

Political Science Department / Summer 2026 Courses

NUMBER	TITLE	MODE	INSTRUCTOR
First Session [May 18 – June 26]			
103	Comparative Politics	Online	Cunha Silva
300A	Inequality & American Democracy	Online	Condon
326	American National Security	Online	Maxey
Second Session [June 29 – August 7]			
101	American Politics	Online	Markarian
102	International Relations in an Age of Globalization	Online	Grigorescu
300A	Hollywood & Politics	Online	Savage
358	War, Peace and Politics	Online	Melin

First Session [May 18 – June 26]

PLSC 103 / Comparative Politics / Cunha Silva



We will examine how we define and measure democracy, how different institutional arrangements (e.g., electoral systems, systems of government) function, and their effects on a country's governability and the representation of its citizens. After taking this class, students should be able to answer questions like: What is the modern state and its origins, and how do we understand democracies and dictatorships? How do we understand the processes by which states transition from authoritarianism towards representative democracy? How do we understand the importance of economics and culture in shaping democracy? Lastly, how do these dynamics and understandings help us develop a broader understanding of the commonalities and specifics of politics across the world?

PLSC 300A / Inequality & American Democracy / Condon



Economic inequality is at a record high in the US. This course explores the political causes and consequences of this phenomenon. Why has the gap between the rich and the rest grown so much? What, if anything, do Americans want government to do about it? How do people develop opinions about the rich, the poor, and inequality itself? Students will explore research and data on economic divides, public opinion trends, and policy solutions. This course will pay particular attention to the social experience of inequality, investigating how much people interact with and think about others whose life circumstances differ from their own, and why that matters in a democracy.

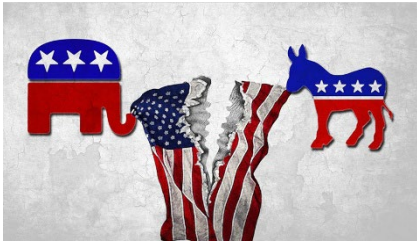
PLSC 326 / American National Security / Maxey



What makes an issue a national security threat? Whose security matters? Is national security affected by polarization? What are the biggest security threats facing the U.S. today? The course answers these questions by examining the moral and political decisions that shape American national security policy, focusing on current events and contemporary threats. The course incorporates opportunities for students to develop professional skills and connect theories to real world challenges. It is asynchronous with regular instructor feedback and engagement.

Second Session [June 30 – August 8]

PLSC 101 / American Politics / Markarian



This introductory course examines the fundamental institutions, processes, and behaviors that shape American democracy. Topics include the Constitution and founding principles, federalism, civil rights and liberties, public opinion and political participation, Congress, the presidency, the courts, elections and campaigns, political parties, interest groups, media, and public policy. The course is taught asynchronously online. However, the instructor can meet via Zoom during regular hours to discuss material and answer questions. Course requirements include regular reading quizzes and open-note midterm and final exams. This course fulfills requirements for the Political Science major and Law and Politics minor. It is also part of the Tier 2 Foundational societal knowledge area of inquiry of the core curriculum.

PLSC 102 / International Relations in an Age of Globalization / Grigorescu



This introductory course covers competing perspectives on international politics and global issues such as North-South relations, human rights, war and peace, population growth, terrorism, global economic relations, and environmentalism. The course is taught online and asynchronously. However, the instructor can meet via Zoom at any time to discuss material and answer questions. Course requirements include bi-weekly postings, a midterm, and a final exam. One of the two exams may be replaced by a research paper on an international topic. This course fulfills requirements for the Political Science, Global Studies, and Law and Politics majors and minors. It is also part of the Tier I Foundational societal knowledge area of inquiry of the core curriculum.

PLSC 300A / Hollywood and Politics / Savage



Step into the world where Hollywood meets American politics. In this course, we'll use some of the most iconic political films of the last several decades to explore the real political events, controversies, and cultural moments that shaped them. From the Cold War and Watergate to the Civil Rights Movement, modern campaigns, and the War on Terror, you'll see how movies both reflect and shape how Americans understand politics. Along the way, you'll learn how films portray political leaders, activists, voters, the media, and interest groups—and what those portrayals get right (and wrong). If you like movies, current events, history, or political drama, this course will help you see both

politics and film in a whole new way. This course is primarily asynchronous with several hour-long Zoom discussions throughout the term.

PLSC 358 / War, Peace and Politics / Melin



Civil war is currently the most violent and deadly form of violence in the international system. Why do countries break out in conflict? This course provides an introduction to and overview of the concepts and approaches related to the causes of civil conflict and cooperation. The main topics of the course are: (1) an introduction to understanding civil war as a social science topic, (2) the origins of the demands and disputes that can lead to civil war, (3) how civil wars are fought, (4) why civil wars last so long, (5) how civil wars end, and (6) how civil wars can be prevented.

