

University of Strathclyde
School of Government and Public Policy
Undergraduate Class List
2022/23

- *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

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>
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		<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. 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>
L2345	Elections, Public Opinion and Parties	<p>This class introduces students to the literature on elections, political parties, and public opinion. Outlines the key institutions, actors, and activities involved in the democratic process from a comparative perspective. Contributes to an understanding of democratic, policymaking and governance processes across different political systems. Students will gain an understanding of how political parties operate, which influences elections, and the role of public opinion in the above. This class aims to contextualise the classic works in the field, which will allow the students to apply these works to more specialized classes and topics in the future. The class aims to outline the key institutions, actors, and activities involved in the three broad class topics. This class aims to contribute to an understanding of democratic, policymaking and governance processes across different political systems</p>
L2346	Public Policy and Political Economy	<p>This class introduce students to the literature on public policy and political economy. Outlines the key institutions, actors, and activities involved in the crafting of public policy. Outline the key institutions, actors, and activities involved with political economy -- both comparative and international. Contributes to an understanding of public policy and its effect, development of economic activities and cooperation, both within and across different political systems. Students will gain an understanding of how public policy develops within states along with how economic policy and outcomes are</p>

		created and impacted both within and across states. This class aims to contextualise the classic works in the field, which will allow the students to apply these works to more specialized classes and topics in the future. The class aims to outline the key institutions, actors, and activities involved in the two broad class topics. This class aims to contribute to an understanding of public policy and its effect, development of economic activities and cooperation, both within and across different political systems
L2349	International Relations	This class introduces students to the literature on international relations (broadly defined). Outlines the key institutions, actors, and activities involved in the relationships between states, both cooperative and conflictual. Contributes to an understanding of democratic, policymaking and governance processes across different political systems and how that impacts interstate relations. Students will gain an understanding of the theories and findings upon how international relations operates. This class aims to contextualise the classic works in the field, which will allow the students to apply these works to more specialized classes and topics in the future. The class aims to outline the key institutions, actors, and activities involved in the broad class topics, which includes war, peace, economics, critical theory, empirical theory. This class aims to contribute to an understanding of democratic, policymaking and governance processes across different political systems

Level 5 – PG ONLY

L2905	Quantitative Methods	<p>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.</p>
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>

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 decision makers 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 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>
L2989	Global and Future Cities	<p>While there is not a singular way to understand the ongoing urbanisation processes in Europe, America, Africa, Oceania and Asia, reflecting different rates and forms of urbanisation – the comparison of cases to facilitate a dialogue around policy approaches is central to research on the built environment context. Core to this class will be to position an understanding of urbanisation processes worldwide, and to upskill students on different approaches to urban governance in different political and cultural contexts. Its aim is to provide a comparative, multidisciplinary and holistic perspective of cities, with their current and future challenges and to engage learners in a discursive conversation round policymaking, design and impact. This class is designed to provide students with a reading of holistic approaches to urban governance, and how these inform strategic planning according to shape of city ecosystems and specific context. The course will provide students with skills to analyse the multiple dimensions of city environments, and to explore obstacles and opportunities they pose to a just transition for citizens.</p>

L2992	Comparative Political Economy	<p>The global economic order is at a crossroads. In Europe and beyond, governments are facing a set of unprecedented challenges: economic, political, social, ecological. This class surveys the turbulent politicoeconomic landscape across crises, from the 2008 financial crash to the Covid-19 pandemic. More specifically, the class critically examines core issues in the political economy of crisis: the austerity debate, the inequality & tax regimes, the rethinking of growth models, the green revolution, the power of central banks, the future of EMU, the populist temptation (e.g. Brexit). By engaging these themes, students will develop a better understanding of the complexity and direction of contemporary capitalism. They will also be confronted with key economic debates, assessing competing approaches and drawing policy lessons. The focus of this class is comparative, looking at developments across advanced nations in the context of wider transformations in the global periphery. All in all, this class offers a window into the most pressing issues facing policymakers and wider contemporary around the world. The following (big) questions will underpin seminar discussions: will the Covid critical juncture finally structure a transition towards a new political economy era? Or will the neoliberal order be (once again) resilient?</p>
L2993	Comparative Political Institutions	<p>The study of institutions is central to the modern political science research. Indeed, a large proportion of research in the top journals in the field rely on institutional perspectives. Theories of politics focused on political institutions emphasize their comparative differences, but major role in structuring political outcomes. This class will cover the primary institutional perspectives by focusing on the assumptions, theories and applications within the field of political science with a particular emphasis on theories derived from sociological and rational choice backgrounds. 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 research.</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

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 analyse 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>
L2309	American Politics	<p>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.</p>

L2310	Scottish Politics	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.
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 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>
L2314	United States National Security	<p>This class introduces key concepts of the development of national security policies of the United States from World War II to today. It also contributes to the development of transferable skills beyond the subject area. Acquire a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of contemporary international relations topics (security) such as civil war, peacekeeping, terrorism, refugee crises and cyber security. Be able to examine seemingly different concepts to understand underlying relationships and their effects on additional topics. Be able to critically assess and debate topics that many have strong opinions on in a sensible manner citing facts to support arguments. Be able to apply theoretical logic presented in the academic literature to real examples students are interested in.</p>
L2340	Contemporary British Governance	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 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.
L2347	Designing Qualitative Research	This class introduce students to the literature on qualitative research design. Outline the key qualitative research designs like case selection, process tracing, and QCA in political science from a comparative perspective. Contribute to a critical assessment of different qualitative research designs. Apply essential knowledge and skills in conducting independent qualitative research. Students will gain an understanding of fundamental basis of quantitative research designs in modern science. This class aims to contextualise the qualitative research designs in different subfields of political science (e.g., IR and CP), which will allow the students to apply these designs to their own dissertations and more specialized classes and topics in the future. The class aims to outline the key qualitative research designs in political science. The class aims to help students to develop essential knowledge and skills in conducting independent qualitative research
L2348	Designing Quantitative Research	This class introduce students to the literature on quantitative research design. Outline the key quantitative research designs like regression analysis, experiment analysis, big data approach in political science from a comparative perspective. Contribute to a critical assessment of different quantitative research designs. Help students to develop essential knowledge and skills in conducting independent quantitative research. Students will gain an understanding of fundamental basis of quantitative research designs in modern science. This class aims to contextualise the quantitative research designs in different subfields of political science (e.g., IR and CP), which will allow the students to apply these designs to their own dissertations and more specialized classes and topics in the future. The class aims to outline the key quantitative research designs in political science. The class aims to help students to develop essential knowledge and skills in conducting independent quantitative research.

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>
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>

L2912	International Institutions and Regimes	International organizations (IOs), like the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, NATO, or the European Union have become common place in how governments govern their international relations. IOs are often seen as the solution to international cooperation problems, be it in areas of conflict, trade, human rights, or the global environment. Whether IOs can live up to this promise and can indeed change national governments' behaviour to solve global cooperation problems will be the central question this course addresses. Specifically, we will examine why IOs differ in their rules and decision-making processes and how this variation translates into different policy outputs and outcomes. The first part of the class builds the theoretical and analytical foundation to address these key questions in a principled manner across different policy domains, while the second part applies these insights to specific IOs. We will discuss prominent IOs, such as the World Bank, IMF, or NATO together with newer forms of transnational governance as well as international courts.
L2914	European Governance	It is increasingly recognised that the European Union constitutes a complex system of governance. The legislation emerging from the European Union has profound effects upon the functioning of member state polities and upon the interactions between institutions and interests at all levels of administration. Citizens of EU member states are increasingly subject to laws, regulations and policies emerging from the EU level, yet it is generally acknowledged that the 3 EU lacks a popular mandate. There have been a number of recent attempts to 'bring Europe closer to the people' and questions of democracy and legitimacy are coming increasingly to the fore in debates about the European Union. This class seeks to examine the EU system of governance through the lenses of democracy, legitimacy and efficiency. Examining key processes, policy areas and proposals for reform, participants will be encouraged to consider the role of the EU and the nature of its relationship with its public.
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 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>
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>