Summer Selected Topics Courses

CS 289 – Python Programming

This course aims to teach how to program computers using Python. We cover the basics of how one constructs a program from a series of simple instructions in Python. The course has no prerequisites and avoids all but the simplest mathematics. Anyone with moderate computer experience should be able to master the materials in this course. The course will introduce the core data structures of the Python programming language. We will explore how we can use the Python built-in data structures such as lists, dictionaries, and tuples to perform increasingly complex data analysis. At the end we will learn how to use some of the libraries available for Python, such as numpy, and matplotlib. We will use Google Colab, so no software is required.

PLSC 289 -- Catholic Church in Comparative Perspective

What is the political significance of the Catholic Church for global politics? By examining different traditions of scholarly literature, students will acquire the necessary tools to make reasoned judgments about urgent political problems in comparative politics. While the class focuses on the Catholic Church it also seeks to place it in the context of global challenges. Some of the covered concepts include but are not limited to: institutions, human rights, authoritarianism, democracy, secularization, and public policy. Overall, the class is designed to critically examine how the Catholic Church, an important international and state-level actor, affects different aspects of human existence. Conversely, we will also look at the factors and variables that influence and constrain how the Church acts.

PLSC 389 – Comparative Federalism (Milkessa Gemechu)

**Course Description:** *Comparative Federalism* introduces students with the theory and practice of federalism and federation by using comparative approach. In this course, students will be gain analytical tools to critically and comparatively examine both functioning and defunct federations in the world. More specifically, the relevance federalism, concepts, approaches and theories of federalism and federal political systems, characteristic features of federations and consociation, federations within federation, centralization and power devolution /secessionism, fiscal federalism, intergovernmental relations, institutions of constitutional interpretation, and pathologies in federations will be explored through comparative case studies of mature, emergent, hybrid and post-conflict federal experiments. In doing so, special attention shall be given to the assessment of the nature and dynamics of federalism in “mature” federations, mainly the United States.

SOC 289 – Sociology of Families

The family is one piece of a complex puzzle in thinking about societies and their functioning from a sociological standpoint. This course is designed to introduce you to the family as a social institution. We will be looking at historical changes in families; paid and unpaid work; marriage and partnering; divorce, remarriage and blended families; parenting; violence; economic issues; law and social policy; race/ethnicity; gender; sexuality; and age. Throughout the course, you will be applying what we have learned about the family to the social interactions and relationships around you. This will enable you to see how your life and the lives of others are greatly influenced by the social interactions and relationships that occur within the social institution that is the family. Taking this course will give you the opportunity to cultivate abstract and critical thinking skills, in addition to improving your reading and writing skills.

SPAN 289/389 – COMING OF AGE CINEMA IN THE SPANISH-SPEAKING WORLD

This course explores Spanish-language films depicting an individual’s transition into adulthood. These coming-of-age films intertwine character growth with social commentary about changing societies and cultural norms. Much of the course content and discussion will focus on issues of cross-cultural communication, as well as gender, racial, and ethnic identities. Along with watching films, and learning about the societies depicted on screen, students will strengthen their Spanish-conversation skills through class discussions, group work, and online presentations.

**Prerequisite**: Placement into Spanish 301 or Spanish 300 or higher, completion of at least 1 semester of a 200-level Spanish course, or permission from the instructor.