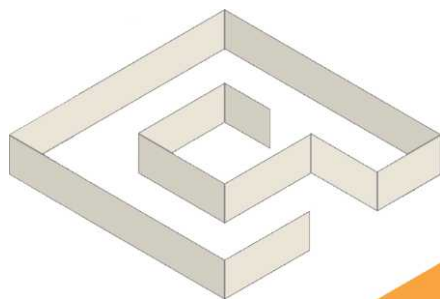


COURSE CATALOGUE
Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

Academic Year 2025/2026



B I S L A
Liberal Arts College

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STUDY PROGRAM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2025 - 2026

1st YEAR –			
FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
Introduction to Political Science	Abrahám	Theories of Political Parties and Central European Party Systems	Kusá
Academic Writing	Sabo	The History of Political Philosophy	Bence Balázs
Formation of the International State System	Tiryaki	Introduction to Social Science Research Methods	Siegel
Empires and Revolutions	Sprouse	English Grammar	Sabo
English Grammar	Ingram		
ELECTIVES (see below)		ELECTIVES (see below)	

2nd YEAR			
FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
Comparative Politics	Kusá	International Conflict & Cooperation	Kusá
Modern Political Thought	Balázs	Geopolitics	A.B. Balazs
Introduction to International Relations	Tiryaki/Tabosa	European Union	Tiryaki
Public Administration and Social Policy (1x per week)	Radičová		
ELECTIVES (see below)		ELECTIVES (see below)	

3rd YEAR			
FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
Bachelor Thesis Seminar (1x week)	Siegel	Reading the History	Novosád
Modern Political Theories and Ideologies	Balazs	Capstone: Review Topics of Politics	Radičová
CEu Enemies, neighbors, friends: Ethnic conflict, history, and memory in Central Europe	Kusá	Advanced Political Philosophy	Bence Balazs/Abrahám
M.Weber, J. Schumpeter and C. Schmitt on the Phenomenon of the Political	Novosád		
ELECTIVES (see below)		ELECTIVES (see below)	

ELECTIVES FALL SEMESTER	
Existentialism (Philosophy)	S.D. Abrahám
News and Journalism in the 21st Century aka: How to Write a News Story	James Thomson
Introduction to Public Finance	Martin Hudcovský
History and Legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire	Dušan Kováč
Human Rights	Sylvia Tiryaki
Chaos by design: Making sense of contemporary American politics	James Thomson
Mastermind 2	Menachem Landau
French Politics	Adam Balazs
Analysis and Interpretation	Jacob Ingram

FALL SEMESTER

Introduction to Political Science

Code:	P-111
Term:	Fall
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Samuel Abrahám, PhD
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Course Objectives

The course introduces political science: the background and emergence of the discipline, its most characteristic dilemmas, as well as its present status. The course also differentiates between the focuses of political *science*, *theory* and *philosophy*. Students learn about the basic structures of the democratic state as well as its individual institutions and administrative units.

Contents

Historically, political science has been plagued by disagreements over the purposes it serves, the basic questions it should be addressing, and the methods of analysis by which we gain knowledge of politics. Introduction to Political Science should begin to teach students to organize and connect factual information by using their analytical abilities to think critically about politics. In this course, students should learn about the basic nature of political science and the connections between the sub-divisions in the field. The course will introduce students to the basic concepts, institutions, and processes of politics. It will also provide the conceptual meanings and concrete information needed in order to understand and cope with the political events and governmental actions that affect every individual.

Each week there will be 3 (academic) contact hours of teaching divided into one-hour and a half lecture and one-hour and a half seminar. The lecture will cover and review the reading material. During the seminar the focus will be on the topics from assigned material and the topics covered during the lectures as well as student presentations. Student must read all the required texts before classes.

Required Readings

The basic textbook is Michael G. Roskin: Political Science: An Introduction (2006). It can be found on the "Share on BISLA server": ROSKINPolSci100

Leo Strauss: "What is Liberal Education?" (In: Liberalism Ancient and Modern, 1968) Isaiah Berlin: "On the Pursuit of the Ideal" New York Review of Books 1988 (In Slovak: K&K2/1999)

Empires and Revolutions

Term:	Fall
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	MA Lucas Sprouse
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Empires and Revolutions is a survey of the major European historical developments in society, religion, politics, economics, and culture from the 15th to the 19th centuries. During this time, movements thrived that defined the world as we know it and major dynastic powers rose, developed, and fell. This course will look at how the world truly awakened and how a globalized world emerged with varying alliances coalescing and combatting each other as they reshaped the world.

Europe rose to global prominence during the Renaissance, clashed ideologically during the Reformation, and explored the great expanses of the world. We will cover major wars leading to the Peace of Westphalia which redefined the global order with Europe at the forefront before looking at the development and impact of the Enlightenment as it shaped intellectual thought and created changes contemporary thinkers could only have dreamed of. As European nations competed for global domination, empires rose and fell, and supporters of Enlightenment ideals challenged the status quo. Independence movements sprung up and successful revolutions forever changed the notion of sovereignty and citizenship. The Industrial Revolution further transformed Europe into modern, urban, manufacturing states. Before our course ends, modern nations like Italy and Germany come into existence and the Habsburgs are forced to deal with various uprisings.

In addition to lectures, discussion-based seminars will focus on primary and secondary source readings, and students' written and oral communication skills will be developed through essays and presentations. Along with increased historical understanding, students will cultivate better critical thinking and analytical skills that can be applied in a range of academic and practical settings.

Formation of the International State System

Code:	IR-111
Term:	Fall
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Sylvia Tiryaki
Form of study:	seminar/workshop

Course Description

Humanism, Renaissance, European Exploration, Protestant Reformation, Reformation Spreads and the Counter Reformation, Absolutist France and England, Habsburgs and the 80 Years War, 30 Years War and the Peace of Westphalia, Enlightenment, French Revolution, Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna, Industrial Revolution and Age of Ideologies, Uprisings Across Europe, Nationalism in Italy and Germany

Learning outcomes: The aim of this course is to give students a deeper understanding of this region's history and provide some historical context for the contemporary political and philosophical writings that they may be asked to study in other courses at BISLA. This course will focus on European historical developments between the 15th and 19th centuries. Students will realize how the world truly awakened and how a globalized world emerged with varying alliances coalescing and combatting each other as they reshaped the world. Students will be asked to consider the perspective and motivations of various actors (individuals, groups, nations, or alliances) and to assess the value of different historical sources and approaches to writing history. In addition to lectures, discussion-based seminars will focus on primary and secondary source readings, and students' written and oral communication skills will be developed through essays and presentations. Along with increased historical understanding, students will cultivate better critical thinking and analytical skills that can be applied in a range of academic and practical settings.

Academic Writing

Code:	W-114
Term:	Fall
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Michael Sabo
Form of study:	seminar/workshop

Prerequisites

Completed first year of studies or received less than 84 % on the English Aptitude Test.

Course Description

This compulsory first-year writing course aims to prepare students for the study requirements in their other courses. Academic writing is a set of practices for participating in a conversation with others. Through frequent practice and study of writing, W-114 introduces students to the conventions of this conversation.

Members of the class will practice using writing to develop, refine, and communicate ideas in academic contexts (especially in Political Science). Writing in this course is considered a process as much as, if not more than, the completion of a finished product. Students should expect to produce drafts, revise, edit and proofread. In addition, students will share their writing with others in the class, both giving and receiving important feedback on each other's work.

Students will work as individuals, but also in groups. Thus, it is important that students be active participants in this course, making positive contributions to activities, assignments and discussions.

Course Objectives

- Develop critical reading and critical thinking skills.
- Become adept in the techniques of argumentation and persuasive writing so that ideas are fully explained, assertions are supported and claims are credible.
- Master the basic structure of academic essays: paragraphing, transitions, research question/thesis, introductions and conclusions.
- Learn the basics of paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as citing sources in APA.
- Consistently follow standards of written, edited English at a proper level of formality.

English Grammar

Code:	W-114
Term:	Fall
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Jacob Ingram
Form of study:	seminar/workshop

Type, scope, and method of educational activities:

Weekly meeting of 90 minutes, amounting to 42 hours total. Every week, the meeting takes the form of a lecture with time at the beginning of each lesson for review and at the end for practical application exercises.

Additionally, each which students receive writing assignments to practice the topics covered during the lessons

Learning outcomes:

- To further students' knowledge of English through exploration and analysis.
- To help students acquire a global vision of English, rather than concentrate on unrelated areas.
- To see a grammar as providing a means of understanding the relation of form to meaning, and meaning to function, in context.

To provide a basic terminology which, within this framework, will enable students to make these relationships explicit.

Brief outline of the course:

Lecture One: Nouns

Lecture Two: Pronouns

Lecture Three: Verbs

Lecture Four: Aspect, Tense, Mood and Voice

Lecture Five: Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions and Conjunctions

Lecture Six: Phrases

Lecture Seven: Clauses

Lecture Eight: Sentences

Lecture Nine: Written Compositions

Lecture Ten: Paragraph Development

Lecture Eleven: Types and Forms of Composition

Lecture Twelve: Language and Expression

Lecture Thirteen: Punctuation Marks

Lecture Fourteen: Lexis

Comparative Politics

Code:	P-231
Term:	Fall
Year:	Second
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Prerequisites

Introduction to Political Science P-111

Course Objectives

- Introduce the subject of comparative politics; key concepts, principles, theories, thinkers;
- Introduce the methods of comparative politics;
- Apply learned theories and methods to case studies of individual countries and regions;
- Apply learned theories and methods in a term paper.

Contents

What makes regimes fall? What is the recipe for progress? What makes for a democracy? Why have some states evolved towards democracy while others towards authoritarianism and totalitarianism? Can democracy be exported? How to compare governance? What is the role of the state in a globalizing world? What are the important elements of a successful transition after a regime change? What role do elites play in such political process? What shapes political culture of a country?

This course is an introductory look at the field of comparative politics. This is a field of systematic approaches towards studying the institutions, processes, actors, structures and cultures of the countries of the world. It is a selective course and does not intend to cover all of the themes in comparative politics. The focus of this semester is on the development and the state of democracy through the prism of the main approaches in comparative politics since 1950s to the present day.

During the first weeks, we will look briefly at the history of comparative politics as a political science field, at the paradigms and influential thinkers within, and the methods of comparison widely used. The next sections of the course will be devoted to the widespread explanatory approaches within CP including institutional, cultural, pluralist schools of thought, study of political processes and change and the new challenges facing the field of comparative politics.

Required Readings

Comparative Politics Reader

SELECTED TEXTS:

- Wiarda, H. 2007. Comparative Politics: Approaches and Issues. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stepan, A. Arguing Comparative Politics
- Easton, D. A Framework for Political Analysis
- Deutsch, K. The Nerves of the Government
- Putnam, R. 1996 Making Democracy Work
- Almond, G. and Verba, S. Civic Culture
- Inglehart, R. Modernization and Postmodernization
- Moore, B. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy
- Skocpol, T. States and Social Revolutions
- Sen, A.K. Development as Freedom
- Dahl, R. A Preface to Democratic Theory
- Huntington, S. The Third Wave.
- Diamond, L. The Coming Wave and Why Are There No Arab Democracies?

Modern Political Thought

Code:	P-352
Term:	Fall
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Adam Bence Balazs, PhD.
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Prerequisites

English language proficiency.

Contents

Learning outcomes: Students will improve their skills in text analysis (introduced in the previous semester). They will acquire means and tools to critically understand the periodization of Western History and grasp long-term continuities and specificities of the Western journey of political concepts. Based on these tools, they will progressively learn to structure shorter essays in political philosophy. Soft skills: In class debates, we will further improve our ability to structure our opinions following the rules of objectivity and constructive criticism.

Brief course outline: This course is the follow-up to *History of Political Thought I. From Plato to Marx*. We will read classics from the Renaissance (Machiavelli) and the early – i.e., pre-industrial – Modern era (Machiavelli). We will examine different conceptions of the state of nature (Hobbes and Locke) to reach the Enlightenment with Rousseau and then Kant. In the last weeks of the semester, we will focus on Industrial modernity through the lens of political philosophy with Hegel and Marx.

Required Readings

Excerpts from: Machiavelli: *The Prince*; Hobbes: *Leviathan*; Locke: *Two Treatises of Government*; Rousseau: *The Social Contract*; Kant: *What is Enlightenment?*; *Perpetual Peace*; Burke: *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Hegel: *Phenomenology of the Spirit*; Mill: *On Liberty*; Marx: *The Capital*

Introduction to International Relations

Code:	P-233
Term:	Fall
Year:	Second
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Clarissa Tabosa, PhD.; JUDr. Sylvia Tiriyaki
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Course Objectives

Learning outcomes:

The course aims at introducing the students to the study of International Relations (IR) and its main theories. The students will be presented with the discipline's historical origins, its purpose, its debates, as well as the main theoretical approaches developed within the discipline. Upon completion of the course students should be able to analytically apply the main theoretical approaches of IR to current affairs in world politics, to critically assess international relations' issues, and to independently conduct basic research in IR.

Brief outline of the course:

1. Introductory session
2. International Relations as an Academic Discipline
3. Idealism and the Foundations of International Relations
4. Realism: a Critique of Idealism
5. Neorealism
6. Neoliberalism
7. The English School
8. Marxism in IR
9. Constructivism
10. Poststructuralism
11. Feminist Theories in IR
12. Power in IR
13. Which theory "wins"?
14. Final evolution

Public Administration and Social Policy

Term:	Fall
Year:	Second
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 min / 1 per week
Language:	English
Instructor:	Prof. Iveta Radičová
Form of study:	seminar

Learning Outcomes: The course's objective is to understand the basics of social policy. Through a critical reading of texts and discussion they will be acquainted with its history, basic models, forms, theoretical concepts. Students will be able to apply the theory to particular states, including Slovakia. Students will understand and will be able to evaluate European model of social policy, international documents, norms in social rights, and necessary dynamic changes.

Brief outline of the course: 1. Introduction, 2. What is social policy, 3. Theoretical concepts, 4. Basic models, 5. Basic principles of social and public services, 6. Case studies, 7. Social policy in Slovakia, 8. Evolution of human rights with emphasis to social rights, 9. Relationship between human rights and social justice, 10. Development of understanding of social rights, 11. Types of social rights, 12. Current international regulations of social rights.

Povinná literatúra:

Paul Spicker: The Welfare State: a general theory, Sage Publication, Revised edition 2023

Paul Spicker: Principles of Social Welfare: an introduction to thinking about welfare state, 1988, Routledge, USA

Bessant, J., Watts, R., Dalton, T., & Smyth, P. 2006. *Talking policy: how social policy is made*. Routledge.

Fine, B. 2017. The continuing enigmas of social policy. In *towards universal health care in emerging economies* (pp. 29-59). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Lavinas, L. 2018. The collateralization of social policy under financialized capitalism. *Development and Change*, 49 (2), 502-517.

Bachelor Thesis Seminar

Code:	P-351
Term:	Fall
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 min / 1 per week
Language:	English
Instructor:	Lukáš Siegel, PhD.
Form of Study:	seminar

Prerequisites

Writing on Politics

Course Objectives

- Complete a draft of the bachelor thesis;
- Have mastered the steps of long-form academic writing;
- Be able to conduct independent academic research;
- Know how to formulate a precise research hypothesis;
- Be experienced in acquiring, analyzing, interpreting data;
- Know how to plan, conduct, and interpret outputs from field research;
- Be experienced in receiving and giving constructive feedback;
- Be familiar with advanced formatting and citation style requirements;
- Be able to present research in front of an academic audience;
- Know how to approach an application process for graduate school or employment opportunity.

Content

1. Introduction (course requirements and structure); 2. Ways of responding and sharing; 3. Motivation and creating atomic habits; 4. Theory building: Themes, key concepts, relations, 5. Relevance of writing; 6. Outlining chapters/working with literature; 7. Effectively using sources in writing; 8. Structuring: combining the written text with sources; 9. Editing; 10. Formatting; 11. BISLA House style – APA; 12. Process writing: Introductions, conclusions, abstracts. 13. CVs / Personal statements;

Modern Political Theories and Ideologies

Code: P-352
Term: Fall
Year: Third
ECTS credits: 6
Lessons per week: 90 + 90 min
Language: English
Instructor: Adam Bence Balazs, PhD.
Form of study: lecture + seminar

Prerequisites

English language proficiency.

Contents

Learning outcomes: Students will further improve their ability to structure their thoughts in written essays and oral debates. They will revisit some classics in political thought and enhance their understanding of the history of political thought.

Brief course outline: Based on our previous courses, we will have a closer look at the classics behind the leading political schools of thought: social democracy, conservatism, and liberalism. We will focus on Burke and the critiques of the Enlightenment. We will reread Marx and explore the ramifications of Marxism in the 20th century. We will debate the different meanings of liberalism. We will examine modern intellectual debates in their historical context and reflect on the very notion of *ideology*.

Required Readings

Excerpts from: Burke: *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Marx: *The 1844 Manuscripts*; *The Communist Manifesto* (with Engels); Hobhouse: *Liberalism*; Hannah Arendt: *The Totalitarian System*

Enemies, Neighbors, Friends: Ethic Conflict, History and Memory in Central Europe

Term:	Fall
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Dagmar Kusá, PhD.
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Course description:

Enemies, neighbors, friends: Ethnic conflict, history, and memory in Central Europe is an interdisciplinary and somewhat personal look at the complicated legacies of the intertwined past and its impact on the political discourse, culture, and institutions today.

The past is engaged through primary and secondary sources, movies, field trips, and personal research, providing an array of learning opportunities for diverse types of learners. Students are invited to contemplate the complexities of their own identities as residents of this region.

Learning outcomes: Three-dimensional perspective taking on identity; Personal investment in social roles research in class and within own family; Democratic value; Short in-class assignments

Final project:

Identity – impact of the big history on own personal histories

In-class and within family research on social roles

Impact of cultural memory and cultural trauma on political discourse and behavior; Own research with presentation

Final project: Realizing the complexity of history and selectiveness of memory

On the Phenomenon of the Political Work in the work of M.Weber, J. Schumpeter and C.Schmitt

Term:	Fall
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	prof. František Novosád
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

The aim of the course is to become thoroughly acquainted with the classical texts of political analysis and to develop the ability to apply the conceptual apparatus developed by M. Weber, J. Schumpeter and C. Schmitt to contemporary problems and strengthen skills in individual research and writing, teamwork, and public presentation.

The course is devoted to close reading and discussing the key texts of German thinkers Max Weber, Joseph Schumpeter and Carl Schmitt. They are the most influential social thinker of the 20th century. Their interpretation of modernity, controversial as it may be, is still at the center of many of the most important debates of our time. We should read their texts as an inspiration for debate. Your presentation should encourage discussion by examining their statements. As a rule, three or four of you will have to give your interpretation of the same statements. I hope this will stimulate discussion, since each of their theses can be interpreted from different positions.

- Politics, State, Legitimacy
- How do the politically ruling powers manage to assert their rule? Role of administration and material resources.
- To live “for” politics or “from” politics.
- Development of specialist officialdom in Europe.
- Main types of professional politicians, lawyers in politics.
- Politicians and officials (civil servants). Role of journalists in the politics.
- Leadership and followers.
- Organization of Parties
- Selection of Leaders: Spoil system.
- What qualities are the politicians expected to possess?
- Ethical dimensions of politics
- The experience of ethical irrationality of the world
- Expectations! What is coming on us?
- Meaning of science. Rationalization, disenchantment of the world.
- Life as eternal struggle of gods

- The essence of charisma
- The origin and transformation of charisma
- The origin of industrial capitalism (M. Weber and J. Schumpeter)
- Competitive elitist democracy (J. Schumpeter)
- Friend/Enemy distinctions as basis of Politics (C. Schmitt)
- Liberal democracy at crossroads
- Politics, consensus and the distribution of power

Literature:

- Weber Max: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism Translated by Talcott Parsons With an introduction by Anthony Giddens London and New York, Routledge, 2005
- Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations Edited and with an Introduction by John Dreijmanis Translation by Gordon C. Wells Algora Publishing New York © 2008
- Schumpeter, Joseph A. (2014) [1942]. *Capitalism, socialism and democracy* (2nd ed.). Floyd, Virginia: Impact Books.
- Schmitt, Carl: The concept of the Political, The University of Chicago Press, 2007

ELECTIVES – FALL SEMESTER

Existentialism

Term:	Fall
Year:	all
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90+90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Mgr. Samuel Dominik Abrahám
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

Course Description

Is life entirely meaningless? What foundation for ethics and morality is there for contemporary atheists and agnostics? How have philosophers tackled the problem of the meaning of existence and the absurd in the last two centuries? This course will offer an in-depth insight into major existentialists works, including those by Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. It will also include selections from Fyodor Dostoevsky, Simone de Beauvoir, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Søren Kierkegaard and Arthur Schopenhauer. Revolved around Sartre's statement that 'existence precedes essence' from his book 'Existentialism is a Humanism', we will analyze and discuss the metaphysical and ethical implications of existentialist thought for the modern world. We will attempt to trace existentialist thought to its roots and contextualize the existential anxiety that is increasingly prevalent in our contemporary society and communities. Together, we will try to find answers to fundamental philosophical questions revolved around the topic of Existentialism and pave the way for a diversified solution to psychological problems that have been ingeniously described by some of the best thinkers of our time.

French Politics

Term:	Fall
Year:	all
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Adam Bence Balazs, PhD.
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Brief outline of the course: France is one of the main pillars of European integration. Paris plays a leading role in Europe's ongoing geopolitical turn, and the French language and culture have a global impact. Yet France has been facing symptoms of democracy backsliding, too. The French Fifth Republic might face a constitutional crisis. Signs of decline (e.g., the far-right's self-confident rise) question the constitutional order's sustainability and legitimacy.

How much is known about French history, politics, and culture in East-Central Europe? How can we better grasp the blurred logic of French politics? We must consider longer-term processes to understand the ongoing political turmoil in France and its European strategy. History, culture, spirit, political thought, and geopolitics meet in this inquiry. In this course, we will explore the specificities and originality of a major European country and its deep passion for politics.

Introduction to Public Finance

Term:	Fall
Year:	All
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90 min / 1 per week
Language:	English
Instructor:	Martin Hudcovský, PhD.
Form of study:	seminar

Learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes: To gain a practical understanding of how governments manage public resources through taxation, spending, budgeting, and borrowing. Learn to interpret public budgets, identify key challenges in fiscal policy, and evaluate the economic and political impacts of public debt and fiscal consolidation. Develop the ability to critically assess trade-offs in public finance and participate in debates about fairness, efficiency, and sustainability of fiscal decisions.

Brief outline of the course:

- Introduction to public finance and the role of government
- Anatomy of public budgets and their political context
- Revenue sources: taxation, fees, and intergovernmental transfers
- Principles of taxation and tax justice
- Public expenditures and allocation of resources
- The budget process and citizen participation
- Budgeting methods: line-item, performance, and program budgeting
- Capital budgeting and infrastructure investment
- Understanding public debt: concepts, risks, and measurement
- Fiscal consolidation: when and how governments tighten budgets
- Budget transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption tools
- Simulation of local budget decision-making

Fiscal policy in a changing world: debt, aging, and climate finance

Literature:

Khan, A. (2024). *Fundamentals of public budgeting and finance*. Palgrave Macmillan.

News and Journalism in 21st century aka How to Write a News Story

Term:	Fall
Year:	All
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90+90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	James Thomson, MA
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

Course description:

Some people write (and re-write) assignments every day. They are called journalists! In this course, we will look at how they do it, why they do it – and why you might want to do it too. We will practice identifying, researching, sourcing and writing news stories. We will also examine how the business of journalism has changed radically with the rise of digital technology and, especially, social media – but how it is still dominated by age-old arguments about the principles that should apply when it comes to telling other people's stories.

Things you will learn from this course:

- What journalism is, and why it is important (and sometimes dangerous)
- What makes a good news story
- What makes a bad news story
- How news stories are researched, written and edited

History and Legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

Term:	Fall
Year:	All
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90+90 min
Language:	Slovak
Instructor:	Dušan Kováč
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

Výsledky vzdelávania: Študenti získajú prehľad o dejinách strednej Európy od 16. do 20. storočia a o mieste strednej Európy v európskych i svetových dejinách.

Stručná osnova predmetu: Prednášky a semináre sa budú venovať meniacemu sa medzinárodnému postaveniu Habsburskej monarchie a príčinám jej zániku, pokusom vládnucej dynastie o absolutistickú vládu a odbojom šľachty, meštianstva a od polovice 19. storočia aj ľudových vrstiev proti týmto pokusom (problém parlamentarizmu). Dôležitou témou je proces modernizácie v rozlohou i počtom obyvateľov veľkej, ale v porovnaní so západnou Európou zaostalej krajine a tiež problém nacionalizmu a národného štátu v mnohonárodnostnej (a multikonfesionálnej) ríši. Pozornosť sa bude venovať tiež zmene postavenia monarchie v kultúrnom vývoji Európy: od pasívneho prijímania „západných“ vzorov (humanizmus, renesancia, barok) k vytváraniu inšpiratívnych kultúrnych centier (Viedeň, Budapešť, Praha) v období fin de siècle.

The Mastermind 2

Term:	Fall
Year:	All
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	120 min / 1 per week
Language:	Slovak+ English
Instructor:	Menachem Edelman_Landau
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

Learning outcomes: Students will be exposed to a wide range of artworks and improve their understanding and appreciation of art. They will become familiar with many core concepts and cultivate their ability to think methodically about art-making and creativity in general.

Brief outline of the course: The course is a kind of laboratory in which, in its 14 sessions, we will dive deep into several works of art and try to understand them, from their depth structure and substructures all the way to their smallest particles. We will try to step into the minds of great artists and understand their thought processes, even when it is unconscious and intuitive: what are the guiding principles behind their decision-making, and what means do they use to construct their artworks and enhance artistic expression.

In our laboratory, each of us will be a bit of an artist himself. We will think together about dramatic structures, compositions of colors and sounds, dynamics of tension and release, and perhaps, here and there, also about that thing that art strives to mirror: life itself.

IR: Human Rights

Term:	Fall
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Sylvia Tiryaki
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes: To see the ‘big picture’ students are encouraged to think critically about the human rights in their entirety. Students will examine, evaluate, and engage critically with different interpretations of political events, trends, phenomena on national and global levels.

Brief outline of the course: This basic course on human rights aims to provide students with an understanding of what the human rights are and their importance in today’s world, including the European and international legal protection framework and their role in democracy. To this end, we look at the historical origins, doctrine, how they are formed in law, institutional structure of the movement and the challenges to its foundations. The core text for this course will be Levitsky and Ziblatt’s book *How Democracies Die*, chapters from which will be read and discussed on weekly basis as part of the evaluation. In addition, chapter from Clapham’s book *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction* will be assigned for each class.

Reccommended readings:

Clapham, Andrew. (2007). *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How Democracies Die*. London: Penguin.

Ovey, Clare & Robin C.A. White. (2006). *Jacobs and White: The European Convention on Human Rights*, 4th ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Steiner, H. J., Alston, P., & Goodman, R. (2008). *International human rights in context : law, politics, morals : text and materials*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chaos by Design: Making sense of Contemporary American Politics

Term:	Fall
Year:	All
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90+90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	James Thomson, MA
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

Course description:

Under the second administration of President Trump, US politics and public life is in flux. Developments that would previously have been considered transformative or transgressive – e.g. reversals in US foreign policy, military commitments, trade policy, health policy and even in the country's tradition of liberal democracy and constitutional law – have been occurring on an almost weekly basis since January 2025. Given the United States' economic and military might, and – since at least 1945 – its crucial role in Europe, these developments are of pressing concern to Slovakia and its neighbours.

This course will examine contemporary events in the US and seek to put them into their political and historical context. It will also look at how the leading actors in American politics explain and communicate their actions and policies, and how the US media interprets and analyses them. We will observe the mechanics of the US political system, and look into the deeper roots of the right-wing, Christian-nationalist resurgence in America – and the potential parallels in Europe.

Things you will learn from this course:

- What is going on in America, and why we should care
- How American leaders and people understand current events
- How it came to this: recent and longer-term trends in US politics
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system

Analysis and Interpretation

Term:	Fall
Year:	All
ECTS credits:	5
Lessons per week:	90+90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Jacob Ingram
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

This course offers an introduction to the interpretation and critical analysis of literary and non-literary texts. Students will engage with a range of media and genres, developing skills to analyze style, purpose, and audience. Emphasis is placed on understanding the relationship between texts and their cultural, historical, and global contexts, fostering internationally minded, critical thinkers.

Learning Outcomes:

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of texts, both literary and nonliterary.

Analyze and evaluate authorial choices (such as structure, stylistic devices, tone) in shaping meaning.

Apply literary and rhetorical terminology effectively in written and oral commentary.

Explore global issues through close textual analysis and develop nuanced, persuasive arguments.

Reflect critically on the impact of context, purpose, and audience on text production and reception.

SPRING SEMESTER

First Year

Theories of Political Parties and Central European Party System

Term:	Spring
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Dagmar Kusá
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes:

- Gain footing in concepts central to the study of political interactions and institutions within the field of comparative politics,
- Acquire knowledge of various types of institutional settings and designs in different political regimes,
- Be able to assess the consequences of electoral and institutional designs on party and political systems,
- Apply theoretical constructs to specific case studies,
- Learn the ins and outs of an electoral campaign,
- Strengthen skills in individual research and writing, teamwork, and public presentation.

Brief outline of the course:

1. Introduction;
2. Political Communication;
3. Interest Groups;
4. Political Parties;
5. Elections;
6. National Elections Simulation;
7. Parties in Power

The History of Political Philosophy

Term:	Spring
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Adam Bence Balazs
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes: Students will be introduced to the history of political thought in chronological order. From the Ancient Greeks to Early Modernity, we will examine, through classic excerpts, the development and progress of our core political concepts (sovereignty, the state, freedom, equality, and justice). Methodologically, students will learn to structure their thoughts in consecutive points.

Brief outline of the course: The history of political thought from the Greeks to the Industrial Revolution is a long odyssey. Texts from distant epochs call for the examination of their historical context. We need to measure the distance between us and those Ancient and Medieval classics to better understand the way they contribute to contemporary political questionings and challenges. This is an archaeology of our political concepts and ideas, progress and shortcomings. After Plato and Aristotle, we will explore Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages to see how our core political concepts have evolved, what challenges they have had to face, and understand the complex origins of our contrasted ways of thinking about politics in this early 21st century.

Recommended readings: Plato: *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Symposium*. Aristotle: *Politics*. Saint Augustine: *The City of God*. Saint Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*. Machiavelli: *The Prince*, *Discourses on Livy*. NB: we will focus on **excerpts** from these thick classics.

Introduction to Social Science Research Methods

Term:	Spring
Year:	First
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Lukáš Siegel
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes:

- Student will be able to choose a researchable topic and hypothesis
- Student will be able to find and evaluate academic sources and integrate them in writing
- Discern facts from judgment and inference
- Student will be able to identify appropriate methodology and technique for the research of their hypothesis
- Student will be able to construct a simple survey, utilizing different types of questions
- Familiarity with ethical concerns and conduct
- Familiarity with formatting and referencing functions in MSWord
- Ability to organize research planning in a thorough proposal

Brief outline of the course:

Week 1 Intro to Social Science research

Week 2 Evaluating information: discerning inference from judgment

Week 3 What can you do with qualitative and quantitative research?

Week 4 Finding academic sources: Offline and online quest

Week 5 Literature Review

Week 6 From theory to findings

Week 7 Research Design: establishing a causation

Week 8 READING WEEK

Week 9 Qualitative Approaches: Interviews, surveys

Week 10 Quantitative Approaches

Week 11 Content analysis

Week 12 Developing a research proposal

Week 13 Developing a research proposal

Week 14 Presentations: Creating a poster

Week 15: Presentations

International Conflict and Cooperation

Term:	Spring
Year:	Second
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Dagmar Kusá
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Výsledky vzdelávania/Learning Outcomes:

- To understand the phenomenon of conflict
- To understand conflicts from the perspective of a variety of disciplines,
- To understand the processes of identity construction, ethnic mobilization, and escalation of conflict,
- To be reflective of own identity, and broad social and historical contexts that have shaped it,
- To research the diverse solutions to end conflicts of violence and to rebuild societies after a period of violent conflict
- To gain insight into and basic skills in conflict resolution and conciliation,
- To develop skills of independent research, presentation, and teamwork.

This research-based seminar traces the theoretical foundations of conflicts rooted in identity (ethnic, religious, cultural, communal conflicts), including the process of a social construction of identity, relationship of history and memory, of language, narrative, and conflict, or the phenomenon of a cultural trauma in social discourse. The course examines various approaches towards conflict analysis and resolution and identifies approaches to conciliation in divided communities.

Geopolitics

Term:	Spring
Year:	Second
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Adam B. Balazs
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes: Students will learn to read geopolitical maps. They will seize international power relations in space and grasp the importance of the geographical dimension of international relations. They will learn how to locate global, regional, and local challenges on the map and get more critical about how they perceive the 'outside world.' Europe's place and role in the global world will be addressed constructively and critically.

Brief outline of the course: We will first get familiar with the essential tools and means of geopolitics and the definition of political geography. After initial considerations on space and time, we will proceed macro-region by macro-region to better see through the contemporary challenges of global complexity. Through these macro-regional inquiries, we will also learn to measure power in a critical way. Indeed, power does not necessarily come along with strength or weight.

Recommended readings: Kishore Mahbubani: *Has the West Lost it? A Provocation*; Fernand Braudel: *The Mediterranean*; Roger Hardy: *The Poisoned Well*; Edward W. Said: *Orientalism*; Connolly and Monaghan: *The Sea in Russian Strategy*; Eric Hobsbawm: 'Mitteleuropean Destinies' in *Fractured Times*

European Union

Term:	Spring
Year:	Second
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Sylvia Tiriyaki
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes:

The course aims to help students understand the roles and interactions among key institutions such as the European Commission and European Council, as well as the legal basis and decision-making processes shaping EU policies. By the end of the course, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the European Union as an institution and develop critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate its basic principles, complex functioning, and international importance.

Brief outline of the course:

This course delves into the European Union, encompassing its principles, evolution, institutional structure, and current challenges. It starts by examining the EU's core values and history, spanning from its inception to its present diverse composition. The expansion of the EU and complexities within the Customs Union will be explored. Students will gain insights into key EU institutions. Additionally, they'll analyze contemporary EU challenges, focusing on citizen engagement, member state relations, and policy domains encompassing economics, and foreign affairs.

Capstone: Review Topics of Politics

Term:	Spring
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Iveta Radičová / Samuel Abrahám
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Learning outcomes:

- Ability to compare and contrast the political systems, social structures, and international relations of Slovakia with other countries in Central Europe and the European Union.

Identify and analyze the role of Slovakia within the broader context of Central Europe and the European Union, including its historical, cultural, and political significance.

- Evaluate the challenges and issues faced by Slovakia and the European Union in today's global context.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments and opinions based on an advanced level of understanding of the key theories and concepts in political science, sociology, international relations, and philosophy.
- Apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios by analyzing and proposing potential solutions to contemporary political, social, and international issues.
- Construct well-structured and coherent written and oral presentations that effectively communicate complex ideas related to the fields covered in undergraduate studies at BISLA
- Develop skills of argumentation through in-class debates and leading discussion with experts from the field
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of political science, sociology, international relations, and philosophy, and their interconnectedness in addressing the challenges of today's society.

- Enhance analytical skills, problem-solving skills, and skill of team work through implementation of semester-long group projects
- Be able to locate data in large databases, interpret them, and utilize in written work and presentations.

Brief outline of the course:

Week 1-2: Introduction, overview of the course

- Identification of key challenges facing our time by the class
- Overview of key relevant theories and concepts and literature
- Discussion on the relevance and importance of connecting theory with practice

Week 3-7: Challenges and Issues facing Slovak Republic and Central Europe

- Focus on Slovakia's political system, social structures, and international relations in light of the identified topics
- Comparison with other countries in Central Europe and the European Union
- Analysis of commonalities and differences

Week 8-11: Challenges and Issues in Today's Global Context

- Week 8: Reading Week
- Presentations of collected data
- Examination of contemporary challenges faced by Slovakia and the European Union
- Discussion on the impact of globalization, technology, and socio-political changes

Week 12-14:

- In class debates
- Situating findings in theoretical frameworks acquired during the undergraduate studies

Week 15: Final presentations of projects to the school audience

Advanced Political Philosophy

Term:	Spring
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Adam B. Balazs
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Through this reading seminar, students will improve their understanding of modern political thought and its chronology. They will improve the structure of their thoughts through essays, text commentaries, and oral presentations. They will deepen their knowledge of those classics we did not cover enough in the previous semesters to get the big picture of this odyssey from Plato to Marx.

We will come back to three prominent classics in political thought: Machiavelli (and the Renaissance), Hobbes (and the 17th century), and Kant (and the Enlightenment). In this reading seminar, we will take our time to have a closer look at theories and periods mentioned in previous courses yet not examined in depth.

Reading the History

Term:	Spring
Year:	Third
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	František Novosád
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Course description

The course is devoted to close reading and discussing the key texts influential social thinker of the 20th century. Their interpretation of modernity, controversial as it may be, is still at the center of many of the most important debates of our time. We should read their texts as an inspiration for debate. Your presentation should encourage discussion by examining their statements.

The present age is often characterized by the prefix post-. We are talking about a post-industrial society, about a post-factual mentality, about a post-history. The prefix *post-* wants to express that we have found ourselves in a period of radical changes, in which what was traditionally called historical experience has lost its meaning. However, progress always looks bigger than it actually is. Therefore, it is important to study authors who emphasize that understanding history is the key to understanding the possibilities and limitations of human nature. In the given course we will read and discuss the authors discussing the historical dimensions of societal life. Among others we would read text of Erwin Panofsky, Stephen Toulmin, Page Smith, Hayden White and

We will read and discuss the following texts. Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book: *The Design of Prose*

1. John Stuart Mill: Mediocrity and Eccentricity (p.207 – 218)
2. C. Vann Woodward: From the First Reconstruction to the Second (p. 3 – 14)
3. Sir Herbert Read: Peasant Art (p. 41 – 48)
4. Roger Fry: The Artist's Vision (p. 49 – 53)
5. H. R. Trevor-Roper: A case of coexistence: Christendom and the Turks (p.81 – 88)
6. Erwin Panofsky: Humanism and Humanities (p. 218 – 233)
7. Aldous Huxley: Time and the Machine (p. 245 – 254)
8. Owen Barfield: Growth of Historical Sense (p. 254 – 266)
9. Stephen Toulmin: Human History and Natural History (p. 267 – 282)
10. Page Smith: History and the Search for Identity (p. 294 – 301)
11. John Kenneth Galbraith: The unseemly Economics of Opulence (p. 350 – 366)