

Spring Capstone Seminars **AcYr 2018**

FP471A: The Priorities of the Modern Presidency-Modern American presidents are, in the words of political scientist Richard Neustadt, expected “to do something about everything.” As time is perhaps the president’s scarcest resource, a successful president must effectively prioritize goals. Our focus will be objective empirical analysis to evaluate the priorities of the people who hold the presidency – what they aim to do, whether they succeed, and why. (Doherty)

FP471B: China’s Rise & U.S. – China Relations-China’s great-power ascent represents presumably the most important geo-strategic issue for the 21st century. In many ways, it has already become a peer competitor to the United States at the bilateral, regional, and global levels. The United State-China relations are considered the most significant bilateral relationship in the world. This capstone seminar explores the realities and implications of China’s growing power with a focus on the economic, political, and military/security challenges for the United States. (Deng)

FP471C: The Politics of European Security-This capstone will explore the current state of European security and security institutions (e.g. EU, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)), the new European strategic environment, Russia and Ukraine as well as the future of NATO and Common European Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) of the EU. It will include the Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic States and Poland where the US has now stationed troops and some of you may be sent. Potential research topics include all of the above plus any other US bilateral or multilateral allied relations (Australia, Japan, OAS, etc.) and the security considerations of various European nations. (Mattox)

FP471D: Coups and Impeachment in Comparative Perspective-Why do some countries experience coups and others do not? Why do some coups fail and others succeed? Why are some presidents overthrown, others impeached, and yet others survive? These questions and their answers are germane to the study of comparative politics and international relations, and inform the way politicians, soldiers, policymakers, and citizens behave in democratic (and non-democratic) society. This seminar uses historical accounts and the scholarly literature to unpack these questions and others, as it examines inter-branch conflict and institutional instability, especially in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The course shows how institutional design and the actions of political actors, including the military, social movements, and political-economic elites, contribute to the survival or fall of governments and democratic regimes across the globe. (Polga-Hecimovich)

FP471E: Politics in the Digital Age: Does the Internet Change Everything?-This seminar will examine the effects of the Internet and social media on politics and society broadly defined. From enhancing the surveillance of states, to empowering the voices of citizens seeking new forms of agency, the digital age is characterized by such forces for political transformation as the Arab Spring Uprisings, Wikileaks, and the Occupy movement. We like, tweet, post selfies, blog, snap-chat, and youtube our politics in the digital age. This seminar will seek explanations as to why these new ways of communicating matter for politics and relations of power, locally and globally. Will authoritarian governments collapse in the face of social media-armed publics? Does the Internet change the way we think? Is there any privacy in the digital age? What will our global future look like as the Internet of things wires our lives? Does the Internet promote global civil society and integration? Or divide us digitally into information rich and information poor? These are some of the questions we will consider in this seminar, as we tackle Bill Gates’ famous argument that the Internet changes everything. (Wheeler)