

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Department of History and Political Science

Our department explores the present and past through two distinct disciplines: History and Political Science. The Political Science program at Worcester State University offers a major and minor in Political Science and minors in Pre-Law and Civic Engagement. Political Science gives students the opportunity to pursue a broad range of questions about the organization and function of government. Students in Political Science programs acquire the analytical skills to ask and answer questions about how and why governments operate in the way that they do. Students can choose to focus on any of the traditional subfields of political science, which include American politics, comparative government, international relations, and political theory. Graduates are prepared to work in a broad array of professional settings, including in traditional career paths such as government service, law, business, journalism, and education; working with community and nonprofit organizations; and involvement in political movements and elected office. Many graduates continue their education to pursue advanced degrees in graduate school or law school.

- Civic Engagement Minor
- Political Science Major
- Political Science Minor
- Pre-Law Minor

Faculty

Nathan Angelo, Associate Professor (2016), B.A., Hofstra University; M.A., New York University and City University of New York; Ph.D., New School for Social Research

Erika Briesacher, Professor (2012), B.A., Illinois Wesleyan University; M.A., Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville; Ph.D., Kent State University

Anthony Dell'Aera, Associate Professor (2016), B.A., Trinity College; M.A., Ph.D. Brown University

Charlotte Haller, Department Chair, Professor (2004), B.A., Brown University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Wisconsin

Tona J. Hangen, Professor (2008), B.S., Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ph.D., Brandeis University

Robert W. Smith, Professor (2007), B.A., Syracuse University; M.A., Ph.D., College of William and Mary

Catriona Standfield, Assistant Professor (2020), B.A., University of Adelaide; M.A., Ph.D., Syracuse University

Courses

PO-110 American Government

LASC Categories: HBS, USW, CON

This course introduces students to the American political system and thus it will be an exploration of American republican democracy. We will attempt to understand the way that the political system operates by examining Congress, the presidency, the judiciary, federalism, political parties, interest groups, elections, civil liberties and civil rights, and policy issues relevant to Americans. We will explore the way that institutional arrangements facilitate debate, which ultimately leads to policy changes. Our objective in this class will be to understand the workings of American democracy.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PO-120 Global Politics

LASC Categories: GP, HBS, DAC, DIV

An introduction to Comparative Politics and International Relations. In this course, students will learn how different countries around the world govern themselves and how they interact with each other. Topics may include democratic and non-democratic regimes, theories of war and peace, global political cultures, and intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations. [Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PO-130 Introduction to Political Theory

LASC Categories: TLC

This course introduces students to the field of political theory by focusing on some of the major works and concepts such as democracy, freedom, liberty, and justice.

Alternating and every year. 3 Credits

PO-150 Foundations of Legal Studies

LASC Categories: HBS, CON

This course introduces the fundamentals of the American legal system. Primary topics will include the sources of law; constitutional interpretation; the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; federal and state judicial systems; civil and criminal law; legal ethics; and questions of power, authority, justice, inequality, individualism, and the community. Students will also learn the fundamentals of legal research, such as locating the texts of statutes, regulations, and court decisions on specific subjects; reading and analyzing statutes and case law; and developing techniques for legal writing and oral presentations.

Fall and Spring and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-160 Introduction to Civic Engagement

LASC Categories: ICW, USW

What are the responsibilities of citizenship? How do we define community? What are the ways we can participate in civic life?

This course in civic learning and civic engagement will help prepare individuals for effective democratic participation, which in turn promotes growth of healthy communities, global economic vitality, social and political well-being and democratic human interactions. Through a variety of readings and experiential activities, students will be introduced to the four core pillars in the Civic Engagement field: Civic and Democratic Knowledge, Civic and Democratic Skills, Civic and Democratic Values, and Civic and Democratic Action.

Alternating and every year. 3 Credits

PO-191 Special Topics: Political Science

Other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-193 First Year Seminar Political Science**LASC Categories:** FYS

Introductory level course covering topics of special interest to first year students. Offered only as a First Year Seminar.

Fall only and every year. 3 Credits

PO-201 International Relations Theory**LASC Categories:** USW, GP, WAC

Theory and practice of international security (realism and internationalism) and international political economy (liberalism and protectionism) in their historical context. [Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-202 Globalization**LASC Categories:** USW, GP, WAC

The promise and problems of globalization (spread of free market capitalism and political democracy). [Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-203 Gender, War and Peace**LASC Categories:** GP, HBS, DAC, DIV

A practical and thematic examination of the relevance of the concepts of gender to war and peace. Students will become familiar with multiple, feminist approaches to topics such as: militarization, gender and armed actors, wartime violence, the impact of war on gender relations, peace activism, peace processes, and peacekeeping. Classes will also cover the emergence of new norms adopted by the UN system to address these issues, as well as the emergence of feminist foreign policies. We will examine cases drawn from across the globe.

Alternating and every year. 3 Credits

PO-204 Women in Politics**LASC Categories:** DIV, HBS

This course examines how women have gained access to formal politics in the US and internationally. Using intersectional feminist theories and theories of political participation, mobilization, and representation, we will examine why women and which women are excluded from formal politics, how women have exercised political power formally and informally, which women benefit most from expanded participation, and whether women's political representation is linked to better outcomes for ordinary women across different groups.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-205 Poverty and Development**LASC Categories:** GP, HBS, DIV

Why are some countries rich, and some poor? What causes these global inequalities, and do we have effective policy solutions? Does aid work? In this course, we will examine the political economy of development across the globe. We will examine how concepts like "poverty" are defined and measured, competing explanations for development, and the efficacy of international responses to poverty alleviation. Importantly, we will center the experiences and perspectives from the Global South.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-209 Ancient and Classical Political Theory

This class introduces students to the ideas and concepts found in the works of ancient and classical political theorists. We will read major works by theorists like Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Mill, Hobbes, the Federalists, and Rousseau. Emphasis will be placed on how theorists justify the existence of government and how its conception has evolved over time. We then trace fundamental principles, such as democracy, liberty, and justice and show how these ideas are encapsulated in the US Constitution.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-211 History of US Foreign Policy I**LASC Categories:** USW

Colonial origins to the era of the Spanish-American War. The sources and development of United States foreign policy in that period. [Cross-listed with HI-211.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-212 History of US Foreign Policy II**LASC Categories:** USW

From 1900 to recent times; United States foreign policy traditions and the challenges of great power status. [Cross-listed with HI-212.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-213 The Modern Presidency**LASC Categories:** HBS, USW

This course will examine the evolution of the presidency. Special attention is given to those presidents who have expanded the office.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-215 State and Local Government**LASC Categories:** HBS, USW

Examines sub-national governments and politics in the United States; the structure and problems of these governments.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-216 Political Parties and Interest Groups**LASC Categories:** HBS

Examines the organization, functions, and methods of political parties; the role of interest groups in the American political process.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-217 The U.S. Congress**LASC Categories:** HBS, CON

The nature and function of the United States Congress, including the complexities of the lawmaking process, Congressional elections, the relationship between individual members of Congress and their constituencies, major issues of public policy, and institutional relations between Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-218 US Constitutional History I**LASC Categories:** CON, HBS, USW

The development of constitutional history as seen in decisions of the United States Supreme Court and their effects, from 1789 to 1921. [Cross-listed with HI-218.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-219 US Constitutional History II**LASC Categories:** CON, USW, HBS

Supreme Court decision-making from 1921; Federal-State relations, civil liberties, civil rights, loyalty program, labor, rights of defendants. [Cross-listed with HI-219.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-220 European Politics**LASC Categories:** HBS, GP

This course provides a comparative study of European government and politics, with a focus on major countries such as Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Russia. Special emphasis will be placed on learning about the structure of political power within the state and on important institutions that form the link between state and society, such as political parties and interest groups. Diverse nationalistic responses to the European Union will also be considered. [Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-221 Asian Politics**LASC Categories:** HBS, GP

This course provides students with an analysis of selected political systems of the countries of Asia. Students will have the opportunity to learn about major theories in comparative politics, which will be applied to the understanding of countries in the Asian region. Topics will include communist and post-communist transitions, democratization, social movements, and economic reform. [Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-222 Latin American Politics**LASC Categories:** GP, HBS

This course provides a comparative study of the government and politics of contemporary Latin America. It will explore the political systems of various countries, as well as how political dynamics, such as democratization, authoritarianism, and crisis situations, have affected political, economic, and social policies throughout the region. [Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-223 Political Communication**LASC Categories:** TLC

This course will analyze the relationship between citizens' opinions and the mass media through a focus on political campaign and governmental communication strategy. Specific attention will be given to the history of the relationship between politicians and the media. We will also study political campaign advertisements. We will analyze how political candidates and governments communicate with voters, how they shape their images and manage crises, and ultimately attempt to determine how effective politicians are in influencing public opinion.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-224 Middle Eastern Politics**LASC Categories:** HBS, GP

This course provides students with an analysis of selected political systems of the countries of the Middle East. Students will have the opportunity to learn about major theories in comparative politics, which will be applied to the understanding of countries in the Middle Eastern region. International rivalries in the area are also discussed. [Cross-listed with HI-330]

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-230 Campaigns and Elections**LASC Categories:** HBS

This course examines political campaigns and elections in the United States, with a focus on the candidate nomination and electoral process, campaign structures and strategies, voting, political participation, public opinion, the media, political behavior, and the role of political parties.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-234 Modern and Contemporary Political Theory

This course will focus on how recent political philosophers have responded to questions such as what constitutes liberty, freedom, and justice. In turn, students will be prompted to consider questions such as when is it necessary for government to constrain freedom, and how can conflicts between the rights of the individual and the rights of the community be adjudicated. This class will allow for engagement with these concepts through the works of modern political theorists such as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Arendt, and contemporary political theorists such as Rawls, Nozick, Dworkin, Berlin and Strauss.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-240 The United Nations and Global Governance**LASC Categories:** HBS, GP

This course explores a selection of the various organizations that are relevant in contemporary global politics. Special attention will be paid to the United Nations, as well as to organized political movements that challenge, and/or offer alternative visions for, global governance. Concepts, practices, and processes that will be covered in this course include: sovereignty, democracy, human rights, global capitalism, and political resistance/pre-figurative politics.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-241 English Constitutional History**LASC Categories:** GP, HBS

Development of English Constitution from Magna Carta through revolution, supremacy of Parliament, reform acts, entry into European Union and devolution. [Cross-listed with HI-241.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-243 City Politics**LASC Categories:** HBS, DAC, DIV

This course examines the political development and the political processes of America's cities. The actors in this story include machine bosses, reformers, immigrants, bureaucrats, politicians, average citizens, the rich, the poor, and the marginalized. Particular attention will be given to the political institutions of city government, structures and strategies of city elections, local party organizations, governing strategies of mayors, evolving urban populations and interests, and enduring problems such as racism, prejudice, discrimination, poverty, crime, education, economic decay and exploitation.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-250 Doing Political Science: an Introduction To Research**Methodology****LASC Categories:** HBS, QAC**Prerequisites:** PO-110 or PO-120.

This course introduces students to the research process in Political Science. There will be an emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative methods of generating and analyzing social science statistics and other data in order to answer research questions about the political world around us. In this course students will learn what makes Political Science a "science." No previous experience in math, statistics, or programming is required.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 4 Credits

PO-262 Principles of US Public Policy**LASC Categories:** HBS

This course introduces students to how American public policy is formulated and how public policies can be evaluated. These theoretical and structural frameworks are then applied to a series of case studies of public policies to examine the role of politics in how the policy process works and to develop a fuller understanding of the political and ideological debates over contemporary public policy issues such as welfare, social security, health care, education, labor, criminal justice, and the environment.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-264 American Political Thought**LASC Categories:** TLC, USW, DAC, DIV

This course examines the evolution of American political thought as a means to better understand the role of political ideology in contemporary politics. Through a close reading of mainly primary source documents in political theory spanning the colonial period through the present era, students will critically engage topics such as American iterations of Republicanism and Democracy, American character, slavery, race, women's rights, ethnicity, class, and immigration. These topics will reveal challenges to core American values which would shape American political development. We will also examine how different varieties of liberals and conservatives confront these political questions.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-265 Racial and Ethnic Politics**LASC Categories:** HBS, USW, DAC

This class will analyze the relationship between the United States government and racial and ethnic groups and explore the way that race is utilized in American politics. We will focus on issues affecting racial and ethnic communities in the United States, the politics behind racial and ethnic classification, and the use of racial and ethnic appeals in American political campaigns. The readings for this course will cover topics such as affirmative action, criminal justice reform, and civil rights. It will offer students an opportunity to analyze political speeches and advertisements that utilize race and ethnicity.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-299 Special Topics in Political Science

Special Topics in Political Science at the introductory and intermediate level, offering an overview of a particular subject that is not regularly offered in the course catalog; appropriate for students at any level.

Other or on demand and other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-301 International Law**LASC Categories:** HBS, GP, DAC**Prerequisites:** PO-110 or PO-120

An examination of international law through the lens of international relations. This course will focus on international humanitarian law (the law of war), international human rights law, and territorial law (border disputes). We will examine contemporary and historical cases, such as genocide in Myanmar, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the expansion of human rights to women and Indigenous peoples, and China's claims to the South China Sea. Students will also learn about the courts and legal instruments involved in enforcing each area of international law.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-311 Environmental Politics and Policy**LASC Categories:** HBS, NSP

Investigation of the factors that determine the formation of public policy on the environment with consideration of the roles played by federal, state, and local regulatory agencies in the United States. Case studies will include global climate change, air and water pollution, energy, land use, brownfields, waste management, endangered species, and population growth.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-312 Health Politics and Policy**LASC Categories:** HBS, ICW

Examination of the process and factors that influence formulation, implementation and modification of health policy in the United States. Topics will include health ethics, insurance, finance, prescription drug regulation, Medicare/Medicaid, epidemics, private markets, public interest, distributive justice, and the role of government.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PO-313 The Politics of American Education**LASC Categories:** DAC**Prerequisites:** EN102 or EN202, PO110

This course explores the political issues relevant to the American educational system. The focus of the course will be the contemporary political debates and public policy attached to both the American public school system and the system of higher education. We will analyze federal and state educational policy, trace the development of federal involvement in the education system, and explore the current political issues related to the American education system. Special attention will be given to issues of race, sex/gender, and class.

Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-318 Constitutional Law of Government Powers And Constraints**LASC Categories:** CON**Prerequisites:** PO-110

A critical analysis of key US Supreme Court decisions addressing the horizontal allocation of power among federal government branches and institutions, and the vertical allocation of power between federal and state governments. Attention will also be given to unresolved constitutional issues between the legislative and executive branches, the Massachusetts state constitution, and to the theoretical foundations of the United States Constitution (such as Locke, Montesquieu, and the Federalist Papers).

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-319 Constitutional Law of Civil Rights and Liberties**LASC Categories:** CON**Prerequisites:** PO-110

This course will provide students with an analysis of law pertaining to civil liberties and civil rights in the United States, with attention also given to Massachusetts. Following the historical development of constitutional law in the United States, we will begin with pre-Civil War law to see how fundamental civil liberties and civil rights have been applied to the states.

Alternating and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-320 Citizen Nation**LASC Categories:** CON, USW, DAC, WAC, DIV**Prerequisites:** EN-102 or EN-202.

Explores the history and meaning of citizenship in the United States, including discrimination, rights struggles and changing citizenship criteria. [Cross-listed with HI-320.]

Other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-322 Nationalism

Examines the theories of nationalism, the development of the modern Nation-state, and its effect on global politics. [Cross-listed with HI-322. Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]
Other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-323 Empire

Prerequisites: HI-103 and HI-104

Theories and models of colonization, the reaction of colonized peoples, and the way historians analyze imperialism from 1400 to 1920's. [Cross-listed with HI-323. Applicable to the Global Studies Concentration.]
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-325 The Kennedy Legacy in American Public Life

Prerequisites: PO-110 or HI-112

An interdisciplinary study of the impact that members of the Kennedy family have had in American politics, public policy, history, and culture. Topics for close analysis may include Civil Rights, Health Care, the Peace Corps, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, the Media, and Political Campaigns. In addition to traditional coursework, students will have the opportunity to engage in original research at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, the JFK Library, and other public history archives. The course uses the Kennedy Legacy as a template for students to gain knowledge and values to assume the roles and responsibilities of citizenship.
Other or on demand and other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-327 Global South Leadership in the United Nations

LASC Categories: GP, DIV

Prerequisites: EN-102.

Global South individuals and countries have been instrumental in creating and sustaining the United Nations. In this course, we examine how the Global South has used the UN to foster action on issues such as human rights, decolonization, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. In this course, students will get to experience these issues through a field trip to UN headquarters and a Model United Nations simulation.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-334 Environmental Crisis and Management in China

LASC Categories: HBS, NSP

Prerequisites: EN-102 or EN-202

This course will examine the history of the relationship between Chinese society and culture, economic development, state power, scientific theories, and the environment. Recent media reports have highlighted a worsening environmental crisis in China while at the same time reporting on China as a new leader in the development of alternative energy sources. This course will trace the political, economic, social, and scientific history behind this environmental crisis, and will evaluate the role of local, regional, and national levels of the government, domestic and international non-governmental organizations, urban and rural activists, scientific studies and discourses, and evolving political ideologies. [Cross-listed with HI-334.]

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-361 The Rise of the Right: Conservative Politics From Goldwater to Today

LASC Categories: TLC

Prerequisites: EN-102 or EN-202 Take PO-110;

This course will critically trace the development of conservative politics in the United States from the 1960s to today. Students will analyze various influential conservative activists and thinkers like Barry Goldwater and Charles Murray to consider their influence on the political campaigns and strategies of figures like Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, and Donald Trump. We will read the texts of key conservative thinkers on welfare, race, and foreign relations to analyze their lasting impact on American politics.

Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-370 Crisis Politics

Prerequisites: PO-110 or PO-101 (archived)

Analyze the theories regarding the roots of violence, revolution, and terrorism. Special attention will be devoted to violence in America.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-380 American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War

LASC Categories: CON, USW, HBS

Prerequisites: PO-110 or PO-101 (archived) or HI-112 or HI-212

Instruments of American foreign policy; major foreign policy developments since 1947.

Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PO-399 Special Topics in Political Science

Prerequisites: PO-110, PO-120, or PO-130.

Special Topics in Political Science at the advanced level, offering a discipline-specific examination of a particular subject that is not regularly offered in the course catalog; appropriate for more advanced students who have previously taken courses in Political Science.

Other or on demand and other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-401 Senior Research Seminar in Political Science

LASC Categories: CAP, WAC

Prerequisites: PO-110 and EN-102 or EN-202

A capstone research seminar for Political Science majors in which students integrate their training as political scientists in terms of research, analysis, and evaluation of recent and seminal scholarship in one or more of the major subfields, culminating in a large scale original research paper that uses appropriate methods to answer emerging questions in the discipline.

Alternating and every year. 4 Credits

PO-408 Directed Study: Political Science

Directed study offers students, who because of unusual circumstances may be unable to register for a course when offered, the opportunity to complete an existing course with an established syllabus under the direction and with agreement from a faculty member.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PO-440 Internship in Political Science

Internships in government agencies, political parties, election campaigns, non-governmental organizations, the news media, and other institutions in the public and private sectors. Students will perform a variety of tasks in a professional setting, combining the academic study of politics with practical work experience.

Fall and Spring and every year. 1-6 Credits

PO-441 Internship in Pre-Law

Internships with Courts, Law Firms, the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender's office, Legal Aid societies, and other institutions involved in the practice of law. Students will perform a variety of tasks in a professional legal setting, combining the academic study of Pre-Law with practical work experience.

Fall and Spring and every year. 1-6 Credits

PO-450 Special Topics: Political Science

Selected areas of interest to students and instructors. Topic, prerequisites and instructor are announced in advance.

Other or on demand. 3 Credits

PO-470 Senior Thesis-Capstone Project

LASC Categories: CAP, WAC

An intensive independent research project that serves as a capstone experience for students majoring in Political Science. Students may opt either to (1) write a traditional formal thesis, or (2) complete an alternative large scale experiential project in applied political research, political action, or creative political arts. The Senior Thesis/Capstone Project may be used to substitute for the Senior Research Seminar requirement in the Political Science major.

Fall and Spring and every year. 4 Credits

Program Learning Outcomes

- Students will identify and explain the structure and function of government, both as an abstract concept and in specific historical and national contexts.
- Students will differentiate among and apply key concepts in the field of political science, such as power, sovereignty and legitimacy.
- Students will compare political systems, constitutions, national interests, and ideas of international responsibilities as elements of global politics.
- Students will apply political theory in their examination of political systems.
- Students will select and apply appropriate methodologies (such as from economics, anthropology, psychology, organizational behavior, and history) to evaluate different political systems and theories.
- Students will determine the relevance of political participation to political outcomes; they will connect their political science learning to their own political identity.