WHY STUDY POLITICAL SCIENCE?

Politics have been put under scrutiny in a systematic way since the ancient Greeks. Our own Constitution is the product of both the scholarly study of political theory and a practical framework for political institutions and norms. Our faculty in the Department of Political Science engage politics in a scientific and rigorous way to understand human behavior and world events. Study political science to prepare yourself for a career in campaigns, public policy, business, administration, political advocacy, law, or public service, but also to become an informed and active citizen. Especially during these times when the value of facts and objective truth seem to be under attack, political science plays an important role in helping inform political debate and discourse.

Political science is a broad and rich discipline. Some of our faculty members conduct research on why people behave the way they do politically. Others study institutions such as legislatures, courts, political parties, and bureaucracies both as organizations and as political actors themselves. Many political scientists use statistical analysis to understand political attitudes; others take deep dives into political philosophy. The field is divided into four principal fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Americanists study elections, voting, the presidency, Congress, the bureaucracy, race and politics, social movements, and courts. Comparativists primarily study the domestic politics of other countries, and they leverage comparison to seek answers to perennial political questions around democracy and authoritarianism, social identity and gender, political violence and conflict, why people protest, and the political economy of development. IR scholars study relations between states, including why states go to war, terrorism, international organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank, trade and finance across borders, and foreign policy. Theorists are intellectual historians and social critics interested in the millennia-long quest for the good and just society.

Political science majors are comfortable at the intersection of the humanities and the sciences. Poli Sci majors can apply rigor to problems and they can articulate solutions with clarity and with an analytical command of data. Poli Sci graduates move into a wide spectrum of positions that demand well-honed writing and presentation skills. With a degree in political science, you will be able to apply reason and rigor to problems that are often consumed by ideology and emotion. The ability to define a problem and contribute to its solution while placing it within political, social, and cultural realities is a rare skill indeed, with applications well beyond the narrow confines of political work. The wide range of intellectual, analytical, qualitative, and quantitative skills, and a broad knowledge of world events that Poli Sci majors develop form the cornerstone of a powerful liberal arts education.

WHAT CAREERS DO POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS PURSUE?

Poli Sci majors learn quickly, work well in teams, and have basic understanding of the policy process and the operations of government. Poli Sci majors understand that for every endeavor, no matter how important, there is a mountain of ordinary grunt work that has to be done. Poli Sci majors can be counted on to do the foot-work, put in the face-time, and endure the slog necessary of everything of consequence.