Department of Political Science

Summer 2015

Course Descriptions
Whether we want to believe it or not, politics is a part of our lives and we need to understand it. Whether your future is taking you into business, law, education, the arts or the natural sciences, politics will touch your lives in many ways.

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the fundamentals of American government and politics, particularly the major institutions and processes. Further, it aims to develop skills and abilities in analyzing and evaluating issues and public policies in American politics. On the one hand, this course wants to stimulate interest in American politics and impart tools that can be of use to all life-long students of politics. On the other hand, this course hopes to develop critical (that is, analytical) citizens, so that each of us will have examined reasons for the choices we make.
PS 1200-001
Foundations of Law: An Introduction to Legal Studies
Richard Middleton

100% Online

Summer Session IV
May 18, 2015 - July 11, 2015

PS1200/CCJ 122, Foundations of Law, is a rigorous and intense introductory course on law and the American legal system. The material taught in this course is similar to that which students in their first year at an American Bar Association approved law school take. Students looking to take an “easy” course should not enroll in this course. This will probably be one of the hardest courses you encounter during your studies at the University. As a broad liberal arts approach to the study of law, this course is designed to familiarize students with legal ideas, legal reasoning, and legal processes. It also provides comparative and historical perspectives on law that will help explain legal diversity and legal change.

Finally, it offers opportunities to explore some of the persistent issues in law and legal theory: for example, issues about the sources of law, the responsibilities of the legal profession, or the relative merits of the adversary system. Individuals confront laws on a daily basis, yet are sometimes totally oblivious that they are affected by them. In the United States, laws guide most social interactions and create an atmosphere of stability and societal norms. Law, as applied, is mostly about limitations on human behavior. In this course, students will learn a wide-range of legal topics, issues, and concepts; among them including: a) case briefing, 2) IREAC, 3) foundations of American law, 4) the judicial system, and 5) substantive areas of law.
This course introduces students to western and non-western systems. It examines similarities and differences in the basic political ideologies, structures, economies, social institutions and governmental processes of developed and developing countries. It also provides frameworks for understanding the cultures of the world that are the basis for formal economic and political institutions. In addition, the course examines the role of non-state institutions, including trans-national ones, in shaping national policies. It uses case studies from Africa, Asia, Latin America, as well as Europe, to enhance student understanding of comparative politics.
The primary objective of this course is to investigate the institutional role of the U.S. Supreme Court in the American political system. The contemporary Supreme Court is often described as being at the “storm center” of American politics. In this course, we will explore how Supreme Court Justices wield power. The following topics will be covered: the Supreme Court’s institutional background and place in the federal judicial system, the process and politics of selecting Justices to the Supreme Court, how Justices select cases for review, the role of oral argument and attorney expertise, Supreme Court decision making theories and the implementation and impact of Court decisions. Course requirements: 4 short papers (3-4 pages), 4 quizzes and online class participation using Discussion Board.