations governing the conduct of elections, the way local election officials administer elections, and proposals for reforming voter registration and how voters cast ballots in local, state, and national elections.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.

PL 339 - International Political Economy and the Environment

Credits: 4

Explores changes in international politics that lend more weight to economic and environmental issues and analyzes the responses to those changes of developed and developing countries and regional, international, and nongovernmental organizations. Students examine different theoretical perspectives on international political economy issues, engage in problem-solving exercises, and conduct a major research paper or prepare for participation in Model United Nations, Model European Union, or other simulation exercises.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

PL 340 - The International Human Rights Regime: Promise and Peril

Credits: 4

An examination of the philosophical, religious, and legal bases of the modern international human rights regime. Students will explore such questions as: How did the concept of human rights evolve? How do states, international and non-governmental organizations, and individuals try to provide for and protect human rights around the world? When do they succeed, and why do they fail? What is one's individual responsibility regarding the international human rights regime? Students will work with the primary texts that form the international human rights regime and will engage in research projects that examine the practice of human rights provision and violation around the world.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or IA 101.

PL 341 - French Liberal Tradition

Credits: 3

Examines the unique strain in French political philosophy that confronts the origins and impact of liberal democratic theory. Students will engage thoughtfully and critically with an underappreciated tradition in French political philosophy and will gain an awareness of both the positive and negative potentialities of modern democratic life. Students will encounter the well-known triad of Montesquieu, Constant, and Tocqueville as well as contemporary French thinkers such as Bertrand de Jouvenel and Pierre Manent.

Prerequisites: PL 102.

PL 343 - International Relations of the Global South

Credits: 4

An examination of the Global South as a site of politics. Students question what is the meaning of sovereignty to those who have experienced colonialism and imperialism? How are the dichotomies of war/peace and failed state/good governance gendered and racialized? This course examines the question of what an IR rooted in the experiences of the global South and the non-West might actually look like. This course critically evaluates the development of International Relations and its Western-centric theories and explores alternative origins of the discipline and its views on the state, security, cooperation, and development that do not have their roots in the West or the North. Students will examine how the global South's encounter with the "international" has been mediated by its invisibility within dominant, universalizing narratives and practices of the West and how to conceive of an IR that challenges and engages perspectives from the global South with mainstream perspectives.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or IA 101.

Note(s): Fulfills Non-Western Culture and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.

PL 345 - Japans Political Cult

Credits: 3

PL 346 - Politics of Modern Warfare

Credits: 4

An examination of organized violence from around the world. From World War II to the War on Terror, most people alive today have experienced armed conflict in one way or another. Students will examine why and how we fight as well as investigate the timeless and the distinctive features of modern warfare. Students will consider how, over the past century, we have transformed warfare, and how warfare has transformed us.

Prerequisites: PL 103.**Note(s):** Fulfills Social Science requirement; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.**PL 347 - Making States, Building Democracies**

Credits: 4

Critical analysis of the relations between state-making, national integration, and democracy. The course focuses on the emergence and diffusion of the modern state system, technologies of governance, modes of resistance to state authority, policies geared toward building national majorities, and the causes and consequences of democratization. Students will analyze and discuss classic works in comparative politics as well as cutting-edge research in the field.

Prerequisites: PL 103.**PL 348 - Politics of Modern South Asia**

Credits: 4

An examination of the politics and society of South Asian states, with a special focus on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. Students will develop substantial regional knowledge and learn to apply social scientific reasoning to tackle the major puzzles and policy issues facing South Asia. Students will gain knowledge of the region and investigate the big and enduring questions of political inquiry: What is the relationship between development and democracy? What is the role of history in shaping political outcomes? Is nonviolent resistance more effective than violence? In addressing these questions, students will engage closely with classic and contemporary social scientific texts on South Asia.

Prerequisites: PL 103.**Note(s):** Fulfills Non-Western Cultures and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.**PL 349 - States, Markets and Politics in Developing Countries**

Credits: 4

An examination of economic and social development in the Global South. Students analyze the market-building policies of states through a comparative perspective with a special focus on developing countries. Students evaluate concepts, theoretical perspectives, and key issues that constitute the field of political economy of development. The first part of the course explores the shifting role of states and markets in development policy since before the Great Depression. The second part brings together multiple viewpoints to examine the key actors in the Global South, the current phase of globalization, the growing competitiveness of some developing countries such as Brazil, India, China, Russia and Turkey, and the causes of stagnation in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Prerequisites: PL 103.**Note(s):** Fulfills Cultural Diversity and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Global Cultural Perspectives requirement.**PL 351 - Topics in Political Thought**

Credits: 3-4

A seminar devoted to a particular issue or a particular thinker. Topics will vary from year to year. Recent topics have included "The 'Public' and 'Private' in Modern Political Thought," "Machiavelli's Political Thought," and "Shakespeare's Rome."

Prerequisites: PL 102. *Recommended preparation:* PL 204 or PL 205H.**Note(s):** The course may be repeated with the approval of the department.**PL 354 - Feminist Political Thought**

Credits: 3

A critical exploration of contemporary feminist political thought. The course will focus on the different conceptions of subjectivity found within feminist thought and the implications of those conceptions for political society. Readings will come from a wide range of approaches including postmodernism, psychoanalytic theory, and standpoint theory.

Prerequisites: PL 102.**PL 357 - Sexing Global Politics: Gender and International Relations**

Credits: 4

An exploration of how the theory and practice of international relations is gendered. Students examine how the fundamental international relations concepts of security and defense are defined in gendered ways, and how the practice of diplomacy, war-making, and international economic development are gendered. Special focus on the environmental impacts of international relations' gendered past and present, and how women's and environmental organizations work together to challenge traditional patterns of global governance.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.**PL 362 - Politics of Congress**

Credits: 4

A seminar devoted to the examination of the congressional system through research, class discussion, and written work.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.**PL 364 - Special Topics in Political Science**

Credits: 1-4

An upper-level course devoted to the intensive study of a particular topic in political science, especially with a visiting scholar.

PL 365 - Topics In Comparative Politics

Credits: 4

Selected issues, regions, and research in comparative politics. Topics will vary from year to year, depending upon specialization and research interests of the instructor. Possible topics: post-authoritarian transitions in Eastern Europe; party politics in Israel.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.**Note(s):** Students may take the course more than once, with the approval of the department, if the topic is different each time.**PL 366 - Topics In International Relations**

Credits: 4

Selected issues, regions, and research in international relations. Topics will vary from year to year, depending upon specialization and research interests of the instructor. Possible topics: Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union), conflict and compromise; United States and Japan, allies in collision. Students may take the course more than once, with the approval of the department, if the topic is different each time.

Prerequisites: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

PL 367 - Topics in American Politics

Credits: 4

Selected issues, periods, and research in American politics. Topics will vary from year to year, depending upon the specialization and research interests of the instructor. Possible topics include: urban government, politics of AIDS, political role of the labor movement, etc.

Prerequisites: PL 101 or permission of instructor.

Note(s): Students may take the course more than once, with the approval of the department, if the topic is different each time.

PL 371 - Independent Study

Credits: 1-4

An opportunity for qualified majors to do special studies in the field of political science beyond or outside of the regular departmental offerings. The student's study program is supervised by a member of the department. Written work and regular periodic discussion meetings are required.

PL 374 - Senior Thesis Prep

Credits: 3

Independent research under the direction of a member of the department, undertaken in the fall of the senior year by students writing a senior thesis. Students should consult department guidelines regarding the senior thesis, which specify the expectations for this course.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

PL 375 - Senior Thesis

Credits: 4

Optional for government majors. Particularly recommended for majors wishing to develop a problem or theme in depth and for those working toward professional careers or in preparing for graduate work. The student's work is supervised by a member of the department. Individual and, if appropriate, group conferences will be held during the term. Written work and regular periodic discussion meetings are required. Proposals for the senior thesis must be prepared in consultation with a government faculty thesis-sponsor, approved by the sponsor and the student's advisor, and submitted to the chair for approval during the semester preceding the one in which the student wishes to work on the thesis.

Note(s): Application deadlines precede registration periods; see the department calendar for specific dates.

PL 376 - Senior Coda in Political Science

Credits: 1

An integration of the first three years of the Political Science major curriculum with other experiences at Skidmore, while at the same time enabling consideration of life after Skidmore. This course is a moment for students, together with other senior PL majors, to simultaneously reflect on their academic past and path at Skidmore, while also thinking about plans to move into the future, past Skidmore.

Note(s): Open to PL majors only. Fulfills Senior Experience Coda requirement.

PL 383 - New York State Assembly Program

Credits: 15

A semester-long intensive field experience. Students spend a minimum of 30 hours a week working in Albany for an Assembly member and their research staff, conducting research, responding to constituent mail, bill tracking, bill memo preparation, and attending committee and public hearings, among other tasks. The program also has an academic seminar component, Policy in the NY State Legislative Process, and includes other weekly meetings (Issue Forums), as well as mandatory participation in a Mock Legislative Session at the end of the semester.

Prerequisites: PL 101 and junior or senior standing. PL 222 recommended.

Note(s): Must be taken S/U.

PL 384 - New York State Senate Program

Credits: 15

A semester-long intensive field experience. Students spend a minimum of 30 hours a week working in Albany for a Senate member and their research staff, conducting research, responding to constituent mail, bill tracking, bill memo preparation and attending committee and public hearings, among other tasks. The program also has an academic seminar component, and includes other weekly meetings (Issue Forums), as well as mandatory participation in a mock legislative session at the end of the semester.

Prerequisites: PL 101 and junior or senior standing. PL 222 recommended.

Note(s): Must be taken S/U.

PL 385 - Wash Sem Program

Credits: 4

PL 386 - Wash Sem Program

Credits: 4

PL 387 - Wash Sem Program

Credits: 4

PL 388 - Wash Sem Program

Credits: 4

PL 399 - Professional Internship in Political Science

Credits: 1-4

Internship experience at an advanced level in government, political, or legal offices for students with substantial academic preparation. The intern must produce a major research paper related to the area of the internship, on a topic approved by the faculty sponsor and the on-site supervisor.

Prerequisites: PL 101 (if internship is in the area of national politics or a legal office) or PL 103 (if internship is in the area of comparative or international politics), and at least two advanced courses in the appropriate field for the internship.

Note(s): Must be taken S/U.