

PPOL Course Descriptions

(Updated: 01/26/2023)

“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 – Analysis and Action in American Public Policy

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 2802 – Supreme Court & Public Policy

New Curriculum: Law and Policy

Old Curriculum: Required

Students examine the policy-making role of the Supreme Court in such areas as civil rights, economic policy, freedom of expression, and criminal justice, while studying the overall power of the Court to determine social policy.

PPOL 3230 – Analytical & Critical Skills

New Curriculum: Required

Old Curriculum: Elective

Students gain the tools necessary to analyze competing points of view using empirical techniques and statistical inference. Students also learn the history and development of the scientific method; how to distinguish between speculation, theory, fact, and opinion; how to identify the validity of data; how to identify the intentional obfuscation of issues; and how to evaluate one's own prejudices and vulnerability to argument.

PPOL 3701.1 – Regulatory Policy

New Curriculum: Elective

Old Curriculum: Elective

One of the most common public policy tools is regulation. In the United States, we regulate the food we eat, industries that educate and provide healthcare, professional licenses, pollution, and

business practices, among other things. Using two books—*The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair and *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson—this class explores the impact these two books had on the development of regulations regarding the meat packing industry and polluting industries. Students will be introduced to the tools of research used to access legislation, legislative history, and regulatory history as well as U.S. bureaucratic institutions.

PPOL 3701.2 – The Making of Economic Policy

New Curriculum: Elective

Old Curriculum: Elective

How does economic policy get made, and how do the policy decisions that we observe in the real world differ from those prescribed by economics textbooks? This course delves into the policy formation process, studying the ways in which politics, social structure and institutions determine how policy is designed and who benefits from it. The course takes a case-study approach, focusing on discussing specific policy events and understanding the constraints and motivations of actors that shaped them. Some examples of policy events discussed include the 2008 global financial crisis, hyperinflations in Venezuela and Zimbabwe, clientelism and social programs in Latin America, oil sanctions on Russia and how authoritarian regimes distort macroeconomic data.

PPOL Approved Electives Course Descriptions
(Updated: 01/31/2023)

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.

ENVI 3000 – Environmental Law

Specialization: Sustainability

Purpose and applications of federal laws pertaining to environmental protection, including NEPA, RCRA, CERCLA, and Clean Water and Clean Air Acts; addresses role of states in implementation of federal environmental laws.

ECON 2360 – Economics, Ecology, and Social Welfare

Specialization: Sustainability

This course examines the interaction between economic outcomes, environmental effects, and inequality based on the contribution of alternative economic perspectives. It is divided in three core sections: Section I presents a historical examination of the restructuring of global capitalism under neoliberalism, and its impact on resource distribution and ecosystems. It follows a presentation of the theoretical differences between traditional and critical economics in the interpretation of these developments. Section II applies the concepts learned in Section I to specific case studies. For each of these case studies, the analysis will highlight both social and environmental implications and prospects for ecological sustainability and social welfare. Section III discusses alternative economic recommendations for socio-economic prosperity and ecological conservation. Prerequisite: ECON 1030.

ECON 2400 – Public Finance

Specialization: None

Public-sector economics, including public finance and expenditures; effects of different types of taxes and various government programs; government budgeting; cost benefit analysis. Prerequisite: ECON 1030 or **PPOL 3115**.

ECON 3610 – International Trade Theory and Policy

Specialization: None

Examines topical trade issues confronting the United States, policies proposed to tackle them, and the theoretical underpinnings of these policies. Studies how those policies could affect the less developed countries as determined by the environment established under the World Trade Organization. Prerequisite: ECON 2020 or 2030. Recommended: ECON 2610.

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.

INTS 2490 – Introduction to 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 2700 – Topic: Political Leadership

Specialization: None

What is the relationship between what political leaders are like and the actions and policies of the countries and institutions they run? To answer this question, this course will provide an overview of psychological theories of political leadership and decision making. It will also discuss a variety of methodological approaches to assessing political leaders at a distance. Each student will select a different world leader to analyze over the course of the semester, resulting in a full profile of the chosen leader.

INTS 2701 – Topic: Debates on Democracy

Specialization: None

This course will cover a range of questions and issues related to the contemporary practice of democracy around the world. The first part of the course will address questions about why some countries adopt democracy while others remain under authoritarian systems of rule – and why democracy is under increasing threat in some parts of the world. The second part of the course

will assess issues of governance – why and how democracies do (or do not) effectively address the security, economic, environmental, and social needs of their populations. The third part of the course will cover emerging challenges for democratic systems of government such as changes in information technology, migration and the management of diversity, and globalized capitalism.

INTS 2703 – Topic: U.S.-Russia Relations

Specialization: US Foreign Policy

The course will examine U.S.–Russia relations from the end of the Cold War through Vladimir Putin's accession to power, to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It will focus on issues arising from the collapse of communism in East and Central Europe and Russia's societal collapse, its post-Communist transition to a klepto-petrostate, American and European efforts to promote democracy in the post-Soviet space, Russia's response to EU and NATO expansion, Russia's determination of its foreign-policy interests, and its interference in the domestic affairs of former Soviet Republics (its so-called "near abroad"). We also examine Russia's meddling in the sovereign affairs of other nations, as well as future prospects for cooperation between Russia and the United States.

INTS 3421 – Environmental Justice Policy and Practice

Specialization: Sustainability

Environmental justice (EJ) asks how we can ensure a fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the design, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. In short, how can we facilitate an environment where people live, work, and play exempt from unequitable allocations of environmental benefits (such as natural resource distributions) and harms (such as environmental health hazards). The course will present a historical overview of the EJ movement in the United States and its intersections with global EJ. It will cover the theoretical and practical methods used in environmental policy to assist government agencies, from the local to the global, in addressing immediate and long-term environmental justice challenges. Particular attention will be placed on the Colorado State legislature and how different environmental justice bills are designed and negotiated through the legislative session. Students will examine proposed bills and their relationships to social theories on EJ, diverse actors' interests and needs, and the appropriateness of the solutions presented to address specific environmental inequities. This will require group collaboration to examine specific EJ bills and produce in-class presentations and a policy brief that engages students critically with the course material and a real-world EJ issue. In short, with this course you will: • Learn about the EJ movement history • Create and share your own EJ story • Explore issues in water access & air quality, food insecurity, access to nature and open spaces, and more • Understand EJ policy in Colorado and beyond • Analyze EJ policies in the Colorado State legislature Prerequisites: INTS 1500 and INTS 1700.

MFJS 2280 – Politics and Media

Specialization: None

We examine the nature of the media and how media institutions shape the way citizens understand politics. We discuss global media institutions and the role media play in various societies. We explore the role of media in providing information for citizens in a democracy, examine how the media influence the political process, and investigate how the goals of and changes within the media industry influence the effect media coverage has on the political

process. Through our study, we explore how the media either enhance or limit the potential for citizens to contribute to democracy. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 1810 – Introduction to Law and Society

Specialization: Law and Policy

This course introduces the relationship between law and society, exploring principles of legal conduct in social contexts and explaining how social scientific methods are used to understand these principles. Questions discussed include what is the relationship between the “law-on-the-books” and “law-in-action,” and what can we learn from gaps between formal law and the “real” law that is experienced in society? Empirical examples may include international comparisons and the evolution of law over time. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

PLSC 2001 – Law and Politics

Specialization: Law and Policy

Introduces the relationship between law and politics, describing the basic principles of legal conduct in political contexts and explaining how social scientific methods are used to understand these underlying principles. Questions explored include the following: Where does the law come from? Whose interests does it reflect? Does formal legal change lead to practical political and social change? Why do we comply with the law? What are the limits of enforcement? This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. It also satisfies the department distribution requirement in law. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2425 – Religion in American Politics

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

This course offers a broad, critical overview of the relationship, and some of the tensions, between religion and politics in the United States. We first review how the historical presence of a variety of American religious groups and perspectives on the relationship between church and state have impacted the nation's often conflicted sense of identity as well as the tenor of our ongoing debates about - and within - religion in American politics. That gives us a foundation for exploring a number of current "hot button" issues like debates over "moral values" and faith-based initiatives. Satisfies the department distribution requirement in American politics. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

PLSC 2703 – Topics: Politics of US Immigration Law

Specialization: US Foreign Policy

Description forthcoming.

PLSC 2830 – Judicial Politics

Specialization: Law and Policy

This course considers the role of courts, especially the Supreme Court, in the U.S. political system. Topics include the the potential dangers and benefits of allocating significant power to un-elected justices, judicial decision-making, Court-Congress interaction in developing public policies, the social and political effects of court rulings, and legal interest groups.

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 2701.1 – Topics in Sociology: Environmental Justice

Specialization: Sustainability

This course starts from the premise that all people have a right to live in a clean environment and access resources to sustain health and livelihood. We will examine issues at the intersection of environmental change and environmental justice (EJ). EJ issues revolve around the race-, class-, and equity-based implications of environmental problems. This course presents research on environmental quality and health, enforcement of regulations, access to resources, response to urban industrial problems, public policy, and the broader political economy of decision-making around environmental issues. This course will also explore and critically analyze the philosophies, frameworks, strategies, and policies underlying environmental justice movements and struggles of African American, Latine, Asian American, and Indigenous communities. We will ask and seek to answer questions such as: How and why are environmental problems experienced differently according to race, gender, and class? How do different communities experience and respond to environmental problems? Why does it matter that there is unequal exposure to environmental risks and benefits? What does the study of environmental risks tell us about racism, classism, and sexism in our nation and world today? What is environmental privilege and why does it matter? This course will be discussion and reading intensive. Course material will challenge students to be critical of the status quo and of colonial ways of thinking. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2701.5 – Topics in Sociology: Immigration and the Law

Specialization: US Foreign Policy

International migration to the US and the political and legal questions it raises are omnipresent in the news. Former President Trump arguably was nominated to the presidency because of claims that if elected, he could force Mexico to "build a wall" on the US-Mexico border to curtail immigration. More recently, Republican governors began the practice of bussing newly arrived immigrants to states with Democratic leaders. On the other hand, some states and localities have passed "sanctuary" policies aimed at protecting immigrants and their families from federal immigration authorities. And these are just some recent examples. Historically, the US has

exhibited both inclusive and restrictionist tendencies. This class will seek to make sense of immigration law with a focus on the contemporary era. After covering some basics of immigration as a phenomenon in itself (why do people migrate?), we will focus on the trends towards "illegalization" of immigrants, and the "criminalization" of immigration law. What explains such efforts? How has this movement played out amongst the public and policymakers, in the courts, and in the federal bureaucracy? How have states and local governments acted? What are the consequences for communities, immigrants and their families when some must live in states of "liminal legality," as described by Sociologist Cecilia Menjivar? Finally, how do immigrants and their allies resist these broader trends? By examining causes and consequences of US immigration law in the contemporary era, students will be able to make sense of an ever-controversial topic. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2701.6 – Topics in Sociology: Gangs in America

Specialization: US Domestic Policy

Description forthcoming.

SOCI 2750 – Sociology of Law

Specialization: Law and Policy

Overview of theory and research about relationship between law and society; legal rules, roles, organizations and inter-institutional relations; activities of legal profession, courts, juries, legislatures and regulatory agencies. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.