

Selected Graduate POLS courses for Fall 2022 and Winter 2023

The attached descriptions are intended to give you a sense of the content and structure of the current graduate courses. These are not final statements on the direction of the course. If you need more information on a particular course, please contact the Graduate Program and/or the course director.

Political Theory

POLS 6000R – *Histories and Theories of Nationalism*

Gerald Kernerman

Please contact the course director directly for more information on his course.

POLS 6021 3.0/ STP 6183 3.0 – *The Return of Philosophy in Contemporary French Thought*

Martin Breugh

This advanced seminar seeks to understand the origins, ideas, and problems of the return of political philosophy in contemporary French thought. This multifaceted intellectual phenomenon presents a particularly rich and intense debate on the fundamental issues of political life such as freedom, democracy, conflict, domination, and social division.

In this graduate seminar, our task will be to analyse the contributions of certain key thinkers who have influenced the ideas and approach of the antitotalitarian movement: Pierre Clastres, Cornelius Castoriadis, and Claude Lefort. We will also analyse the works of some of the main protagonists of the return of political philosophy: M. Gauchet, M. Abensour, P. Manent, and J. Rancière (selected authors will vary from year to year). Here we will see that the antitotalitarian camp is divided into two distinct groups. The first is made up of skeptical liberal thinkers (Gauchet, Manent) and the second of radical democratic thinkers (Abensour, Rancière). Our objective will be to draw out the similarities and differences between the authors while seeking to understand the contribution of each to political theory today.

Canadian Politics

POLS 6145 – *Indigenous Politics*

Gabrielle Slowey

The course examines and develops the analytic tools necessary to understand the challenge for Indigenous decolonization in the global political economy. Central analytic questions to be addressed include the changing relationship between capitalism and Indigenous peoples, between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production and the role of the state. Drawing on different ways of knowing and different community, country and group experiences, (Canada, US, Latin America, Scandinavia and Australia and New Zealand) topics considered include: decolonization and settler relations; the globalization of Indigenous issues; trade liberalization and state restructuring; political economy of

resource development, institutional developments, the UN and Indigenous rights; gender, the environment and resistance. The course also investigates the legal, cultural and environmental implications of “development” strategies.

International Relations

POLS 6205 – *Hegemony, Imperialism and Globalization*

Hannes Lacher

This course analyzes theories and concepts of power, supremacy, hegemony and imperialism in different world orders since antiquity. Analytical emphasis is placed on explaining the post-1945 period associated with American hegemony, Soviet Power and subsequent patterns of intensified globalization

POLS 6220 – *Contemporary Security Studies: Conflict, Intervention and Peacebuilding*

Gerald Bareebe

This course introduces the field of conflict, intervention, and peacebuilding and examines various facets of social conflicts and the possibilities for conflict resolution. It provides students with a set of tools to analyze a wide range of theories, exploring contemporary civil and international conflicts. Students will scrutinize several dynamics of conflict, options for violent and nonviolent responses to prevent and resolve conflicts, and the challenges of building a stable post-conflict political order. Learners will be offered the opportunity to simulate conflict-negotiations and problem-solving in real-world situations in order to familiarize themselves with efforts and experiences of policy makers engaged in conflict resolution. The class has four goals:

- I. To scrutinize and comprehend hard choices made by police-makers when they undertake intervention in conflicts and evaluate the outcomes of decisions taken and alternatives.
- II. To provide students with a set of tools for the analysis of various approaches to managing or resolving conflict in the world.
- III. To examine complex legal, ethical and moral questions embedded in decisions and actions of policymakers and practitioners engaged in conflict intervention, conflict management and peacebuilding.
- IV. To equip students with knowledge and understanding of how evidence and theory can be effectively used to understand peace and civil conflict.

The course is divided into two sections: The first part reviews a wide range of theories examining the nature, dynamics, causes and consequences of armed conflict, the possibilities for conflict resolution, and the foundations for building states and peace after war. The second part examines the changing dynamics of conflict, with a focus on topics such as terrorism, climate change conflict and environmental security.

POLS 6245 – *Global Politics of Health*

Rodney Loeppky

'Health' has long since emerged as an issue of study in politics, cutting across disciplinary and national boundaries. It is immediately relevant to the study of international organizations, 'globalisation', domestic politics and social restructuring, global governance regimes, and even questions of human security. The occurrence of the COVID pandemic in 2020-21 has brought this into dramatic relief in conceptual, political, practical ways. Health, in many ways, is a lens through which critical facets of politics, social inequality, and global injustice can be examined. This course will challenge students to consider health from a variety of angles and intellectual perspectives, encouraging a distinctly political understanding (along both global and national lines).

POLS 6280 – *Advanced Topics in Politics Economy*

Stephen Gill

The main purpose of this course is to review some of the historical development and central theoretical debates and literature in Global Political Economy (GPE). This field is taken to include issues addressed by both international and comparative political economy, and indeed their links to both social and political theory.

Normally the course will be taught by student-led seminar discussions, focusing on required readings drawn from a range of major works within the field.

The course will pay regard to, amongst other things, the importance of knowledge, ideology and consciousness for the method and study of political economy.

Discussions will vary annually but will centre on the following aims:

1. To explore some of the major perspectives in global political economy, partly by reading major works by e.g. Braudel, Gramsci, Polanyi, Hayek and Buchanan, E.P. Thompson, R.W. Cox, Harvey, Van der Pijl and others.
2. To explore theoretical and methodological debates, e.g. between neo-realism and critical theory; debates within historical materialism; in feminist theory e.g. the role of social reproduction in theories of political economy.
3. To relate contemporary problems in global political economy to their historical context, e.g. perennial questions of world order, hegemony and imperialism, questions of livelihood and dispossession, inequality, health and ecological sustainability.
4. To reflect on selected aspects of contemporary GPE including the power of capital, disciplinary neo-liberalism, new constitutionalism, market civilization, panopticism and surveillance, global governance, political economy and ecology, health and well-being, geopolitics, war and organic crisis.

POLS 6285 3.0 – *Global Capital: Political Economy of Capitalist Power*

Jonathan Nitzan

What is capital? Despite centuries of debate, there is no clear answer to this question – and for a good reason. Capital is a polemic term. The way we define it attests our theoretical biases, ideological disposition, view of politics, class consciousness, social position, and more.

Is capital the same as machines, or is it merely a financial asset? Is it a material article or a social process? Is it a static substance or a dynamic entity? The form of capital, its existence as monetary wealth, is hardly in doubt. The problem is with the content, the stuff that makes capital grow – and on this issue there is no agreement whatsoever. For example, does capital accumulate because it is productive, or due to the exploitation of workers? Does capital expand from within capitalism, or does it need non-capitalist institutions like the state and other external forces? Is accumulation synonymous with economic growth, or can capital expand by damaging production and undermining efficiency? What exactly is being accumulated? Does the value of capital represent utility, abstract labour – or perhaps something totally different, such as power or force? What units should we use to measure its accumulation?

Surprisingly, these questions remain unanswered; in fact, with the victory of liberalism, most of them are no longer being asked. However, the silence is incomplete. As crisis and social strife intensify, the questions resurface. The accumulation of capital is the central process of capitalism, and unless we can clarify what that process means, we remain unable to understand our world, let alone change it.

The seminar has two related goals: substantive and pedagogical. The substantive purpose is to tackle the question of capital head on. The course explores a spectrum of liberal and Marxist theories, ideologies and dogmas – as well as a radical alternative to these views. The argument is developed theoretically, historically and empirically. The first part of the seminar provides a critical overview of political economy, examining its historical emergence, triumph and eventual demise. The second part deals with the two ‘materialistic’ schools of capital – the liberal theory of utility and the Marxist theory of labour time – dissecting their structure, strengths and limitations. The third part brings power back in: it analyses the relation between accumulation and sabotage, studies the institutions of the corporation and the state and introduces a new framework – the capitalist mode of power. The fourth and final part offers an alternative approach – the theory of capital as power (or CasP for short) – and illustrates how this approach can shed light on conflict-ridden processes such as corporate merger, stagflation, imperialism and the new wars of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Pedagogically, the seminar seeks to prepare students toward conducting their own independent research. Students are introduced to various electronic data sources, instructed in different methods of analysis and tutored in developing their empirical research skills. As the seminar progresses, these skills are used both to assess various theories and to develop the students’ own theoretical/empirical research projects.

POLS 6292 – *Illicit Economies and Global Politics*

Ellen Gutterman

This course examines diverse dimensions of ***transnational crime and corruption*** (TCC) in international politics. We will explore: What is “transnational crime”? What is “corruption”? What is the “illicit global economy”, and in what ways is it linked – conceptually, theoretically, empirically – to the *licit* global economy? To what extent and in what ways are TCC phenomena – transnational bribery; money laundering; human trafficking; illicit trade in narcotics; illicit trade in wildlife/animal parts; cybercrime; etc. – problems in/for global politics?

Taking up Friman's (2009, 9) challenge to IR/IPE scholars "to better demonstrate through theoretically informed inquiry how the intersection of politics and economics matters in the analysis of crime in the global political economy", we will adopt a theoretically pluralist approach to examine TCC and to address its relevance for several sets of theoretical concerns:

- the relationship between states and markets, and the evolving field(s) of global political economy
- the enabling – and potentially constraining? – roles of transnational actors and networks;
- shifting patterns of political authority and the emergence of new forms of governance, generally, and with respect to "global crime governance" specifically
- the problems of power and inequality, globally and locally

Core Courses

Comparative Politics

POLS 6435 – *Capitalism, the State and Social Provisioning*

Ann Porter

This course examines the relationship between the development of capitalism and attempts to address "the social", focusing in particular on the contradictions, possibilities and limits as capitalist states attempt to deal with social provisioning in the current era. The course first examines theoretical and historical perspectives, including the formation of welfare states and their subsequent crisis and restructuring. The second section focuses on neo-liberalism and how it has altered the nature of social provisioning. The third section examines changes from the 2008 financial crisis onwards including, the growing use of debt as a form of social provisioning, the implications of austerity measures, and the challenges of the current pandemic situation. A theme running throughout the course is how hierarchies of gender, race/ethnicity and class have formed part of the transformations that have taken place and created differential impacts.

POLS 6470 – *Politics of AI, Ethics and Algorithmic Life*

Jennifer Pybus

Short: This class takes an interdisciplinary approach to understand the political and ethical implications of the ubiquitous deployment of AI and Machine Learning technologies. We will engage in an intersectional and socio-technical perspective to critically assess the unevenly distributed impacts of automated decision making on communities. Some themes included are: bias and discrimination, surveillance, privacy, data feminism and data activism.

Longer Description:

If objects have politics, what are the politics of AI? This class begins with a basic assumption that all technological processes are predicated on human decisions that are steeped in personal, political, and economic values held by the scientists, designers, nation states and corporations. This course, therefore, will be centred on discussions around how different epistemologies get embedded in AI systems. We will take an interdisciplinary approach to understand the political and ethical implications of the ubiquitous deployment of AI and Machine Learning technologies within society by engaging in an intersectional and socio-technical perspective that focuses on some of the following themes: bias and discrimination, surveillance, privacy, data feminism and data activism.

Students will explore an array of theories and concepts about AI. The course will i) map out a technical understanding of how these technologies work including—What is Big Data? What is an algorithm? What are the technical objects of datafication?; ii) provide a grounded critique of the challenges of machine learning asking: How do these technologies transform power and knowledge relations in our contemporary era? Who made them? Whose goals are prioritized? Who benefits? And how are we being constituted by them?; iii) explore ethical considerations brought about by those (un)intended harms of AI (including data colonialism) and finally, iv) what would a more just and accountable AI look like from a social justice/data activist approach?

Overall the course will not just focus on theorising our objects of study but on understanding how they work to facilitate a more iterative approach that critically engages with how AI technologies surveil, quantify, classify, and profile citizens but can equally extend and empower new kinds of activism and agency. MA students who are intending to write their MRPs and PhD students who are thinking about their dissertation research will be able to reflect and apply these socio-technical arguments about AI to their work.

POLS 6485 – Contemporary Social Transformations

Asad Haider

What are the conditions for political action? Is it necessary to have knowledge of the social structure in order to act politically, and where does this knowledge come from? Is political economy the foundation of politics, determining its aims and practices? Is the agent that engages in political action a subject that already exists, and if not, how can its emergence be understood? In this course we will pose all these questions from the ground up, without assuming any unity between knowledge, political economy, and agency, or any linear relation between them and the processes of social transformation. Our approach will be both comparative and theoretical, grounded in a method of studying political sequences as delimited historical episodes of political action which produce their own categories – specifically, the global revolutionary upheavals in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We will use these historical references to understand the possibilities and limits of political action today. Readings may include the following authors: Alain Badiou, Susana Draper, Sylvain Lazarus, Michael Neocosmos, Jacques Rancière, Kristin Ross, Rossana Rossanda, Alessandro Russo, and Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba.

POLS 6570 – Advanced Topics in the Politics of the Global South

Richard Saunders

This course explores theoretical approaches, conceptual debates and recent empirical research on the dynamics of state-society-economy interactions in the Global South, in the context of recent experiments and experiences of ‘state developmentalism’ as an emerging alternative model of ‘development’. It considers the experience and evolution of East Asian ‘developmental states’, tracks the theoretical and geographical scope of ‘developmentalist’ models in Africa and Latin America, investigates trends in historical variants of ‘Developmental States’ in the 21st Century, and explores their implications for future research and policy interventions.

POLS 6566 – *Advanced Topics in Latin America and Caribbean Politics*

Simone Bohn

Course Description: This seminar aims to critically analyze the key economic, political, and social issues associated with the neoliberal turn in Latin America and the so-called Pink Tide in the region. Among other topics, the course will focus on (1) the features, promises, and concrete experiences of leftist and left-leaning governments in the region; (2) popular resistance to neoliberalism in cities and the countryside by organized labor, women's movements, traditional communities, the indigenous, and other social actors; (3) the new pattern of trade dependency and eco-dependency, (4) the contemporary configuration of the perennial "land question"; (5) the class-face of urban violence; and (6) innovative social policies to combat poverty and inequality.

Learning objectives: Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to (1) improve their analytical, writing, and presentation skills and understand (2) the long-term economic debilities that affect Latin America, especially after the neoliberal turn and the Pink Tide, (3) the changing role of the state, and (4) the obstacles to and the deficiencies of the democratic rule in the region.

Women and Politics

POLS 6750 – *Gender and the Construction of Global Markets- Social Reproduction, Dispossession, and the Global Political Economy Today*

Isabella Bakker

This course will explore key aspects of the globalization processes as they reconstitute existing gender orders related to social reproduction and care in the Global North and South. In order to address current transformations, we will focus on the historical development of the concept of social reproduction, and its interplay with changing systems of production, the shifting social relations of these forces and the constitution of male and female subjects across time and space. We will read the classics and more recent modern classics such as Marx, Polanyi, Braudel in conversation with modern feminist political economy and intersectional interventions that place race and citizenship at the centre of their analyses. We will examine the ways in which the separation of production from social reproduction is particularly problematic in the contemporary period of capitalist transformation given the breakdown in boundaries between work and non-work, the new flexible subjects of late capitalism/intensified globalization and the continuities of blurring of boundaries in the Global South.

We will also examine recent research on the global financial and health crises and the multiple institutions of care (households and families, states, markets, and the non-profit sector) in the context of neoliberal governance and mass migrations, the increasing financialization of social reproduction and the social reproduction of different bodies, settler colonialism and intersectionalities, and critically evaluate the 're- building of commons' approach.

POLS 6775 – *The Political Economy of Work & Welfare*

Leah Vosko

This seminar explores the political economy of work and welfare in industrialized settler colonial countries in the context of ongoing processes of dispossession and extractivism under globalized capitalism, shaped by gendered, racialized and colonial legacies. Placing an accent of the Canadian

case, it draws on five strains of scholarship: scholarship in decolonial feminist political economy; critical social policy; socio-legal studies concerned with the changing nature of employment; Indigenous studies; and, migration studies. Participants examine political-economic forces that shape the development, consolidation, and restructuring (or retrenchment) of work and welfare policies with emphasis on the multi-faceted social relations of gender, race, Indigeneity, as well as citizenship and (dis)ability. Normatively, the course is oriented towards advancing the idea of global labour market membership – a notion that entails freeing key labour rights and protections from the exclusive domain of nation states and promoting people’s increased control over work (paid and unpaid) and welfare – informed by visions for alternative futures transcending national borders and Indigenous place-based knowledge.

The course is divided into four parts. Part 1 surveys central theoretical and methodological debates and schools of thought in the political economy of work and welfare literature, elevating critical approaches and challenges within, as well as to, this body of literature. Part 2 offers an alternative framework for understanding contemporary work and welfare policy in a neoliberal ‘new’ economy that places shifting employment norms, social reproduction and citizenship boundaries in dialogue. Parts 3 and 4 examine policy approaches to addressing contemporary labour and social issues through the lenses of “making workers” and “maintaining workers” during ‘prime’ wage-earning years and transitions. The course concludes by canvassing organizing strategies for the pursuit of global labour market membership.