

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 3819S  
Date of Senate Approval 04/04/19

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Doc 31 (POLS):** **Reinstate POLS 323, updating the title and description;  
Add new course, POLS 398, Political Game Theory**

**Effective Date: Fall 2019**

**1. Add:** On page 264, reinstate **POLS 323** with new title and course description:

**323 U.S. Elections (4)**

Designed to introduce students to the study of campaigns and elections in the United States, this course will focus primarily on federal elections--both presidential and congressional. We will cover a variety of topics, including campaign strategies and finance, political advertisements, public opinion, electoral rules, and voting behavior. Students will be asked to think creatively about how to design and run an effective campaign and to analyze the effects of rules and procedures on the outcomes of elections. Students will be asked to partner with Buncombe County Election Services for voter mobilization efforts and election day poll working. Even years Fall.

**2. Add:** On page 267, new course, **POLS 398:**

**398 Political Game Theory (4)**

Introduces students to the foundational concepts of game theory for studying conflict and cooperation in social and political settings. Game theory is the use of mathematics and logic to model and study behavior and to explore rationality. In this course, we will go into depth about some of the canonical “games” in game theory, and will also discuss more advanced subjects, including Nash equilibria and its refinements. The insights from this class will not only help students think about politics but will also be applicable to everyday life and a variety of other fields of study. Prerequisites: POLS 290 or permission of instructor. See department chair.

**Impact Statement:** The addition of these courses will have no anticipated negative impact on the Political Science major, minor, or university requirements. Instead, both courses will serve as electives for the major and minor in areas in which the department is in need: American politics and research methodology. The addition of the courses is not expected to affect the department’s staffing needs as both have already been offered as special topics courses. Further, both classes have the potential to be taught by multiple faculty in the department, lessening the burden on any individual faculty member and preventing any adverse effect on their course offerings. While both courses have been taught by Ashley Moraguez in the past, Peter Haschke is qualified to teach in both areas, as well. Our new faculty member in the department, (Rob Shrode, an Americanist), will be able to teach POLS 323, and should also be able to teach POLS 398. Finally, with the retirement of two faculty members, we anticipate retiring several courses, depending on Rob Shrode’s teaching interests.

POLS 323 was taught last in 2010 by a now retired faculty member (Bill Sabo). Having been sunsetted, the course was more recently taught as a Special Topics course in Fall 2018, largely in response to student interest and demand (fully enrolled with 25 students). This current POLS 323 is essentially the same course as the previous iteration with a slightly more general description, so relisting it as POLS 323 should not have any adverse effects. U.S. Elections is likely a more appealing and meaningful title for students, provides faculty flexibility, and does not limit the study of American elections to a behavioral perspective. POLS 398 was offered as a special topics course in the Spring of 2018 and was well enrolled with 16 students.

Regularly offering these courses will contribute to, and strengthen, the department's curriculum delivery and provide students with a wider array of courses from which to choose.

**Rationale:** The inclusion of POLS 323 and POLS 398 will make both substantive and methodological contributions to the department's course offerings and contribute to the missions of both the department and the university.

POLS 323 is an American Politics elective and will be regularly offered to coincide with the national election cycle of the United States. Because the offering coincides with U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections, we anticipate high student demand. The course will help fill the hole in departmental provision of electives in American politics as a result of two faculty retirements. Further, it will contribute to University programs, as it will be offered as a Service Learning designated course; a partnership with Buncombe County Election Services has already been established. In this way, the course will also contribute to the shared mission between the University and the department to foster engaged service and practical experience, and the University's strategic priority to have students collaborate with civic leaders in the wider community. Most importantly, the course will touch on themes important to modern democracy and to the liberal arts experience: citizenship, public engagement, and civic responsibility. We seek to change the old title from American Electoral Behavior to U.S. Elections to 1) more clearly communicate the course's content and focus to students, while 2) adding more flexibility as to how the content is offered. American elections can be studied from both a behavioral perspective and an institutional perspective and the old title and description restricted the course unnecessarily toward the behavioral camp.

POLS 398 will be offered as an elective in Political Science and will contribute to the department's curricular emphasis on research methodology. This course will prepare students to engage their critical thinking skills in a new way of modeling the social world, which reflects priorities in the department and university's missions. Further, it will contribute to and enhance UNC Asheville's and the Political Science department's emphasis on, and strengths, in undergraduate research. The skills acquired in the course will also prepare students for a variety of career and educational paths. At present, there is no game theory course provided in any department across the university. Given that game theory is a prominent tool in a variety of disciplines (ranging from biology to economics to philosophy), this course can also contribute to the university's wider curriculum and will be consistent with the multidisciplinary emphasis of the liberal arts. The course can also play an important role in the Social Science Research Methods initiative, which is currently being developed by faculty across the social sciences fields. Given this wide appeal we anticipate the course to enroll well.