POLITICAL THEORY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

James Madison College's major in Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy, as its unusual name suggests, probes the major competing principles that have animated political communities and how we have attempted to translate these into practice. We raise complex fundamental questions as we try to sort out the values and principles that have been most important to us. What does it mean to flourish as a human being? What are the rights and responsibilities of good citizens? What is the best way of life for society as a whole? Political Theory does not pretend to have the definitive answers to these questions. But we believe we can teach students how to think about these concepts and how to approach these questions in a productive and intellectually exciting way.

To achieve this, the Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy curriculum is both philosophical and historical. Course readings range from Plato and the classical poets to contemporary political theory, literature, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The introductory course sequence (MC 270-271) is not a conventional survey of political theory. It introduces students to a theoretical way of thinking about politics and morality at different times and places (for example, the ancient Greek city-state and the Florentine republic) which they can then use as a basis of comparison in analyzing the American experience. Other required "core" courses confront students with the most systematic justifications philosophers have offered for one or another conception of justice and also the most challenging, sometimes unorthodox objections to grand theories of justice. Finally, in senior seminars, students can critically explore a focused topic in depth in such a way that many of the themes and questions that have been raised by the curriculum may be viewed in a new light. In addition, a wide range of electives, including courses on technology, religion and politics, the Supreme Court and African-American political thought allow students to pursue more specialized interest relevant to the general concerns of the major.

In short, the Political Theory curriculum is coherent yet flexible. The required courses are carefully sequenced and built on one another. The small number of required courses in the junior and senior year, combined with the flexibility of other Political Theory requirements, enables upper-class students to use the curriculum as the basis for a program that integrates their interests inside and outside the College. After graduation, Political Theory majors have gone on directly to work in a wide variety of public and private sector jobs. Many Political Theory graduates go on to graduate or professional school in law, business, philosophy, and political science. From there, their paths have taken many different turns, for example, serving in the Michigan Legislature, as Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as Budget Director of the State of Michigan, as Executive Director of the Michigan Democratic Party, and teaching at major universities and small liberal arts colleges.

These features of the PTCD program make it easy to pursue a dual major. Many students combine a PTCD major with a major in another Madison core or a major in a disciplinary department. In recent years, PTCD students have dual majored in biochemistry, criminal justice, economics, English, history, mathematics, philosophy, political science, physics, psychology, religion, secondary education, sociology, and theater.

Requirements for a major in Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy:
All of the Following (21 credits):
MC 270: Classical Republicanism (4 cr.)
MC 271: Constitutionalism and Democracy (4 cr.)
MC 370: Radical Challenges to Liberal Democracy (4 cr.)
MC 371: Beyond Liberal Democracy? New Directions in Political Theory (4 cr.)
MC 497: Senior Seminar in Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy (5 cr.)

One (1) (4 credits):
MC 373A: Constitutionalism: The Supreme Court (4 cr.)
MC 373B: Constitutionalism: The Presidency (4 cr.)
MC 373C: Constitutionalism: Congress (4 cr.)
MC 375: Contemporary Developments in American Politics (4 cr.)
MC 378: Law and Social Groups (must have PTCD content) (4 cr.)

One (1) (4 credits) ***(continues to next page)***
MC 272: Political Theory and Political Issues (4 cr.)
MC 325: State and Society in Comparative Perspective (4 cr.)
MC 326: U.S. Foreign Policy (4 cr.)
MC 332: Literature and Politics in a Comparative Perspective (4 cr.)
MC 341: Politics and Markets (4 cr.)
MC 349: Economics of Legal Relationships in Comparative Perspective (4 cr.)
MC 350: Evolution and Society (4 cr.)
MC 351: Science and Social Policy (4 cr.)
MC 368: The Civil Rights Movement and its Legacies (4 cr.)
MC 369: Global Issues in Citizenship (4 cr.)
MC 372: Comparative Black Political Thought (4 cr.)
MC 373A*: Constitutionalism: The Supreme Court (4 cr.)
MC 373B*: Constitutionalism: The Presidency (4 cr.)

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One (1) (4 credits) ***(continued from previous page)***
MC 373C*: Constitutionalism: Congress (4 cr.)
MC 375*: Contemporary Developments in American Politics (4 cr.)
MC 376: Modern Political Thought in the Muslim World (4 cr.)
MC 377: Culture, Politics and Post-Colonialism (4 cr)
MC 378*: Law and Social Groups (4 cr.)
MC 381: American Politics and Equality (4 cr.)
MC 383: African American Politics (4 cr.)
MC 386: Women and Power in Comparative Perspective (4 cr.)
MC 387: Jews and Anti-Semitism (4 cr.)
MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs (must have PTCD content) (4 cr.)
MC 391: Selected Topics in Public Affairs (must have PTCD content) (4 cr.)
MC 482: Gender and Violent Conflict (4 cr.)
*MAY NOT be double counted in major

One (1) of the Following (3-5 credits):
MC 294: Qualitative Research Methods (4 cr.)
MC 295: Research Design and Quantitative Analysis in Public Policy (4 cr.)
PLS 201: Introduction to Method of Political Analysis (4 cr.)
PHL 330: Formal Deductive Reasoning (4 cr.)
PHL 331: Formal Practical Reasoning (4 cr.)
PHL 480: Philosophy of Science (4 cr.)
STT 421: Statistics I (3 cr.)
One college-level math course (calculus or above).
Example: MTH 124, MTH 126, MTH 132, MTH 133, MTH 152H, MTH 153H (3-5 cr.)
(MTH may not be counted both as fulfilling the MSU MTH requirement and Methods requirement for PTCD)

One (1) of the Following Related Areas (12-16 credits):

Option 1: Humanities/Social Sciences
Students select four courses (12-16 credits) from one of the following disciplines or fields:

Anthropology, Philosophy, Economics, Political Economy (JMC), English, Political Science, Second Language, Social Relations and Policy (JMC), History, Sociology, International Relations (JMC)

At least two of the four courses must be at the 300 level or above. In the case of a related area in a second language, all four courses must be at the 300 level or above.

With the approval of the student's advisor, the following substitutions are permitted:
(a) Four courses in a discipline other than one of those listed above (for example, related area in Criminal Justice or Journalism).
(b) A coherent and unified multidisciplinary package of courses (for example, a related area in comparative literature consisting of a mix of courses from French and German [in translation]; a related area in the history of ideas which includes a mix of courses from History and Philosophy). In addition, appropriate courses offered in Madison College may be substituted for courses offered in one of the above disciplinary departments (for example, a related area in Philosophy may include PTCD courses; a related area in Political Science may include IR and/or PTCD courses; a related area in Sociology may include SRP courses; a related are an in Economics may include PE courses).

Option 2: Political Culture
With the approval of their advisor, students select four (preferably advance) courses that focus on an historically significant polity in another time and place. At least one of these courses must be in the history of the polity. The others may be on any aspect of life of the polity (e.g., art, music, literature, religion, philosophy, economics, family and Social Relations and Policy, politics). Two may be in the study of the language of the polity (either as advanced work in the student's second language or as beginning work in a third language).

Typical examples of historical polities: ancient Egypt, ancient Israel, classical Greece, classical Rome, medieval Christendom, the medieval Islamic world, Renaissance Italy, Reformation Germany, Tudor and Elizabethan England, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Prussia, Victorian Britain, the British Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czarist Russia, the Soviet Union, the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, South Africa, and the polities of comparable epoch in the history of the peoples of India, China, Japan, Africa, and Latin America.

In fulfilling this requirement, students may use appropriate Madison courses (including independent studies, second senior seminars, and senior honors theses) where they are relevant.

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Option 3: Dual Major
Students pursuing a second major (inside or outside the college) may, with approval of their advisor, use four courses from that major to fulfill the Related Area requirement.

In addition to the coursework outlined above, students are responsible for the following requirements: Integrative Studies, Math requirement, Language requirement, Economics requirement, Field Experience and Electives.

TOTAL CREDITS TO GRADUATE: 120

Examples of Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy Senior Seminars (MC 497)

Freedom, Justice & Constitutionalism - What do freedom and justice demand of a liberal democracy's constitution? What do we mean by freedom and social justice? Are their demands compatible or do they conflict? Can they be satisfied in the context of constitutional democracy, or is more required?
The purpose of the seminar is to consider these and other questions related to freedom and justice in constitutional democracy through the lens of modern political and economic thought. The course readings provide a dialogue among political economists of the past 100 years who have informed and interacted with each other, from Frank Knight and James Buchanan to John Rawls and F.A. Hayek. We conclude with John Tomasi's effort to reconcile Rawls with Hayek.

The American Presidency: Becoming Commander-in-Chief - This course is not intended primarily as a history course. Our examination of past presidents will aim, in the first place, to illustrate and elucidate the nature of the office itself. In examining several U.S. presidents, we will try to keep the following analytical questions in mind: What role did the American founders envision for the presidency? What role has it had throughout American history? Is there a "modern" presidency distinctly different than that which preceded it? Our examination and discussion of these more general questions will give us greater analytical leverage as we turn to the rest of the presidents we will study for the remainder of this course. In each case, we will examine the content of that transformation and what it means for the office of the presidency and American government more generally.

Contemporary Liberal and Social Democracy - During the past seven years, this senior seminar has focused on a relatively straight forward topic: a comparison of American liberal democracy and European social democracy. This fall the course examines the broad problems of contemporary liberal democracy. The main theme will remain broad problems of contemporary (American and European) democracy, but with an emphasis on Tocqueville's argument regarding the tendency in democracy to evolve towards "soft despotism." Students will look at both historical and theoretical approaches to these problems. The class will raise critical questions and draw some tentative conclusions regarding the quality of today's liberal and social democracy, forcing us to question whether we are headed toward a despotic state.

POLITICAL THEORY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist for students in the Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy major who began in PTCD Fall 2019 or after. It can help students visualize how the various parts of the curriculum fit together. Transfer students who are taking coursed at other institutions should choose classes that may be applied toward MSU's Integrative Studies requirements, MSU's math requirement, or Madison's second language and economics requirements.

Integrative Studies:

MC 111 _____ MC 201 _____ ISP _____ IAH(201-210) _____
MC 202 _____ ISB _____ IAH (211 or higher) _____ +MATH _____

MC100 _____ Second Language: _____ Economics: EC 201 _____ or EC 251H _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ EC 202 _____ or EC 252H _____

One of the following is required. Meet with the field experience coordinator to see best option.
Field Experience: Internship (MC 400/MC 401) _____ Study Abroad _____ Senior Honors Thesis _____

Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy Core Program:

All of the following:

MC 270 _____ MC 271 _____ MC 370 _____ MC 371 _____ MC 497 _____

One of the following:
Constitutionalism or American Politics

MC 373A _____
MC 373B _____
MC 373C _____
MC 375 _____
MC 378 _____

One of the following:
Political Issues Elective

MC 272 _____
MC 325 _____
MC 326 _____
MC 332 _____
MC 341 _____
MC 349 _____
MC 350 _____
MC 351 _____
MC 368 _____
MC 369 _____
MC 372 _____
MC 373A** _____
MC 373B** _____
MC 373C** _____
MC 375** _____
MC 376 _____
MC 377 _____
MC 378** _____
MC 381_____
MC 383 _____
MC 386 _____
MC 387 _____
MC 390* _____
MC 391* _____
MC 482 _____

**must have PTCD content **may NOT be double counted in major*

Methods:

One of the following:

MTH 124 _____ MTH 152H _____ MC 294 _____ PHL 331 _____
MTH 126 _____ MTH 153H _____ MC 295 _____ PHL 480 _____
MTH 132 _____ PLS 201 _____ PHL 330 _____ STT 421 _____
MTH 133 _____

(MTH may not be counted both as fulfilling the MSU MTH requirement and Method requirement for PTCD)

Related Area:

OPTION 1: Humanities/Social Sciences. Four courses from one discipline or JMC Major (see list in Handbook) or advisor-approved package of four courses.

Discipline of JMC Major: _____ Courses: _____ _____ _____ _____

OPTION 2: Political Culture. Four courses on a historically significant polity in another time and place. One course must be in History, others may be in any aspect of life of the polity; i.e., art, philosophy, social structure. May include advanced work in a language or beginning work in an additional language.

Historical Polity: _____ Courses: _____ _____ _____ _____

OPTION 3: Dual Major. Four courses from student's second major: _____ _____ _____ _____

120 TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE: ☐ meets requirement

Minimum number of MC credits required: 47. For Transfer students: 41.
+A minimum score of 19 on MSU proctored placement exam or selected MTH or STT course(s).

POLITICAL THEORY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY CLASS SCHEDULE

Semester: Fall Semester 1

MC 100	1 cr
MC 111	4 cr
MC 201	4 cr

Semester: Spring Semester 1

MC 202	4 cr

Semester: _____

Semester: _____

Semester: _____

Semester: _____

Semester: _____

Semester: _____

Semester: _____

Semester: _____
