

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political Philosophy/Social Theory

17.000[J] Political Philosophy

Same subject as 24.611[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring)

3-0-9 units

Can be repeated for credit.

Systematic examination of selected issues in political philosophy. Topic changes each year and subject may be taken repeatedly with permission of instructor.

Fall: B. Zacka. Spring: B. Skow

17.006[J] Feminist Thought

Same subject as 24.637[J]

Subject meets with 17.007[J], 24.137[J], WGS.301[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor, based on previous coursework

G (Fall, Spring)

3-0-9 units

Analyzes theories of gender and politics, especially ideologies of gender and their construction; definitions of public and private spheres; gender issues in citizenship, the development of the welfare state, experiences of war and revolution, class formation, and the politics of sexuality. Graduate students are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

H. Arain

17.007[J] Feminist Thought

Same subject as 24.137[J], WGS.301[J]

Subject meets with 17.006[J], 24.637[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Analyzes theories of gender and politics, especially ideologies of gender and their construction; definitions of public and private spheres; gender issues in citizenship, the development of the welfare state, experiences of war and revolution, class formation, and the politics of sexuality. Graduate students are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

E. Wood, S. Haslanger

17.01[J] Justice

Same subject as 24.04[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 24.04[J].

B. Zacka

17.021[J] Philosophy of Law

Same subject as 24.235[J]

Prereq: One philosophy subject or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject 24.235[J]. Enrollment may be limited; preference to Course 24 majors and minors.

Staff

17.03 Introduction to Political Thought

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines major texts in the history of political thought and considers how they contribute to a broader conversation about freedom, equality, democracy, rights, and the role of politics in human life. Areas covered may include ancient, modern, contemporary, or American political thought.

K. Hoss

17.031 American Political Thought

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines political thought from the American colonial period through the 20th century. Considers the influences that gave rise to American political ideas and the implication of those ideas in a modern context, with particular emphasis on issues of liberty, equality, and the role of values from a liberal democratic lens.

K. Hoss

17.035[J] Libertarianism

Same subject as 21H.181[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject 21H.181[J].

M. Ghachem

17.04[J] Modern Conceptions of Freedom

Same subject as CC.111[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject CC.111[J]. Preference to students in Concourse.

L. Rabieh

17.043[J] Liberalism, Toleration, and Freedom of Speech

Same subject as 24.150[J], CMS.125[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject 24.150[J].

A. Byrne, B. Skow

17.045[J] Power: Interpersonal, Organizational, and Global Dimensions

Same subject as 11.045[J], 15.302[J], 21A.127[J]

Subject meets with 21A.129

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.127[J].

S. Silbey

17.05[J] Humane Warfare: Ancient and Medieval Perspectives on Ethics in War

Same subject as CC.117[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject CC.117[J]. Preference to Concourse students.

L. Rabieh

17.055 Just Code: The Ethical Lifecycle of Machine Learning

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines the moral and political questions that arise at each step of the development of a machine learning system: from problem definition and data collection, to model selection and training, evaluation, interface design, deployment, and use. Brings work in STS, sociology, anthropology, and political science into conversation with perennial concerns in political theory about power, authority, legitimacy, justice, liberty, and equality. Considers the political agency of technology. Limited to 18; preference to juniors and seniors.

B. Zacka

Political Economy

17.100 Field Seminar in Political Economy

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Examines broad range of topics — such as social classes, states, interest groups, inequality welfare states, comparative capitalism, race, and gender — from both classical (Marx and Weber) and contemporary theorists. Limited to 12; preference to Course 17 PhD students.

Consult B. Schneider

17.115 International Political Economy

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Provides an introduction to the politics of international economic relations, including a range of analytical "lenses" to view the global economy. Examines the politics of trade policy, international monetary and financial relations, financial crises, foreign direct investment, third-world development and transition economies, the debate over "globalization," and international financial crime.

D. Singer

17.150 The American Political Economy in Comparative Perspective

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Examines the origins and impact of key features of the American political economy in comparative perspective. Considers a range of political-economic topics, including labor markets, finance, taxation, social policy, and the role of money and organized interests. Highlights the distinctive aspects of American political economy in terms of both institutional structure and substantive outcomes (such as poverty and inequality) by comparing the US with other nations, particularly other rich democracies.

K. Thelen

17.154 Varieties of Capitalism and Social Inequality

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)
 Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered
 3-0-9 units

Focuses on the advanced democracies of Europe, the United States, and Japan. Explores trajectories of change that bear on issues of economic and social inequality. Examines whether contemporary trends (globalization, deindustrialization) undermine institutional arrangements that once reconciled economic efficiency with high levels of social equality. Considers the extent to which existing theoretical frameworks capture cross-national variation in the dynamics of redistribution in these societies.

K. Thelen, P. Hall

17.156 Welfare and Capitalism in Western Europe

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 G (Spring)
 Not offered regularly; consult department
 3-0-9 units

Considers theoretical models that attempt to capture the distinct paradigms of capitalism and welfare regimes prevalent in Western European economies. Analyzes content and processes of contemporary changes in the political economy and social policy - from a broad view of the challenges, to closer inquiry into specific reforms. Includes a theoretical discussion of how change occurs and trajectories of development.

K. Thelen

17.174 Historical Political Economy

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered
 3-0-9 units

Surveys recent work in historical political economy, a field that combines a historical perspective with statistical methods for causal inference or formal theory. Topics include the origins of democratic and authoritarian institutions, long-run economic development, colonial legacies, state building, and intergenerational transmission of political attitudes and behavior. Readings drawn from different political science subfields, economics, and history. Intended as a research seminar for PhD students.

V. Charnysh

17.178 Political Economy of Institutions and Development

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered
 3-0-9 units

Explores institutional diversity in capitalist development, both historical and contemporary, and various explanations (e.g. economic, institutional, sociological, and political) for the divergent economic organization. Examines dimensions of comparison, including issues in business-government relations, labor relations, vocational training, and multinational corporations. Also considers global production networks, natural resource dependence, diversified business groups, industrial policy, and globalization.

B. Schneider

17.181 Sustainability: Political Economy, Science, and Policy

Prereq: None
 U (Spring)
 Not offered regularly; consult department
 3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines alternative conceptions and theoretical underpinnings of sustainable development. Focuses on the sustainability problems of industrial countries, and of developing states and economies in transition. Explores the sociology of knowledge regarding sustainability, the economic and technological dimensions, and institutional imperatives. Considers implications for political constitution of economic performance. 17.181 fulfills undergraduate public policy requirement in the major and minor. Graduate students are expected to explore the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri

17.182 Sustainability: Political Economy, Science, and Policy

Prereq: None

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines alternative conceptions and theoretical underpinnings of sustainable development. Focuses on the sustainability problems of industrial countries, and of developing states and economies in transition. Explores the sociology of knowledge regarding sustainability, the economic and technological dimensions, and institutional imperatives. Considers implications for political constitution of economic performance. 17.181 fulfills undergraduate public policy requirement in the major and minor. Graduate students are expected to explore the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri

17.198 Current Topics in Comparative Political Economy

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Analyzes and compares approaches in current political economy literatures. Weekly topics are selected by instructor and participants. Examples include the organization of interests, industrial policy, growth and inequality, resource "curse", late development. Topics vary each year depending on the research interests of the seminar participants. The subject is for graduate students in social sciences with previous coursework in political economy.

K. Thelen

American Politics

17.20 Introduction to the American Political Process

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Provides a substantive overview of US politics and an introduction to the discipline of political science. Surveys the institutional foundations of US politics as well as the activities of political elites, organizations, and ordinary citizens. Explores the application of general political science concepts and analytic frameworks to specific episodes and phenomena in US politics. Enrollment limited.

D. Caughey

17.200 American Political Behavior I

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Analyzes mass political behavior within the American political system. Examines political ideology, party identification, public opinion, voting behavior, media effects, racial attitudes, mass-elite relations, and opinion-policy linkages. Surveys and critiques the major theoretical approaches and empirical research in the field of political behavior.

A. Berinsky

17.202 American Political Institutions

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Analyzes the institutions of the American political system, with primary emphasis on the national level. Examines American federalism, political parties, national political institutions, and the policymaking process. Focuses on core works in contemporary American politics and public policy. Critiques both research methodologies and the explicit and implicit theoretical assumptions of such work.

D. Caughey

17.210 American Political Behavior II

Prereq: 17.200

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Analyzes mass political behavior within the American political system. Goes beyond the topics covered in 17.200, to explore additional areas and research frontiers in political behavior. Examines recent research on political ideology, party identification, public opinion, voting behavior, media effects, racial attitudes, mass-elite relations, and opinion-policy linkages. Introduces new topics such as personality, emotion, networks, polarization, opinion on war.

A. Berinsky

17.251 Congress and the American Political System I

Prereq: 17.20 or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Focuses on both the internal processes of the House and Senate and on the place of Congress in the American Political System. Attention to committee behavior, leadership patterns, and informal organization. Considers relations between Congress and other branches of government, as well as relations between the two houses of Congress itself. Students taking the graduate version are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

*C. Stewart***17.262 Congress and the American Political System II**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Analyzes the development of the US Congress by focusing on the competing theoretical lenses through which legislatures have been studied. Particularly compares sociological and economic models of legislative behavior, applying those models to floor decision-making, committee behavior, political parties, relations with other branches of the Federal government, and elections. Students taking the graduate version are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

*C. Stewart***17.263 Electoral Politics, Public Opinion, and Democracy**

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Considers the role of elections in American politics. Issues explored include empirical and theoretical models of electoral competition, the effect of elections on public policy, and proposals to improve elections. Special emphasis is given to mass voting behavior, political parties, the media, and campaign finance. Subject focuses on US elections, but provides some contrasts with other countries, especially the United Kingdom.

*A. Berinsky***17.265 Public Opinion and American Democracy**

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Introduces students to public opinion in politics and public policymaking. Surveys theories of political psychology and political behavior. Examines empirical research on public understanding of and attitudes towards important issues, including war, economic and social policies, and moral questions.

*A. Berinsky***17.269 Race, Ethnicity, and American Politics**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores the role of race and ethnicity in modern American politics. Focuses on social science approaches to measuring the effects of race, both at the individual level and more broadly. Topics include race and representation, measurement of racial and ethnic identities, voting rights and electoral districting, protest and other forms of political participation, and the meaning and measurement of racial attitudes.

*A. White***17.270 American Political Development**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Examines the evolution of American national political processes over time: how political culture, governing institutions, and structures of political linkage (parties and organized interests) shape political conflict and public policy. Topics include the evolution of electoral politics and the party system, eras of political reform and state expansion (Populist, Progressive, New Deal, and Great Society), major wars and their effects, and the adaptation of government institutions to crisis and complexity in society and in the economy. Open to undergraduates with permission of instructor.

D. Caughey

17.271 Mass Incarceration in the United States

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Covers the current state of incarceration in the United States and proposals for reform. Class materials include a mix of first-hand/media accounts of incarceration and social science literature on the causes and effects of high incarceration rates. Topics include race and the criminal legal system, collateral consequences of incarceration, public opinion about incarceration, and the behavior of recently elected "reform" prosecutors.

A. White

17.275 Public Opinion Research Design and Training Seminar

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Studies the basic skills required to design, use, and interpret opinion surveys and survey experiments. Acts as both a reading subject on survey analysis and a practicum on collecting and analyzing observational and experimental survey data. Culminates in a group project involving a survey experiment on a particular topic chosen by the class and the instructor.

A. Berinsky

17.276 Public Opinion Research Training Lab

Prereq: 17.200 or permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Offers practical training in public opinion research and provides students with an opportunity to conduct their own survey research. As a group, students design a national sample survey and field the survey. Students analyze the survey results and examine literatures related to the content of the survey. Ideal for second and third year PhD students and advanced undergraduates, though others are welcome.

A. Berinsky

17.279 Political Misinformation in the Age of Social Media

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores the factors that make people vulnerable to political misinformation and why corrections so often fail to reduce its prevalence. Pays especially close attention to the role of social media, and the internet more generally. Analyzes how patterns of misinformation are exploited by political elites and considers possible approaches that journalists, civic groups, government officials, and technology platforms could employ to combat misperceptions.

A. Berinsky

17.28[J] The War at Home: American Politics and Society in Wartime

Same subject as 21H.213[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines the relationship between war and domestic politics in the US since the start of 20th century. Students engage in historical and social scientific research to analyze the ways that overseas military commitments shaped US political institutions, and how domestic politics has in turn structured US engagements abroad. Moving chronologically from World War I to the Iraq War, subject draws on materials across the disciplines, including political documents, opinion polls, legal decisions, and products of American popular culture.

A. Berinsky, C. Capozzola

Public Policy

17.30[J] Making Public Policy

Same subject as 11.002[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

4-0-8 units. HASS-S; CI-H

See description under subject 11.002[J].

Staff

17.303[J] Methods of Policy Analysis

Same subject as 11.003[J]

Prereq: 11.002[J]; Coreq: 14.01

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 11.003[J].

C. Abbanat

17.307 American Public Policy for Washington Interns

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Fall, Spring; partial term)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines US policymaking process, with special attention to making of policy for science and technology. Subject spans the second half of Spring and first half of Fall terms. Spring term attends to origins and development of American policymaking institutions and their roles in settling controversial policy questions. Fall term focuses on development of representative policies in the US, such as pollution controls, biotechnical engineering, and telecommunications. Selection and participation in Washington Summer Internship program required. Fulfills undergraduate public policy requirement in the major and minor.

C. Stewart

17.309[J] Science, Technology, and Public Policy

Same subject as IDS.055[J], STS.082[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

4-0-8 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Credit cannot also be received for 17.310[J], IDS.412[J], STS.482[J]

Analysis of issues at the intersection of science, technology, public policy, and business. Cases drawn from antitrust and intellectual property rights; health and environmental policy; defense procurement and strategy; strategic trade and industrial policy; and R&D funding. Structured around theories of political economy, modified to take into account integration of uncertain technical information into public and private decision-making. Meets with 17.310[J] when offered concurrently.

N. Selin

17.310[J] Science, Technology, and Public Policy

Same subject as IDS.412[J], STS.482[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Credit cannot also be received for 17.309[J], IDS.055[J], STS.082[J]

Analysis of issues at the intersection of science, technology, public policy, and business. Cases drawn from antitrust and intellectual property rights; health and environmental policy; defense procurement and strategy; strategic trade and industrial policy; and R&D funding. Structured around theories of political economy, modified to take account of integration of uncertain technical information into public and private decision-making. Meets with 17.309[J] when offered concurrently.

N. Selin

17.315 Health Policy

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)

4-0-8 units. HASS-S

Analyzes the health policy problems facing America including adequate access to care, the control of health care costs, and the encouragement of medical advances. Considers market and regulatory alternatives as well as international models including Canadian, Swedish, British, and German arrangements. Emphasis on historical development, interest group behavior, public opinion, and organizational influences in shaping and implementing policy.

A. Campbell

17.317 US Social Policy

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

4-0-8 units. HASS-S

Explores historical development and contemporary politics of the American welfare state. Examines interactions among political institutions, elites, the media, and the mass public. Emphasis on reciprocal relationship between policy designs and public opinion/political action. Investigates broad spectrum of government policies that shape well-being, opportunity and political influence, including welfare, social security, health care, education, and tax policy.

A. Campbell

17.320 Social Policy

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines the politics of social policy in comparative perspective. Empirical and theoretical overview of the origins, development, and future of social provision in industrialized countries, in the context of broader political and historical trends. Examines concepts such as social citizenship, risk sharing, de-commodification, and welfare regimes, and the challenges of globalization, neo-liberalism, and demographic change. Topics include pensions, health care, poverty alleviation, and family policy. Combines classic work and research frontiers.

A. Campbell

17.381[J] Leadership in Negotiation: Advanced Applications

Same subject as 11.111[J]

Prereq: 11.011 or permission of instructor

U (Fall)

4-0-8 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 11.111[J]. Limited by lottery; consult class website for information and deadlines.

B. Verdini

17.389 Education, Inequality, and Politics

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

With a focus on the United States, Europe, and Latin America, discusses how education around the world profoundly affects individual economic mobility, social inequality, and national development, making it a high stakes policy area. Analyzes the contentiousness of education policy as government reformers, parents, business, NGOs, teacher unions, and other stakeholders vie for influence.

B. Schneider

17.391[J] Human Rights at Home and Abroad

Same subject as 11.164[J]

Subject meets with 11.497

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

2-0-10 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 11.164[J].

B. Rajagopal

17.393[J] Environmental Law, Policy, and Economics: Pollution Prevention and Control

Same subject as 1.801[J], 11.021[J], IDS.060[J]

Subject meets with 1.811[J], 11.630[J], 15.663[J], IDS.540[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Analyzes federal and state regulation of air and water pollution, hazardous waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and production/ use of toxic chemicals. Analyzes pollution/climate change as economic problems and failure of markets. Explores the role of science and economics in legal decisions. Emphasizes use of legal mechanisms and alternative approaches (i.e., economic incentives, voluntary approaches) to control pollution and encourage chemical accident and pollution prevention. Focuses on major federal legislation, underlying administrative system, and common law in analyzing environmental policy, economic consequences, and role of the courts. Discusses classical pollutants and toxic industrial chemicals, greenhouse gas emissions, community right-to-know, and environmental justice. Develops basic legal skills: how to read/understand cases, regulations, and statutes. Students taking graduate version explore the subject in greater depth.

N. Ashford, C. Caldart

17.395[J] Innovation Systems for Science, Technology, Energy, Manufacturing, and Health

Same subject as STS.081[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

2-0-7 units. HASS-S

See description under subject STS.081[J]. Limited to 25.

Staff

17.399[J] Global Energy: Politics, Markets, and Policy

Same subject as 11.167[J], 14.47[J], 15.2191

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Credit cannot also be received for 11.267[J], 15.219[J]

See description under subject 15.2191. Preference to juniors, seniors, and Energy Minors.

Staff

International Relations/Security Studies

International Relations

17.40 American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Reasons for America's past wars and interventions. Consequences of American policies. Evaluation of these consequences for the US and the world. History covered includes World Wars I and II, the Korean and Indochina wars, the Cuban Missile Crisis and current conflicts, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, and against al Qaeda.

S. Van Evera

17.407 Chinese Foreign Policy

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Credit cannot also be received for 17.408

Explores the leading theoretical and methodological approaches to studying China's interaction with the world since 1949. Readings include books and articles that integrate the study of China's foreign policy with the field of international relations. Requires basic understanding of Chinese politics or international relations theory. Meets with 17.408 when offered concurrently.

M. T. Fravel

17.408 Chinese Foreign Policy

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Credit cannot also be received for 17.407

Explores the leading theoretical and methodological approaches to studying China's interaction with the international system since 1949. Readings include books and articles that integrate the study of China's foreign policy with the field of international relations. Requires basic understanding of Chinese politics or international relations theory. Meets with 17.407 when offered concurrently.

M. T. Fravel

17.41 Introduction to International Relations

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Provides an introduction to the causes of international conflict and cooperation. Topics include war initiation, crisis bargaining, international terrorism, nuclear strategy, interstate economic relations, economic growth, international law, human rights, and environmental politics.

R. Nielsen

17.410 Globalization, Migration, and International Relations

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Tracing the evolution of international interactions, subject examines the dimensions of globalization in terms of scale and scope. Includes international environmental issues, impacts and expansion of human activities, and the potential implications for global and national policy. Linkages among individuals, nation-states, transnational organizations and firms, international systems, and the global environment. Special focus on models of globalization, challenges of sustainable development, and on evolving types. Institutional responses to globalization and global change. 17.411 fulfills undergraduate public policy requirement in the major and minor. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri

17.411 Globalization, Migration, and International Relations

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Tracing the evolution of international interactions, subject examines the dimensions of globalization in terms of scale and scope. Includes international environmental issues, impacts and expansion of human activities, and the potential implications for global and national policy. Linkages among individuals, nation-states, transnational organizations and firms, international systems, and the global environment. Special focus on models of globalization, challenges of sustainable development, and on evolving types. Institutional responses to globalization and global change. 17.411 fulfills undergraduate public policy requirement in the major and minor. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri

17.416 Theoretical Models in International Relations and Comparative Politics

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Develops the skill of generating elegant, creative, satisfying theories of politics, with a focus on theoretical models in International Relations and Comparative Politics. Discusses views on theory from the philosophy of science and techniques for theorizing in several theoretical traditions. Students examine and critically analyze theoretical work in the field with an eye to learning what makes influential theories influential. Complements the IR and CP field seminars, Scope and Methods, and Game Theory.

R. Nielsen

17.418 Field Seminar in International Relations Theory

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Provides an overview of the field of international relations. Each week a different approach to explaining international relations is examined. Surveys major concepts and theories in the field to assist in the preparation for further study in the department's other graduate offerings in international relations.

T. Fravel

17.42 Causes and Prevention of War

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

4-0-8 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Examines the causes of war, with a focus on practical measures to prevent and control war. Topics include causes and consequences of misperception by nations; military strategy and policy as cause of war; religion and war; US foreign policy as a cause of war and peace; and the likelihood and possible nature of great wars in the future. Historical cases include World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Seven Years' War, the Arab-Israel conflict, other recent Mideast wars, and the Peloponnesian War.

S. Van Evera

17.424 International Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Focuses analytically on how interest groups, voters, political parties, electoral institutions, ideas and power politics interact to shape policy outcomes. Topics include globalization, international trade, international monetary and financial relations, and security.

D. Singer, I. S. Kim

17.426 Empirical Models in International Relations and Comparative Politics

Prereq: 17.802 or permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Explores statistical methods as applied to international relations and comparative politics. Discusses methodological issues unique to these subfields, primarily in the areas of measurement and causal inference. Students examine and critically analyze existing work in the field to gain familiarity with the array of models and methodological choices employed thus far in published research articles. Complements Quantitative Methods I and II by exploring how the methods developed in those subjects have been applied in the field.

R. Nielsen

17.428 American Foreign Policy: Theory and Method

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines the causes and consequences of American foreign policy since 1898. Readings cover theories of American foreign policy, historiography of American foreign policy, central historical episodes including the two World Wars and the Cold War, case study methodology, and historical investigative methods. Open to undergraduates by permission of instructor.

S. Van Evera

17.430 Research Seminar in International Relations

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

While this seminar provides an overview of recent literature, its principal purpose is to help graduate students develop skills suited to production of research papers and/or dissertations. Begins by reviewing general theoretical and methodological issues, then turns to specific empirical studies that examine the effects of systems structure, national attributes, bargaining processes, institutions, ideas, and norms on security affairs and political economy. The last two sessions of the seminar are devoted to evaluating research proposals generated by all members of the class.

*K. Oye***17.432 Causes of War: Theory and Method**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Provides an in-depth survey of scholarly theories associated with war. Examines when, where, and why wars—both interstate and intrastate—occur, why some conflicts escalate, and how wars end. Drawing from scholarship in political science and other disciplines, students explore debates over the variables that cause war and the mechanisms through which conflicts unfold. Includes readings that offer both theoretical and empirical insights.

*E. Lin-Greenberg***17.433 International Relations of East Asia**

Subject meets with 17.434

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Introduces and analyzes the international relations of East Asia. Examines the sources of conflict and cooperation during and after the Cold War, assessing competing explanations for key events in East Asia's international relations. Readings drawn from international relations theory, political science and history. Students taking the graduate version are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

*M. T. Fravel***17.434 International Relations of East Asia**

Subject meets with 17.433

Prereq: None

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Introduces and analyzes the international relations of East Asia. Examines the sources of conflict and cooperation during and after the Cold War, assessing competing explanations for key events in East Asia's international relations. Readings drawn from international relations theory, political science and history. Students taking graduate version are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

*M. T. Fravel***17.445 International Relations Theory in the Cyber Age**

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines cyber dynamics and processes in international relations from different theoretical perspectives. Considers alternative theoretical and empirical frameworks consistent with characteristic features of cyberspace and emergent transformations at all levels of international interaction. Theories examined include realism and neorealism, institutionalism and liberalism, constructivism, and systems theory and lateral pressure. Highlights relevant features and proposes customized international relations theory for the cyber age. Students taking the graduate version are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

*N. Choucri***17.446 International Relations Theory in the Cyber Age**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines cyber dynamics and processes in international relations from different theoretical perspectives. Considers alternative theoretical and empirical frameworks consistent with characteristic features of cyberspace and emergent transformations at all levels of international interaction. Theories examined include realism and neorealism, institutionalism and liberalism, constructivism, and systems theory and lateral pressure. Highlights relevant features and proposes customized international relations theory for the cyber age. Students taking the graduate version are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri

17.447[J] Cybersecurity

Same subject as IDS.050[J], MAS.460[J]

Subject meets with 17.448[J], IDS.350[J], MAS.660[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Focuses on the complexity of cybersecurity in a changing world. Examines national and international aspects of overall cyber ecology. Explores sources and consequences of cyber threats and different types of damages. Considers impacts for and of various aspects of cybersecurity in diverse geostrategic, political, business and economic contexts. Addresses national and international policy responses as well as formal and informal strategies and mechanisms for responding to cyber insecurity and enhancing conditions of cybersecurity. Students taking graduate version expected to pursue subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri, S. Pentland

17.448[J] Cybersecurity

Same subject as IDS.350[J], MAS.660[J]

Subject meets with 17.447[J], IDS.050[J], MAS.460[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Focuses on the complexity of cybersecurity in a changing world. Examines national and international aspects of overall cyber ecology. Explores sources and consequences of cyber threats and different types of damages. Considers impacts for and of various aspects of cybersecurity in diverse geostrategic, political, business and economic contexts. Addresses national and international policy responses as well as formal and informal strategies and mechanisms for responding to cyber insecurity and enhancing conditions of cybersecurity. Students taking graduate version expected to pursue subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.

N. Choucri, S. Pentland

17.449 Emerging Technology and International Security

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores how emerging technologies — including drones, artificial intelligence, social media, additive manufacturing, and cyber warfare — affect international security. Examines how states develop these technologies, identifies barriers to innovation in the security domain, and considers how the proliferation of new military and dual-use technologies affect decisions on war and peace. Designed for students interested in international relations, security studies, and emerging technologies.

E. Lin-Greenberg

17.452 Emerging Technology, Intelligence, and the Problem of Surprise

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Examines the effect of emerging technologies on the organization and operation of intelligence agencies and how these technologies can and cannot address the steady-state challenges of interpretation, uncertainty, politicization, and surprise. Readings and case studies ground students in the work of leading intelligence scholars and, focusing on intelligence analysis, examine the effect of rational actor assumptions on intelligence failure. Designed for students interested in security studies, public policy, and emerging technologies.

J. Brenner

17.456 The International Politics of Emerging Technology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Provides an in-depth survey of the international political and security implications of new technologies. Explores emerging technologies as both a dependent and independent variable. Readings and discussion assess the factors that contribute to military innovation and the proliferation of new technologies and analyze technology's effects on international politics.

E. Lin-Greenberg

Security Studies

17.46 US National Security Policy

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the making of US foreign and national security policy. Examines the laws that guide policy-making, studies the actors and organizations involved in the inter-agency process, and explores how interaction between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches shapes policy development and implementation. Students acquire practical experience through policy writing and a crisis simulation. Designed for students interested in international relations, security, and public policy.

E. Lin-Greenberg

17.468 Foundations of Security Studies

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Develops a working knowledge of the theories and conceptual frameworks that form the intellectual basis of security studies as an academic discipline. Particular emphasis on balance of power theory, organization theory, civil-military relations, and the relationship between war and politics. The reading list includes Jervis, Schelling, Waltz, Blainey, von Clausewitz, and Huntington. Students write a seminar paper in which theoretical insights are systematically applied to a current security issue.

C. Talmadge

17.472 International Conflict in the Gray Zone Between War and Peace

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Examines US strategic, legal, and organizational readiness to deal with intensifying international conflict below the level of armed attack, including covert action, offensive cyber operations, propaganda, and economic coercion. Cases include Ukraine, Stuxnet, and South China Sea operations. Substantial reading ranges across Western, Leninist, and Chinese views of war, covert action history, international law, US strategy, industrial espionage, and the effects of technology on operations.

J. Brenner

17.473 Nuclear Strategy and Proliferation

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Provides an introduction to the politics and theories surrounding the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Introduces the basics of nuclear weapons, nuclear strategy, and deterrence theory. Examines the historical record during the Cold War as well as the proliferation of nuclear weapons to regional powers and the resulting deterrence consequences.

V. Narang

17.474[J] Nuclear Weapons and International Security

Same subject as 22.814[J]

Prereq: None

G (Spring)

4-0-8 units

See description under subject 22.814[J]. Enrollment limited to 15; preference given to doctoral students in Courses 17 and 22.

V. Narang

17.478 Great Power Military Intervention

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines systematically, and comparatively, great and middle power military interventions, and candidate military interventions, into civil wars since 1991. These civil wars did not easily fit into the traditional category of vital interest. These interventions may therefore tell us something about broad trends in international politics including the nature of unipolarity, the erosion of sovereignty, the security implications of globalization, and the nature of modern western military power.

B. Posen, R. Petersen

17.480 Understanding Modern Military Operations

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines selected past, current, and future sea, air, space, and land battlefields and looks at the interaction in each of these warfare areas between existing military doctrine and weapons, sensors, communications, and information processing technologies. Explores how technological development, whether innovative or stagnant, is influenced in each warfare area by military doctrine.

Staff

17.482 US Military Power

Subject meets with 17.483
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Examines roles and missions of U.S. conventional military forces, with a focus on developing ability to rigorously analyze military operations. Topics include grand strategy; organization of the military; defense budget; capabilities and limitations of naval, air, and ground forces; intelligence; counterinsurgency; and implications of new technologies and nuclear weapons. Military history and simple models of warfare used to explore how variations in technology and battlefield conditions can drastically alter effectiveness of conventional forces. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

C. Talmadge

17.483 US Military Power

Subject meets with 17.482
Prereq: Freshmen need permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines roles and missions of U.S. conventional military forces, with a focus on developing ability to rigorously analyze military operations. Topics include grand strategy; organization of the military; defense budget; capabilities and limitations of naval, air, and ground forces; intelligence; counterinsurgency; and implications of new technologies and nuclear weapons. Military history and simple models of warfare used to explore how variations in technology and battlefield conditions can drastically alter effectiveness of conventional forces. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

C. Talmadge

17.484 Comparative Grand Strategy and Military Doctrine

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered
3-0-9 units

A comparative study of the grand strategies and military doctrines of the great powers in Europe (Britain, France, Germany, and Russia) from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. Examines strategic developments in the years preceding and during World Wars I and II. What factors have exerted the greatest influence on national strategies? How may the quality of a grand strategy be judged? Exploration of comparative case study methodology also plays a central role. What consequences seem to follow from grand strategies of different types? Open to undergraduates with permission of instructor.

B. Posen

17.486 Japan and East Asian Security

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Explores Japan's role in world orders, past, present, and future. Focuses on Japanese conceptions of security; rearmament debates; the relationship of domestic politics to foreign policy; the impact of Japanese technological and economic transformation at home and abroad; alternative trade and security regimes; Japan's response to 9/11; and relations with Asian neighbors, Russia, and the alliance with the United States.

R. J. Samuels

17.488 Simulating Global Dynamics and War

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Explores the history, tools, and utility of crisis simulations and war games that model international dynamics. Aims to develop toolkits for future worlds exercises and for the production of conference papers and peer-reviewed publications. Students review historical debates about gaming and simulation methods while gaining experience designing and playing different kinds of exercises, including technical operational games, computerized rapid play games, nuclear crisis games, and global dynamics simulations.

R. Samuels, E. Heginbotham, E. Lin-Greenberg

17.490 Political Economy of International Security

Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units

Introduces the scholarly literature on the political economy of international security, focusing on questions of how economic and security motivations are weighed against each other in both wartime and peace. Wartime topics include economic warfare, war financing, and technological investment. Peacetime topics include sanctions, market power, currency statecraft, and grand strategy.

M. Grinberg

Comparative Politics

17.50 Introduction to Comparative Politics

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Examines why democracy emerges and survives in some countries rather than in others; how political institutions affect economic development; and how American politics compares to that of other countries. Reviews economic, cultural, and institutional explanations for political outcomes. Includes case studies of politics in several countries. Assignments include several papers of varying lengths and extensive structured and unstructured class participation. Enrollment limited.

C. Lawson

17.503 How Dictatorship Works

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Investigates the different nature of threats that dictators, kings, and autocrats face from the population who want democratization and other powerful elites who want to replace them. Considers the different ways dictatorial leaders institutionally design their regimes to temper these competing threats. These include coup-proofing their internal security apparatus, repressing the population, controlling the media, and co-opting rivals.

M. Hassan

17.504 Authoritarian Regimes

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Examines how autocratic regimes, which more than half of the world's population lives under, operate. Considers variation in the internal operations of authoritarian regimes, studying both how this variation came about and the effects of different regime dynamics on downstream outcomes. Covers both regimes' management of elite actors and the general population with a largely domestic focus.

M. Hassan

17.506 Ethnic Politics

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Introduces students to the classic works on ethnic politics, familiarizes them with new research and methodological innovations in the study of ethnic politics, and helps them design and execute original research projects related to ethnic politics. Readings drawn from across disciplines, including political science, anthropology, sociology, and economics. Students read across the four subfields within political science. Graduate students specializing in any subfield are encouraged to take this subject, regardless of their previous empirical or theoretical background.

E. Lieberman

17.509 Social Movements in Comparative Perspective

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores why people join grassroots political organizations and social movements. Asks what accounts for the ultimate success or failure of these organizations and examines how social movements have altered political parties, political institutions, and social relations. Critically considers a range of theoretical treatments and several movements, including the US civil rights, poor peoples', pro-life/pro-choice and gay/lesbian movements.

M. Nobles

17.511 Critical Perspectives on Data and Identity

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines how group identities are recorded as "data" in various domains, and the effects of data collection on the formation of identities, inequality, redistribution and conflict around the world. Compares approaches to recording personal information on household censuses and surveys, college admissions forms, via automated, computer-based systems (AI), and other systems. Draws upon a wide variety of primary materials, and scholarly works from political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and economics.

F. Christia, E. Lieberman

17.517[J] Political Utopias and Dystopias

Same subject as 21L.453[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores fundamental questions about equality, freedom, privacy, community, and popular accountability through representation of idealized or horrific political systems. Focuses on classic, time-tested novels paired with short pieces on real-world cases that address key themes in the fictional treatment.

C. Lawson, M. Fuller

17.523 Ethnic Conflict in World Politics

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Ethnic and racial conflict appear to be the hallmark of the post-Cold War world. Students explore the rise of ethnic/racial and nationalist sentiments and movements; the basis of ethnic and racial identity; the political claims and goals of such movements, and whether conflict is inevitable. Introduces the dominant theoretical approaches to race, ethnicity, and nationalism, and considers them in light of current events in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

M. Nobles

17.524 State, Society, and Political Behavior in Developing Contexts

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines the political behavior of citizens in developing countries and the question of why governmental performance remains poor in these contexts, despite citizen efforts, international aid, and civil society initiatives. Evaluates and builds on our current understanding of political behavior and state-society relations when democratic institutions are weak, state capacity is low, and regimes are changing. Explores these questions by drawing on new and old literatures from institutional, sociological, psychological, and political economy perspectives.

L. Tsai

17.526 Comparative Urban Development

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Examines both classic and recent research on urban politics, including studies of resource distribution, clientelism and machine politics, ethnic politics, property rights, economic informality, and violence in cities spanning the developing world, and also draws comparisons to urban areas in developed democracies. Special attention is paid to the effects of urban context on political behavior. Readings are primarily from political science, but also include work from sociology, economics, and related disciplines.

N. Nathan

17.53 The Rise of Asia

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Focuses on social, economic, political, and national security problems of China and Japan -- two of the largest economies in a dynamic region with the potential to shape global affairs. Examines each topic and country from the perspectives of history, contemporary issues, and their relations with one another and the United States.

R. Samuels, T. Fravel

17.537 Politics and Policy in Contemporary Japan

Subject meets with 17.538

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Analyzes contemporary Japanese politics, focusing primarily upon the post-World War II period. Includes examination of the dominant approaches to Japanese politics and society, the structure of the party system, the role of political opposition, the policy process, foreign affairs, and interest groups. Attention to defense, foreign, industrial, social, energy, technology policy processes. Graduate students are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and class presentations. Assignments differ.

R. J. Samuels

17.538 Politics and Policy in Contemporary Japan

Subject meets with 17.537

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Analyzes contemporary Japanese politics, focusing primarily upon the post-World War II period. Includes examination of the dominant approaches to Japanese politics and society, the structure of the party system, the role of political opposition, the policy process, foreign affairs, and interest groups. Attention to defense, foreign, industrial, social, energy, and technology policy processes. Graduate students are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and class presentations. Assignments differ.

R. J. Samuels

17.55[J] Introduction to Latin American Studies

Same subject as 21A.130[J], 21G.084[J], 21H.170[J]

Subject meets with 21G.784

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Examines contemporary Latin American culture, politics, and history. Surveys geography, economic development, and race, religion, and gender in Latin America. Special emphasis on the Salvadoran civil war, human rights and military rule in Argentina and Chile, and migration from Central America and Mexico to the United States. Students analyze films, literature, visual art, journalism, historical documents, and social scientific research.

T. Padilla, P. Duong

17.561 European Politics

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines similarities and differences in politics and political economy in Britain, Germany, and Sweden. Particular focus on the structure of political power within the state, and on important institutions that form the link between state and society, especially political parties and interest organizations.

K. Thelen

17.565 Israel: History, Politics, Culture, and Identity

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Credit cannot also be received for 17.567

Examines Israeli identity using a broad array of materials, including popular music, film, documentaries and art, in addition to academic historical writings. Topics include Israel's political system and society, ethnic relations, settlement projects, and the Arab minorities in the Jewish state. Students also discuss whether there is a unique Israeli culture and the struggle for Israel's identity. Limited to 60; preference to students in the MISTI MIT-Israel program.

P. Krause

17.567 Israel: History, Politics, Culture, and Identity

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (IAP)

3-0-6 units. HASS-S

Credit cannot also be received for 17.565

Examines Israeli identity using a broad array of materials, including popular music, film, documentaries and art, in addition to academic historical writings. Topics include Israel's political system and society, ethnic relations, settlement projects, and the Arab minorities in the Jewish state. Students also discuss whether there is a unique Israeli culture and the struggle for Israel's identity. Limited to students in the MISTI MIT-Israel program.

N. Karlinsky

17.568 Comparative Politics and International Relations of the Middle East

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Surveys both classic and cutting-edge work on the politics of the Middle East, broadly defined. Topics include the causes and consequences of political and economic development, authoritarianism and democratization, the influence of social movements, the role of women in Middle Eastern politics, regional inter-state relations, Islamism, terrorism, colonialism and foreign occupation, state-building, resistance and rebellion, and the Arab uprisings.

R. Nielsen, F. Christia

17.569 Russia's Foreign Policy: Toward the Post-Soviet States and Beyond

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Analyzes Russia's foreign policy, with a focus on relations with the other post-Soviet states. Frames the discussion with examination of US-Russian and Sino-Russian relations. Looks at legacies of the Soviet collapse, strengths and vulnerabilities of Russia, and the ability of other states to maintain their sovereignty. Topics include the future of Central Asia, the Georgian war, energy politics, and reaction to the European Union's Eastern Partnership. Readings focus on international relations, historical sources, and contemporary Russian and Western sources.

C. Saivetz

17.57[J] 20th Century Ukraine and Russia: Entangled Histories and Identity Politics

Same subject as 21G.086[J], 21H.245[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

See description under subject 21H.245[J]. Enrollment limited.

E. Wood

17.571 Democracy, Development, and Climate Change in Africa

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines how democratic practice can affect development outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the emerging context of climate change. Encourages students to apply engineering thinking to better understand the political and other drivers of health, education, infrastructure, and other outcomes. Addresses many of the challenges and dilemmas of democratic governance in poor, diverse, and unequal societies, while inviting students to propose practical interventions.

E. Lieberman

17.572 Political Economy of Africa

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Explores how African leaders have projected authority and built states, and, in turn, how their states' actions have influenced major economic and societal outcomes, including agrarian development, economic inequality and informality, violence, grassroots collective action, and the nature of ethnic and partisan political mobilization. Spans the pre-colonial period to the present day. Readings primarily drawn from political science, but also include work from economics, history, and related disciplines.

N. Nathan

17.577 Electoral Politics in the Developing World

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores how electoral competition operates in new democracies across the developing world. Major topics include how voters hold politicians accountable for good governance, how politicians campaign and distribute state resources, and why some elections are free, fair, and peaceful while others are violent and skewed to benefit incumbents. The course materials draw on examples from Africa, Latin America, the post-Soviet countries, South Asia, and the historical United States.

N. Nathan

17.578 Elections and Political Representation in the Developing World

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Focuses on the theoretical and empirical study of elections, representation, and governance in non-industrialized democratic societies. Surveys the contemporary literature on topics such as party systems, clientelism, electorally-motivated violence, ethnic politics, and federalism.

D. Hidalgo

17.581 Riots, Rebellions, Revolutions

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines different types of violent political conflict. Compares and contrasts several social science approaches (psychological, sociological, and political) and analyzes their ability to explain variation in outbreak, duration and outcome of conflict. Examines incidents such as riots in the US during the 1960's, riots in India, the Yugoslav wars, and the Russian Revolution, in addition to current international events.

*M. Hassan***17.582 Civil War**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Surveys the social science literature on civil war. Studies the origins of civil war, discusses variables affecting duration, and examines termination of conflict. Highly interdisciplinary and covers a wide variety of cases. Open to advanced undergraduates with permission of instructor.

*F. Christia***17.584 Civil-Military Relations**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Subject consists of five sections. After a general survey of the field, students consider cases of stable civilian control, military rule, and transitions from military to civilian rule. Cases are selected from around the world.

*C. Talmadge***17.588 Field Seminar in Comparative Politics**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Provides an introduction to the comparative politics subfield. Readings lean toward the classics, but also include some more contemporary research. Covers topics such as the state, institutions, the political economy of development, regimes and regime change, elections and distributive politics, ethnicity and intergroup relations, and contentious politics. Primarily intended for PhD students in political science.

*N. Nathan***17.590 States and Power in Politics**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Examines the origins of power in the political arena, especially with respect to the development of building modern, national states across regions at different levels of development. Focuses on conceptualizing and measuring political power; and on the range of political, economic, and social explanations that account for variation, including the role of tradition, charisma, technology, war, material endowments, geography, trust, ethnic diversity, and democratic regimes. Evaluates the quality of evidence for different accounts.

*E. Lieberman***17.591 Research Seminar in Applied International Studies**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Focuses on research methods in the social sciences as they relate to topics in international studies. Students complete an independent research project on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor; class presentation required. Limited to 18; preference to Applied International Studies minors.

*B. Schneider***Models and Methods****17.800 Quantitative Research Methods I: Regression**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Introduction to statistical research in political science and public policy, with a focus on linear regression. Teaches students how to apply multiple regression models as used in much of political science and public policy research. Also covers elements of probability and sampling theory. Limited to 30; preference to Course 17 PhD students.

D. Hidalgo

17.801 Political Science Scope and Methods

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Introduces principles of empirical and theoretical analysis in political science through research projects currently conducted in the department. Different department faculty lead modules that introduce students to major research questions and different ways of examining those questions. Emphasizes how this research in progress relates to larger themes, and how researchers confront obstacles to inference in political science. Includes substantial instruction and practice in writing (with revision) and oral presentations. Intended primarily for majors and minors.

F. Christia

17.802 Quantitative Research Methods II: Causal Inference

Prereq: 17.800, 17.803, or permission of instructor

G (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Survey of statistical methods for causal inference in political science and public policy research. Covers a variety of causal inference designs, including experiments, matching, regression, panel methods, difference-in-differences, synthetic control methods, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity designs, quantile regression, and bounds. Limited to 30; preference to Course 17 PhD students.

N. Egami

17.803 Political Science Laboratory

Prereq: 17.801 or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

3-6-6 units. Institute LAB

Introduces students to the conduct of political research using quantitative methodologies. The methods are examined in the context of specific political research activities like public opinion surveys, voting behavior, Congressional behavior, comparisons of political processes in different countries, and the evaluation of public policies. Includes instruction and practice in written and oral communication. Students participate in joint class projects and conduct individual projects. Does not count toward HASS Requirement. Enrollment limited; preference to Course 17 majors who have pre-registered.

V. Figueroa

17.804 Quantitative Research Methods III: Generalized Linear Models and Extensions

Prereq: 17.802 or permission of instructor

G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Provides a survey of statistical tools for model-based inference in political science and public policy. Topics include generalized linear models for various data types and their extensions, such as discrete choice models, survival outcome models, mixed effects and multilevel models. Covers both frequentist and Bayesian approaches. Limited to 15; preference to Course 17 PhD students.

I. S. Kim

17.806 Quantitative Research Methods IV: Advanced Topics

Prereq: 17.804 or permission of instructor

G (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Covers advanced statistical tools that are useful for empirical research in political science and public policy. Possible topics include missing data, survey sampling and experimental designs for field research, machine learning, text mining, clustering, Bayesian methods, spatial statistics, and web scraping. Limited to 15; preference to Course 17 PhD students.

I. S. Kim

17.810 Game Theory and Political Theory

Subject meets with 17.811

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

4-0-8 units

Introduces students to the rudiments of game theory within political science. Provides all students with the ability to solve simple games. Readings draw from basic texts on game theoretic modeling and applied articles in American Politics, International Relations, and Comparative Politics. Students taking the graduate version evaluate applied theory articles in the major journals.

Staff

17.811 Game Theory and Political Theory

Subject meets with 17.810

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

4-0-8 units. HASS-S

Introduces students to the rudiments of game theory within political science. Provides students with the ability to solve simple games. Readings draw from basic texts on game theoretic modeling and applied articles in American politics, international relations, and comparative politics. Students taking the graduate version evaluate applied theory articles in the major journals.

Staff

17.830 Empirical Methods in Political Economy

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Reviews recent quantitative empirical studies on important, substantive questions in political economy. Designed to increase students' understanding of the core research designs and measurement strategies employed in the empirical analysis of political institutions and political behavior. Topics include the political and economic consequences of direct democracy, reservations for political minorities, corruption, political effects of the media, and politics in authoritarian regimes.

D. Hidalgo

17.831 Data and Politics

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores the intersection between politics and data. Introduces principles and practice of data-driven methods used to understand electoral and other types of political behavior. Students use real world datasets to explore topics such as election polling and prediction, the determinants of voter turnout, how campaigns target voters, and how public opinion changes over time.

D. Hidalgo

17.835 Machine Learning and Data Science in Politics

Prereq: 6.100A or permission of instructor

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

4-0-8 units. HASS-S

Introduces students to politics by analyzing political science data sets with machine learning methodologies. Covers a variety of data science tools, including supervised and unsupervised learning methods, visualization techniques, text analysis, and network analysis. Emphasizes how the research methodologies can be used for studying political science. Topics include lobbying, international trade, political networks, and estimating ideologies of political leaders.

I. S. Kim

17.839 Democracy and AI (New)

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Examines the political implications of AI through an academic lens. Analyzes how AI reshapes democratic participation, deliberation, and representation, while also considering its role in misinformation, surveillance, and authoritarian control. Focuses on regulatory frameworks, ethical principles, and the broader geopolitical competition over AI governance.

V. Rennard

17.850 Political Science Scope and Methods

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Introduces principles of empirical and theoretical analysis in political science. Exposes students to major research questions and different ways of examining them. Limited to Course 17 PhD students.

R. Nielsen

17.860 How to Theory

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Workshop-based subject providing an overview of how to construct a theoretical argument through a mix of conceptual examination and practical application. Examines different components and aspects of theory building, allowing students to refine their own proto-theories and develop their completed theoretical propositions. Complements subjects in research design as well as qualitative and quantitative methods. Project proposal required.

M. Grinberg

17.878 Qualitative Methods and Fieldwork

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Prepares students to conduct independent qualitative research, focusing on practical skills acquisition. Topics include methodological controversies, debates about transparency, human subjects protocols and research ethics, interviewing techniques, ethnography, focus groups, comparative historical case studies/archival research, and write-up of qualitative information collected from the field.

C. Lawson

Common Ground Subjects

17.Co8[] Causal Inference

Same subject as 15.Co8[]
 Prereq: 6.3800, 6.3900, 6.Co1, 14.32, 17.803, 18.05, 18.650[], or permission of instructor
 U (Spring)
 Not offered regularly; consult department
 4-0-8 units

See description under subject 15.Co8[].

Staff

General Subjects

17.UR Undergraduate Research

Prereq: None
 U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
 Units arranged [P/D/F]
 Can be repeated for credit.

Research opportunities in Political Science in theoretical and applied research. For further information, contact the Departmental Coordinator.

Staff

17.URG Undergraduate Research

Prereq: None
 U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
 Units arranged
 Can be repeated for credit.

Research opportunities in political science in theoretical and applied research. For further information, contact the departmental coordinator.

Staff

17.90 Politics, Policy, and Political Science: What Does It All Mean?

Prereq: None
 U (Fall)
 2-0-1 units

Explores the scope of political science, policy, and politics through conversations with faculty who research across the field. Topics include misinformation and democracy, dictatorships, nuclear war and AI, and why governments make the policy decisions they do. Gives a broad overview of the role of methods and data in political science. This class counts towards the 6-unit discovery-focused credit limit for first-year students.

A. Campbell, K. Hoss

17.902 Political Science Internship and Research

Prereq: None
 U (Fall, Spring)
 Units arranged [P/D/F]
 Can be repeated for credit.

For students participating in off-campus internships relevant to the field of political science. Before registering, students must submit a 1-2 page application statement which describes the internship, the nature of the work, the time commitment (hours per week and number of weeks) and the connection to the field of political science. Students must also submit a formal offer letter from a host employer/organization which provides details of the internship. Subject to departmental approval. Consult departmental undergraduate office.

Staff

17.905-17.911 Reading Seminar in Social Science

Prereq: None
 U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
 Not offered regularly; consult department
 Units arranged
 Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of special topics in the fields of social science. Open to advanced undergraduates by arrangement with individual staff members. 17.909 is taught P/D/F.

Staff

17.922 Martin Luther King, Jr. Design Seminar

Prereq: None

U (IAP)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-3 units

Facilitates design and construction of installations and other community projects in conjunction with and beyond MIT's celebration of Dr. King. Students discuss the ideas and goals of Dr. King and other human rights leaders in the US and the world. The first half of the class develops in-depth understanding of the history of US racial issues as well as past and present domestic and international political struggles. Addresses issues of justice, equality and racism through videos, readings and writings, and class discussions. In the second half, students work as a group complete the installation and projects which serve as models for connecting academics with real life problems and struggle.

*T. Weiner***17.925 Fundamentals of Science and Technology Public Policy Making: Science and Technology Policy Boot Camp**

Prereq: None

U (IAP)

2-0-1 units

Examines the public policy behind, and the government's role in, the science and technology-based innovation system. Focuses on the US, but also discusses international examples. Prepares students planning careers in and around science and technology with the basic background for involvement in science policy making. Limited to 35. Application required.

*W. Bonvillian***17.959 Preparation for General Exams**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Selected readings for Political Science doctoral students in preparation for qualifying exams.

*Staff***17.962 Second Year Paper Workshop**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Workshop for research and writing of major research paper as part of pre-dissertation requirements. Restricted to doctoral students.

*D. Singer***17.THG Graduate Political Science Thesis**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of research and writing of thesis; to be arranged by the student with supervising committee.

*Staff***17.THT Thesis Research Design Seminar**

Prereq: 17.803 or permission of instructor

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Students writing a thesis in Political Science develop their research topics, review relevant research and scholarship, frame their research questions and arguments, choose an appropriate methodology for analysis, and draft the introductory and methodology sections of their theses.

*D. Singer***17.THU Undergraduate Political Science Thesis**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of research leading to the writing of an SB thesis. To be arranged by the student under approved supervision.

*Staff***17.S912 Special Undergraduate Subject in Political Science**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of topics in the field of social science not covered in the regular curriculum.

*Staff***17.S914 Special Undergraduate Subject in Political Science**

Prereq: None

U (IAP)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of topics in the field of social science not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

17.S916 Special Undergraduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of topics in the field of social science not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

17.S917 Special Undergraduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of topics in the field of social science not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

17.S918 Special Undergraduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of topics in the field of social science not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

17.S919 Special Undergraduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of topics in the field of social science not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

17.S950 Special Graduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified graduate students who would like to pursue special studies or projects. Please consult graduate administration prior to registration.

Staff

17.S951 Special Graduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified graduate students who would like to pursue special subjects or projects. Please consult graduate administration prior to registration.

Staff

17.S952 Special Graduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified graduate students who would like to pursue special subjects or projects. Please consult graduate administration prior to registration.

Staff

17.S953 Special Graduate Subject in Political Science

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified graduate students who would like to pursue special subjects or projects. Please consult graduate administration prior to registration.

Staff

17.954-17.958, 17.960 Reading Seminar in Social Science

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring, Summer)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Reading and discussion of special topics in the fields of social science. Open to advanced graduate students by arrangement with individual staff members. 17.954 and 17.959 are taught P/D/F.

Staff