

PPOL Course Descriptions

(Updated: 10/11/2022)

"New Curriculum" applies to students who started after Fall 2021.

"Old Curriculum" applies to students who started before Fall 2021.

PPOL 1910 – Hard Choices in Public Policy

New Curriculum: Required core

Old Curriculum: Elective

This course provides an opportunity to develop comprehensive knowledge of America's most intriguing public policy dilemmas. Policy issues to be discussed include intergenerational equity, competitiveness, the budget and trade deficits, crime, AIDS, education, health care, the environment, entitlements, immigration, race and affirmative action, public involvement, and social welfare. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PPOL 2000 – The Politics of American Policymaking

New Curriculum: Required core

Old Curriculum: Required core

This course is designed as a rigorous, analytical introduction for public policy majors to the ways in which American public policy is actually made and includes discussion of (1) Congress; (2) the President; (3) the Supreme Court; and (4) Regulatory agencies. The course is problem-centered and core policy dilemmas are discussed from both cost-benefit and decision-making perspectives. Key topics include the following interrelated issues: (a) fiscal policy and the federal budget; (b) entitlement reform; (c) health care; (d) national security; (e) the financial crisis and economic growth; (f) education; (g) criminal justice; and (h) environmental policy.

PPOL 2701 – Topic: Managing Political Risk

New Curriculum: Elective

Old Curriculum: Elective

Description forthcoming. Prerequisite: PPOL 2000.

PPOL 3115 – Economics for Public Policy

New Curriculum: Required core

Old Curriculum: Required core

The tools and techniques of economics are essential for policy analysis. This course provides an intensive and comprehensive introduction to the field of economic analysis, with a specific emphasis on the applicability of economics to public policy and problem solving within the field of policy analysis. Topics include supply and demand; gross domestic product; business cycles; classical and neo-classical economic theory; Keynesianism and Keynesian equilibrium; the "Chicago School"; fiscal policy; inflation; stimulation of aggregate demand; employment and unemployment equilibrium; creation of money; the Federal Reserve system; national debt; the financial sector; public and private debt. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Recommended Prerequisite: PPOL 2000.

PPOL 3300 – Ethics in Public Policy

New Curriculum: Required core

Old Curriculum: Elective

1. Survey prominent fields of ethical discourse—academic and public intellectual—ranging from ancient understandings of virtue through contemporary humanism. 2. Evaluate these approaches

to ethical decisions by examining a number of current moral issues. 3. Analyze the fundamental relations between morality and the law in general and in a pluralistic, democratic society in particular. 4. Practice civil dialogue. Consider the absolute necessity, but also the limits, of publicly reasoned discourse on this country's most pressing moral challenges. 5. Consider the role of normative theory in personal decision-making, community decision-making, and overlap between the two.

PPOL 3701 – Topic: Race, Inequality, and Public Policy

New Curriculum: Elective

Old Curriculum: Elective

This course will examine the history of structural racism in the US by analyzing how spatial inequality, economic inequality and dominant culture privilege have contributed to a history of injustice. Additionally, the course will explore the impact of the anti-racist movement on mitigating racial injustice. Finally, the course will critically analyze policies that have served to exacerbate racial inequality but also identify policies that serve to repair racial inequities.

PPOL Approved Electives Course Descriptions

(Updated: 10/17/2022)

AH 2581 – Spectator to Citizen:

Specialization: None

ADD DESCRIPTION

COMN 1012 – Speaking on Ideas that Matter

Specialization: None

The purpose of this course is to assist students in becoming more competent and comfortable when speaking about their opinions. Students learn how to develop and analyze rhetorical arguments, including the full range of the speech-making process, but especially how to support those opinions they assert. Assignments, class discussions and course materials provide students with a foundation of knowledge and practical application of speaking skills, which will prove useful in a variety of personal, professional, and public contexts.

COMN 2700 – Topic: Introduction to Political Communication

Specialization: None

This course will examine the theoretical and practical issues that affect communication between members of discussion groups, deliberative groups, and decision-making bodies. Students will work as members of student teams to analyze both the theoretical and practical implications of the issues that surround effective communication and miscommunication in a small group setting. During this course, you will learn how and why to:

- Question the taken-for-granted status of communication through theory-structured practice communicating in the immediate company of others about matters of shared or public concern
- Integrate consideration of the oral (spoken), aural (heard), and embodied dimensions of face-to-face communication into the entire process of communicating
- Develop a complex understanding of context and audience that will aid in communication adaptation and evaluation
- Engage in evaluation and reflection as modes of criticism (included self-assessment)
- Cultivate a recognition of and appreciation for your public self

ECON 3460 – Monetary Theory and Policy

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

Studies the interaction between money and the economy. Examines the workings of the financial institutions and how they affect the economy. Looks at the questions of what serves as money, what determines interest rates, and how the central bank conducts monetary policy and its effect on the performance of the economy. Restriction: junior standing. Prerequisite: ECON 2030.

ECON 3590 – Urban Economics

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

Covers topics and issues of economic growth and decline in metropolitan areas, emphasizing urban economic issues. A broad range of policy areas is discussed, including labor market policy, welfare reform, housing policy, racial segregation, transportation, and environmental policy, among others. Restriction: junior standing. Prerequisite: ECON 2020 or 2030.

ECON 3740 – Health Economics

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

This course is designed to study the nature of the organization of health care production, delivery and utilization according to economic theory. It introduces the up-to-date problems and issues in the U.S. health care system by studying demand for and supply of health care services, health care production and costs, and market analysis of health care industry. Important parties playing roles in health care industry such as private health insurance firms, physicians, pharmaceutical industry, and hospital services will be studied in detail. In addition, the course deals with the role of government in health care industry and various health care reforms proposed in the U.S.

Restriction: junior standing. Prerequisite: ECON 2020 or 2030.

GEOG 2100 – Introduction to Geographic Information Systems

Specialization: None

Overview of GIS, including background, development, trends, and prospects in this technological field; software package and hands-on exercises used to examine basic geographic concepts and spatial data characteristics associated with automated mapping, projections, scales, geocoding, coordinate referencing, and data structures for computerized land-based data bases. Cross listed with GEOG 3100.

GEOG 2500 – Sustainability & Human Society

Specialization: Sustainability

Sustainability has become a catch phrase in discussions concerning the long-term viability of a number of phenomena, from the environment to the economy. Sustainability is commonly defined as meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Students are introduced to issues inherent in discussions of sustainability. The major areas of focus include definitions of ecological and environmental sustainability, economic and political sustainability, and social justice, and various metrics used to assess sustainable behavior and practices. Students study the theory, principles and practices of sustainability, and participate in discussion and writing exercises based on lecture and readings. You must be a Sustainability minor or a Geography or Environmental Science major to enroll.

GEOG 2700 – Contemporary Environmental Issues

Specialization: Sustainability

Principles, practices, issues, and status of care of environment; lectures, readings, and discussions focus on causes, effects, and mitigation of a selection of topical regional, national, and international environmental problems including Denver's air pollution, acid deposition, hazardous waste management, global warming, and tropical deforestation.

GEOG 3425 – Urban Sustainability

Specialization: Sustainability

The 21st century is being called the 'century of the city.' Now more than ever, humans across the globe call the city their home. Many of the world's most pressing crises are manifest in cities, including: greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, high mass production and consumption, widespread poverty and hunger, and expanding socio-economic disparities. As 'sustainability' becomes part of mainstream discourse, this course explores what sustainability means for urban contexts around the globe. Arguably, the city has the potential to be the most efficient, equitable,

and environmental form of modern human settlement. Covering all dimensions of sustainability from a social science perspective, this course focuses on theoretical groundings, practices of urban sustainability, and new research agendas. Major topics include cities and nature; planning and land use; urban form; community and neighborhoods; transportation systems and accessibility; livelihood and urban economies; and social justice and the city.

GEOG 3755 – Geography of Health

Specialization: None

The geography of health is a thriving area of study that considers the impact of natural, built, and social environments on human health. This course introduces students to three geographical contributions to health studies. First, it emphasizes the importance of ecological approaches to health, which consider interactions between humans and their environments, including topics such as how climate change might influence disease distributions, and how the built environment can influence patterns of physical activity. A second focus is social theory, exploring how aspects such as race, socioeconomic status, and identity play a critical role in influencing human health. A third section of the course considers how spatial methods (cartography, GIS, and spacial statistics) can help answer health-related questions.

GEOG 3870 – Water Resources and Sustainability

Specialization: Sustainability

In this course, we look at water as both a local and global resource and examine what sustainability means for human and ecological realms. After an overview of the physical processes that drive the hydrologic cycle, surface and groundwater hydrology, we examine how we humans have harnessed water for our use and how we both alter and treat its quality. We examine the legal aspects of water allocation in the U.S. and the groups and agencies that are most involved in managing and overseeing water issues. Finally, we examine the most pressing water "issues" related to wildlife, development, scarcity and conflict. We look forward to imagining the power of both the individual and the collective in meeting our future, global water needs.

HIST 2950 – U.S. and Latin American Relations: The Historical Struggle for Autonomy

Specialization: US Foreign Policy

This course examines how Latin American nations have tried to maneuver in the world sphere under the dominant role played by the United States in the hemisphere. Latin American countries and the United States have had a complex and, at times, difficult relationship that dates back to the early nineteenth century. In response to the challenges of this complicated relationship, Latin American nations have adopted a range of strategies to deal with the United States, most of which are examined in this course.

INTS 2490 – Global Health

Specialization: None

This class is an introduction to the field of global health and explores relationships between social, political, cultural, and economic conditions of mostly low and middle-income countries and their impact on health and health services. We will spend some time covering health issues in high-income countries as well. A major focus of the course is the evolution of primary health care and alternative strategies in global health. Topics addressed include: maternal and child

health, nutrition, the rise of non-communicable diseases, water and sanitation, community engagement, global health agencies, and funding sources. The course presents an overview of the multiple factors that influence global health and emphasizes the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to global health challenges.

INTS 3218 – Intelligence Analysis and the U.S. Policymaking Process

Specialization: US Foreign Policy

This course will provide an overview of the intelligence collection and analysis cycles, as well as the national security policymaking process. It will examine case studies in which both the perceptions and biases of analysts or policymakers resulted in intelligence failures, and discuss ways to avoid those misperceptions and counter biases. The course will conclude with a short simulation in which students will each play a member of the National Security Council, debating over the pros and cons of an important foreign policy decision. Prerequisites: INTS 1500 and INTS 1700.

INTS 3222 – International Law and Human Rights

Specialization: Law and Policy

An introductory course examining the concept of human rights, including political, economic, social, and cultural rights. International, regional and national institutions, norms and procedures to protect individual and group rights are discussed. Prerequisites: INTS 1500 and INTS 1700.

INTS 3761 – Diplomacy in the 21st Century

Specialization: US Foreign Policy

The course examines questions and dilemmas in the practice of contemporary statecraft and diplomacy. It will focus particularly on the changing nature of the tools available to states, the context in which they are used, and the players (including non-state actors) that are involved. The instructor will draw from recent experience to round out the topics discussed in class, and focus on the challenges of modern statecraft and diplomacy. Prerequisites: INTS 1500 and INTS 1700.

MFJS 3040 – Media Law

Specialization: Law and Policy

Introduction to freedom of expression and media law. Students learn how the American legal system works and gain an understanding and appreciation of the philosophical foundations of free expression. In addition, students confront many of the issues facing professional communicators today. Topics include incitement, hate speech, student speech, copyright, defamation, and other issues crucial to mass media professionals. The course examines also explores challenges to free expression brought by new(er) communication technologies. The purpose of this class is to give students the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to be successful in today's rapidly changing communication environment. Cross-listed with MFJS 4300.

PLSC 2410 – American Government Simulation

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

This course explores American politics by simulating the legislative process of the federal government. Students play either a member of the House of Representatives or a member of the

Executive Branch. The simulation requires that students seek the goals related to their position. By putting theory into practice, students gain a better understanding of Washington politics. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

PLSC 2430 – Political Parties and Interest Groups

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

Evolution and structure of political parties; how they mobilize voters and provide leadership of political issues. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics.

Prerequisite: sophomore standing

PLSC 2703 – Topics in Law and Politics: Criminal Law – Theory, Media, and Practice

Specialization: Law and Policy

This course will explore the American criminal legal regime by engaging in a comparative analysis of (1) social and popularized narratives about criminal "justice," (2) the lived realities of those who experience the criminal system, and (3) the legal principles that purportedly undergird the criminal system. Substantive themes will include: the death penalty, gangs, the criminalization of immigration, and incarceration as punishment. Course materials will consist of Supreme Court decisions, media (podcasts, music, and television), and personal accounts from directly impacted communities. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2820 – Constitutional Law: Civil Rights and Liberties

Specialization: Law and Policy

This course addresses major ideas and principles of U.S. constitutional law, with a focus on equal protection of the law, fundamental rights, and freedom of speech and religion. Within each of these areas, we will consider the development of court rulings over time, economic and political influences on court decision-making, and policy implications of these rulings. While PLSC 2860 complements this course, it is not necessary to take both courses. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing

PLSC 2860 – Constitutional Law: Governmental Structures and Powers

Specialization: Law and Policy

This course addresses major ideas and principles of U.S. constitutional law, with a focus on federalism, the growth of national power, and separation of powers. Within each of these areas, we will consider the development of court rulings over time, economic and political influences on court decision-making, and policy implications of these rulings. While PLSC 2820 complements this course, it is not necessary to take both courses. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing

SOCI 2250 – Criminology

Specialization: None

Social meaning of criminal behavior; relationship between crime and society in particular, how production and distribution of economic, political and cultural resources shape construction of law, order and crime; different types of crime, criminals and victims, and efforts to understand and control them. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

SOCI 2500 – Schooling and Society**Specialization:** US Domestic Policy

The objective of this course is to examine the relationship between schooling and the larger social inequalities (e.g., racism, poverty, and gender) that profoundly shape education. The major focus in this seminar will be on U.S. K-12 public education. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2622 – Deportation Nation**Specialization:** US Domestic Policy

This service-learning course examines the nexus of the criminal justice and immigration—or, crimmigration—system. Through a scholarly analysis situated of the historical, social, and political processes that have informed contemporary immigration law and policy, the course focuses on the shift to enhanced enforcement, detention, and mass deportation. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810.

SOCI 2722 – Criminal Justice Reform in the U.S.**Specialization:** US Domestic Policy

Events in 2020 have left many people wondering why our criminal justice system looks as it does today and asking what we can do to make it better. Despite the wave of political and cultural support for reform, little has changed. Why? The answers lie in the complicated historical processes that created the loose network of institutions that we refer to as "the criminal justice system," and in the contemporary socioeconomic and political structures that sustain these institutions. To better understand the contemporary state of reform, we will study the forces that gave rise to them, including race's central role in the politics of criminal justice, and the complexities of American federalism. We will research contemporary reform efforts targeting policing, mass incarceration, prosecutorial discretion, and other issues. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810.

SOCI 2770 – Kids and Courts**Specialization:** Law and Policy

This course examines how American society has responded to the problem of at-risk and delinquent youth in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The primary focus will be on the juvenile court's and the encompassing juvenile justice system's efforts to address this problem. The court's and the system's ameliorative attempts to help at-risk children/adolescents as well as their more punitive policies directed at serious and violent young offenders will be investigated. Differences in juvenile court policies and practices over time and across jurisdictions (both in the United States and in other countries) will be considered. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.