

The course descriptions contained in this document are sourced from the 2016-2017 West Virginia State University Catalog. Students may need to consult their respective WVSU Catalog based on when they started their education at WVSU.

Political Science Course Descriptions

Note: All courses are three credit hours unless noted otherwise.

POSC 100. Introduction to Government and Politics

Examination of the fundamental political and legal systems of national and international communities. Prerequisite(s): Eligible for English 101.

POSC 101. American Government

The organization and nature of the federal political system, with special emphasis placed on the U.S. Constitution. The role of non-governmental actors (political parties, interest groups and the media) is also analyzed. Prerequisite(s): Eligible for English 101.

POSC 101H. American National Government - Honors

The organization and nature of the federal political system, with special emphasis placed on the U.S. Constitution. The role of non-governmental actors (political parties, interest groups and the media) is also analyzed. A 15-page research paper is required, in addition to traditional requirements for this course, for honors students. Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the Honors Program and eligibility for ENGL 101.

POSC 204. State and Local Politics

Politics and policy at the state and local level in the American political system. Areas for study include constitutional, cultural and financial constraints on state and local politics; community power structures; state legislatures; governors and other elected executives; and judicial institutions. Prerequisite(s): Pass ENGL 102 with C.

POSC 205. Political Science as a Profession (2 credits)

This course is designed to help political science students navigate through the process of after-college decisions. This includes the difficult decision of whether to go onto graduate school or to enter the workforce. The course will provide guidance to students who are pursuing either goal or to students who are unsure as of what to do. The course will begin with addressing the literature that discusses such decisions and the consequences and ramifications of either choice. We will then address the tools that facilitate in a student's decision to attend graduate school or enter the workforce. These topics include resume and cover-letter preparation, interview skills and graduate school application procedures and practices as well as how to handle graduate school once the student is there. Prerequisite(s): Faculty approval.

POSC 210. International Relations

An introduction to international politics in the late 20th century. The course covers historical developments altering power relationships among nation-states in foreign policy, the interaction of developed and non-developed nations and problems confronting international organizations and transnational actors. Prerequisite(s): Pass ENGL 102 with C.

POSC 225. Strategic Decision making in the Social Sciences

This course is an introduction to formal and informal models of decision-making and logic, with an emphasis on evaluating multiple courses of action and the consideration of possible outcomes. The analysis and application of decision-making are addressed through an examination of decision theory and game theory. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 102 with a C or better and either POSC 100 or POSC 101

POSC 302. American Foreign Policy

This course investigates the ideological and institutional setting of American foreign policy through a series of selected case studies. Emphasis is given to concepts and resources that enable students to understand foreign policy issues. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101 or 210.

POSC 304. Comparative Politics

A comparative analysis of the political culture, ideologies, processes and institutions of the Russian Federation, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and China. This course should familiarize the student with the predominant influences on these particular political systems, and further develop the student's ability to assess the significance of the roles played by these major nation-states. Prerequisite(s): POSC 100 or 101 or 210.

POSC 305. The American Congress

An examination of the origin, organizations, operation and political characteristics of Congress; focusing on problems of representation, leadership, relations with interest groups and other branches of government, and public policy formation. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101.

POSC 306. The American Presidency

An examination of the institution of the presidency, its functions, formal and informal relationships with other branches of government. The course also examines recurrent problems and limitations of the office. Emphasis is on the dynamics of the office: on the influence exerted by certain presidents, and on the impact of public opinion and the media. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101.

POSC 307. Introduction to Public Administration

This course provides the student with an understanding of the major public administration theories influencing the discipline, the role of the public bureaucracy in American society, and the interplay of politics and administration at the national, state, and local levels. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101.

POSC 308. International Political Economy

This course analyzes the interplay between states and markets in the global arena, with emphasis upon economic tools employed by modern states to address issues arising from international trade, monetary relations and other foreign policy goals. Prerequisite(s): POSC 210 or permission of the instructor.

POSC 311. Methodology and Research

Introduction to the concepts and methods of social science research: the role of theory in research, forming hypotheses and questions, identifying variables and gathering and analyzing statistical data. Emphasis will be on developing good writing skills and using computers for basic statistical evaluation. This course meets the requirements of CJ 315 and SOC 311. Prerequisite(s): Junior classification and a grade of C in ENGL 102 and contemporaneous enrollment in PSYC 200 or completion of PSYC 200 with a grade of C.

POSC 321. Constitutional Law

This study begins with an introduction to principles of constitutional interpretation, then examines the politics of both the development and the impact of constitutional law addressing civil rights and civil liberties. Moreover, the course will address the powers and structure of government and the impact of the developments on political, economic, and social life. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101 and a grade of C in ENGL 102.

POSC 330. Judicial Systems and Policy-Making

This course will analyze the political nature of the American Judicial System. It will examine the organization, procedures of the federal court system, and the politics of judicial selection as well as the implementation and impact of judicial policymaking in a political and social context. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101 and ENGL 102 with a C.

POSC 335. Politics and Religion in America

This course address the intersection of religion and politics in American political affairs and policy development. Students will study the civil liberties that protect religious freedom from government interference and review the developments in constitutional law based on those liberties. The course will also consider religious organizations and individuals that act as interest groups and evaluate their influence on public policy. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101 and ENGL 102 with a C.

POSC 399. Special Topics (1-3 credit hours)

Independent work on a special topic or problem area with guidance from a member of the political science faculty. Prerequisite(s): POSC 100 or POSC 101.

POSC 400. Senior Capstone Experience

In this senior capstone experience, students will apply the knowledge and skills developed through previous coursework. In conjunction with a member of the Political Science faculty, each student will select a project and complete either basic research, applied research, fieldwork, or a service-learning project. The experience will culminate with the completion of a written work and, if appropriate, a presentation.

POSC 402. Modern Political Thinkers

A critical analysis and tracing of influences of the major political theorists from Hobbes, Locke or Rousseau through Lenin. Cross-listed with Philosophy 402. Prerequisite(s): POSC 100 and ENGL 102 with a C.

POSC 403. Electoral Politics

Organization, functions and practices of political parties in the United States, electoral problems, practical impact of the media, pressure groups and current electoral legislation. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101.

POSC 405. Politics and Public Policy

An analysis of the policymaking process with emphasis on the various factors influencing the content and consequences of public policy and an examination of specific issues. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101.

POSC 408. American Political Thought

This course introduces students to the multitude of ideas that serve as the basis for political discourse in the United States today, with emphasis upon the variety of political perspectives that have obtained significance in different historical periods and their relevance for contemporary political thought. Prerequisite(s): POSC 101, 402, or permission of the instructor.

POSC 410. Comparative Politics: Latin America and Africa

An examination of the political institutions and processes of selected countries in Latin America and Africa. Prerequisite(s): POSC 100, 101 or 210.

POSC 415. Comparative Politics: Arab Middle East

An analysis of Arab politics and culture in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. Emphasis is given to the region's historical development and its implications for the region's democratic development. Prerequisite(s): POSC 100, 101 or 210.

POSC 420. Politics of Race in America

Analysis of racial politics in the United States, with special attention given to historical shaping of the political culture, the civil rights movement, electoral college and current controversies over racial elements implicit in public policies. Prerequisite(s): POSC 100, 101 or 210 with grade of C.

POSC 430. Empirical Analysis

The course will expose the student to an advanced role of theory in research, forming hypotheses and research questions, identifying variables, and gathering and analyzing statistical data. Students will undertake a practical opportunity to apply basic research methods to a problem or question in the field of political science by synthesizing all of their coursework and extant academic preparation into a final research project. The student will utilize theory and the statistical methodology as well as policy analysis, ethics and writing skills to produce a piece of original research.
Prerequisite(s): Faculty Approval.

POSC 497. Internship (3-12 credit hours)

For political science majors and students in other majors who qualify to participate in one of the various internship opportunities offered through the university. It may be taken for a maximum of three credit hours, unless it is the Judith Herndon Fellowship or the Higher Education Fellowship for 12 credit hours or some comparably competitive and demanding fellowship for a maximum of six credit hours. Only six earned internship credits can be applied towards upper-division requirements in political science.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor.

Political Science Faculty

Palubinskas, Ginta T. (2013) Associate Professor of Political Science, B.A. Loyola Marymount University; M.A., George Washington University; Ph.D., George Mason University, 2003. Areas of research: Democracy and energy security, economic and societal transformation, interaction of political and cultural change and democratization.

Pennington, Michael. (2015), MPA Program Director and Associate Professor of Political Science. B.A., West Virginia State University; 1997. M.P.A., West Virginia University, 1998; Ph.D. Texas A&M, 2008. Areas of research: Human resources management, regulatory policy and economic development.

Vaughan, Frank D. (2006), (2008), Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of Political Science. B.A, Emory and Henry College; M. A., West Virginia University; Ph.D., West Virginia University, 2006. Areas of research: The Resolution of Civil Wars and American political development.