PPOL Fall 2023 Course Descriptions
(Updated: 5/4/2023)

“New Curriculum” applies to students who started on/after Fall 2021.
“Old Curriculum” applies to students who started in Fall 2020.

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 2701 – Topics: Governing Cities in the 21st Century
New Curriculum: Elective
Old Curriculum: Elective
This course introduces students to current major policy challenges urban areas worldwide must face. We will begin with a general overview of the evolution of the urban form until today and then we will delve deeper into selected topics of interests for city populations in and out of the US, in the developed as well in the developing world. Topics will include development, housing urban mobility, sustainability, safety and more. The class will feature prominent guest speakers from city governments, businesses, policy organizations, and other urban-relevant sectors.

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.

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 2600 – Introduction to Political Communication**  
**Specialization:** None  
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the subdiscipline of political communication with a focus on the United States. Through scholarship, case study development, discussion, and activities, this course surveys the major communicative actors in U.S. public and political life. Students will use theories from across political communication to understand the roles of elites, media organizations, and everyday individuals in political talk. Students should leave the course with the ability to identify and critically assess the political communication that permeates their lives.

**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.

**GEOG 3340 – Geographies of Migration**  
**Specialization:** None  
This course explores contemporary movement of people across international borders and the social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental repercussions of such movements. The class looks at the global flow of people across national boundaries and the ways in which these dispersed peoples build and maintain social networks across national borders. While doing so, we address the role of globalization in international migration processes. What motivates people to move long distances, often across several international borders and at considerable financial and psychological cost? How do migrants change--and how in turn do they bring change, social as well as economic, to new destinations as well as places left behind? This course examines politics and patterns of migration, transnational migration, and immigration to the United States.

**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 2420 – Social Inequality**  
**Specialization:** None  
Dimensions of social class and its effect on economic, political and social institutions as well as style of life. **Prerequisite:** SOCI 1810 and sophomore standing or permission of instructor.

**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.

**PLSC 2755 – Legal Actors and Institutions**  
**Specialization:** Law and Policy  
This course examines the legal system from the points of view of those who work within it. It considers the social characteristics of lawyers, judges, regulators, elected officials and non-state actors, and how they matter to the social construction of law. The emphasis is on the social organization of law and the everyday interactions that bring meaning to the legal system. It considers and seeks to understand how legal roles, legal institutions and power relations within the law influence its development and practice. Throughout the course, students are required to think critically about how society and the social relationships of law influence law’s outcomes. **Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing.

**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.

**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.
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.

PLSC 2415 – Campaigns and Elections
Specialization: US Domestic Policy
The U.S. holds hundreds of elections every year, but presidential elections stand alone as the only truly national contests. What influences presidential selection? What information can we gain as citizens and scholars from national presidential debates? These elections are guided by distinct rules (including nominations via primaries and caucuses, evolving campaign finance laws, and the strict requirements of the Electoral College) with ever-changing strategies to maximize support under these rules. This class provides students with the historic context and political science concepts and theories to better understand the many steps involved in electing U.S. presidents.

PLSC 2701 – Gangs
Specialization: US Domestic Policy
Description forthcoming. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810.

PLSC 2703 – Topics: Immigration Law
Focuses on topics in law from a political science perspective. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

INTS 2708 – Contemporary US Foreign Policy
Specialization: US Foreign Policy
When the United States first won its independence, its leaders sought to avoid at all costs the countless problems awaiting any country engaging in foreign affairs. Indeed, John Quincy Adams, in 1821, warned the United States of the dangers of "going abroad in search of monsters to destroy." In September of 2002, however, as American forces occupied one country and prepared to invade another, the Bush Administration released its National Security Strategy of the United States, which states: "To contend with uncertainty and to meet the many challenges we face, the United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for long-distance deployment of U.S. forces." How did we go from isolation to empire? In this course, we will attempt to answer this question by exploring the progression of American foreign policy from its emergence out of isolation to its current stage of interventionist superpower. We will
also identify and discuss key issues that are driving America's conduct abroad as well as evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the given policies addressing these important issues. By the end of the class, students should have a solid knowledge of the major themes and developments in the history of American foreign policy as well as the ability to reflect critically upon on-going foreign policy debates.