

Politics

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2019)
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The departmental aim is to cultivate in students a critical ability to interpret political questions from a variety of perspectives.

A student who enters Whitman without any prior college-level preparation in politics will have to complete 36 credits to fulfill the requirements for the politics major.

Distribution: Courses completed in politics apply to the social sciences and cultural pluralism (selected courses) distribution areas.

Total credits required to complete a Politics major: 36

Learning Goals: Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- **Major-Specific Areas of Knowledge**
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the interconnections of political institutions, movements, concepts, and events from multiple intersecting vantage points.
- **Critical Thinking**
 - Identify contested assumptions, ideas, and intellectual debates in politics scholarship. Pose critical questions about power relations as key political questions in a globalizing world are investigated.
- **Research Experience**
 - Conduct a focused academic inquiry that demonstrates a critical awareness of competing arguments in response to a key question; formulate a systematic path of analysis; generate creative findings based on original research.

The Politics major: The major in politics consists of 36 departmental credits, distributed as follows:

- I. At least 12 credits of 300- and 400-level courses, exclusive of the required senior seminar, and exclusive of the senior thesis or honors thesis,
- II. Successful completion of the department's senior seminar (four credits),
- III. Successful composition of a senior thesis or honors thesis; a grade of C- or better is required for the thesis (four credits).

The program for the major is to be planned by the student and his or her adviser to ensure adequate breadth in the courses taken. Only courses taught or co-taught by Whitman Politics Department faculty members are eligible for satisfying the major requirements for coursework at the 300-400 level. No more than eight credits earned in off-campus programs, transfer credits, and/or credits from cross-listed courses taught only by faculty in other Whitman departments may be used to satisfy major requirements for coursework at the 100-200 level. Courses taken P-D-F may not be used to satisfy the course and credit requirements for the major.

The Politics minor: A minimum of 20 credits of departmental offerings. These must include eight credits in courses 300-level and above, and must include courses taught by at least two different members of the department. Only courses taught or co-taught by Whitman Politics Department faculty members are eligible for satisfying the minor requirements for coursework at the 300-400 level. No more than four credits earned in off-campus programs,

transfer credits, and/or credits from cross-listed courses taught only by faculty in other Whitman departments may be used to satisfy minor requirements for coursework at the 100-200 level. Courses taken P-D-F may not be used to satisfy the course and credit requirements for the minor.

The Politics-Environmental Studies major: The requirements are fully described in the *Environmental Studies* section of the catalog.

Interdepartmental programs: The politics department also participates in various interdepartmental major study programs. For additional information, consult the department's home page at www.whitman.edu/content/politics.

100 Introduction to Race, Gender & Politics of the Body

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

What is the relationship of race, gender, and sexuality to the body? We begin to address this question by exploring the body as a philosophical problem. Why do thinkers oppose the 'rational' mind to the 'carnal' body? How are race, gender, and sexuality used to illustrate this opposition? We then consider 'nature vs. nurture' arguments. Are race, gender, and sexuality a function of biology (biologically-determined), or produced through social interaction (socially-constructed)? What are the implications of both perspectives for conceptualizing freedom, agency, and power? How do these perspectives inform the decision-making of legal and other institutions? We consider how thinkers push beyond 'essentialist' and 'social constructionist' analyses, and instead ask how, why, and under what circumstances a body's race, gender, and sexuality matter. We examine how movements to transform racial, gendered, and sexualized social hierarchies address this question. Finally, we reflect on the idea that race, gender, and sex are neither what one has, nor what one is, but are *norms* through which a body becomes recognizably human.

101-104 Special Topics in Politics: Introductory Level

4 credits

An introductory course designed to familiarize students with basic concepts and problems in the study of politics. When offered, courses will focus on a different topic or area and will generally include lectures and discussion. The class is specifically aimed at first and second year students. Any current offerings follow.

101 ST: Politics Through Film

Fall

Serin

4 credits

This course will introduce students to the foundational concepts and critical lexicon of politics through the medium of film. The course revolves around weekly film screenings. The film of the week will be supplemented with readings that provide historical and theoretical context on the political, economic, social, and cultural issues under discussion. We will link formal techniques of making social reality visible to a political conception of seeing and explore a series of questions: What are the schemas through which social reality is given to be seen, is rendered seeable, or visible? Why are some things seen and others cast in the shade? How does the filmic apparatus's translation of social reality enable us to "see" the depicted reality in a new light—in the light of its underlying, unseen concepts? What are some potentials of the camera not simply to record a preexisting, extra-cinematic reality but to participate in its transformation? May be taken for credit toward the Anthropology major or minor or the Film and Media Studies major or minor. Distribution area: social sciences.

102 ST: African Politics

Fall

Forjwuor

4 credits

This course introduces students to a variety of scholarly works and arguments about the meaning and nature of African politics. We will not simply learn about how African politics and society are shaped by historical, economic, and legal conditions, but also how to critically evaluate a range of academic theories designed to explain political conditions in contemporary African politics. For these primary reasons, we will look at a variety of political challenges facing African state and how resolutions to these challenges

may require a shift in the ways we evaluate the success of politics in general. Additionally, we will dedicate part of the course to looking closely at the nature of political authority, factors that shape political identities, transitions to democracy, various political ideologies, and pressing issues regarding economic development and poverty. Distribution area: social science.

109 Introduction to U.S. Politics and Policymaking

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course introduces students to the various institutions, actors, and ideologies of contemporary U.S. politics and policymaking. We will make visible the multiple sites of policy formation in the United States as we move away from speaking of “the government” in the singular. Through a series of contemporary policy case studies, we will explore the many openings to influence policymaking and discover the myriad ways that good ideas can die. Throughout the course we will view U.S. politics and policymaking with a critical eye toward the impacts of gender, race, class, sexuality, and other systems of power and difference.

110 Introduction to the Politics of Migration and Immigration

Spring

Bobrow-Strain

4 credits

The movement of people across national borders has emerged as a central nexus of politics around the world—from the rise of anti-immigrant populist movements in Europe and the United States, to the global spread of hyper-militarized border enforcement regimes; from fierce debates about race, religion, and nationalism in receiving countries, to the ways out-migration transforms the economies and societies of sending countries. This course combines a global overview of migration politics with a focused introduction to the U.S. immigration system. Topics addressed include: colonialism, imperialism, and the historical roots of contemporary migrations; the political economy of migration on a local and global scale; race, nationalism, and nativism; the rise of militarized border enforcement; immigrant rights and anti-immigrant social movements; climate change and migration; and the history and workings of U.S. immigration law and policy.

114 Introduction to the Study of African Politics and Society

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course has two principal objectives. The first is to pose a set of questions aimed at identifying key areas of study with regards to African political and social processes. The second is to translate these questions into guides for ongoing critical academic skills. The course consists of four parts. The first part will review both the images of Africa in popular media and some of the theoretical constructions of Africa from ancient times to the present. The second part of the course explores autonomous Africa which pre-existed the subsequent inequitable relationship between Africa and the outside, mainly European, world. The third part of the course looks at the process of Africa’s incorporation into the wider world of mercantilist trade, the modern slave trade, and the establishment of formal colonization, modern imperialism and dependence. The fourth part of the course looks at the major social, political, and economic problems Africans have inherited and sometimes compounded since the acquisition of formal political power from the Europeans.

117 Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law, Culture & Political Thought

Spring

J. Jackson

4 credits

This course will provide a broad introductory survey of the emergence and development of the U.S. Constitutional tradition. We will situate that development within a set of enduring power struggles and constitutive political facts: the radical impulses of democracy, the collective yet fragmented nature of sovereignty in constitutional structure and theory, the individualistic logic of “rights,” the racialized order of U.S. law and society, the politics of property and distribution, the culture of fear and empire, and the ideology of “progress.” Readings will include texts by Alexis de Tocqueville, Hannah Arendt, Charles Beard, James Madison, The Anti-Federalists, and Thomas Paine. We will devote time to very close readings of primary texts, including: the Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution (as originally ratified + the Bill of Rights and subsequent Amendments), and decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. By the end of the course, we will have to consider whether the U.S. has had one constitution or

several constitutions sequentially (early republic, post-Civil War, post-New Deal, post-Brown) or many constitutions competing all at once, a jurisprudential schizophrenia that perhaps continues to this day.

119 Whitman in the Global Food System

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course uses food as a window through which to examine the study of politics and its connections to our everyday lives. Topics range from the geopolitics of food aid and trade to the gendered politics of export agriculture in the Third World, from the political ecology of obesity in the United States to the causes of famine in Africa. The course is designed to get students out of the classroom and into the larger community. To this end, along with standard seminar readings, discussions, and occasional lectures, the course includes short field trips and small group projects in which students trace connections between food on campus and larger global processes.

121 Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Political Theory

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course introduces students to the history of European political theory through an investigation of classical Greek and premodern Christian writings. Texts to be explored may include Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War*, Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, St. Augustine's *City of God*, and St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. May be elected as Classics 221.

122 Introduction to Modern European Political Theory

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course introduces students to the history of European political theory from the 16th through the 19th centuries, focusing particularly on the origins and development of liberalism. Themes covered in this class may include: How did political theorists make sense of the developing nation state? How have modern political theorists conceived of the concepts of "justice," "freedom," and "equality"? What role did the growing dominance of capitalism play in altering political conceptions of the individual? How have Marxist and anarchist thinkers critiqued the language of liberalism? Authors to be considered may include Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Tocqueville, and Marx. Politics 121 is not a prerequisite for Politics 122.

124 Introduction to Politics and the Environment

Spring

Brick

4 credits

An introduction to key concepts in the study of politics using environmental issues as illustrations. Designed for first- and second-year students, this course encourages critical thinking and writing about such political concepts as equality, justice, freedom, liberalism, power, dissent, individualism, and community. Strong emphasis is placed on developing critical writing skills and persuasive oral arguments. A field trip may be required. Three periods a week.

147 International Politics

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of contemporary international politics. The course will explore contending approaches to the study of international politics, including political realism, political idealism and liberalism, feminism, political economy, and constructivism. We will discuss how these different approaches can help us understand major current issues, including war and peace, weapons proliferation, the environment, globalization, and human rights.

200-204 Special Studies in Politics: Introductory Level

1-4

An introductory course designed to familiarize students with basic concepts and problems in the study of politics. When offered, courses will focus on a different topic or area, and will generally include lectures and discussion. Any current offerings follow.

200 ST: Politics of Salmon

Fall

Thayne

4 credits

The history of Indigenous peoples, settler colonial infrastructure, commerce, hydropower, agriculture, recreation, dam-building and dam removal, treaty rights, environmentalism, and sovereignty in the Northwest—and particularly in the Columbia River Basin—can be told through the story, and politics, of salmon. Salmon was once the center of the Northwest's economy, ecology, and cosmology. By the mid-twentieth century, most species were functionally extinct in many tributaries. Through the efforts of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission—after numerous court cases and Treaty Rights activism—salmon have largely been restored. Still, politics over salmon continue to rage over issue such as dam removal, climate change, recreation, conservation, protection of endangered species, wild vs. hatchery propagation, invasive and native species, federal-state-tribal jurisdictions, ecology, subsistence, and sovereignty. Whitman College—the almost sockeyes—located on the eastern edge of the Columbia River Basin, with the concrete-choked and salmon-bereft Mill Creek flowing through it, is a perfect place to learn about the politics of salmon. It will involve at least one field trip to significant salmon sites in the Columbia River Gorge and Plateau. May be elected as Environmental Studies 203, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 203 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies. Distribution area: social sciences.

201 ST: Carceral Cultures

Spring

Serin

4 credits

This course offers students an intellectual toolkit for thinking critically and engaging politically with contemporary problems of mass incarceration. Drawing on historical, ethnographic, legal, and literary texts on slave plantations, native reservations, internment camps, prisons, refugee camps and immigration detention centers in diverse cultural and geographical locations, we will rethink capital, labor, and political economy; regimes of racialization and gendering; and sovereignty and biopolitics in imperial, post-colonial, settler-colonial, and neoliberal contexts. We will also attend to the experiences and alternative imaginaries of those captive in carceral complexes in an effort to learn from abolition movements. May be elected as Anthropology 247. Distribution area: social sciences.

202 ST: Socialism, Communism, Democracy

Fall

Serin

4 credits

This course insists on the possibility and indeed the urgent necessity of imagining alternatives to unbridled capitalism. We will approach socialism and communism as heuristic devices for the radical imagination of emancipatory politics. Tracing the discontinuous and unpredictable history of community, antagonism, and liberation, we will analyze events such as the Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo revolutions, the Paris Commune, Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartacists, the Italian Autonomia movement, Guy Debord and the Situationists, China's Long March, the African-American civil rights movement, the Palestinian intifada, liberation theology, and the past and present Zapatista peasant uprisings in Mexico. We will also examine the recent wave of occupations, riots, and insurrections: Tahrir, Puerto del Sol, Syntagma, Gezi, Zuccotti, and Ferguson. In an engagement with critical Marxism, we will tackle a series of problematics developed around the concepts of common, commune, community, and communism. Distribution area: social sciences.

203 ST: Race and International Politics

Spring

Forjwuor

4 credits

Prompted by new insights in postcolonial theory and the increasing Western military presence in the Middle East and Africa, new scholarly activities have over the past decades sought to bring back the analyses of race and racism into discussions of global politics. This course introduces the intersections of race and international politics. We will discuss how particular understandings of race and racism shape contemporary scholarship in international politics and also inform national and international legal and governmental practices. Questions of concern in this course will include –among others things—the impact of scientific racism on Western understanding of itself and its political projects in the world, the rise of the

non-aligned movement during the Cold War, the different articulations of non-Western subjectivities in world affairs, the changing patterns of capital and labor mobility, as well as the environmental degradation and new kinds of cultural configurations. Distribution area: social sciences.

207 Islam and Politics

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course surveys the various significations of Islam in contemporary politics, with an emphasis on references to Muslims from the Middle East. We will consider how authors have advanced diverse, and often conflicting, understandings of Islam in response to concrete political problems in the 20th century—and what it means for us, in a post-9/11 world, to study what they said. The course is divided in two parts: ‘Beginnings as Dissidence’ and ‘Political Order Today.’ In the first part (‘Beginnings as Dissidence’), we consider instantiations of political thought that draw on origin stories to resist existing power structures. Our survey will include articulations of Islam in relation to republicanism, Marxism, black internationalism, and the anti-colonial tradition. In the second part (‘Political Order Today’), we consider instantiations of political thought that reference Islam to establish, justify, and/or reform existing power structures (e.g. the modern state). Our survey will include articulations of Islam in relation to liberal democracy, constitutionalism, neo-liberalism, and themes pertaining to the status of minority populations in plural societies (e.g. gender equality and free speech). May taken for credit toward the Middle East/Islamic World area requirement for the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major.

208 Middle East Politics

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course examines approaches to the study of politics in the modern Middle East. We will consider region-specific iterations of conventional themes, including but not limited to: the state; political economy; nationalism; revolution; war; religion and politics; and authoritarianism and democracy. The course begins with critiques of knowledge production articulated in response to colonization and foreign intervention. How are we to interpret modern Middle East politics in light of these critiques? What would it mean to write against regional exceptionalism—to understand the “Middle East” as a global phenomenon with ill-defined borders? When analyzing geopolitics, how can we think beyond suffering and resistance to envision a politics of the everyday? What are the limits of area studies? And finally, despite its limits, can area studies nevertheless afford generative possibilities for future inquiry and political action? Case studies appear selectively to illustrate core themes. May taken for credit toward the Middle East/Islamic World area requirement for the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major.

212 What is Political Freedom?

Fall

J. Jackson

4 credits

This course asks the deceptively simple question: what is political freedom? Is freedom necessarily tied to the idea of “the political”? Or is freedom best understood as being primarily challenged by the formation of the political and the decisions rendered there? Is political freedom concerned primarily with the individual? Or with the polity as a whole? Or with political collectives that cross familiar political boundaries and borders? Who is capable of political freedom? The many? The few? Do we all desire political freedom or is it a burden most would prefer not to carry? Is political freedom a gift or a right? What obstacles to realizing political freedom exist in the present? What powers and practices enable it? What powers and practices enfeeble it? We will explore these questions via an engagement with the thinking of Hannah Arendt, Aristotle, Isaiah Berlin, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Milton Friedman, Emma Goldman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Catharine MacKinnon, Karl Marx, J.S. Mill, Plato, J.J. Rousseau, and Alexis de Tocqueville.

215 The First Amendment: Speech, Press, and Assembly

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

The First Amendment is central to the functioning of U.S. democracy. Moreover, some scholars contend that the First Amendment is at the very heart of the “meaning of America.” In this class, we will focus on the clauses

regarding speech, assembly, and the press while concentrating on the intertwined issues of freedom, democracy, and power. Some specific questions to be addressed include: what is the relationship between the First Amendment and the politics of public space; concentrated media power; new political economies of knowledge; the suppression and protection of dissent; and socio-political inequalities (e.g., group libel and hate speech)? We will also interrogate the alleged distinction between speech/act and, more broadly, between reason-persuasion/violence-force. In this course we will study the development of legal doctrine and spend a fair amount of time reading case law.

220 American Political Theory
Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course provides an introduction to major works of American political theory from the founding to the present. We confront core philosophical questions about politics in general and politics in the United States specifically, including the following: What are the purposes of government, and what political institutions are most conducive to these ends? How can the American polity be democratic while preventing the tyranny of the majority? How has American nationality been defined through the exclusion of certain social groups, and how do historically excluded groups gain political power and inclusion? Readings usually include texts by J. Madison, J. Calhoun, E. Goldman, J. Dewey, and M. L. King, Jr., among others.

225 Introduction to Indigenous Politics
Spring

Thayne

4 credits

This course will introduce students to concepts and themes in the study of indigeneity and indigenous social movements, including (but not limited to) sovereignty, land and territoriality, settler colonialism, and decolonization. Our approach will be comparative and historical, with an emphasis on law, governance, race, and gender in North American and Southeast Asian indigenous contexts. We will also explore cultural assertions of autonomy and resistance to settler colonialism. How might the meaning of indigeneity shift across space and time? In what types of political projects are indigenous peoples engaged? How are the experiences of colonization and decolonization gendered and racialized? This course is designed for first- and second-year students, and will require field trips to the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute, the Whitman Mission, and the Happy Canyon Pageant (schedule permitting).

228 Political Ecology
Spring

Bobrow-Strain

4 credits

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of “political ecology,” a framework for thinking about environmental politics that combines insights from geography, anthropology, history, political economy, and ecology. Through the lens of case studies from around the world, the course critically examines the origins and key contributions of political ecology, with a focus on three themes: 1) Nature-society relations, or the challenges of weaving history, economy, and power into the study of the environment (and vice versa); 2) The politics of resource access and control in diverse settings from Amazonian forests to biotech laboratories; 3) The (dis)connections between environmental movements and social justice struggles.

232 The Politics of Globalization
Fall

Forjuuor

4 credits

This course introduces students to some of the major scholarly works and central debates about globalization. The course will critically examine some of the competing perspectives on the historical origins of globalization, the shape and intensity of its many dynamics (economic, political and cultural), its inevitability and desirability, and its impacts on different communities around the world. Some of the central themes covered will include the future of the nation-state, the salience of various transnational actors, changing patterns of capital and labor mobility, rising levels of environmental degradation and new kinds of cultural configurations.

236 Concepts of the Political in Southeast Asia: An Introduction**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This course examines how the political, economic, and cultural are entangled in Southeast Asian societies. Themes include pre-colonial political formations, modes of colonization and anti-colonial resistance, cartography, social movements, and transformations in the conceptualization of power, gender, race, space, indigeneity, and the divine. How has “Southeast Asia,” as a concept and field of study, emerged? What resonances and divergences can be traced in how the political is understood and practiced in the region? Moving from the classical and early modern periods to the contemporary era, we will explore Southeast Asia’s experiences of empire, war, revolution, industrialization, and globalization. Texts draw from the fields of history, anthropology, race and gender studies, political studies, and indigenous politics.

240 Mexico: Politics and Society in the Age of NAFTA**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

Mexico and the United States have been inextricably connected for as long as both countries have existed. Currently, Mexico is the United States’ third largest trade partner. More than 10 percent of the U.S. population is of Mexican descent, and every year millions of U.S. residents visit Mexico as tourists. And yet—fed on a diet of political polemics, racialized representations, and sensationalist media—most people in the U.S. have little understanding of their southern neighbor. This course surveys the history, political economy, and cultural politics of Mexico. It begins with a short introduction to Mexican history and a critical exploration of representations of Mexico in U.S. popular culture going back to the 19th century. It then focuses in on several key contemporary themes including: poverty, development, and economic restructuring; the War on Drugs; social movements and struggles for justice; migration and transnational Mexico; conflicts over land and resources; debates about race, gender, and sexuality within Mexico; and the unique dynamics of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Course materials span a wide range, from the work of Mexican political theorists, historians, anthropologists, and economists to novels, films, and social media. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major.

242 The Politics of Development in Latin America**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This course provides a broad introduction to critical themes in contemporary Latin American development. It begins with a survey of the political economy of Latin America from colonialism through 21st century neoliberal globalization. The bulk of the course then focuses on the present. Centered on the question of how market-society relations are being contested and reworked in contemporary Latin America, it looks closely at topics such as the drug trade, immigration, the WTO FTAA, indigenous uprisings, rapid urbanization, and maquiladora-style industrialization. Finally, it compares three national cases in which popular discontent with neoliberal development has produced dramatic political shifts (Bolivia, Venezuela, and Brazil).

250 Latinos in US Politics and Society**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This corequisite course to Politics/Sociology 318 enables students in that course to put their community-based research projects in critical context by examining the political and social experiences of Latinos in the United States. We read critical theories of race and ethnicity to explore the meaning of these concepts as well as the features and effects of racial and cultural forms of power. We consider how these types of power operate in the local and regional problems students are researching, and in turn gain critical insight on theory by considering these problems. We also place the contemporary circumstances of Latinos, especially those in our geographic region on which the research focuses, in historical perspective, with attention to the legacies of colonization, the uncertain position of Latinos in a predominantly Black/white racial order, and the politics of immigration reform. We also study how Latinos have struggled to challenge domination and enhance democracy through labor movements, women’s organizing, the Chicano Movement, electoral politics, and immigrant justice activism. May be elected as Sociology 250.

Corequisite: Politics 318 or Sociology 318.

254 Gender and Race in Law and Policy**Spring****Beechey****4 credits**

This course offers an introductory survey of the ways in which gender and race have been constructed in and through law and policy in the United States. We will uncover the legacy of racism and sexism in U.S. law and policy, and explore the potential as well as the limitations of using law and policy as tools for social and political change. Readings will draw from feminist and critical race theories to critically examine historic and contemporary debates in law and policy surrounding issues such as: employment, education, families, and violence.

255 Politics and Christianity**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This course introduces students to complex issues concerning the relationship between politics and religion, with a focus on Christianity. Authors include modern political theorists seeking to conceptualize the roles of religious faith and practice in a public order as well as writings by modern political theologians. Readings include texts from the United States, Europe, Britain, and Latin America and address a range of Christian perspectives and concrete controversies. We ask: what philosophical grounds justify church-state separation and religious toleration? Under what circumstances might conflicts between the state and religion (or faith) become irreconcilable, and what should citizens, public officials, and religious adherents do at such times? In what ways do religious communities strengthen and/or undermine democracy? What might it mean to see Christianity as a cultural ideology that legitimates social domination? How have Christian communities fortified radical challenges to class, racial, gender, colonial, and anthropocentric power-formations?

287 Natural Resource Policy and Management**Fall****Brick****4 credits**

This course introduces the student to basic problems in natural resource policymaking in the American West. We will focus on the legal, administrative, and political dimensions of various natural resource management problems, including forests, public rangelands, national parks, biodiversity, energy, water, and recreation. We also will explore the role of environmental ideas and nongovernmental organizations, and we will review a variety of conservation strategies, including land trusts, various incentive-based approaches, and collaborative conservation. A field trip may be required.

301 the Art of Revolution**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

How do entirely new political formations emerge? In this seminar, we will consider the possibility of responding to this question by way of aesthetics. Our inquiry will be bookmarked by two defining and radical modern revolutionary events: the 1789 French Revolution and the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Where the former initiated a period of Enlightenment, the latter, in creating an Islamic Republic, appears to have broken the Enlightenment mold. In light of these events, how might we characterize the relationship between aesthetics and political thought? Recent scholarship in political theory suggests that moments of radical democratic action involve the making seen of that which previously had not and could not be seen. For this proposition to hold, a new perspective must emerge whereby new—or revolutionary—modes of political and social life can be recognized in the first place. On the one hand, the aesthetic promises to foster these new ways of seeing. On the other hand, the aesthetic field of vision always seems to be conditioned by politics. What are we to make of this paradox? When and how might revolutionary change occur in light of it?

304 Work and the Politics of Citizenship**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This global studies course challenges students to consider the political, economic, and social meanings of "work" from a variety of theoretical perspectives and in diverse historical/geographical contexts. Why do people work, and how does work come to have political significance, especially in defining who are (and are not) "citizens"? How does work's attachment to wages and profit under capitalism affect people's experiences of working? What questionable assumptions might be encoded in common distinctions between "workplace" and "household," "free

labor” and “slavery,” “production” and “reproduction,” or “work” and “leisure”? How does working relate to democratic citizenship, to social domination, and to political mobilization? In what ways have these connections varied in different historical eras, in distinct geographical contexts, and for various social groups with regard to race, gender, and class? How do the institutions and meanings of work in today’s world of social precariousness and digital capitalism compare to the cultures and institutions of work in earlier modern eras?

305 Latino Politics

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course explores the key events, mobilizations, public policies, political theories, and obstacles that have shaped Latino experiences of politics in the United States. We examine the intersections between labor and political involvement (or exclusion) for Latinos from the early twentieth century to the present, with attention to episodes of collective action by Latino workers and allied groups. Gender comprises an additional focus of the course: we consider how assumptions about gender difference and efforts to contest them have characterized various forms of Latino political assertion and subordination. We also inquire into how Latino political activities (and their class and gender dimensions) have been profoundly affected by immigration regulations while also arising in response to immigration policy and law. The course also investigates texts by Latin American and US writers that offer theoretical accounts of the basic terms by which we might understand political power and social justice.

309 Environment and Politics in the American West

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course explores the political landscape of the American West, focusing on natural resource policy and management on public lands. Topics include forest, mineral, range, grassland, water, and energy policy with an emphasis on the local impacts of climate change. Required of, and open only to, students accepted to Semester in the West.

311 Deservingness in U.S. Social Policy

Fall

Beechey

4 credits

Why are some beneficiaries of social policy coded as deserving assistance from the government while others are marked as undeserving? What impacts do these notions of deservingness have on social policies and the politics which surround them? What are the consequences for the material realities of individual lives? How do gender, race, class, and citizenship status work together to construct and maintain distinctions of deservingness? This course engages with these and other questions through historic and contemporary debates in U.S. social policies such as welfare, Social Security, and disability benefits.

312 Humanism between Europe and its Others

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

What does it mean to be human? Is it possible to articulate a universal notion of humanity? What are the challenges to doing so? Why should we (or shouldn’t we) attempt to do so? This class responds to these questions in light of a recent political phenomenon: the rise of universal human rights discourse in the aftermath of the Second World War. Articulations of humanism in canonical political theory take European “man” as the center of their analysis. This course considers humanist ideas as they were adopted, engaged, and critiqued by those considered to be—and who considered themselves as—different from European “man.” Our investigation covers three strains of contemporary political thought prevalent among those writing as and/or on behalf of Europe’s “others”: humanism, anti-humanism, and new humanism.

313 Tocqueville and Democratic Theory

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

What do we mean when we say “democracy”: is it an electoral system, a cultural order, or a political theory of sovereignty? Is democracy an inescapable unfolding historical fact or a claimed normative good to guide political action? What relationship is there between democracy and wealth or property? Is democracy the realization of freedom or the greatest danger to freedom? How do the boundaries (both imagined and real) of something called

“Europe” contour thinking about democracy and its progress? What are the implications for political life when democracy appears as a revolution without end? In an age of democracy, what aristocratic virtues have we lost? Are they recoverable? These are some of the questions we will explore in this seminar via a close and sustained engagement with the thought of Alexis de Tocqueville. Alexis de Tocqueville has served as a theoretical resource and inspiration for liberal individualism, small-government conservatism, communitarianism, Euro-imperialism, and radical democratic anti-capitalism. We will explore all of these threads in his writings. Although we may engage with secondary sources and the writings of Tocqueville’s contemporaries, the primary focus of this seminar will be Tocqueville’s works. We will read both volumes of *Democracy in America*, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, and other selected writings.

314-315 Special Studies in Politics: Intermediate Level
4 credits

Intermediate seminars designed for students who have had considerable prior work in the study of politics. Each time they are offered, these seminars focus on different topics. Any current offerings follow.

314A ST: Politics of Decolonization

Fall

Forjwuor

4 credits

This seminar is a critical exploration of the various processes, accounts and theories of colonialism and decolonization in Africa and the Americas. The aim is to chart alternative paths to rethinking the meaning and impact of these terms. Focusing on the various colonial/imperial tools employed to subjugate, exploit and dominate colonized subjects, we will examine how liberal discourses/structures that are assumed to embody the terms of freedom and sovereignty have now become extensions of the colonial they were initially employed to overcome. The main objective of this course is to explore various approaches to redefining decolonization, noting the changing meaning of colonialism. Distribution area: social sciences.

314B ST: Power, Body, Resistance

Spring

Serin

4 credits

What can a body do? In this seminar, we will develop an understanding of the body as the ambivalent ground of both subjugation and emancipatory transformation by tracing the history of different power formations and their investment of the body. Approaching historical, ethnographic, and philosophical materials concerning cultural inscription, race and colonialism, discipline and labor, machinery and embodiment, sexuality and affects, and biocapital among others, we will focus on the manner in which different regimes of power constitute different corporealities. We will pose a broader set of questions about power, corporeality, and agency. How can we think of the body, and the capacities it entails, as fully inside power relations without reducing it to a mute effect of power? Inversely, how can we think of resistance as an invention that exceeds the particular modes of subjection? Distribution area: social sciences.

315 ST: Violence and Society

Fall

Serin

4 credits

What are the historical, social and political conditions that make particular forms of violence legitimate or illegitimate, sanctioned or unsanctioned, permissible or impermissible? What forms of violence are recognized as shocking and revolting or as ordinary and tolerable? Displacing the critical gaze from isolated acts toward social relations, this course develops an analytic of reading that probes *representations* of violence. Drawing on ethnography and theoretical texts by political philosophers and literary critics as well as fiction, historical memoirs, photography, architecture, and film, students will explore the epistemological assumptions, political risks and ethical choices underlying representational practices about violence. Can representations of violence be innocent of violence themselves, or are they necessarily implicated in the scenes of violence they invoke, speak to, mediate and translate? Distribution: social sciences.

316 Culture, Ideology, Politics

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course explores the political meaning of culture, focusing on popular culture in the United States. Students experiment with different ways of understanding the political character of popular culture by examining a variety of cultural sources and reading the works of modern political theorists. Special attention is given to Hollywood films, the advertising industry, the news media, radicalism in the 1960s, popular music, and lesbian and gay activism. The course also discusses the concept of ideology and its usefulness in the critical analysis of popular culture (or “mass culture,” or “subcultures”). Two periods per week.

318 Community-Based Research as Democratic Practice I

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Students in this course design and carry out an original program of empirical research on a social or political problem affecting the local community, the state or the region. Projects typically contribute to Whitman’s research on “The State of the State for Washington Latinos.” This research is “community-based”: students perform it in partnership with professionals from organizations outside the college. The research contributes something tangibly useful to these organizations. It also enables students to develop new independent research skills. Students typically work in research teams with peers and begin to write their reports collaboratively. The course also prepares students to communicate publicly about their research findings and recommendations. In all these ways, the research provides a concrete experience in the practices of democracy. May be elected as Sociology 318. *Corequisite:* Politics 250 or Sociology 250.

319 Public Communication about Community-Based Research II

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Students begin this course by completing the final reports for the research undertaken in the fall companion course (Politics/Sociology 318), which typically focuses on “The State of the State for Washington Latinos.” The first part of this course emphasizes collaboratively writing reports that are practically useful to the community partner organizations while also being academically rigorous and intellectually rich. Students then take part in selected activities to communicate publicly about their research findings and recommendations. Public outreach activities are designed in consultation with the community partners and also include presenting in the Whitman Undergraduate Conference. Through these ventures students develop their skills in oral and visual communication, communication across lines of racial and cultural difference, cooperative communication, and leadership. *Prerequisite:* Politics 318 or Sociology 318.

320 The Politics of Global Security

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

In the study of international relations, the concept of security is almost always tethered to the nation-state through the central signifier of “national security”. Even studies of private security, cyber warfare, or drone technology, all of which raise some complex questions about the changing parameters of modern warfare, rarely stray too far from a focus on the state. The purpose of this course is to both understand the motivations for and the effects of this linkage and open up different ways to think of the concept and the referents of security. Using a variety of different approaches through which global security has been studied, the course will ask who is made secure and/or insecure by statist security, what kinds of apparatuses of power are created in the provision of security, what sorts of affective investments are involved in projects of security, and what political possibilities and risks are inherent in imagining a world beyond security. Topics covered may include: practices and technologies of war-making, the military-industrial complex, nuclear proliferation, surveillance and the securitization of everyday life, and military disarmament and peace movements. *Prerequisite:* previous coursework in Politics or consent of instructor.

322 The Anthropocene

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course is a discussion seminar on the implications of climate change for human societies, natural communities, and hybrid human/natures in the Anthropocene, the age of man. Discussions will focus on controversies

surrounding the relatively new concept of the Anthropocene itself and how this concept unsettles understandings of nature, wildness, sustainability, democracy, citizenship, global capitalism, environmental justice, and environmental governance. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, drawing on readings in climate politics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and critical climate studies. Although our focus will be on theoretical and conceptual debates, we will also explore proposed climate mitigation and adaptation strategies such as low carbon social and economic systems, geo-engineering, carbon sequestration, and landscape-scale conservation efforts. A field trip and a longer research paper may be required. May be elected as Environmental Studies 322, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 322 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

323 Debt, Law, and Politics

Spring

J. Jackson

4 credits

In recent years the issue of debt—individual debt, institutional debt, sovereign debt—has burst forth into public life in a manner that increasingly raises pressing questions for political democracy and constitutional order. Financial crises have produced constitutional crises and vice versa. As example, threats by the U.S. Congress to default on public debts promised to produce a financial meltdown as well as a constitutional one, as constitutional theorists attempted to locate the “least unconstitutional” option for resolving the matter. This course will explore the complex interaction between creditor-debtor relations and theories of constitutionalism. Questions to be explored in the course include: What is the implication of the inequality lurking in debtor-creditor relationships for the constitutional presumption of equal citizenship and the ideal of comity between nations? Is the legal fiction of a sovereign constitutional “people” a challenge to the ascendancy of post-national financial power or a precondition of it? To what extent does the constitutional language of right, contract, and obligation contradict or marginalize concepts of mercy, forgiveness, and friendship?

325 Queer Politics and Policy

Spring

Beechey

4 credits

This upper level seminar traces the development and effects of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) politics in the United States from pre-Stonewall through contemporary activism, attending to the importance of race and ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sex, class, and age in LGBTQ organizing. We will explore contemporary policy debates and on-going tensions between assimilation and liberation in U.S. queer politics with an eye toward global connections. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major or minor.

328 Contemporary Feminist Theories

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course will begin by exploring various schools of contemporary feminist theory (e.g., Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, ecofeminism, psychoanalytic feminism, etc.). We will then ask how proponents of these schools analyze and criticize specific institutions and practices (e.g., the nuclear family, heterosexuality, the state, reproductive technologies, etc.). Throughout the semester, attention will be paid to the ways gender relations shape the formation and interpretation of specifically political experience.

329 Theories of Empire

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This class examines some of the most influential and important political writings on empire from the late 18th century to the present. We will focus on the arguments of pro-imperial authors (e.g. James Mill), anti-imperial authors (e.g. Edmund Burke), and contemporary postcolonial and political theorists interested in troubling both the historical legacy and continuing presence of empire today (e.g. Edward Said). The class will consider a variety of general themes including: colonial ambiguity, the problem of sovereignty, cosmopolitanism, the status of women in the colony and postcolony, the invention of race and the persistence of hybridity, the relationship between capitalism and empire, the tension between liberal equality and colonial hierarchy, the role of history in the colonial imagination, the colonial and postcolonial search for authenticity, postimperial futures, and migration, forced migration, and exile. *Recommended pre- or corequisite:* Politics 122.

331 The Politics of International Hierarchy

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course examines the ways in which the international social-political system is hierarchical. The course looks at how such relations of hierarchy have been historically produced and continue to be sustained through a variety of mechanisms. The first part of the course focuses on the period of classical colonialism, examining the racial and gendered constructions of imperial power. The second part of the course turns to more contemporary North-South relations, studying the discourses and practices of development and human rights, and critically examining the resuscitation of the project of empire in recent U.S. foreign policy practices.

333 Feminist and Queer Legal Theory

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Broadly, this is a course on gender, sexuality, and the law. More particularly, this course will 1) explore the relationship between queer theoretical and feminist theoretical projects and will 2) consider how these projects engage legal doctrines and norms. In question form: Where do feminist and queer theories intersect? Where do they diverge? How do these projects conceive of the law in conjunction with their political ends? How have these projects shifted legal meanings and rules? How have the discourses of legality reconfigured these political projects? These explorations will be foregrounded by legal issues such as marriage equality, sexual harassment, workers' rights, and privacy. Theoretically, the course will engage with issues such as identity, rights, the state, cultural normalization, and capitalist logics. We will read legal decisions and political theory in this course. May be elected as Gender Studies 333.

334 The U.S.-Mexico Border: Immigration, Development, and Globalization

Spring

Bobrow-Strain

4 credits

This course examines one of the most politically charged and complex sites in the Western hemisphere: the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border. The borderlands are a zone of cultural mixings, profound economic contrasts, and powerful political tensions. In recent years, the border has emerged as a key site in debates over U.S. immigration policy, national security, the drug war, Third World development, social justice in Third World export factories, and transnational environmental problems. This course examines these issues as they play out along the sharp line running from east Texas to Imperial Beach, California, as well as in other sites from the coffee plantations of Chiapas to the onion fields of Walla Walla. These concrete cases, in turn, illuminate political theories of the nation-state, citizenship, and transnationalism. Students are encouraged, but not required, to take this course in conjunction with the U.S.-Mexico border trip usually offered at the end of spring semester.

339 Nature, Culture, Politics

Fall

Brick

4 credits

In this seminar we explore changing understandings of nature in American culture, the role of social power in constructing these understandings, and the implications these understandings have for the environmental movement. Topics discussed will include wilderness and wilderness politics, management of national parks, ecosystem management, biodiversity, place, and the political uses of nature in contemporary environmental literature. The seminar will occasionally meet at the Johnston Wilderness Campus (transportation will be provided).

351 Necropower and the Politics of Violence

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe posits necropower as "the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (2003). This course explores necropolitics as a mode of political practice that intertwines the power to kill with a concept of population. What are the conditions of possibility by which certain populations are targeted for violence and death, while others are exempt? By what determination are some forms of violence designated political, while others remain ineligible for such a designation? Our approach to the study of political violence will be historical, conceptual, empirically grounded, and comparative, with attentiveness to gendered and sexual forms of violence. We consider philosophical and legal

354 Topics in Jurisprudence: Time, Law, and Justice**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This seminar will center on the nexus between theorizations of time in political life and the politics of difference. In particular, we will consider how different peoples, histories, and hopes are included and excluded in theoretical and legal orderings of temporality. For example, how might the laws, norms and practices of gendered “publics” and “politics” inform the experience of one’s sense of place in political time? In addition, how might the accumulation of racial privilege and property structure different understandings of the future and the urgency required to get there? Does the law solidify these temporal regimes or offer the means to reconfigure them? The course will interrogate writings about the velocities of modernity, the time of capital, the historical markers of a “now,” the constitutional imperatives for justice, and the conditions prefiguring futures on the horizon. Texts will include works from the Western canon, landmark legal documents, and contemporary writings in political theory. Some thinkers we will engage include Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, Martin Luther King, Jr., Joan Tronto, and Jacques Derrida.

359 Gender and International Hierarchy**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

This course draws attention to the manner in which international hierarchies and gender relations intersect to have implications for the lives of Third World women. The course examines how the needs and interests of Third World women are addressed in various international discourses and practices, how Third World women are affected by international political practices, and how Third World women sustain, resist, and transform international power structures. We will cover a number of different issue areas that include security and war, development and transnational capitalism, media and representation, cultural practices and human rights, women’s movements and international feminism.

363 Genealogies of Political Economy**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

What is capitalism? Where did it come from? How does it work, and what are the politics of its epochal expansion? This course explores the origins, dynamics, and politics of capitalism as they have been theorized over the past 200 years. It begins with classical political economy, closely reading the works of Ricardo, Smith, and Marx. It then traces the lineages of classical political economy through the works of theorists such as Weber, Lenin, Schumpeter, Gramsci, Keynes, and Polanyi. The course ends with an examination of theorists who critique Eurocentric political economy by approaching the dynamics and experiences of capitalism from Europe’s former colonies. Topics addressed in the course include debates about imperialism, the state, class struggle, development, and globalization.

365 Political Economy of Care/Work**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

Whether labeled work/family balance, the second shift, or the care gap, tensions between care and work present important challenges for individuals, families and states. This seminar interrogates the gendered implications of the political and economic distinction between care and work. How do public policies and employment practices construct a false choice between work and care? What role should the state play in the provision of care for children, the sick, the disabled and the elderly? How does the invisibility of carework contribute to the wage gap in the United States and the feminization of poverty globally? Course readings will draw from the literatures on political economy, feminist economics and social policy.

367 African Political Thought**Spring****Forjwuor****4 credits**

This course will explore themes in African politics such as colonialism, nationalism, development, authenticity, gender, violence, and justice, through the ideas of some of Africa’s most notable political thinkers of the past half-century, including Fanon, Nkrumah, Senghor, Nyerere, Mandela, and Tutu. The course also will consider the work of contemporary critics of the postcolonial African state. These may include writers, artists, and activists such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Wangari Maathai, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Wambui Otieno.

400-404 Special Studies in Politics: Advanced Level

4 credits

Advanced seminars designed for students who have had considerable prior work in the study of politics. Each time they are offered, these seminars focus on different topics. Students are expected to complete extensive reading assignments, write several papers, and participate regularly in discussions. Any current offerings follow.

481, 482 Individual Projects

Fall, Spring

Staff

1-4 credits

Directed individual study and research. *Prerequisites:* appropriate prior coursework in politics *and* consent of the supervising instructor.

490 Senior Seminar

Fall

Beechey, S. Biswas, Brick, J. Jackson

4 credits

This team-taught seminar will meet one evening a week throughout the semester. Its purpose is to engage senior majors in sustained discussion of contemporary political issues. Requirements include attendance at all seminar meetings; extensive participation in discussion; and the completion of several papers, one being a proposal for a senior thesis or honor thesis. Required of, and open only to, senior politics majors. Fall degree candidates should plan to take this seminar at the latest possible opportunity.

497 Senior Thesis

Spring

Beechey, S. Biswas, Brick, J. Jackson

3-4 credits

During their final semester at Whitman, majors will satisfactorily complete the senior thesis launched the previous semester. Over the course of the semester, students submit sections of their thesis for discussion and review with their readers on a regular basis and defend the final thesis orally before two faculty members. Detailed information on this process is provided to students well in advance. No thesis will be deemed acceptable unless it receives a grade of C- or better. Politics majors register for four credits of Politics 497. Politics-Environmental Studies majors should register for three credits of Politics 497 and one credit of Environmental Studies 488, for a total of four credits. *Prerequisite:* Required of, and open only to, senior majors not taking Politics 498.

498 Honors Thesis

Spring

Beechey, S. Biswas, Brick, J. Jackson

3-4 credits

During their final semester at Whitman, senior honors candidates will satisfactorily complete the senior honors thesis launched the prior semester. Over the course of the semester, students submit sections of their thesis for discussion and review with their readers on a regular basis, and defend the final thesis orally before two faculty members. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in politics. Politics majors register for four credits of Politics 498. Politics-Environmental Studies majors should register for three credits of Politics 498 and one credit of Environmental Studies 488, for a total of four credits. *Prerequisites:* admission to honors candidacy and consent of the department chair.