

# Department of Political Science

*Professor:* Daniel J. Mahoney (Augustine Chair in Distinguished Scholarship); *Associate Professors:* Bernard J. Dobski, Jeremy Geddert, Geoffrey Vaughan (chairperson), Gregory Weiner; *Lecturer:* Mary Beth Burke.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The major is designed to provide a comprehensive grounding in the fundamental principles and problems of a science whose relevance to contemporary life is immediate, yet whose tradition is venerable. Its concern is to help students become liberally educated men and women, rather than narrowly trained functionaries. Nevertheless, it prepares students in more than a general way for successful work in such fields as government service, international affairs, graduate study, journalism, law, teaching, publishing and business. The political science program consists of basic courses, open to all students, and advanced courses for all students except first-year students.

### The basic Political Science courses are:

POL 110	Political Issues: The Quest for Justice
POL 201	American Government
POL 203	Modern States
POL 205	Political Philosophy
POL 207	Peace and War

Selections from these basic courses may be counted toward Core requirements in “Person and Society” and “The Great Conversation” as well as credit in a Political Science major or minor. The courses cover the major fields in Political Science, namely:

- American National Government—the constitutional founding, institutions and parties, constitutional law, civil rights, and political thought in the U.S.
- American Public Policy and Administration—political economy, urban politics, and democratic leadership.
- Major Foreign States—the institutions, practices, and traditions of European, Latin American, Asian, and African States.
- Political Philosophy—reflection on political life from Plato and Aristotle to Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and Nietzsche.
- International Politics—relations of peace and war among states, American foreign policy, and diplomacy.

Students are urged to plan a program of study by selecting from among major and elective courses those appropriate to their personal interests and objectives

## MINOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE (6)

Students majoring in other fields may minor in Political Science by planning their program with a departmental advisor.

Of the six required courses, at least three of the following must be taken:

POL 201	American Government
POL 203	Modern States
POL 205	Political Philosophy
POL 207	Peace and War

For the three additional courses, two must be numbered above POL 207, producing a total of 18 credits of Political Science. The student must earn at least a C average in the courses in Political Science.

## MINOR IN LEX: LAW, ETHICS, AND CONSTITUTIONAL STUDIES (7)

Jointly sponsored by the Departments of Political Science and Philosophy, the LEX minor engages the law, ethics, and constitutionalism through those thinkers and texts whose political, philosophical, and legal reflections have shaped the Western intellectual tradition. This minor is designed for those who want to acquire the liberal arts skills essential to professional and personal excellence, as well as to all those who aspire to thoughtful citizenship. For more information, please consult the entry in “Interdisciplinary Programs of Study” or contact its Director, Prof. Gregory S. Weiner.

A NOTE ON PRE-LAW: The American Bar Association confirms that majors and minors across the curriculum, combined with a strong liberal education, provide excellent preparation for law school. Assumption's Pre-Law Program provides personalized advising, co-curricular activities, and development opportunities for all students considering law school. See the "Pre-Law" section under "Pre-Professional Programs of Study." Above all, students considering law school should choose a major that interests them, pursue academic excellence in that field, and contact the pre-law advising coordinator, Prof. Carl Keyes at [ckeyes@assumption.edu](mailto:ckeyes@assumption.edu).

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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### POLITICAL SCIENCE (POL)

#### **POL 110 POLITICAL ISSUES: THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE**

This beginner's course in political science provides an introduction to politics through a critical examination of a full range of political issues and of classic and contemporary texts that illuminate the ongoing human—and American—"quest for justice." Classic works of political reflection, political literature, speeches and writings by statesmen, as well as contemporary American political debates on domestic and foreign policy will be analyzed to put the "issues" of politics in a broader and deeper perspective. Counts towards "The Great Conversation" in the Core Curriculum. (Fall, Spring)

Staff/Three credits

#### **POL 201 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

This course is an introduction to the principles, institutions, and processes of American government. It focuses on our political principles, such as liberty, democracy, and equality, especially as reflected in our government institutions—Congress and the Executive and Judiciary branches—and in our extra-governmental institutions, such as political parties and interest groups. Consideration will also be given to major contemporary issues—free speech, racial and sexual equality, privacy—as expressions of debates over our principles. Open to all students, this course counts towards "The Great Conversation" in the Core Curriculum. (Fall, Spring)

Weiner/Three credits

#### **POL 203 MODERN STATES**

A comparative analysis of major types of ancient and modern political systems, with an emphasis on the Western European liberal democracies of Great Britain and France and on the 20th century experience of totalitarian despotism. Open to all students, this course counts as social science in "Person and Society" in the Core Curriculum. (Fall, Spring)

Mahoney/Three credits

#### **POL 205 POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

This course is an introduction to the nature and place of political philosophy in the political thought and life of Western Civilization. It examines the basic principles of political philosophy according to thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Machiavelli, and Marx. Open to all students, this course counts towards "The Great Conversation" in the Core Curriculum. (Fall, Spring)

Vaughan/Three credits

#### **POL 207 PEACE AND WAR**

This course examines the role of war in human affairs, especially during the 20th century of "total war," and at the outset of the 21st century. It considers why no enduring peace was achieved after the two world wars, the characteristics of international politics since the end of the Cold War, and the instruments for maintaining or restoring peace. Major interpretations of world politics are evaluated. Open to all students, this course counts as social science in "Person and Society" in the Core Curriculum. (Fall, Spring)

Dobski, Mahoney/Three credits

#### **POL 311 AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT**

American political conditions and institutions have occasioned unique contributions to the history of political thought. This course will explore them. It begins with the theoretical foundations of the American republic; proceeds to cover the political theory of the Constitution and the great clashes about the nature of the union that culminated in the Civil War and the

concepts of freedom that blossomed in its aftermath; and finally, explores the ideas unleashed by the emerging conditions of the 20th century, including industrialism, American power and civil rights, through the lenses of both progressive and conservative thought.

Weiner/*Three credits*

**POL 312 THE AMERICAN FOUNDING**

An investigation into the fundamental principles that informed the founding of the American political order and have subsequently oriented the American way of life. In seeking to understand those principles, we also examine the political and philosophical tradition that preceded the founding. (Fall)

Weiner/*Three credits*

**POL 315 THE JUDICIARY**

This course explores the U.S. judiciary as an institutional force in American politics. Beginning with the foundations of the judiciary and continuing through its prominent position in the interpretation and sometimes formation of policy and law today, the course considers the place courts do and should occupy in the constitutional scheme, how effective they are in producing social change, why their role has changed and how other branches of government react to them. Students will consider major Supreme Court cases and political controversies that illustrate the effect of the federal judiciary on American government.

Weiner/*Three credits*

**POL 316 CONSTITUTIONAL LAW**

The role of the Supreme Court in the American political system. Constitutional powers and limitations, with primary emphasis on judicial interpretations of the 1st and 14th amendments.

Weiner/*Three credits*

**POL 321 PUBLIC POLICY**

This course examines selected major contemporary national problems of the U.S. and the federal policies designed to deal with them. Particular problems considered might include poverty, welfare, the economy, education, health, transportation, consumer protection, environmental protection, and energy. It considers the interaction between parts of the government and between government and interest groups, in formulating and executing public policy. It evaluates the thinking of those who have advocated and opposed the expansion of government responsibility for a large range of social action.

Geddert/*Three credits*

**POL 322 POLITICAL ECONOMY**

The purpose of this course is to clarify the tradition of political economy, to understand its foundations and historical permutations, and to study its relationship and pertinence to pressing public policy concerns of our time. The relationship between "political" and "economic" phenomena and analysis will be investigated. The course focuses on the origins of political economy in moral and political reflection rather than in abstract "scientific" considerations. Authors to be studied include Smith, Marx, Keynes, de Jouvenel, Hayek, and Berger. (Fall)

Staff/*Three credits*

**POL 323 POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

This course is intended as an introduction to the study of democratic statesmanship, or political leadership in a democratic regime. The primary emphasis will be on the study of the rhetoric and actions of leading American presidents, as well as leading figures from antiquity and from modern Britain and France.

Mahoney/*Three credits*

**POL 338 NATIONALISM & FASCISM**

This course has as its focus the nation, as a unique form of political organization, and nationalism as the unique movement which gives that form its primary expression. Distinctions will be drawn between moderate and patriotic forms of nationalism and that extreme form known as fascism. It will analyze the rise of major manifestations of nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries as well as the 21st century challenges posed to the sovereignty of the nation by multinational corporations, intergovernmental organizations, terrorism, transnational bodies (the EU), and even individuals.

Dobski/*Three credits*

**POL 345 POLITICAL MASS MURDER**

Scholars who have studied the 20<sup>th</sup> century say that far more people were killed by their own governments during this time than by foreign enemies in wars. This course examines this phenomenon and compares selected major cases of political mass murder, including the Jewish holocaust, great state induced famines under Stalin and Mao, the killing fields of Cambodia, genocide in Rwanda and Sudan and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. It considers how outside powers, especially the U.S. and U.N, have responded, when they intervene and how effectively; when and why they refrain from acting; and whether moral principles or international law permit or oblige states to intervene. (Fall)  
Dobski, Mahoney/*Three credits*.

#### **POL 350 REPUBLICANISM ANCIENT AND MODERN**

Is it possible for a political community to combine the rule of wisdom and virtue with popular consent? Can such a regime satisfy the need for both stability and energy? To understand why and how republics ancient and modern answered these questions, as well as why some republics succeeded and others failed, students will explore the theoretical and historical texts that illustrate the evolution of this political form. Rising above any particular party, policy, or platform, this course will distinguish the ancient effort to secure ordered liberty from its medieval and modern counterparts, throwing into specific relief the character of our own republican democracy and the challenges facing its success. Fulfills a "Great Conversation" requirement in the Core curriculum.  
Dobski, Mahoney/*Three credits*

#### **POL 351 CLASSICAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

Study of the origin and principles of political philosophy in the works of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle. Relevant works by Roman-era philosophers and historians (Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, Sallust, Tacitus and Livy) may also be studied.  
Dobski/*Three credits*

#### **POL 352 EARLY MODERN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: MAKING NATURAL RIGHTS**

This course will explore the major philosophers of the period, from Machiavelli to Rousseau. These figures made the modern world through their claim that each individual is best positioned to know what is right for that person. This is the origin of natural rights.  
Vaughan/*Three credits*

#### **POL 353 IDEOLOGY AND REVOLUTION**

A study of modern revolutions and their connection to "ideologies" which promise a fundamental transformation of political life. We examine the political history of the French and Soviet Revolutions to understand the originality of ideological revolution as distinct from traditional political revolutions which have had more limited aims. The course also compares totalitarian tyrannies with traditional forms of dictatorship. The anti-totalitarian Revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe are also considered.  
Mahoney/*Three credits*

#### **POL 355 LATE MODERN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

A study of political theories from Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger which have presented themselves as critical alternatives to early modern, medieval, and classical political philosophy. (Fall)  
Vaughan/*Three credits*