

## Politics

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The departmental aim is to cultivate in students a critical ability to interpret political questions from a variety of perspectives.

A student who enters Whitman without any prior college-level preparation in politics will have to complete 36 credits to fulfill the requirements for the politics major.

**Learning Goals:** Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- **Major-Specific Areas of Knowledge**
  - Demonstrate knowledge of the interconnections of political institutions, movements, concepts, and events from multiple intersecting vantage points.
- **Critical Thinking**
  - Identify contested assumptions, ideas, and intellectual debates in politics scholarship. Pose critical questions about power relations as key political questions in a globalizing world are investigated.
- **Research Experience**
  - Conduct a focused academic inquiry that demonstrates a critical awareness of competing arguments in response to a key question; formulate a systematic path of analysis; generate creative findings based on original research.

**Distribution:** Courses completed in politics apply to the social sciences and cultural pluralism (selected courses) distribution areas.

**Total credit requirements for a Politics major:** 36

**The Politics major:**

- 36 Credits
- Required Courses
  - At least 12 credits of 300- and 400-level courses, not including 490 and 497 or 498
  - Politics 490 and 497 or 498
- Other notes
  - No more than eight credits in off-campus programs, transfer credits, or credits from cross-listed courses taught by faculty in other departments. These may be used at the 100-200 level.
  - The program for the major is to be planned by the student and his or her advisor to ensure adequate breadth in the courses taken. Only courses taught or co-taught by Whitman Politics Department faculty members are eligible for satisfying the major requirements for coursework at the 300-400 level.
  - No courses may be taken PDF
- Senior Requirements
  - 490 and 497 or 498
  - C- or better on thesis
  - One hour oral thesis defense
    - Two faculty members
- Honors
  - Students submit a Honors in Major Study Application to their department

- Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project
  - Must be submitted within the first six weeks of the two-semester period in which student is eligible
- Accumulated at least 87 credits
- Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman.
- Cumulative GPA of at least 3.300 on all credits earned at Whitman College
- Major GPA of at least 3.500
- Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program
- Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course.
- Pass the senior assessment with distinction
- The department will submit the Honors applications to the Registrar's Office of students pursuing Honors by the specified deadline
- The department submit "Senior Assessment/Major Study Certificate" to the Registrar's Office no later the Reading Day
- An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day

**The Politics minor:**

- 20 Credits
- Minor requirements
  - 8 credits 300-level above. Must be taken from at least two professors
- Other notes
  - Only courses taught or co-taught by Whitman Politics Department faculty members are eligible for satisfying the minor requirements for coursework at the 300-400 level.
  - No more than 4 credits in off-campus programs, transfer credits, or credits from cross-listed courses taught by faculty in other departments. These may be used at the 100-200 level.
  - No courses may be taken PDF

**The Politics-Environmental Studies major:** The requirements are fully described in the *Environmental Studies* section of the catalog.

**Interdepartmental programs:** The politics department also participates in various interdepartmental major study programs. For additional information, consult the department's home page at [www.whitman.edu/content/politics](http://www.whitman.edu/content/politics).

**101-104 Special Topics in Politics: Introductory Level  
4 credits**

An introductory course designed to familiarize students with basic concepts and problems in the study of politics. When offered, courses will focus on a different topic or area and will generally include lectures and discussion. The class is specifically aimed at first and second year students. Any current offerings follow.

**101 ST: Politics through Film**

**Fall**

**Serim**

**4 credits**

This course will introduce students to the foundational concepts and critical lexicon of politics through the medium of film. The course revolves around weekly film screenings. The film of the week will be supplemented with readings that provide historical and theoretical context on the political, economic, social, and cultural issues under discussion. We will link formal techniques of making social reality visible to a political conception of seeing and explore a series of questions: What are the schemas through which social reality is given to be seen, is rendered seeable, or visible? Why are some things seen and others cast in the shade? How does the filmic apparatus's translation of social reality enable us to "see" the depicted reality in a new light—in the light of its underlying, unseen concepts? What are some potentials of the camera not simply to record a preexisting, extra-cinematic reality but to participate in its transformation?

May be taken for credit toward the Film & Media Studies major or minor. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

**109 Introduction to U.S. Politics and Policymaking**

**Spring**

**Beechey**

**4 credits**

This course introduces students to the various institutions, actors, and ideologies of contemporary U.S. politics and policymaking. We will make visible the multiple sites of policy formation in the United States as we move away from speaking of “the government” in the singular. Through a series of contemporary policy case studies, we will explore the many openings to influence policymaking and discover the myriad ways that good ideas can die. Throughout the course we will view U.S. politics and policymaking with a critical eye toward the impacts of gender, race, class, sexuality, and other systems of power and difference.

**110 Introduction to the Politics of Migration and Immigration**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

The movement of people across national borders has emerged as a central nexus of politics around the world—from the rise of anti-immigrant populist movements in Europe and the United States, to the global spread of hyper-militarized border enforcement regimes; from fierce debates about race, religion, and nationalism in receiving countries, to the ways out-migration transforms the economies and societies of sending countries. This course combines a global overview of migration politics with a focused introduction to the U.S. immigration system. Topics addressed include: colonialism, imperialism, and the historical roots of contemporary migrations; the political economy of migration on a local and global scale; race, nationalism, and nativism; the rise of militarized border enforcement; immigrant rights and anti-immigrant social movements; climate change and migration; and the history and workings of U.S. immigration law and policy.

**114 Introduction to African Politics**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course introduces students to a variety of scholarly works and arguments about the meaning and nature of African politics. We will not simply learn about how African politics and society are shaped by historical, economic, and legal conditions, but also how to critically evaluate a range of academic theories designed to explain political conditions in contemporary African politics. For these primary reasons, we will look at a variety of political challenges facing African state and how resolutions to these challenges may require a shift in the ways we evaluate the success of politics in general. Additionally, we will dedicate part of the course to looking closely at the nature of political authority, factors that shape political identities, transitions to democracy, various political ideologies, and pressing issues regarding economic development and poverty.

**117 Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law, Culture & Political Thought**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course will provide a broad introductory survey of the emergence and development of the U.S. Constitutional tradition. We will situate that development within a set of enduring power struggles and constitutive political facts: the radical impulses of democracy, the collective yet fragmented nature of sovereignty in constitutional structure and theory, the individualistic logic of “rights,” the racialized order of U.S. law and society, the politics of property and distribution, the culture of fear and empire, and the ideology of “progress.” Readings will include texts by Alexis de Tocqueville, Hannah Arendt, Charles Beard, James Madison, The Anti-Federalists, and Thomas Paine. We will devote time to very close readings of primary texts, including: the Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution (as originally ratified + the Bill of Rights and subsequent Amendments), and decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. By the end of the course, we will have to consider whether the U.S. has had one constitution or several constitutions sequentially (early republic, post-Civil War, post-New Deal, post-Brown) or many constitutions competing all at once, a jurisprudential schizophrenia that perhaps continues to this day.

**119 Whitman in the Global Food System****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

This course uses food as a window through which to examine the study of politics and its connections to our everyday lives. Topics range from the geopolitics of food aid and trade to the gendered politics of export agriculture in the Third World, from the political ecology of obesity in the United States to the causes of famine in Africa. The course is designed to get students out of the classroom and into the larger community. To this end, along with standard seminar readings, discussions, and occasional lectures, the course includes short field trips and small group projects in which students trace connections between food on campus and larger global processes.

**121 Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Political Theory****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

This course introduces students to the history of European political theory through an investigation of classical Greek and premodern Christian writings. Texts to be explored may include Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War*, Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, St. Augustine's *City of God*, and St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. May be elected as Classics 221.

**122 Introduction to Modern European Political Theory****Fall****Davari****4 credits**

This course introduces students to the history of European political theory from the 16th through the 19th centuries, focusing particularly on the origins and development of liberalism. Themes covered in this class may include: How did political theorists make sense of the developing nation state? How have modern political theorists conceived of the concepts of "justice," "freedom," and "equality"? What role did the growing dominance of capitalism play in altering political conceptions of the individual? How have Marxist and anarchist thinkers critiqued the language of liberalism? Authors to be considered may include Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Tocqueville, and Marx. Politics 121 is not a prerequisite for Politics 122.

**124 Introduction to Politics and the Environment****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

An introduction to key concepts in the study of politics using environmental issues as illustrations. Designed for first- and second-year students, this course encourages critical thinking and writing about such political concepts as equality, justice, freedom, liberalism, power, dissent, individualism, and community. Strong emphasis is placed on developing critical writing skills and persuasive oral arguments. A field trip may be required. Three periods a week.

**147 International Politics****Fall****S. Biswas****4 credits**

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of contemporary international politics. The course will explore contending approaches to the study of international politics, including political realism, political idealism and liberalism, feminism, political economy, and constructivism. We will discuss how these different approaches can help us understand major current issues, including war and peace, weapons proliferation, the environment, globalization, and human rights.

**200-204 Special Studies in Politics: Introductory Level****1-4 credits**

An introductory course designed to familiarize students with basic concepts and problems in the study of politics. When offered, courses will focus on a different topic or area, and will generally include lectures and discussion. Any current offerings follow.

**200 ST: Land Water Justice: Envisioning the Next West****Spring/Summer****Blavascunas, Brick, Thayne****1 or 4 credits**

This field course examines land, water, and justice in the inland Northwest, with an emphasis on racial and climate justice. Students will read about connections between manifest destiny and decolonization while gaining skills in digital storytelling, oral history, and interviews. Particular emphasis will be placed on

imagining just futures and how to examine practical and aspirational solutions for addressing critical problems of climate change and racial inequality. The course has a one credit spring seminar and an accompanying three credit field component in the following May/June. May be elected as Anthropology 247. *Prerequisite:* Admission to the Program-**Just Futures/Next West Media Lab (see Special Programs section of the catalog)**. Distribution area: cultural pluralism, humanities, or social sciences.

### **201 ST: Carceral Cultures**

**Fall**

**Serin**

**4 credits**

This course offers students an intellectual toolkit for thinking critically and engaging politically with contemporary problems of incarceration as a logic of state and social formation. Drawing from historical, ethnographic, and theoretical texts about slave plantations, native reservations, internment camps, prisons, refugee camps and immigration detention centers in diverse cultural and geographic locations, we will rethink capital, labor and political economy; regimes of racialization and gendering; and sovereignty and biopolitics in settler-colonial and neoliberal contexts. We will also attend to the experiences and alternative imaginaries of those captive in carceral complexes in an effort to learn from abolition movements. May be elected as Anthropology 248. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

### **202 ST: International Law**

**Fall**

**Lemma**

**4 credits**

This course explores the theories, origins, features and operations of international law at the interface between law and politics, with an emphasis on how international law governs relations involving sovereign states, supranational and international institutions and increasingly individual persons, private businesses and other non-state actors. The course adopts the traditional view of the international legal order as a Westphalian system of sovereign states and explains how international law traces its theories, origins and features to the defining characteristic of its primary constituents, sovereignty of states. It also analyzes the two major elements of international law, namely treaty and custom, and the operations of supranational and international institutions and other subjects of international law like diplomats and other state agents. Moreover, the course engages dispute settlement pertaining to international law by examining issues of conflict and choice of laws and jurisdictions and recognition and enforcement of decisions of international and national courts and arbitration tribunals. The course also addresses newer themes in international law, including human rights, climate change, migration, terrorism, corruption and other “international” crimes, as well as the application of international law to individual persons, private businesses, civil society organizations and other non-state actors. May be applied toward the Global Politics requirement of the Politics-Environmental Studies major. Distribution area: social sciences.

### **203 ST: Politics of Salmon**

**Spring**

**Thayne**

**4 credits**

News stories forecast the imminent demise of Columbia River salmon. Yet Supreme Court interpretation of the 1855 treaties of Washington and Oregon territories holds the states accountable to ensure that there are enough salmon in the river to fulfill treaty obligations to the Indigenous peoples of the N’chi-Wana, “the Big River.” In the Pacific Northwest, salmon are political. Dam removal, treaty rights, aquaculture, orcas, pollution, hatcheries, climate change, fish-ins, water, agriculture, the ESA, First Foods, intertribal politics... For better or worse, the lives of salmon are bound up with the lives of humans, and their future is largely up to our actions. Whitman College, located on the eastern edge of the Columbia River Basin, with the concrete-choked and salmon-bereft Mill Creek flowing through it, is a perfect place to engage the politics of salmon--politics which, whether we realize it or not, we are already a part of. May be elected as Environmental Studies 203, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 203 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

**204 ST: Abolition: Theory and Praxis****Spring****Serin****4 credits**

How does abolition generate a radical critique of incarceration as a logic of state and social formation? What are the limitations of liberal and progressive demands to reform systems of legitimated state violence, including criminal justice, policing, and domestic militarization and war? How does abolitionist praxis facilitate alternative notions of freedom, justice, security, and community that do not rely on systems of carceral state power? Readings include W. E. B Du Bois, Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Mariame Kamba, Andrea Ritchie, Alex Vitale, Dylan Rodriguez, Frank Wilderson, Allegra McLeod, Alberto Toscano as well as two collections of prison writings edited by Joy James. There are no prerequisites for this course but it may be taken as a sequel to Carceral Cultures offered in Fall 2021. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

**205 ST: From Arab Spring to Climate Change: Contentious Politics and Collective Behavior in the Contemporary Middle East and North Africa Region****Fall****Tofangsazi****4 credits**

This course utilizes sociological theories of collective behavior and social movements to explain some of the most important recent episodes of social change and contention in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The course begins by analyzing the historical reasons behind the emergence and success of the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 and proceeds to sociological analyses of more recent social movements such as the Iranian Green Movement (2009), and the Arab Spring (2010). The latter portion of the class focuses on the role (or lack thereof) of climate change in the emergence of the Arab Spring protests and their metamorphosis into civil wars in countries such as Syria and Iraq. Lectures and discussions focus on contentious politics, as well as the importance of ethno/religious diversity, political economy, and previous social movements in shaping the contemporary social landscape of the region. Students will be evaluated in the course based on exams, quizzes, class participation, and a final paper which employs sociological theories and research methods to analyze one of the topics studied in this course. Course will count toward South Asian and Middle East or Race and Ethnic Studies. May be taken as Sociology 293-A. Distribution areas: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

**207 Islam and Politics****Spring****Davari****4 credits**

This course surveys the various significations of Islam in contemporary politics, with an emphasis on references to Muslims from the Middle East. We will consider how authors have advanced diverse, and often conflicting, understandings of Islam in response to concrete political problems in the 20th century—and what it means for us, in a post-9/11 world, to study what they said. The course is divided in two parts: ‘Beginnings as Dissidence’ and ‘Political Order Today.’ In the first part (‘Beginnings as Dissidence’), we consider instantiations of political thought that draw on origin stories to resist existing power structures. Our survey will include articulations of Islam in relation to republicanism, Marxism, black internationalism, and the anti-colonial tradition. In the second part (‘Political Order Today’), we consider instantiations of political thought that reference Islam to establish, justify, and/or reform existing power structures (e.g. the modern state). Our survey will include articulations of Islam in relation to liberal democracy, constitutionalism, neo-liberalism, and themes pertaining to the status of minority populations in plural societies (e.g. gender equality and free speech). May taken for credit toward the Middle East/Islamic World area requirement for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major.

**208 Middle East Politics****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

This course examines approaches to the study of politics in the modern Middle East. We will consider region-specific iterations of conventional themes, including but not limited to: the state; political economy; nationalism; revolution; war; religion and politics; and authoritarianism and democracy. The course begins with critiques of knowledge production articulated in response to colonization and foreign intervention. How are we to interpret

modern Middle East politics in light of these critiques? What would it mean to write against regional exceptionalism—to understand the “Middle East” as a global phenomenon with ill-defined borders? When analyzing geopolitics, how can we think beyond suffering and resistance to envision a politics of the everyday? What are the limits of area studies? And finally, despite its limits, can area studies nevertheless afford generative possibilities for future inquiry and political action? Case studies appear selectively to illustrate core themes. May taken for credit toward the Middle East area requirement for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major.

### **212 What is Political Freedom?**

**Spring**

**J. Jackson**

**4 credits**

This course asks the deceptively simple question: what is political freedom? Is freedom necessarily tied to the idea of “the political”? Or is freedom best understood as being primarily challenged by the formation of the political and the decisions rendered there? Is political freedom concerned primarily with the individual? Or with the polity as a whole? Or with political collectives that cross familiar political boundaries and borders? Who is capable of political freedom? The many? The few? Do we all desire political freedom or is it a burden most would prefer not to carry? Is political freedom a gift or a right? What obstacles to realizing political freedom exist in the present? What powers and practices enable it? What powers and practices enfeeble it? We will explore these questions via an engagement with the thinking of Hannah Arendt, Aristotle, Isaiah Berlin, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Milton Friedman, Emma Goldman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Catharine MacKinnon, Karl Marx, J.S. Mill, Plato, J.J. Rousseau, and Alexis de Tocqueville.

### **215 The First Amendment: Speech, Press, and Assembly**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

The First Amendment is central to the functioning of U.S. democracy. Moreover, some scholars contend that the First Amendment is at the very heart of the “meaning of America.” In this class, we will focus on the clauses regarding speech, assembly, and the press while concentrating on the intertwined issues of freedom, democracy, and power. Some specific questions to be addressed include: what is the relationship between the First Amendment and the politics of public space; concentrated media power; new political economies of knowledge; the suppression and protection of dissent; and socio-political inequalities (e.g., group libel and hate speech)? We will also interrogate the alleged distinction between speech/act and, more broadly, between reason-persuasion/violence-force. In this course we will study the development of legal doctrine and spend a fair amount of time reading case law.

### **228 Political Ecology**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of “political ecology,” a framework for thinking about environmental politics that combines insights from geography, anthropology, history, political economy, and ecology. Through the lens of case studies from around the world, the course critically examines the origins and key contributions of political ecology, with a focus on three themes: 1) Nature-society relations, or the challenges of weaving history, economy, and power into the study of the environment (and vice versa); 2) The politics of resource access and control in diverse settings from Amazonian forests to biotech laboratories; 3) The (dis)connections between environmental movements and social justice struggles.

### **232 The Politics of Globalization**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course introduces students to some of the major scholarly works and central debates about globalization. The course will critically examine some of the competing perspectives on the historical origins of globalization, the shape and intensity of its many dynamics (economic, political and cultural), its inevitability and desirability, and its impacts on different communities around the world. Some of the central themes covered will include the future of the nation-state, the salience of various transnational actors, changing patterns of capital and labor mobility, rising levels of environmental degradation and new kinds of cultural configurations.

**240 Mexico: Politics and Society in the Age of NAFTA****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

Mexico and the United States have been inextricably connected for as long as both countries have existed. Currently, Mexico is the United States' third largest trade partner. More than 10 percent of the U.S. population is of Mexican descent, and every year millions of U.S. residents visit Mexico as tourists. And yet—fed on a diet of political polemics, racialized representations, and sensationalist media—most people in the U.S. have little understanding of their southern neighbor. This course surveys the history, political economy, and cultural politics of Mexico. It begins with a short introduction to Mexican history and a critical exploration of representations of Mexico in U.S. popular culture going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It then focuses in on several key contemporary themes including: poverty, development, and economic restructuring; the War on Drugs; social movements and struggles for justice; migration and transnational Mexico; conflicts over land and resources; debates about race, gender, and sexuality within Mexico; and the unique dynamics of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Course materials span a wide range, from the work of Mexican political theorists, historians, anthropologists, and economists to novels, films, and social media. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major.

**254 Gender and Race in Law and Policy****Spring****Beechey****4 credits**

This course offers an introductory survey of the ways in which gender and race have been constructed in and through law and policy in the United States. We will uncover the legacy of racism and sexism in U.S. law and policy, and explore the potential as well as the limitations of using law and policy as tools for social and political change. Readings will draw from feminist and critical race theories to critically examine historic and contemporary debates in law and policy surrounding issues such as: employment, education, families, and violence.

**260 The Secularization of Whitman College****Fall****Thayne****4 credits**

Whitman College was originally founded as a seminary named after two missionaries who were sent to this region to convert the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla peoples to Christianity. Though the college now has no official ties to Christianity, we continue to bear the names of the Whitmans, house artifacts collected by our missionary founders, report of our mascots, mark and wash our monuments, and have a mission statement outlining our goals and aspirations. Is Whitman haunted? Are all secularisms haunted? In this class we will consider the present politics of Whitman College in light of our archives, collections, and relationships, as well as broader scholarship on religion and secularism. May be elected as Religion 260.

**287 Natural Resource Policy and Management****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

This course introduces the student to basic problems in natural resource policymaking in the American West. We will focus on the legal, administrative, and political dimensions of various natural resource management problems, including forests, public rangelands, national parks, biodiversity, energy, water, and recreation. We also will explore the role of environmental ideas and nongovernmental organizations, and we will review a variety of conservation strategies, including land trusts, various incentive-based approaches, and collaborative conservation. A field trip may be required.

**301 The Art of Revolution****Spring****Davari****4 credits**

How do entirely new political formations emerge? In this seminar, we will consider the possibility of responding to this question by way of aesthetics. Our inquiry will be bookmarked by two defining and radical modern revolutionary events: the 1789 French Revolution and the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Where the former initiated a period of Enlightenment, the latter, in creating an Islamic Republic, appears to have broken the Enlightenment mold. In light of these events, how might we characterize the relationship between aesthetics and political thought? Recent scholarship in political theory suggests that moments of radical democratic action involve the making seen of that which previously had not and could not be seen. For this proposition to hold, a new perspective must emerge



whereby new—or revolutionary—modes of political and social life can be recognized in the first place. On the one hand, the aesthetic promises to foster these new ways of seeing. On the other hand, the aesthetic field of vision always seems to be conditioned by politics. What are we to make of this paradox? When and how might revolutionary change occur in light of it?

### **309 Environment and Politics in the American West**

**Fall**

**Brick**

**4 credits**

This course explores the political landscape of the American West, focusing on natural resource policy and management on public lands. Topics include forest, mineral, range, grassland, water, and energy policy with an emphasis on the local impacts of climate change. Required of, and open only to, students accepted to Semester in the West.

### **311 Deservingness in U.S. Social Policy**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

Why are some beneficiaries of social policy coded as deserving assistance from the government while others are marked as undeserving? What impacts do these notions of deservingness have on social policies and the politics which surround them? What are the consequences for the material realities of individual lives? How do gender, race, class, and citizenship status work together to construct and maintain distinctions of deservingness? This course engages with these and other questions through historic and contemporary debates in U.S. social policies such as welfare, Social Security, and disability benefits.

### **312 Humanism between Europe and its Others**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

What does it mean to be human? Is it possible to articulate a universal notion of humanity? What are the challenges to doing so? Why should we (or shouldn't we) attempt to do so? This class responds to these questions in light of a recent political phenomenon: the rise of universal human rights discourse in the aftermath of the Second World War. Articulations of humanism in canonical political theory take European "man" as the center of their analysis. This course considers humanist ideas as they were adopted, engaged, and critiqued by those considered to be—and who considered themselves as—different from European "man." Our investigation covers three strains of contemporary political thought prevalent among those writing as and/or on behalf of Europe's "others": humanism, anti-humanism, and new humanism.

### **313 Tocqueville and Democratic Theory**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

What do we mean when we say "democracy": is it an electoral system, a cultural order, or a political theory of sovereignty? Is democracy an inescapable unfolding historical fact or a claimed normative good to guide political action? What relationship is there between democracy and wealth or property? Is democracy the realization of freedom or the greatest danger to freedom? How do the boundaries (both imagined and real) of something called "Europe" contour thinking about democracy and its progress? What are the implications for political life when democracy appears as a revolution without end? In an age of democracy, what aristocratic virtues have we lost? Are they recoverable? These are some of the questions we will explore in this seminar via a close and sustained engagement with the thought of Alexis de Tocqueville. Alexis de Tocqueville has served as a theoretical resource and inspiration for liberal individualism, small-government conservatism, communitarianism, Euro-imperialism, and radical democratic anti-capitalism. We will explore all of these threads in his writings. Although we may engage with secondary sources and the writings of Tocqueville's contemporaries, the primary focus of this seminar will be Tocqueville's works. We will read both volumes of *Democracy in America*, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, and other selected writings.

### **314-316 Special Studies in Politics: Intermediate Level**

#### **4 credits**

Intermediate seminars designed for students who have had considerable prior work in the study of politics. Each time they are offered, these seminars focus on different topics. Any current offerings follow.

#### **314 ST: Biopolitics/Necropolitics**

**Fall**

**Serin**

**4 credits**

From the unequal (global) distribution of essential medicines and medical technologies, manifested most currently in the pandemic, to the continued debates over health care, social security, retirement ages, abortion and immigration; from the necropolitical killing and social abandonment of racialized, ethnicized, and gendered others to the development of new technologies whose innovative potentialities produce the conditions for a return of fantasies of immortality, biopolitics appears to be at the center of every new crisis. Attentive to the paradoxes (co-constitutive relation between biopolitics and necropolitics) and emerging limits of biopolitics (its anthropocentrism), this course seeks to make sense of the reciprocal implication of the concepts of “life” and “politics.” It proposes a close and rigorous engagement with the seminal texts that today have come to constitute something like a “biopolitical turn” and their critical readings. Readings include Foucault, Arendt, Agamben, Esposito, Mbembe, Puar, Wilderson, Sexton, Weheliye, Wynter, Hardt and Negri, Deleuze, Haraway, and Povinelli. May be elected as Anthropology 347. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

#### **316 ST: Decolonizing Marxism**

**Spring**

**Serin**

**4 credits**

This course examines select concepts within the Marxian oeuvre in terms of their historical origins, their translation and their movements across both time and social and cultural contexts. It is, in short, a course which attempts to interrogate the relationship between globalizability of radical politics and transformative theories within the political movements themselves. Structurally, the course has two parts: In the first part, we explore the tradition within which Marx made his most radical analytical interventions and read key texts drawn from the later works which make room for relatively heterogeneous (anti-evolutionist and anti-historicist) definitions of the concept of communism as well as the interventions, theses and hypotheses presented at successive meetings of the “Idea of Communism” launched by Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek in 2009. The second part of the course is devoted to an exploration of the trajectories that these texts and their associated ideas had outside of Europe: Lenin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Senghor, Fanon, Shariati, and subaltern studies. May be elected as Anthropology 348. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or social sciences.

#### **320 The Politics of Global Security**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

In the study of international relations, the concept of security is almost always tethered to the nation-state through the central signifier of “national security”. Even studies of private security, cyber warfare, or drone technology, all of which raise some complex questions about the changing parameters of modern warfare, rarely stray too far from a focus on the state. The purpose of this course is to both understand the motivations for and the effects of this linkage and open up different ways to think of the concept and the referents of security. Using a variety of different approaches through which global security has been studied, the course will ask who is made secure and/or insecure by statist security, what kinds of apparatuses of power are created in the provision of security, what sorts of affective investments are involved in projects of security, and what political possibilities and risks are inherent in imagining a world beyond security. Topics covered may include: practices and technologies of war-making, the military-industrial complex, nuclear proliferation, surveillance and the securitization of everyday life, and military disarmament and peace movements. *Prerequisite:* previous coursework in Politics or consent of instructor.

#### **322 The Anthropocene**

**Spring**

**Brick**

**4 credits**

This course is a discussion seminar on the implications of climate change for human societies, natural communities, and hybrid human/natures in the Anthropocene, the age of man. Discussions will focus on controversies surrounding the relatively new concept of the Anthropocene itself and how this concept unsettles understandings of nature, wildness, sustainability, democracy, citizenship, global capitalism, environmental justice, and environmental governance. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, drawing on readings in climate politics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and critical climate studies. Although our focus will be on theoretical and conceptual debates, we will also explore proposed climate mitigation and adaptation strategies such as low carbon social and economic systems, geo-engineering, carbon sequestration, and landscape-scale conservation efforts. A field trip and a longer research paper may be required. May be elected as Environmental Studies 322, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 322 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

### **323 Debt, Law, and Politics**

**Fall**

**J. Jackson**

**4 credits**

In recent years the issue of debt—individual debt, institutional debt, sovereign debt—has burst forth into public life in a manner that increasingly raises pressing questions for political democracy and constitutional order. Financial crises have produced constitutional crises and vice versa. As example, threats by the U.S. Congress to default on public debts promised to produce a financial meltdown as well as a constitutional one, as constitutional theorists attempted to locate the “least unconstitutional” option for resolving the matter. This course will explore the complex interaction between creditor-debtor relations and theories of constitutionalism. Questions to be explored in the course include: What is the implication of the inequality lurking in debtor-creditor relationships for the constitutional presumption of equal citizenship and the ideal of comity between nations? Is the legal fiction of a sovereign constitutional “people” a challenge to the ascendancy of post-national financial power or a precondition of it? To what extent does the constitutional language of right, contract, and obligation contradict or marginalize concepts of mercy, forgiveness, and friendship?

### **325 Queer Politics and Policy**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This upper level seminar traces the development and effects of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) politics in the United States from pre-Stonewall through contemporary activism, attending to the importance of race and ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sex, class, and age in LGBTQ organizing. We will explore contemporary policy debates and on-going tensions between assimilation and liberation in U.S. queer politics with an eye toward global connections. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major or minor.

### **328 Contemporary Feminist Theories**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course will begin by exploring various schools of contemporary feminist theory (e.g., Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, ecofeminism, psychoanalytic feminism, etc.). We will then ask how proponents of these schools analyze and criticize specific institutions and practices (e.g., the nuclear family, heterosexuality, the state, reproductive technologies, etc.). Throughout the semester, attention will be paid to the ways gender relations shape the formation and interpretation of specifically political experience.

### **331 The Politics of International Hierarchy**

**Spring**

**S. Biswas**

**4 credits**

This course examines the ways in which the international social-political system is hierarchical. The course looks at how such relations of hierarchy have been historically produced and continue to be sustained through a variety of mechanisms. The first part of the course focuses on the period of classical colonialism, examining the racial and gendered constructions of imperial power. The second part of the course turns to more contemporary North-South relations, studying the discourses and practices of development and human rights, and critically examining the resuscitation of the project of empire in recent U.S. foreign policy practices.

**333 Feminist and Queer Legal Theory****Spring****J. Jackson****4 credits**

Broadly, this is a course on gender, sexuality, and the law. More particularly, this course will 1) explore the relationship between queer theoretical and feminist theoretical projects and will 2) consider how these projects engage legal doctrines and norms. In question form: Where do feminist and queer theories intersect? Where do they diverge? How do these projects conceive of the law in conjunction with their political ends? How have these projects shifted legal meanings and rules? How have the discourses of legality reconfigured these political projects? These explorations will be foregrounded by legal issues such as marriage equality, sexual harassment, workers' rights, and privacy. Theoretically, the course will engage with issues such as identity, rights, the state, cultural normalization, and capitalist logics. We will read legal decisions and political theory in this course.

**334 The U.S.-Mexico Border: Immigration, Development, and Globalization****Spring****Bobrow-Strain****4 credits**

This course examines one of the most politically charged and complex sites in the Western hemisphere: the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border. The borderlands are a zone of cultural mixings, profound economic contrasts, and powerful political tensions. In recent years, the border has emerged as a key site in debates over U.S. immigration policy, national security, the drug war, Third World development, social justice in Third World export factories, and transnational environmental problems. This course examines these issues as they play out along the sharp line running from east Texas to Imperial Beach, California, as well as in other sites from the coffee plantations of Chiapas to the onion fields of Walla Walla. These concrete cases, in turn, illuminate political theories of the nation-state, citizenship, and transnationalism. Students are encouraged, but not required, to take this course in conjunction with the U.S.-Mexico border trip usually offered at the end of spring semester.

**339 Nature, Culture, Politics****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

In this seminar we explore changing understandings of nature in American culture, the role of social power in constructing these understandings, and the implications these understandings have for the environmental movement. Topics discussed will include wilderness and wilderness politics, management of national parks, ecosystem management, biodiversity, place, and the political uses of nature in contemporary environmental literature. The seminar will occasionally meet at the Johnston Wilderness Campus (transportation will be provided).

**345 Indigenous Politics****Fall****Thayne****4 credits**

"It has been said that being born Indian is being born into politics." -Gerald Taiaiake Alfred. America is an occupied space, structured by a logic of elimination. Indigeneity is the refusal to be eliminated. Whitman College is a part of that occupation, and yet we have an agreement with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, whose ancestors have lived on this land since "time immemorial"--long before the arrival of any American settlers. In this class we will spend a semester considering what that commitment can and should entail. Topics and themes include treaties, nation states, federal Indian law, Indigenous nationhood, boarding schools, education, monuments and memorials, queer Indigenous studies, MMIW, settler colonialism, blood, DNA, First Foods, Truth and Reconciliation, reparations, sovereignties, Indigenous futurities, critical indigenous studies, and more.

**354 Topics in Jurisprudence: Time, Law, and Justice****Not offered 2021-22****4 credits**

This seminar will center on the nexus between theorizations of time in political life and the politics of difference. In particular, we will consider how different peoples, histories, and hopes are included and excluded in theoretical and legal orderings of temporality. For example, how might the laws, norms and practices of gendered "publics" and "politics" inform the experience of one's sense of place in political time? In addition, how might the accumulation of racial privilege and property structure different understandings of the future and the urgency required to get there? Does the law solidify these temporal regimes or offer the means to reconfigure them? The course will interrogate writings about the velocities of modernity, the time of capital, the historical markers of a "now," the constitutional

imperatives for justice, and the conditions prefiguring futures on the horizon. Texts will include works from the Western canon, landmark legal documents, and contemporary writings in political theory. Some thinkers we will engage include Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, Martin Luther King, Jr., Joan Tronto, and Jacques Derrida.

### **359 Gender and International Hierarchy**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course draws attention to the manner in which international hierarchies and gender relations intersect to have implications for the lives of Third World women. The course examines how the needs and interests of Third World women are addressed in various international discourses and practices, how Third World women are affected by international political practices, and how Third World women sustain, resist, and transform international power structures. We will cover a number of different issue areas that include security and war, development and transnational capitalism, media and representation, cultural practices and human rights, women's movements and international feminism.

### **362 Food, Culture, and Politics**

**Fall**

**Bobrow-Strain**

**4 credits**

Eating is a relational act linking people and environments in complex webs of power. Across time and geography, food has united and divided, underpinned political systems, provided the material and symbolic basis for conceptions of society, and played key roles in forging gender, race, class, and status. This interdisciplinary class draws on texts from history, anthropology, political theory, literature, art, religion, and political economy to explore the cultural politics of food, diet, and eating. It focuses primarily on the development and dynamics of capitalist global food systems from the 18th Century to the present. May be elected as Environmental Studies 362, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 362 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

### **363 Genealogies of Political Economy**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

What is capitalism? Where did it come from? How does it work, and what are the politics of its epochal expansion? This course explores the origins, dynamics, and politics of capitalism as they have been theorized over the past 200 years. It begins with classical political economy, closely reading the works of Ricardo, Smith, and Marx. It then traces the lineages of classical political economy through the works of theorists such as Weber, Lenin, Schumpeter, Gramsci, Keynes, and Polanyi. The course ends with an examination of theorists who critique Eurocentric political economy by approaching the dynamics and experiences of capitalism from Europe's former colonies. Topics addressed in the course include debates about imperialism, the state, class struggle, development, and globalization.

### **365 Political Economy of Care/Work**

**Fall**

**Beechey**

**4 credits**

Whether labeled work/family balance, the second shift, or the care gap, tensions between care and work present important challenges for individuals, families and states. This seminar interrogates the gendered implications of the political and economic distinction between care and work. How do public policies and employment practices construct a false choice between work and care? What role should the state play in the provision of care for children, the sick, the disabled and the elderly? How does the invisibility of carework contribute to the wage gap in the United States and the feminization of poverty globally? Course readings will draw from the literatures on political economy, feminist economics and social policy.

### **367 African Political Thought**

**Not offered 2021-22**

**4 credits**

This course will explore themes in African politics such as colonialism, nationalism, development, authenticity, gender, violence, and justice, through the ideas of some of Africa's most notable political thinkers of the past half-century, including Fanon, Nkrumah, Senghor, Nyerere, Mandela, and Tutu. The course also will consider the work of contemporary critics of the postcolonial African state. These may include writers, artists, and activists such as Ngugi wa Thiongo, Chinua Achebe, Wangari Maathai, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Wambui Otieno.

#### **400-404 Special Studies in Politics: Advanced Level**

##### **4 credits**

Advanced seminars designed for students who have had considerable prior work in the study of politics. Each time they are offered, these seminars focus on different topics. Students are expected to complete extensive reading assignments, write several papers, and participate regularly in discussions. Any current offerings follow.

#### **481, 482 Individual Projects**

**Fall, Spring**

**Staff**

**1-4 credits**

Directed individual study and research. *Prerequisites:* appropriate prior coursework in politics *and* consent of the supervising instructor.

#### **490 Senior Seminar**

**Fall**

**Beechey, Bobrow-Strain, Davari, J. Jackson**

**4 credits**

This team-taught seminar will meet one evening a week throughout the semester. Its purpose is to engage senior majors in sustained discussion of contemporary political issues. Requirements include attendance at all seminar meetings; extensive participation in discussion; and the completion of several papers, one being a proposal for a senior thesis or honor thesis. Required of, and open only to, senior politics majors. Fall degree candidates should plan to take this seminar at the latest possible opportunity.

#### **497 Senior Thesis**

**Spring**

**Beechey, Bobrow-Strain, Davari, J. Jackson**

**3-4 credits**

During their final semester at Whitman, majors will satisfactorily complete the senior thesis launched the previous semester. Over the course of the semester, students submit sections of their thesis for discussion and review with their readers on a regular basis and defend the final thesis orally before two faculty members. Detailed information on this process is provided to students well in advance. No thesis will be deemed acceptable unless it receives a grade of C- or better. Politics majors register for four credits of Politics 497. Politics-Environmental Studies majors should register for three credits of Politics 497 and one credit of Environmental Studies 488, for a total of four credits. *Prerequisite:* Required of, and open only to, senior majors not taking Politics 498.

#### **498 Honors Thesis**

**Spring**

**Beechey, Bobrow-Strain, Davari, J. Jackson**

**3-4 credits**

During their final semester at Whitman, senior honors candidates will satisfactorily complete the senior honors thesis launched the prior semester. Over the course of the semester, students submit sections of their thesis for discussion and review with their readers on a regular basis, and defend the final thesis orally before two faculty members. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in politics. Politics majors register for four credits of Politics 498. Politics-Environmental Studies majors should register for three credits of Politics 498 and one credit of Environmental Studies 488, for a total of four credits. *Prerequisites:* admission to honors candidacy and consent of the department chair.