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 J. Emden  
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**Assistant Professor**

Vida Yao

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/SWKSCAT.cat?p_action=cata)

To view the most recent semester’s course schedule, please see Rice’s Course Schedule (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/SWKSCAT.cat)

**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