

PSC: POLITICAL SCIENCE

Courses

PSC 100. United States Government and Politics. 3 Credits.

This course is an introduction to the foundations and workings of the American political system. The main focus of the course is on the institutions and activities of the national government. The assignments and lectures in this course are designed to enhance your ability to think critically about politics, political choices, and political institutions. The course covers four main topics: the foundation of American politics, Civil Liberties and Civil Rights in the United States, American political institutions, and citizen participation in the political process. Gen Ed Attribute: Behavioral & Social Science
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 199. Political Science Transfer Credits. 1-10 Credits.

Transfer Credits
Repeatable for credit.

PSC 200. Political Analysis. 3 Credits.

This course is designed to serve as an introduction to the systematic processes of political science research, including methods for gathering and analyzing data on political science phenomena. It will provide instruction throughout on how to effectively communicate scholarly political science research.

PSC 200 Prerequisite: Successful completion of PSC 100 with a minimum grade of D-.
Gen Ed Attribute: Writing Emphasis (select both)
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 201. Politics of Diversity in the U.S.. 3 Credits.

This course examines American government by analyzing how historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have been represented by the American political system and its institutions. It analyzes how different theoretical approaches such as pluralism, elitism, socialism, and liberalism define concepts such as equality and liberty and how social movements have contributed to social change. By focusing on elements of political culture and social experiences of underrepresented groups, it also considers how historical and cultural contexts have shaped the differential experiences of individuals and how race, class, gender, and sexual orientation influence an individual's role in the political system. Lectures and discussions are embedded in a political science ethics framework. Questions about ethical leadership, the "character" of elected officials, and the "morality" of political decision making and resulting public policies will be examined by using ethical dilemmas and case studies. Gen Ed Attribute: Behavioral & Social Science, Diverse Community(select both), Ethics Requirement

Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 202. Elements of Public Administration. 3 Credits.

Considers public administration in the United States as a process of implementing public policy. Uses case studies and projects with texts focusing on organizational theory, human behavior and motivation, budgeting, personnel, and administrative responsibility.

PSC 213. International Relations. 3 Credits.

Politics among nations, including politics carried on through international organizations. Examines power politics, techniques of diplomacy, and methods of current international organizations. Special attention to U.S. interests and policies.

Gen Ed Attribute: Behavioral & Social Science, Global Awareness Pathway
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 230. Introduction to Political Thought. 3 Credits.

Examination of key ideas that animated the major thinkers of Western thought. Special emphasis will be placed both on specific historical context and possibility of continuing relevance of considered ideas.

Gen Ed Attribute: Writing Emphasis (select both)
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 240. Introduction to Comparative Politics. 3 Credits.

An introduction to the comparative study of political systems at various stages of cultural, social, economic, and political development. The course enables critical assessment of these developments through comparative examination of distinct political systems around the world. Important topics and questions to be examined: political contestation and participation, types of government, forms of electoral systems, models of democracy and processes of democratization, political economy, and many others.

Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 250. The Politics of the Judicial Process. 3 Credits.

The courts are the least democratic of the major American political institutions. Yet, the role of the courts is also essential to maintaining not only the rule of law, but the basic rights necessary to maintain a functioning democratic republic. In this course, we will critically analyze the American legal system in terms of its democratic nature and its essential functions for society. Topics explored include, the role of law in society, the structure and functioning of judicial institutions, the selection and behavior of judges, the function and role of lawyers and interest groups in the legal process, and the role of judges in the policy making process. We will examine both state and federal courts and both trial and appellate courts, including the United State Supreme Court. Our focus in this course will be on legal actors and institutions rather than legal doctrine or specific court decisions.

PSC 255. State and Local Government. 3 Credits.

This course is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of how state and local governments operate in the United States, with some emphasis on Pennsylvania. It examines the political and cultural development that has taken place across the nation in these laboratories of democracy. The functions of state and local governments are examined. Emphasis is placed upon constitutions, legislatures, chief executives, courts, political parties, attitudes, and the interrelationships between federal and state governments as well as issues and problems faced by metropolitan areas.
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 301. Gender and Politics. 3 Credits.

This course examines the role of gender within political frameworks in the United States and abroad. It explores how gender can shape political engagement and representation, as well as analyzing the role and impact of women in politics, including women's policy interest and access to the political system. Students will examine the meaning of gender, intersectionality, sexism, and feminism in a political context. The course aims to provide students critical tools to analyze the complexity of political structures through a gendered lens.
Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

PSC 304. Urban Politics. 3 Credits.

This course examines the politics of governing American urban areas. In doing so, a number of social science perspectives are explored. Particular attention is paid to theories of urban power and democracy and the politics of urban development.
Gen Ed Attribute: Interdisciplinary Requirement

PSC 310. The United States and Latin America. 3 Credits.

This course examines U.S. relations with the nations of Latin America. Emphasis is on understanding the goals of U.S. policies and the real impact of those policies. U.S. views of Latin America, both contemporary and historical, are explored as are Latin American attitudes and views toward the United States. The extent to which the United States has been motivated in its dealing by great power hegemonic concerns, economic self interests (dollar diplomacy), cultural imperialism, human rights, and desire to champion democratic governance are all examined. Contemporary concerns with promoting market economics, narcotic trafficking, and immigration are also considered.

PSC 311. Russian Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.

Emphasis on Soviet-American relations since 1945 and a comparison of the two societies. Topics treated include the influence of Marxism, Great Russian nationalism, and historical experience on Soviet foreign relations.

PSC 313. International Law & International Organizations. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the history and contemporary practice of global governance with an emphasis on international law and international organizations (IOs). Students will learn about the origin and evolution of international law, as well as the institutional structures through which international law is implemented, including, but not limited to, the United Nations (UN), The International Criminal Court (ICC), The World Trade Organization (WTO), and World Health Organization (WHO). The class will explore topics related to human rights, the laws of war, trade law, migration and refugee law, global public health, climate change, and financial stability. Upon successful completion of the course, students will have a basic understanding of the structure, practice, and limitations of global governance, with experience in each of the major issue areas of international politics.

PSC 315. The European Union. 3 Credits.

This course examines the politics, policies, and institutional processes of the European Union. Theoretical and analytical approaches will be employed to understand the historical and institutional development of the EU as well as current EU-US relations. Experiential learning via a simulation will be part of the course.

PSC 317. Contemporary International Relations. 3 Credits.

Recent issues and problems with special emphasis on superpower behavior around the world. Also, third world revolutions, international terrorism, human rights, international law and the United Nations, and the changing international economic order.
Gen Ed Attribute: Speaking Emphasis

PSC 318. International Political Economy. 3 Credits.

The focus is the politics of international economic relations. Alternative analytical and theoretical perspectives will be examined for their value in helping to understand and evaluate the historical developments and current operation of the global economy. Special attention is given to system governance (international regimes such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund) and the ability of the nations of the world to provide stability to the international political economy. The primary objective of this course is to develop analytical and theoretical skills in the application of various international political economy perspectives (liberalism, mercantilism, Marxism/structuralism) which examine the interrelationship between states and markets.
Gen Ed Attribute: Interdisciplinary Requirement
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 319. Middle Eastern Politics. 3 Credits.

Topics include the Arab-Israeli conflict, the politics of the Persian Gulf, the role of OPEC, and the superpower conflict in the region.

PSC 320. U.S. Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.

This course will take a critical look at the implications of the dramatically altered post-9/11 global environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. In particular, students will focus on the strategic choices facing policymakers as well as key policy topics related to military-strategic affairs, economic affairs, and transnational policies such as climate change, trafficking, and global health. Domestic institutions of U.S. foreign policy such as the President and Congress will also be analyzed.

Gen Ed Attribute: Writing Emphasis (select both)
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 322. Public Opinion, Media and Politics. 3 Credits.

This course examines the dynamics of public opinion and public policy. It also closely examines the nature of public opinion measurement and the vital role the national and international media are playing in forming and changing public opinion. Various theories about media effects are analyzed.

Gen Ed Attribute: Community Engagement Pathway, Speaking Emphasis

PSC 323. Racial/Ethnic Politics. 3 Credits.

This course examines the relationship between racial and ethnic groups' political behavior and the American political system's response to them in terms of its public policies.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

PSC 324. U.S. Political Parties. 3 Credits.

Patterns, functions, and history of the American political party system at national, state, and local levels. Theoretical and empirical studies of political interest groups, public opinion, and voting behavior.

PSC 325. Campaigns and Elections. 3 Credits.

This course analyzes American elections and voting behavior, with an emphasis on recent presidential elections. Course objectives include understanding American voting patterns in elections.

PSC 329. Courts, Law and Policy. 3 Credits.

This course examines the judicial branch as an actor in law-making and policy-setting, not merely interpreting legal texts. It examines the advisability of the courts playing such a role and their potential effectiveness in doing so. Typically, this will include a focused case study on a policy area of contemporary relevance.

PSC 329 Prerequisite: Successful completion of PSC 250 with a minimum grade of D-.

PSC 330. Politics of the Holocaust and Genocide. 3 Credits.

This course examines the political causes of the Holocaust and genocide both in a historical and current context. Case studies include the Jews in Europe as well as the Americans and Cambodians.

PSC 335. Pennsylvania Government & Politics. 3 Credits.

This class will explore Pennsylvania's political system from both a historical and contemporary perspective. It will include analysis and evaluation of the legislative, executive and the judicial branches of the state's government. The political history of Pennsylvania, particularly in regards to elections in the Commonwealth will be focused upon in detail as will contemporary events and policy.

PSC 338. U.S. Political Thought. 3 Credits.

Examination of animating ideas behind most influential dilemmas that affected the political development of the United States. Emphasis on historical context and continuing relevance.

PSC 339. Contemporary Political Thought. 3 Credits.

Consideration of the most influential political thinkers over roughly the last one hundred years. While emphasis will be placed on particular thinkers, course will be organized around key topics such as: What is justice and how much should the government do to ensure it? To what extent are human- and by extension, collections of humans that wield political power - capable of rational behavior? In what ways can competing values clash and how do we decide which ones to promote forcefully?

PSC 340. Latin American Culture and Politics. 3 Credits.

This course invites students to conduct comparative analysis of political cultures, parties, and decision-making, ideologies and political processes across the Latin American region. Students will learn how to explain the complexities of race, class and gender in Latin American social structures, relating historical, economic and cultural legacies to analysis on contemporary issues.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Spanish CC (select both)
Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 341. Politics of Development. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to major processes taking place in parts of the globe that are growing in significance. More than 4/5 of the world's population lives in what is broadly known as the developing world. There is an enormous diversity within it in terms of economic development, political systems, and social conditions. Seemingly contradictory, it is home to both wealthy (Taiwan, Saudi Arabia) and extremely poor nations (sub-Saharan Africa), robust democracies (Costa Rica), and severe authoritarian regimes (Uzbekistan, North Korea). As the developing world grows and expands these nations are poised to shape some of the most important transnational issues such as global migration, security, health, and environment (David, 1992; Veenendaal & Corbett, 2015). As such, WCU students need to be academically exposed to this growing reality. The course intends to do just that from a systematic, diverse perspective.

Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 342. European Politics. 3 Credits.

Comparative analysis of political cultures, parties, and decision-making processes in principal European political systems. Strong focus on major European nation states: France, Germany, UK and Italy. Additional attention given to the European Union.

Gen Ed Attribute: FRA/Franco Area CC (SLCT both), Germany CC (select both), Italian CC (Select both)

PSC 343. Culture and Politics of Asia. 3 Credits.

Study of cultural, philosophical, and political systems of modern Asia with special emphasis on China, Japan, and India.

Gen Ed Attribute: Writing Emphasis (select both)

PSC 346. Russian Government and Politics. 3 Credits.

Marxism-Leninism, the functioning of the political system, and its domination of all areas of Soviet life. Some brief attention to the conduct of Soviet foreign policy.

Gen Ed Attribute: RUS/East Europe CC (SLCT both)

PSC 348. African Politics and Society. 3 Credits.

The course explores African politics, economics, and society through the critical lens of structuralist analysis. A strong focus on the historical and colonial framework's impact on current African developments will be emphasized. Case studies, political analysis, and current events will be used to illustrate the common misperceptions of Africa today.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

PSC 350. Constitutional Law I: Government Institutions: Power and Constraints. 3 Credits.

This course examines the power relationships among branches of government and between levels of government. Course will be guided by focus on important constitutional provisions and historically critical Supreme Court decisions, but with time reserved for specific focus on areas of high contemporary interest. Working knowledge of the American legal system is suggested.

PSC 350 has a recommended prerequisite of PSC 250 but does not require it.

PSC 351. Energy and the Political Process. 3 Credits.

Stresses the process of policy making and implementation in the field of energy. Emphasis also is given to foreign policy and natural security implications.

PSC 352. Constitutional Law II: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights. 3 Credits.

This course examines the relationship between government and its citizens, both in terms of restrictions on government interference with the individual freedom (civil liberties) and obligations on government to prevent discrimination and ensure equality (civil rights). Heaviest focus will be on the constituent clauses of both the First and the Fourteenth Amendments. Working knowledge of the American legal system is suggested. PSC 352 has a recommended prerequisite of PSC 250 but does not require it.

PSC 353. Latinx Politics. 3 Credits.

This is a "hands on" course for upper-level social science students as research methods are explored and put into practice in coordination with local organizations working with Latinx peoples. Service learning projects with Latinx people and/or Latinx-led organizations in the region are required. Content material includes demographics of Hispanics in the United States, critical theories from Latinx perspectives, interdisciplinary immigration studies, and Latinx perspectives in relation to social welfare, education, employment, crimes and justice, and politics.

Gen Ed Attribute: Spanish CC (select both)

Distance education offering may be available.

PSC 354. Sustainability Politics and Policy. 3 Credits.

This course explores the intersections of environmental, economic, and social sustainability at the local, national and global levels. During the semester, students will investigate the policy-making process as it relates to historic and current policy debates.

PSC 355. Congressional Politics. 3 Credits.

Deals with the internal and external factors that influence Congressional behavior, including the roles of constituents, pressure groups, parties, the committee system, rules, and the leadership. Their relationships to the president and court structure and their impact on electoral politics also are considered. Comparisons with state legislatures.

PSC 356. US Social Policy. 3 Credits.

This course will focus on domestic public policies, particularly policies and policy problems related to issues of inequality within the United States.

Gen Ed Attribute: Community Engagement Pathway, Speaking Emphasis

PSC 359. Presidential Politics. 3 Credits.

In-depth analysis of the nature and significance of the American presidency, including constitutional development, presidential roles and customs, the recruitment process, the executive branch, and the politics of the presidency.

PSC 398. Political Science PSC Upper Level Transfer Credit. 3 Credits.

transfer credit

Repeatable for credit.

PSC 399. Political Science Special Topics. 3 Credits.

This course will examine topics of temporal or special interest which are not normally part of the regular ongoing political science curriculum. Students will be provided an opportunity to pursue specialized research, study, or application of knowledge and skills in an applied setting. Repeatable for credit.

PSC 401. Senior Project in Political Science. 3 Credits.

Execution of an empirical research project in political science. Involves completion of a major senior paper under supervision of a faculty member. Extensive independent effort required.

PSC 401 Prerequisite: Successful completion of PSC 200 with a minimum grade of D-.

PSC 402. Advanced Political Analysis. 3 Credits.

Discussion and application of research design, conceptualization, measurement, operationalization, research models, sampling, and data analysis for political science. Requires full execution of an empirical research paper utilizing quantitative data to reach substantive conclusions.

PSC 402 Prerequisite: Successful completion of PSC 200 with a minimum grade of D-.

PSC 410. Independent Studies in Political Science. 1-3 Credits.

Research projects, reports, and readings in political science. Open to seniors only.

PSC 412. Internship In Political Science. 3-15 Credits.

Contact department for more information about this course.

Repeatable for credit.