

POLITICS, LAW AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

Contact Information

Politics, Law and Social Thought

<https://politics.rice.edu/>

116 Humanities Building
713-348-4274

Christian J. Emden

Program Co-Director
emden@rice.edu

Aysha Pollnitz

Program Co-Director
aysha.pollnitz@rice.edu

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

- Minor in Politics, Law and Social Thought (ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs/humanities/politics-law-social-thought/politics-law-social-thought-minor)

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

Co-Directors

Christian Emden
Aysha Pollnitz

Humanities Faculty Director, Law, Justice and Society Scholars

Shannon LaBove

Professors

Dominic C. Boyer
Peter C. Caldwell
Steven G. Crowell
Christian Emden
James D. Faubion

David W. Leebron
Melissa J. Marschall
Donald Ray Morrison
George Sher
Lora Wildenthal
Harvey E. Yunis

Associate Professors

Gwendolyn M. Bradford
Luis Duno-Gottberg
Julie Fette
William Suarez-Potts

Assistant Professors

Andrea Ballesterio
Aysha Pollnitz
Vida Yao

Professors in the Practice

Steven W. Lewis
Rudolfo Ramirez

Lecturers

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!/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>)

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.

PLST 301 - MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT: MACHIAVELLI TO RAWLS**Short Title:** MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Lecture**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** 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.**PLST 302 - CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY****Short Title:** CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Lecture**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** 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.**PLST 303 - HOW DEMOCRACY FAILS****Short Title:** HOW DEMOCRACY FAILS**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Seminar**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** 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.**PLST 305 - INTRODUCTION TO LAW****Short Title:** INTRODUCTION TO LAW**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Lecture**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** 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.**PLST 316 - DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL THEORY IN ANCIENT GREECE****Short Title:** DEMOCRACY & POLITICAL THEORY**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Lecture**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** 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.**PLST 401 - LAW, JUSTICE AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS LEGAL PRACTICUM****Short Title:** LJSS LEGAL PRACTICUM**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Internship/Practicum**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** This course focuses on the public and private practice sectors of the legal profession through a work experience coupled with classroom instruction at Rice. The goal is to expose undergraduates to the field of law through structured on-site experiences, relevant coursework, and professional development opportunities. Instructor Permission Required. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for PLST 401 and HUMA 404/SOSC 405. Repeatable for Credit.**PLST 402 - LAW, JUSTICE AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS JUDICIAL PRACTICUM****Short Title:** LJSS JUDICIAL PRACTICUM**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Internship/Practicum**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** 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 402 and HUMA 401/SOSC 406.**PLST 477 - SPECIAL TOPICS****Short Title:** SPECIAL TOPICS**Department:** Politics Law Social Thought**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Internship/Practicum, Seminar, Lecture, Laboratory**Credit Hours:** 1-4**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester's topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.

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 ¹

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

¹ Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2010 Codes and Descriptions from the National Center for Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/>