

University of Strathclyde
School of Government and Public Policy
Undergraduate Class List
2021/22

- *Students will complete 60 credits (30 ECTS) per semester.*
- *Each Government and Public Policy class is worth 20 credits (10 ECTS).*
- *Level 5 classes are for Postgraduate students only*

SEMESTER ONE

Level 1

L2107	Politics: Concepts and Processes	<p>This class provides an introduction to the study of politics from a scientific perspective. In particular, the course covers how modern states around the world function and interact from a social science perspective. The course will cover the basic concepts that characterise the essence of political life within and across countries and use these concepts to explore arguments and theories on the functioning of human behaviour. We will cover key concepts, ranging from the meaning of democracy and authoritarianism, to structures and institutions – including elections and governments – essential to understanding modern politics. Students will leave the class with the basic tools, concepts and approaches to interpret the political events as a political scientist and the background information to succeed in your journey through political science topics at the University of Strathclyde.</p>
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Level 2

L2201	International Relations and Global Politics	<p>The objective of this class is to introduce students to the academic study of International Relations (IR) and its major subfields. The class begins by examining the discipline's foundations, both theoretical and historical, in order to give students a basic but firm grounding in IR. The second part of the course then moves on to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). In this part of the course, students will acquire the basic theoretical building blocks employed in the explanation of interstate interactions and policy outcomes. The third part of the course moves on to consider one of IR's enduring questions, namely the causes of war and the causes of peace. Building on parts one and two, students will acquire working knowledge of the major theories of and approaches to International Security (IS). The course's fourth part touches upon International Political Economy (IPE). It introduces students to the workings and major theories of the global economy. The fifth and final section prompts students to reflect on contemporary challenges in international relations.</p>
L2235	Political Philosophy	<p>This course provides an introduction to fundamental political concepts, such as justice, democracy, power, authority, liberty and equality. It considers the relationship between the normative evaluation of political systems and how we study them. Students also become familiar with the basic ideologies necessary to understand political debate.</p>

Level 3

L2305	Research Methods for Political Scientists	<p>This course aims at providing a broad understanding of the philosophy of science, as well knowledge of and experience of both core research design</p>
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		<p>principles and project planning (from topic to research questions to literature review to theory, concepts and hypotheses), differences between qualitative and quantitative methods with a focus on popular qualitative methods used in politics and international relations (including: case study methods; interviews, focus groups; and content analysis and documentary methods).</p> <p>On the basis of the knowledge acquired in this course, students will be able to deconstruct and interpret existing research, as well as have the capacity to develop a qualitative research design of their own, namely through the collection, analysis and presentation of qualitative data.</p> <p>Putting theory into practice, our focus in this class will be on: a) the development of an individual research proposal; and b) a group exercise involving the design, implementation and analysis of a research project.</p>
L2307	Chinese Politics	<p>This course is designed for students who are enthusiastic for learning about Chinese politics and society. This course will provide a comprehensive overview of Chinese politics since 1949. The fundamental goal of the course is to help students lay their theoretical and empirical foundations for their in-depth understanding of the fundamental rules, prominent players, and major issues in contemporary Chinese politics.</p> <p>To achieve this goal, this course contextualizes Chinese politics within the study of comparative politics, historical inheritance, and contemporary Chinese society. It will give students grounding in the dynamic evolution of the Chinese state and Chinese nationalism, China's self-identified problems of weakness and underdevelopment, and the difficult political choices faced by political elites. Furthermore, the course will analyze how the country's Communist legacy offers both opportunities and constraints for the present politics of China. The case of Taiwan is also included as a comparison.</p>
L2312	War, Terrorism and Conflict	<p>This course looks at the multi-faceted and ever-changing nature of war, conflict and terrorism. It addresses debates within the sub-discipline of Strategic Studies (i.e. the study of the use of force) and International Relations more broadly, relevant to the causes of war, the conditions of peace and strategies for dealing with terrorism and conflict.</p> <p>The class is taught over ten weeks, through a combination of twice-weekly lectures and fortnightly tutorials. We will examine competing explanations regarding the causes and consequences of interstate war, civil war, and terrorism, as well as contemporary aspects of political violence and conflict.</p>
L2340	Contemporary British Governance	<p>This class provides an overview of how Britain is governed and examines various concepts and theories that have been advanced to aid understanding of governance processes in Britain. The course will consider how the British political system has been challenged by and has adapted to globalisation, decentralisation and Brexit. After providing some contextual</p>

		and institutional background, we will look at the institutions of the British political system; policymaking; the constitution; patterns of representation and political behaviour as well as contemporary developments. The course is taught through weekly lectures and seminars as well as fortnightly tutorials.
Level 5 – PG ONLY		
L2905	Quantitative Methods	What makes voters turn out in elections and determines their choice of candidates? Does having female politicians affect policy outcomes? This course will teach students how to address these important questions in social science by analysing quantitative data. The course introduces basic principles of data science and programming skills for data analysis so that the students learn how to analyse data in their own research and critically evaluate both non-academic reports and academic studies. Throughout the course, we use the data sets taken directly from published quantitative social science research and show students the exciting cutting-edge quantitative research in our field. This course will provide students with the basic principles of the data science and thus prepare them to learn statistical inference, the topic covered in the Quantitative Methods II course.
L2910	Political Parties – Background to Policy-Making	The role of political parties in contesting elections and organizing government is one of the oldest and richest areas of political research. Political scientists have developed detailed theories to explain their existence, persistence, and evolution in countries with democratic institutions. This class reviews historical theories of parties and evaluates recent work in the major subfields of party politics research following V.O. Key's tripartite framework. The class will focus on the prominent actors within parties, the ways that they make decisions and reform over time, and the implications of these choices for their electoral strategies and behaviour in government. Students will be expected to approach this research in the role of an engaged researcher and critical reviewer with an aim to building on state-of-the-art party politics research.

L2917	Policy Analysis	<p>Policy analysis is the study of government policy, focusing particularly on what issues a government addresses (agenda), what it does (policy adoption and implementation), how it does so (through policy processes) and the factors which enable and constrain policy making (such as networks of powerful actors and inherited institutional frameworks). The initial introduction focuses on the nature of public policy and the key concept of the policy stages/cycle framework: agenda setting, policy formation and decision making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. We then critically review the major models/frameworks/theories of public policy. Although the variety of theoretical concepts, foundations and mechanisms, the frameworks reviewed have a common underpinning that decisionmakers rationality is bounded. Comparative analyses are the common setting in several of the theoretical frameworks. However, the focus of the course is different from the Comparative Public Policy class (L2916). We shall not focus as much on comparative politics methodology, policy diffusion/convergence, public administration, or international influences on national policy. But these topics are obviously relevant to the study of public policy and will crop up occasionally, e.g., the influence of the EU in certain policy areas.</p>
L2941	Principles of Research Design	<p>The most important skill students should develop in graduate education is how to design research projects that withstand critical scrutiny. This module is designed to develop this skill at MSc level. The module introduces students to the theoretical and practical issues they will need to address when designing and conducting political science research in the fields of comparative and international politics and public policy. The module begins by considering the idea of "science" in political research. It then moves on to examine how to formulate research questions appropriately, how to</p>

		<p>integrate research questions into existing political research, and how to formulate and test explanations of political phenomena. During this module students will critically evaluate empirical research, develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs, and build a foundation for their research projects and master theses.</p>
L2964	Debating International Relations Theory	<p>This core class on the MSc in International Relations (IR) aims to introduce students to current debates in IR theory. The academic discipline of IR has developed its own distinctive theoretical traditions, as well as drawing on other fields, and learning about these traditions will help students navigate and engage with competing claims about the subject matter of IR and the best way to make sense of it. The class provides a synthetic overview and critical assessment of a range of theories, focusing particularly on contemporary literature and drawing from both sides of a deep divide between positivist/rationalist approaches, on the one hand, and post-positivist/critical approaches, on the other. Students will be encouraged to reflect critically on the strengths and weaknesses of the rival frameworks, and on their application and purpose, thus gaining the theoretical understanding to help make sense of material on the other classes on the MSc IR programme. Students from other MSc politics programmes are also welcome to take this class as a stand-alone option if they wish to gain a grounding in debates in IR theory.</p> <p>The class is taught through interactive seminars that will discuss core precepts of theoretical approaches, from neo-realism to constructivism to feminism, before exploring their methodological and conceptual implications. Each seminar will aim to foster understanding and critical analysis of competing perspectives by encouraging debate about their respective merits. We will end with a formal, structured class debate, full instructions to be supplied. The class is assessed entirely through coursework, designed to allow formative feedback as the class progresses and to foster deep learning.</p>

SEMESTER 2

Level 1

L2108	Politics: Decision Making and Outcomes	<p>This class investigates the role of actors and political institutions in policymaking processes within states and across political regimes. The class builds on L2107 Politics: Concepts in which the main focus was on concepts and key institutions. This previous knowledge is used to develop a deeper understanding of political actors' behaviour and the processes through which they influence outcomes. It covers a range of political processes that take place within democratic and non-democratic states and beyond. The class examines a range of outcomes that influence the lives of citizens, including the policies associated with modern welfare states. Students will leave the class with the ability to read and critically discuss research in political science and the broader social sciences. This class will equip them to evaluate academic findings and debates in the field of comparative politics, to interpret the political events as a political scientist and to eventually undertake research in political science topics.</p>
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Level 2

L2236	Research Design for Political Science	<p>Social science students are expected to develop core research skills, learn to work in groups, planning and conducting independent research projects. This course ensures that Politics students in Strathclyde understand the ideas of applied social research, and thus it prepares students for an employment market that seeks out graduates with research skills beyond narrow subject-specific knowledge.</p>
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Level 3

L2304	Quantitative Methods in Social Research	<p>The class teaches students a range of simple quantitative research methods. Learning these improves job prospects, prepares you for study in Honours and beyond, and makes you a more discerning consumer of the flood of statistics published by governments and in the media.</p> <p>This class builds on Research Methods for Political Scientists. You should bring from that class an understanding of the following terms: 'research question', 'dependent variable', and 'independent variables'. Those terms recur relentlessly in this class. The class does not presuppose a strong mathematical background. There is some maths involved, but most is straightforward, and that's all you'll need to achieve the key learning objectives. The central concepts are not numbers but dependent and independent variables, which tend to be everyday things like people's opinions, incomes, or ages. Our aim will be to understand the relationship between these everyday things. So, students will not be disadvantaged by a limited maths background.</p>
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		<p>More likely is that students will be disadvantaged because they are worrying (unnecessarily) about a limited maths background. Since it is impossible to learn when in a state of blind panic, students must keep in mind that their main aim is not to undertake advanced calculations, but to understand what simple numbers mean about the relationship between variables. The material is presented in a way that emphasises meaning over mathematics (and deals with maths as painlessly as possible).</p> <p>Students will learn two skills: first, to identify the appropriate statistical technique for a particular research question; second, to evaluate critically the results from other researchers' quantitative analysis. Whether the research is your own or someone else's, you should be able to answer the following questions: 1) Have the dependent and independent variables been measured appropriately? 2) Was the appropriate statistical technique chosen for the task? 3) Has that technique been used correctly? 4) Does the researcher's answer to her question follow from the results that she reports? At the end of the class, students will be well-equipped to answer these questions for a range of techniques.</p> <p>Teaching and learning takes two forms. Each session begins with a lecture-style presentation of statistical concepts and procedures, and examples of their use. Lectures contain more than what is presented in PowerPoint files and compulsory readings. Then students practise these procedures on a variety of custom-built and real-world data, using the computer package SPSS. Students are assumed to have no prior experience with SPSS, and are given an introduction to its use.</p>
L2308	European Politics	<p>The class provides a comprehensive overview of European politics, identifying the common characteristics of politics and government across the continent, but also the distinguishing features that make individual countries different. After a general introduction to the cultural and constitutional context, different electoral systems and their effects are analysed. This is followed by a section focusing on the emergence and evolution of parties and party systems. Particular attention is given to the emergence of green politics and the rise of the far right. The class combines thematic topics with studies of politics in particular countries. The political systems of France, Germany, Italy, and Poland are examined in detail but also politics in Scandinavia and Southern Europe is covered. A special lecture focuses on the politics of austerity in Greece which has major implications for politics across Europe.</p>
L2310	Scottish Politics	<p>The class will seek to provide a comprehensive overview of Scottish politics contextualising it within UK, European and world politics, historical inheritance and contemporary Scottish society. It will examine the practice of Scotland's governing institutions, the changing nature of democracy in Scotland, the impact of devolution on policy and broader governance as well as Scotland's constitutional status.</p>
L2313	Parliamentary Studies	<p>Parliaments are paradoxical political institutions: on the one hand, they are deeply distrusted by the people they are supposed to represent; on the</p>

		<p>other they are deemed to be central to the legitimation of liberal democratic states and public policy outputs. Parliaments in the UK epitomise this paradox. Levels of public trust and confidence in the UK parliament are distinctly lower in the UK than in many other relatively well-established parliamentary democracies in the EU. Indeed, these findings are often taken as sufficient evidence of a ‘crisis of public confidence’ in the UK parliament. Offsetting such findings of little public confidence in the specific capacities of parliament, however, are consistent survey findings that report widespread support for the view that the UK parliament is essential to UK democracy. Thus, the class aims to investigate this paradox and to examine the claim that ‘parliaments matter’. In a multi-level system of governance such as the UK the study of parliamentary institutions necessarily entails analysis of other parliaments alongside Westminster – especially for this class the Scottish parliament.</p> <p>In examining the case that ‘parliaments matter’ the class provides a novel and path-breaking mode for studying both why they matter and how their practical operations both reflect and serve to address the paradoxes confronting them. Not only does the class have a distinctive academic focus – in taking a specific type of political institution and then analysing that institution in a matrix of normative and empirical theories and comparative investigation – but it is also distinctive in its mode of delivery. It is co-taught with staff from the UK Parliament and the Scottish Parliament. In session 2017-18 the Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, along with a number of senior officials of the House of Commons will provide first hand insights into the workings of the Westminster Parliament. The activities of the Scottish Parliament will be analysed during the course of an extended session at Holyrood; and a study visit to Westminster has, provisionally, been organised. In this manner, the academic study of legislatures is linked with the practical world of decision-making in representative institutions.</p>
L2309	American Politics	This class introduces students to the basic concepts and theories related to the study of constitutional rules, political institutions, elites, citizens, and making of public policy in the United States. The class will conclude with consideration of the quality of and consolidation of democracy in the United States.
L2342	Logic of Scientific Inquiry	This class provides an introduction to the philosophy of science, and particular the social sciences. It starts with the hypothetico-deductive method, as outlined by Karl Popper, and also considers alternative to this. It considers how these methods can be applied to the social sciences, where the phenomena we study are (by definition) socially constructed. We then explore the application of scientific method to research design in the social sciences.
L2343	Philosophy of Economic Policy	Economics is not only about the technical allocation of scarce resources among competing needs. Economy policy choices inevitably involve political trade-offs, social concerns and value judgments. In this light, this class looks at the ideational and ethical underpinnings of public policymaking. The focus is on how the clash of economic ideas shapes policy decisions in key areas. It also examines the sources and implications of big shifts in policy paradigms. An effort will be made to make sense of the direction of economics and the

		<p>rethinking of policy frameworks in the aftermath of the global financial crisis.</p> <p>This course familiarizes students with the historical debates over alternative economic paradigms and policies and their historical and philosophical foundations. Questions such as why are some nations richer than others and what should governments do to overcome economic crises are as pressing today as they were a century ago. Indeed, the question “what is the best economic policy” has been asked and debated over centuries, and, as it turns out, policymakers are still guided by ideas and paradigms that were articulated by men and women centuries ago. At the end of this course, the students will have a better knowledge about how our economic and financial world was developed. The approach of this class is both practical and comparative. The empirical starting point are historical and contemporary economic debates as reflected in policymakers’ writings, policy documents and legislation. Building on this material, students will then engage in a critical reflection of the underlying assumptions and contested positive and normative claims behind discussions on money and finance, tax and spending, labour and industrial policy, economic growth and equality, and so on.</p>
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Level 5 – PG ONLY

L2908	Quantitative Methods 2	<p>Theoretical and practical knowledge in quantitative research methods are vital skills that students gain from a degree in politics. This course will introduce students to the process and application of quantitative political research beyond the basic concepts covered in Quantitative Methods 1. It will teach them to conduct a range of statistical analysis using the statistical software R. Students successfully completing this class should feel familiar and comfortable with reading and conducting quantitative research, which entails a range of advantages.</p> <p>Understanding the statistical methods commonly employed in social science research will enable students to critically reflect upon and better evaluate the research they encounter in their studies. Moreover, they will have the necessary tools to conduct original research and investigate the questions which motivated them to study politics in the first place. The skills acquired in this course will thus prove extremely useful in writing the dissertation, and especially for those who are planning to pursue a Ph.D., but also in a range of different careers that involve research or data analysis. Prospective employers will be quite pleased to hear that candidates have been exposed to and are familiar with data analysis and with the widely used programming language R. The skills and knowledge acquired in this course will also provide a basis for students to take more advanced applied quantitative classes and short courses as well as learn other programming languages. Lastly, students will find it easier to make sense of the claims based on statistics that they are confronted with every day, be it by commentators, politicians or scientists, and thus to better navigate the world.</p>
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L2909	Qualitative Methods	<p>This class provides an overview of the ever-expanding field of qualitative methods in political science, international relations and public/social policy. A variety of methods and analytical tools will be examined, and situated within different traditions of social research such as positivism and interpretivism. The focus is on both principles and practices. The idea is to develop an understanding of the logic and quality standards associated with different forms of qualitative inquiry, but also engage the practical tasks involved in conducting qualitative research. Rather than privileging one tradition as 'more scientific' or 'more humanistic' than the other, this class adopts an inclusive, pluralistic approach. The core assumption is that the complexity of the social and political world can be approached from multiple methodological perspectives, using a diverse set of tools. The common ground though is our strong commitment to the standards of systematic, rigorous social and political research.</p> <p>The agenda of this class is diverse and ambitious. We will cover a good range of approaches, methods, tools, techniques. We will study both methodological guidelines and empirical applications (from various disciplines). Our seminars will include presentations, debates, and practical (hands-on) activities. In terms of content, the structure is as follows. In the first seminar, we will discuss the foundations and survey the terrain of qualitative methods. Each of the following seminars will focus on a specific qualitative approach/tool: case studies & small-N comparisons, case selection strategies, process tracing, interviews, focus groups, qualitative content analysis (with NVivo), discourse analysis, ethnographies. The final seminar looks at an increasingly popular approach: mixed methods. Each of these methods relies on a specific theoretical framework and research standards that will be explored in the seminars. Throughout this class, we will discuss how these methods can be applied in students' own research projects.</p>
L2912	International Institutions and Regimes	<p>The theory and practice of international institutions and regimes is a dynamic dimension of world politics, yet it is often ignored and widely misunderstood. The purpose of this class is to provide students with a comprehensive overview of the concepts and theoretical approaches central to understanding and analysing the role of international institutions and regimes in the contemporary world. In the context of recent calls for reforming the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation as well as readdressing the balance in established environmental and humanitarian regimes, such an analysis is particularly timely and increasingly important. This class will survey a variety of international institutions and regimes, exploring how they shape global interactions in a number of cross-cutting issue areas such as security, trade, human rights and the environment. The overall analysis will contribute to the understanding of the theories, practices and processes through which global politics are organised and to an assessment of the future of international institutions and regimes in global governance.</p>
L2916	Comparative Public Policy	<p>Comparative studies are becoming the standard in policy analysis. Comparing public policies aims to explain the variance of output and</p>

		<p>outcome across units of analysis (countries, states/regions, local governments, but also international organisations, policy tools and actors). The typical research questions of comparative public policy analysis are: How and why are policies different/similar across countries, regions, or cities?</p> <p>After an initial introduction to the purpose, scope, issues, and methodology of comparative public policy, the seminars are structured around two distinct research fields. One research field revolves around four modes of comparative policy analysis. The first mode aims to cluster countries according to different institutional, economic, social and cultural settings. The second mode aims to generalise a given theory of policy process in different geographical contexts and by taking time into consideration. The third mode contrasts or integrates different (usually two) theoretical frameworks. Finally, the fourth mode is about benchmarking countries' policy performance.</p> <p>There is also a more recent strand of comparative research that tends to capture the interdependence of countries. Research on globalisation, policy diffusion and transfer can be conducted exclusively through comparative analysis. The questions addressed are: How and why does a policy programme transfer from a country A to country B and C? To what extent countries emulate and learn from and compete with each other? Do international organisations impact on domestic policy of their member states and to what extent?</p>
L2962	Contemporary International Relations	<p>This course introduces students to the literature and research agendas related to conflict and cooperation in international relations studies. We will cover a wide array of approaches that relate to interstate and intrastate conflict, cooperation and other contemporary security topics such as peacekeeping operations, terrorism, and human rights violations. By the end of this course, students should be able to answer questions such as why international (intrastate) conflicts occur, when cooperation between countries emerges, whether peacekeeping missions are effective in reducing violence against civilians and promoting post-conflict peace, how terrorist groups emerge, why some governments torture their citizens and how international institutions might prevent human rights violation. While we will not have time to comprehensively cover all the important relevant work, we will sample a spectrum of the work from foundational studies to state-of-the-art approaches.</p>
L2965	Feminism and International Relations	<p>This class aims to explore and assess contemporary feminist challenges to global politics and to the study of global politics. The last few decades has seen the emergence of a feminist movement that is world-wide in scope, transnationally connected, and working in and against international institutions to combat gender inequality. Connectedly, there is now a substantial feminist body of scholarship on global politics, interrogating the ostensible gender blindness of existing academic work in this area (particularly as articulated in the academic discipline of International Relations) and expanding the range of issues, ideas and voices that count as</p>

		<p>'global' and 'political'. We begin our investigations by establishing key actors, in terms of the expansion and institutionalisation of feminist organising on a global scale and of feminist scholarship on global politics. We then discuss key feminist concepts and frameworks for making sense of global politics (and International Relations as a discipline), before critically evaluating feminist analysis of and activism on a range of substantive issues connected to conflict and security, international political economy and global governance. A final session will reflect critically on the impact of feminism on the theory and practice of global politics, and the challenges ahead. The class will be taught in seminars that encourage active student participation and assessed solely through coursework intended to facilitate active and deep modes of learning.</p>
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