

**The Wilf Family  
Department of Politics**

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A Guide to  
M.A. in Politics Courses

\*Updated 2022-23

*The Wilf Family Department of Politics offers the following courses in our M.A. in Politics Program. Visit our [website](#) or contact us at [politics.masters@nyu.edu](mailto:politics.masters@nyu.edu) for more information.*

**Introduction to Political Theory ~Core (POL-GA 1100)**

*Offered in Fall*

This course examines a selection of the most influential and enduring works in the western tradition of political philosophy, highlighting the way in which major concepts of political thought have evolved from ancient Greece to contemporary western society.

**Quantitative Political Analysis I (POL-GA 1120)**

*Offered in Fall*

This course provides an introduction to quantitative methods in political science. It is intended for students who have limited or no background in quantitative analysis. The focus is on providing the statistical foundations needed for students to conduct their own original research in the future.

**American Politics ~Core (POL-GA 1300)**

*Offered in Fall*

This course offers a broad survey of American political institutions and processes, focusing on the most important and influential works in the study of politics and government of the United States. The course covers research on political participation, political parties, elections, public opinion, legislative politics, bureaucratic politics, interest groups, and judicial politics.

### **Political Campaigns: Media, Message & Management (POL-GA 1301)**

This course examines the role that media has played in the politics of the past - examines its ever-expanding influence on the present - and projects a future for its use in political campaigns. *In this course we begin with an examination of how the electorate thinks and behaves in our heavily mediated society – and how at the intersection of ‘old’ media, ‘new’ media, and the ‘news’ media - new opportunities exist for combining classic propaganda techniques with contemporary campaign strategies. We will also look at the ‘real time’ campaign strategies being employed by various candidates, so that we may come to our own conclusions as to the success or failure of their approach.*

### **Political Economy ~Core (POL-GA 1400)**

*Offered in Spring*

This course has three objectives. First, it is to familiarize you with theoretical approaches, methods of analysis, and concepts widely used in the study of political economy. Second, it is to explore how institutions and democratic politics shape economic policies and macroeconomic outcomes. The third goal is to survey how domestic and international economic and social factors affect domestic politics.

### **Comparative Politics ~Core (POL-GA 1500)**

*Offered in Fall*

Basic approaches to comparative political inquiry and the application of these approaches to specific problems of political analysis. This course is designed to help students enter into the subfield of comparative politics and to learn how to do comparative politics at a scholarly level.

### **Formal Modeling in Political Science (POL-GA 2105)**

The application of game theory- and an alternative strategic theory called “theory of moves” – as well as social-choice theory to a wide variety of strategic situations, principally but not exclusively in politics, will be examined. Uses of strategy in voting in committees and elections, in political campaigns, in defense and deterrence policies, and in bargaining and coalition-building situations will be among the topics discussed.

### **Game Theory and Politics (POL-GA 2108)**

This course is an introduction to game theory and its application to the study of political phenomena.

## **Quantitative Political Analysis II (POL-GA 2127)**

*Offered in Spring*

Builds on POL-GA 1120 Provides working knowledge of some of the quantitative methods used in political science research. Emphasis is on applying regression analysis to the study of political phenomena. The course covers the assumptions underlying OLS regression, the consequences of violating these assumptions, and how to detect these violations and proceed with analysis. Students are introduced to statistical software and work with data in a weekly lab.

## **Introduction to Causal Analysis in Political Science (POL-GA 2252)**

*Offered in Summer*

*Prerequisite: POL-GA 2127 or equivalent*

This course builds on Quantitative Political Analysis II to teach students the skills necessary to conduct their own independent quantitative research, with a focus on understanding the causal implications of their analyses. By the end of course, students should be comfortable conducting their own independent research using observational or experimental data.

## **Public Policy (POL-GA 2371)**

This is a graduate course on policymaking in the American federal government. The course first reviews leading theories of policy analysis, or how one makes arguments for policies on the merits. We then review leading theories of the policymaking process, including agenda setting, policy advocacy, and bureaucracy.

## **Political Economy of Policy-Making (POL-GA 2410)**

*Offered in Fall*

This course conducts a systematic analysis of the ways through which preferences of individuals and groups are transformed into policies in democratic societies. Throughout the course, we will survey models of politics and illuminate a number of paradoxes and puzzles from a rational choice perspective. Our focus will be on the incentives and constraints faced by political actors when choosing public policies.

## **International Organization (POL-GA 2800)**

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to the international relations subfield of international organization. The focus of this course is cooperation between states, especially cooperation through international organizations and international agreements. This course draws from both theoretical and empirical works in the international organization literature. We will cover theories of cooperation between and among states, enforcement and compliance, and international bargaining. We will also discuss the roles that international organizations and other non-state actors and/or domestic politics may play in these processes.

## **Citizenship, Immigration and the Nation-State (POL-GA 3100)**

*Offered in Spring*

The objectives of this course are to explore the intersection of ethnic politics, nationalism and citizenship; examine how different conceptions of citizenship address the challenges raised by both global and local forces; and debate the impact of globalization on citizenship, immigration and ethnic identities. Though the primary focus is on the European Union and the United States, the reading material is both cross-disciplinary and comparative.

## **Constitutional Theory (POL-GA 3100)**

Political theory seminar addressing constitutions and constitutional theories from a comparative perspective.

## **Interest Groups in American Politics (POL-GA 3300)**

This seminar examines theories and research about the role of interest groups in American politics, with emphasis on debates about the degree and arenas of interest group influence as well as methods of influence. In defining the topic, the seminar touches briefly on adjacent themes of civil society and social movements. The second half of the seminar focuses on a particular form of organized interest: associations based in organizational and individual membership, such as: the US Chamber of Commerce; labor unions; professional associations; infrastructure and trade associations; and constituency-based groups such as the AARP and NRA, among many others. The course should help graduate students think systematically about organizational and collective advocacy, and about complex, group-based political behavior.

### **American Identity Politics (POL-GA 3300)**

This course brings together multiple approaches to the study of identities -- race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, and others -- to explore their role in contemporary American politics. The first part of this course will introduce social identity theory and the psychology of group membership. The second portion of the course will consider how major identities influence political and social behavior. The final portion of the course will examine how these identities can overlap or collide to shape political discourse, media coverage and consumption, attitude formation, structural inequalities, and policy outcomes. Along the way, we will grapple with important normative debates about equality, power, and multiculturalism in American democracy.

### **Poverty and Welfare (POL-GA 3300)**

This course is about poverty and welfare, and the controversies about them, in the United States. We will briefly survey the nature of poverty and poverty politics, the development of antipoverty policies and programs, contending theories about the causes of poverty and about policy approaches, and promising policy directions.

### **Comparative Political Economy (POL-GA 3400)**

*Offered in Fall*

This seminar is organized around three questions: Why are some countries able to promote equitable growth better than others? What are the economic and social causes of recent changes in democratic politics, including the rise of populism? How does politics shape economic liberalization? We will probe these questions in the context of OECD countries. Overall, the seminar is designed to draw attention to key aspects of the interaction between capitalism and democracy in post-industrial OECD countries.

### **Leaders, Followers and Political Behavior (POL-GA 3400)**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the study of leaders, followers and political behavior. We will analyze political behavior from the perspectives of leaders and followers, as a function of individual psychology, as a function of biology and as a function of identity. Do we need more than valence affect to explain political behavior? Do emotions matter? How do episodes of intergroup violence affect political opinions toward outgroup members? These questions are investigated throughout the course via experimental and survey research methods and quantitative data analysis.

## **Political Economy of Foreign Aid and Nation-building (POL-GA 3400)**

*Offered in Summer*

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the study of foreign aid and development. It begins by reviewing the logic and evidence of arguments for and against the provision of foreign aid. It introduces a set of analytic tools based on political economy to evaluate the current debates on foreign aid and to draw policy-relevant conclusions. The second part of the course turns attention to the interrelationship between foreign aid, poverty, and revolutions.

## **National Identity and the Politics of Belonging (POL-GA 3501)**

This seminar builds a framework for understanding and analyzing the politics of national identity. The assigned readings will provide a knowledge base that will help you develop the skills to think critically about nations, states and the politics of belonging. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will discuss nations, nationalism, and identity. We will consider the politics of peoplehood in the contexts of history, memory, culture, inequality, ethnicity, race, religion and geography. Globalization, ethnic violence, migration and xenophobia will also be addressed.

## **Democratization (POL-GA 3501)**

The number of democracies in the world changed dramatically in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. Scholars both reported on and participating in these democratization processes. Since the middle of the 1980s a subfield of comparative politics- democratization studies- has emerged. This course offers an introduction to some of the key topics and literature in this field while also encouraging students to participate in the field through analysis of research and a research paper.

## **Revolutions (POL-GA 3501)**

*Offered in Spring*

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the study of revolutions. It explores the political mechanisms contributing to revolutions and the context for political violence. It begins by defining revolution and examining competing theories about its causes, outcomes, and processes. It explores the main theoretical approaches to explaining revolutionary phenomena, namely structural and subjectivist.

## **Comparative Government and Institutions (POL-GA 3501)**

*Offered in Spring*

This course provides a systematic analysis of comparative democratic processes with an emphasis on the political determinants and policy consequences of institutions. Topics include the classification of constitutional regimes, electoral institutions, the dynamics of executive-legislative relations, as well as the role played by different government institutions in determining various political outcomes, such as representation, accountability, corruption, growth, and economic policy.

## **Refugees, Migrants, and Displacement (POL-GA 3501)**

This course is designed to provide an understanding of the major causes of contemporary migration and population displacement. Global, regional, and national processes driving refugee and migration flows will be examined. Students will consider a range of critical issues and factors contributing to displacement, including poverty, uneven development, competition for resources, globalization, political instability, war, and climate change. Human trafficking and smuggling, international human rights protections, xenophobia, citizenship and statelessness will also be addressed.

## **Formal Models of International Cooperation (POL-GA 3700)**

This course offers an introduction to the formal theory of international cooperation. Over the last three decades or so formal theory—that is theory that makes use of simple mathematics and game theory—has greatly clarified international relations scholars' thinking about international cooperation and treaty making. Scholars use formal theory because it helps them make clear and logically coherent arguments possible in ways that would be impossible using verbal argumentation alone. This course is intended to introduce students who have no formal training in formal modeling and game theory to this literature.

## **Master's Internship Seminar (POL-GA 3995)**

The internship supervision course is for students concurrently holding an internship position consistent with student's academic and/or career trajectory.

## **Master's Thesis Seminar (POL-GA 4000)**

Required capstone course for students in the MA program. This seminar is designed for MA students working on their thesis. The seminar is designed as a research workshop that covers all stages of the thesis writing process. The course focuses on developing your research question and proposal, the components of proper research design, how to conduct and present your research, and how to structure your thesis.