**Spring 2020 Special Topics Courses (321s & 421s)**

### 321s

**PSC 321-001: Law and Judicial Advocacy, Dr. Allen Linken** *(W: 5:00pm-7:30pm, TH 258)*
This course is only available with instructor permission; it is restricted to current participants in the University of Alabama’s Mock Trial teams.

**PSC 321-002: Gender and Politics, Dr. Regina Wagner** *(TR: 12:30pm-1:45pm, TH 105)*
This course examines how gender influences women’s representation and their role in the electoral process, both as voters as well as candidates and office holders. Over the course of the semester, we will investigate women’s participation, the conceptualization of women’s interests, women’s portrayal in the media and women’s effectiveness as legislators, both on the state as well as the congressional level in the US.

**PSC 321-003 and 321-004 - Ancient Political Thought, Dr. Terry Hughtston**
This course offers a critical introduction to the main issues and debates in western political theory, including but not limited to the topics of justice, legitimacy, equality, democracy, liberty, sovereignty, and the role of history in the political and social world. The scope of this course will include but not be limited to political theorists and philosophers from the Ancient Greek and Roman eras up to the beginning of the Middle Ages as well as a few readings from outside the western ancient tradition.

**PSC 321-005: Social Inequalities, Dr. Gregory Austin** *(TR: 11:00am-12:15pm, TH 107)*
Social inequality refers to the systemic and uneven distribution of people across social categories based on achieved and ascribed characteristics. Different cultures and societies vary in the amount of, and extent to which, inequalities exist within them. This course focuses on social inequality in the United States with some comparison to other cultures and societies for reference. In this course, we analyze the inequalities of power, privilege, and access as they relate to class, political status, sex and gender, sexual orientation, and race. We will examine the causes and consequences of the many types of inequalities present in our society through a variety of ways, including television/movie/documentary, pop culture, current events, and scholarly analysis.

**PSC 321-006: Devices, Apps and the Private Public, Dr. Juan Pablo Black Romero** *(MWF: 11:00am-11:50am, TH 351)*
This class addresses social media from the point of view of its technologies, the way these technologies shape our views of public and private, the way they transform the private into publics, and the implications for our democratic way of life.

**PSC 321-007: Latinx Popular Culture, Dr. Juan Pablo Black Romero** *(MWF: 12:00pm-12:50pm, TH 351)*
Comics, films, graffiti, music, and more. This class explores Latinx culture: its presence in the public imagination, its contributions to democratic life, the experiences of the world it brings to all of us, and the realities that are the source material that inspire its creations.

**PSC 321-900: Diplomatic Simulations, Dr. Karl DeRouen** *(ONLINE/DOES NOT MEET)*
This course is an introduction to diplomacy and international relations through the use of a course-long computer simulation. The Statecraft software program allows students to break into teams...
and design their country and foreign policy decisions that characterize real world politics. **YOU MUST HAVE A RELIABLE DAILY INTERNET CONNECTION!** Can be applied to International Studies major. **THIS IS A WINTER INTERIM COURSE!!!**

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**PSC 421-001: African American Rhetoric, Dr. Utz McKnight (MWF: 1:00pm-1:50pm, TH 107)**

Students in the course will explore the popular description of Black life, issues of race and society, and the problem of democracy. The course will focus on developing student knowledge of recent political change in the US, how race matters to our democratic polity, and the concerns that have been raised by politicians, academics, and public intellectuals. Students will learn about how we form our opinions about ideas central to our lives, what we do to make sense of the world around us, and the importance of the political.

**PSC 421-002: Gender and Black Masculinities, Dr. Gregory Austin (TR: 2:00pm-3:15pm, GA 308)**

Investigations into the construction of gender categories are central to projects of social justice and to the lived experience of women and men. This course begins at the intersection of feminist criticism and inquiries into the development of different kinds of Black masculinities. We will ask how race, age, class, and sexual identity have an impact on the production of different kinds of Black masculinities. In this course, we will look at the role of gender and the experience of Black males by examining issues such as: the role of Black feminism, the construction of "Black men" as a category, sexuality and fertility, male aggression and violence, male body image and health, media representations of boys and men, the role of Hip-Hop and Black celebrities (particularly athletes), and how ideas of masculinity have changed over time. We will look at these issues as they interact with the broader politics of race and gender in the post-Civil Rights era and how we might evaluate social policies and programs geared toward Black males.

**PSC 421-003: Equal Opportunity and the Law, Dr. Joseph Smith (TR: 12:30pm-1:45pm, TH 351)**

The concept of equal opportunity is a bedrock principle of American political culture. We pride ourselves on the idea that all Americans, regardless of race, gender, class level or other demographic characteristics, have a chance to live the American Dream of getting a good job, owning your own home and creating a successful and satisfying life. Other components of American political culture, such as the belief that it is the individual’s responsibility to provide for their own welfare, are only defensible if equal opportunity exists. However, the American Dream is not enjoyed equally by all. Race, gender, and socioeconomic class seem to influence who achieves the dream. This course will examine whether equal opportunity is a reality in America, and what effect the law and public policy have on equal opportunity. Do inequalities in starting points, race, gender, and access to quality schooling make the American Dream unreachable for some portion of Americans? How do factors over which we have no control affect our chances of achieving the American Dream? Writing proficiency within the discipline is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does
not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student in this discipline will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

**PSC 421-004: Law and Society: Theory and Applications, Dr. Allen Linken (MWF: 1:00pm-1:50pm, TH 351)**

Law is traditionally studied vocationally. That is, students of the law often learn about it strategically, in order to eventually write legislation, advocate for a client, or decide cases. In this, students will be introduced to a different way of studying law, one rooted in the interdisciplinary field of legal studies (sometimes known as “law and society”) that draws on knowledge, methodologies, and critical theories from several disciplines. Rather than studying law as an enterprise that operates autonomously, this course introduces students to the study of law as an object that cannot be understood apart from the social, political, and cultural contexts in which it exists, to include race and ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and nationality. With these goals in mind, this course will explore how law permeates human life and, conversely, how human life permeates law.

The course has units which explore the following questions: What is law? How do judges make decisions? What is law's relationship to society? How are laws enforced? Can law change society? How is law represented in popular culture?

**PSC 421-005: Political Psychology, Dr. Nicholas Davis (TR: 2:00pm-3:15pm, TH 117)**

Political psychology is an interdisciplinary pursuit that uses psychological theories (mostly social and cognitive) to explain political attitudes and behavior. For example, students will explore how personality, emotions, stereotypes, and group dynamics shape what individuals believe and why they participate in politics. They will also learn about the different methodological tools used to analyze how these things causally affect attitudes and behavior. As an upper level course that is eligible to fulfill the university's writing requirement, students should expect an extensive amount of writing in this course. Writing proficiency is required to earn a passing grade.

**PSC 421-006: International Relations of the Middle East, Dr. Waleed Hazbun (MWF: 11:00am-11:50am, TH 117)**

This seminar examines the evolution of regional geopolitics in the Middle East within the context of global politics. It traces how colonialism, state building, and nationalism formed the Middle East regional system and how domestic political struggles, external inventions, and geopolitical rivalries have defined shifts in the sources of both state and societal insecurity and the dynamics of the regional order. We also explore American diplomatic and military engagement in the region, state and societal opposition to the US, and the impact of the Iraq war on regional politics. We conclude by considering the rise of new regional powers and non-state actors, the “new Arab wars” in the wake of the uprisings, and current debates about the future evolution of regional politics and the role of the US in the region.

**PSC 421.007 - Theories of National Identity, Dr. Terry Hughston**

This course will critically evaluate a variety of different contemporary theories about the nature of nationality and national identity. Beginning with some initial readings on what a nation is continuing on through a variety of arguments on what ethical obligations nations put on their citizens and what patriotic rhetoric is used to justify such obligation.