

2006 SUMMER SESSION

Political Science Course Descriptions

3649 POLS 20100 American Politics

Benjamin Radcliff

MW 6:30-9:00

6/20-8/4

This course examines the American political system from the point of view of democratic theory. While we will cover the usual range of topics for an introductory course, particular attention will be devoted to understanding whether, or in what ways, the practice of American politics conforms to conventional understandings of democracy. The course thus stresses theoretical understanding and critical appraisal rather than description. No conventional text book will be used: instead, students will be asked to read a series of more challenging books (and some shorter pieces) on individual topics. Course requirements include a substantial paper.

3650 POLS 20200 International Relations

George Lopez

MTWR 10:30-11:50

6/20-8/4

This course provides students with an understanding of historical and current events in world politics. As such, the course has three central objectives: to introduce various theoretical frameworks for analyzing international political and economic events, to provide an overview of substantive topics in international relations, and to supply a basic understanding of contemporary international events. We explore substantive issues such as cooperation and conflict in international relations, the causes of war, nuclear proliferation, regional free trade agreements, the causes and effects of economic globalization, and the role of international law and institutions. Discussion sections use historical case studies and current events to illustrate concepts introduced in lectures.

3236 POLS 20600 Political Theory

Joshua Kaplan

MTWR 2:45-4:05

6/20-8/4

This course is an introduction to political theory as a tradition of discourse and as a mode of thinking about politics. It is designed to demonstrate how political theory can enhance our understanding of politics. The course begins with modern rational choice theory as a way of introducing two problems of modern politics: How can people with different preferences agree on a common course of action? How can self-interested individuals cooperate and unite in a mutually beneficial association? We will then read selected works of traditional political theory that explore justice, morality, nature, force, fear, freedom, and rationality as foundations of the political partnership. Readings include Orwell, Plato, Thucydides, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, The Federalist Papers, Melville, and Malcolm X.

3238 POLS 30001 Presidential Leadership

Peri Arnold

MTWH 8:55-10:15

6/20-8/4

This course examines the role of the presidency in the American regime and its change over time. Particular attention will be given to expectations about presidential leadership through the course of American political history. Beginning with questions about the original design and role of the presidency, the course turns to consideration of the role of leadership styles for change and continuity in American politics. Finally, cases of presidential leadership are studied to comprehend the way leadership and political context interact.