

IAS 3003 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING 2027:

IAS 3003 Sec. 001 Elite Politics in Iran, TR 12-1:15pm, Dr. Vahid Abedini

This course examines the domestic and foreign policy of post-revolutionary Iran through the lens of elite politics and conflict. Unlike many modern revolutions, the Iranian Revolution succeeded without a centralized revolutionary organization or party. In its aftermath, elite networks—formed through revolutionary credentials, religious institutions, familial ties, and educational backgrounds—emerged as the core drivers of political power in the Islamic Republic.

The course explores how these elite dynamics have shaped state-building, political competition, and foreign policy in Iran. Particular attention is given to how elite networks extend beyond national borders and play a central role in shaping Iran's relations with non-state actors across the Middle East. Key topics include elite education, factionalism, political socialization, informal institutions, and the role of international constraints—such as war and sanctions—in influencing elite strategies. Students will gain a deeper understanding of contemporary Iranian politics and its integration into regional and global power structures, while engaging broader debates in comparative authoritarianism, post-revolutionary politics, and political development.

IAS 3003 Sec. 002 Comparative Constitutionalism, TR 10:30-11:45am, Dr. Fabio de Sa e Silva

What do constitutions do, and why do they matter? Are they blueprints for democracy, instruments of domination, or fragile compacts that mirror their societies' conflicts? Constitutions shape some of the most consequential struggles of our time—from impeachment battles and judicial power to social rights, inequality, environmental protection, and democratic breakdown. Far from being static legal documents, constitutions are lived, contested, and reinterpreted through politics, institutions, and social movements.

This course introduces students to the comparative study of constitutionalism: the principles, institutions, and practices through which societies define, distribute, and constrain political power. We begin by examining competing theories of what constitutions are, why they matter, and how scholars study them across countries and contexts. The course then turns to Brazil's 1988 Constitution as a central case study of democratic constitutionalism in the Global South. Students will analyze its ambitious promises—especially regarding social rights, federalism, participation, and accountability—alongside the tensions and crises that emerged as those promises were implemented in practice, culminating in the political upheavals of 2013–2018. In the final part of the course, students will conduct comparative constitutional analyses of other countries, using Brazil as a reference point to explore broader questions about constitutional design, democratic resilience, and constitutional crisis in a changing world.

IAS 3003 Sec. 004 European Politics, MWF 2:00-2:50pm, Dr. Loren Gatch

This course is an analysis of political developments in Europe, emphasizing state structures, intergovernmental relations, and regional political dynamics. Student will learn about institutions and processes of European politics from a comparative perspective; the significance of the European Union as a regional integration project that impacts the domestic politics of its member countries; analysis of selected policy areas of concern to European countries; the roles individual European countries, and the European Union itself, play in international politics.

IAS 3003 Sec. 005 Global AI Governance, MWF 11-11:50am, Dr. Mark Raymond

How should artificial intelligence (AI) be governed? This course examines the major challenges in contemporary AI policy, including its environmental effects, economic consequences, and safety risks, paying particular attention to global-scale challenges. The second part of the course examines the major actors and processes that are being created for creating and implementing AI policy and governance arrangements, including companies, governments, international organizations and civil society groups.

IAS 3003 Sec. 006 Modern Europe, MWF 1-1:50pm, Dr. Kayhan Nejad

Europe has been remade. Since 1914, it has changed from a continent of empires and nation-states to one largely governed by a supranational union; from an industrial economy to one based on services and natural resource extraction; from over a quarter of the world's population to under a tenth. Over the course of these shifts, European

states have both inflicted and confronted a series of traumas, including the horrors of fascism and colonialism, and faced a number of political shocks, including the loss of overseas empire. How did these historical experiences shape the European continent, and how do they allow us to understand its politics and society today? In this course, we will engage modern Europe both past and present, conceived broadly from the British Isles in the northwest to the Balkans in the southeast. Beginning with an overview of the last century of European history, we will end by thinking through the most difficult and contentious issues facing the continent today, from the debates surrounding immigration and refugee asylum, to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and consequent rearmament, to Europe's relative economic underperformance vis-à-vis the US and emerging Asian powers. In so doing, we will ask what the European future holds, and whether the liberal democratic structures that proliferated across the continent in recent decades can meet the challenges of the post-unipolar world.

IAS 3003 Sec. 007 Global Politics of Oil, TR 10:30-11:45am, Dr. Vahid Abedini

Oil is widely considered the most strategic and politically charged commodity in the global economy. This course explores the politics of oil through three interconnected dimensions, combining domestic, market-based, and international perspectives.

- (1) The Socio-Political Dimensions of Natural Resources** – This section examines how oil wealth shapes the internal dynamics of oil-producing states. Topics include the “resource curse,” rentier state theory, authoritarian resilience, labor politics, and social movements in resource-rich countries. We also explore how oil has historically drawn foreign intervention and fueled domestic conflict—such as the 1953 coup in Iran, unrest in the Niger Delta, and broader patterns of conflict across the Middle East.
- (2) The Global Oil Market and Producer-Consumer Collaboration** – This section analyzes the structure and evolution of the oil market, including price volatility, technological shifts like shale oil, and unconventional extraction methods. Students will examine the role of major institutional actors such as OPEC, OPEC+, and their influence on market stability, with particular attention to Russia's integration into the global oil regime and the United States' shifting role as both a producer and strategic influencer. The section also considers consumer-producer dynamics and the politics of energy interdependence.
- (3) The Geopolitics of Oil and International Conflict** – The final part addresses the global ramifications of oil, focusing on its role in foreign policy, economic sanctions, and international rivalry. Key topics include oil and war, energy security, climate diplomacy, and the use of oil as an instrument of economic statecraft. The course pays special attention to the foreign policies of the United States and China toward the Middle East, exploring how strategic energy interests shape their engagement in the region. Case studies will include Iran, Venezuela, Ukraine, and the Persian Gulf.

By examining these three layers of oil politics—domestic structures, market systems, and international power dynamics—this course equips students with a comprehensive understanding of how oil continues to shape global political and economic order.