POLISCI 110: Foundations of American Government and Politics

This course explores the organization and operation of national state power in the United States. It begins with a "textbook" account of American government and politics, focused on the formal institutional arrangements of the U.S. national state (viz., the constitution, separation of powers, federalism, congress, president, and Supreme Court) as well as the formal mechanisms through which the state is linked to American citizens (esp., public opinion, elections, political parties, and interest groups). Armed with this formalist view, we turn to an examination of the "real world" of American democracy. Here we engage in a close and careful reading of a handful of empirical studies on the actual workings of the U.S. political system with a focus on citizen-state relationships, the constitutional and institutional organization of the U.S. national state, and the relationship between this state and the nation's corporate capitalist economy.

Units: 3
Program: Political Science