Politics, Law and Social Thought (PLST) is an interdisciplinary minor open to all undergraduate students at Rice from all backgrounds. Its task is the study of political ideas in their philosophical and historical contexts as well as with regard to their effects on constitutional law and social and political practices.

The central focus of the minor is political theory, taken in a wide sense to mean the theory and philosophy of how polities form, function, and fail. The minor has a strong orientation toward works of political, legal, and social philosophy, understood in their historical context. Politics, Law and Social Thought is a program of study that enables Rice students to engage successfully with the "big" political questions relevant to contemporary society in a global setting: Why democracy? What are the foundations of law? What is political liberty? What is political citizenship? Are states necessary? How do normative political and social orders come into existence? Is there a philosophical justification for human rights?

Minor


Politics, Law and Social Thought does currently not offer an academic program at the graduate level.

Co-Directors

Christian Emeden
Aysha Pollnitz

Humanities Faculty Director, Law, Justice and Society Scholars

Shannon LaBove

Professors

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Associate Professors

Gwendolyn M. Bradford
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Julie Fette
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Shannon LaBove
Robert Werth

For Rice University degree-granting programs:
To view the list of official course offerings, please see Rice’s Course Catalog (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/lswkscat.cat?p_action=cata)
To view the most recent semester’s course schedule, please see Rice’s Course Schedule (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/lswkscat.cat)

Politics, Law and Social Thought (PLST)

PLST 238 - SPECIAL TOPICS
Short Title: SPECIAL TOPICS
Department: Politics Law Social Thought
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Internship/Practicum, Lecture, Laboratory, Seminar
Credit Hours: 1-4
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level
Description: Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester’s topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Short Title</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Grade Mode</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLST 301</td>
<td>MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT: MACHIAVELLI TO RAWLS</td>
<td>MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Introduction to political theory and political philosophy from the Renaissance to the present: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Pufendorf, Montesquieu, Kant, Hegel, Constant, Mill Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Habermas, and Rawls. Topics include human rights, political power, citizenship, democracy, the modern state. Required core course for minor in Politics, Law, and Social Thought.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLST 302</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Introduction to contemporary political theory. Topics include freedom, democracy, empire, citizenship, human rights, radical democracy, protest and civil disobedience, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, postcolonial political thought, transnational and global governance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLST 303</td>
<td>HOW DEMOCRACY FAILS</td>
<td>HOW DEMOCRACY FAILS</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Course examines the conditions under which democracies and republics can fail. Draws on political theory, constitutional debates, and historical examples. Topics include: constitutional crises, states of emergency, popular sovereignty, populism, nationalism, revolution, political violence, civil disobedience, post-democracy, illiberal democracy, and neoliberalism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLST 305</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO LAW</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO LAW</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Course introduces students to the U.S. legal system and provides them with a preview of the first year of law school, including the basic principles of Tort, Contract, Criminal, and Criminal Procedure Law. Additionally, the class will teach students how to conduct appellate argument and to write briefs. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for PLST 305 and COLL 201.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLST 316</td>
<td>DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL THEORY IN ANCIENT GREECE</td>
<td>DEMOCRACY &amp; POLITICAL THEORY</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>The Greeks created political society and studied political society in order to understand and improve it. One particular form of political society, democracy, reached its pinnacle in Athens. We shall attempt to understand how ancient Greeks thought about politics from the rudimentary beginnings in Homer to the complex, incisive arguments of Aristotle. Cross-list: CLAS 316.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLST 401</td>
<td>LAW, JUSTICE AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS LEGAL PRACTICUM</td>
<td>LJSS LEGAL PRACTICUM</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Internship/Practicum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Students will participate in a semester-long “practicum” with a sitting judge (federal, or Texas appellate) in Houston. This program is designed to give select Rice undergraduates a broad and practical introduction to what lawyers do in court and how judges and the law clerks who work with them think about the questions they are asked to resolve. Instructor Permission Required. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for PLST 401 and HUMA 404/SOSC 405. Repeatable for Credit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLST 402</td>
<td>LAW, JUSTICE AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS JUDICIAL PRACTICUM</td>
<td>LJSS JUDICIAL PRACTICUM</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Internship/Practicum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Students participate in a one-semester-long “practicum” with a sitting judge (federal, or Texas appellate) in Houston. This program is designed to give select Rice undergraduates a broad and practical introduction to what lawyers do in court and how judges and the law clerks who work with them think about the questions they are asked to resolve. Instructor Permission Required. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for PLST 402 and HUMA 404/SOSC 405.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLST 477</td>
<td>SPECIAL TOPICS</td>
<td>SPECIAL TOPICS</td>
<td>Politics Law Social Thought</td>
<td>Undergraduate Upper-Level</td>
<td>Internship/Practicum, Seminar, Lecture, Laboratory</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.</td>
<td>Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester’s topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.</td>
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Description and Code Legend

Note: Internally, the university uses the following descriptions, codes, and abbreviations for this academic program. The following is a quick reference:

Course Catalog/Schedule
- Course offerings/subject codes: PLST

Program Description and Code
- Classical and European Studies: PLST

Undergraduate Minor Description and Code
- Minor in Politics, Law and Social Thought: PLST

CIP Code and Description
- PLST Minor: CIP Code/Title: 22.0000 - Legal Studies, General

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2010 Codes and Descriptions from the National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/