

POLITICAL SCIENCE, B.A.

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.

Poli Sci majors go on to work in all levels of government. Local and state governments have a direct impact on the quality of life of all Americans. Courses on state and urban government, public policy, administrative law, and public administration are especially valuable. Quantitative and statistical skills developed in these courses and applied in the internships many of our students do provide a powerful combination.

Poli Sci majors go on to work in a wide range of International careers, in business, Foreign Service, and non-governmental organizations. Political Science offers a wide variety of courses in comparative politics, international relations and organizations, public policy, political development, and interest group politics. These courses in combination with economics, statistics, computer science, and international trade.

Poli Sci majors pursue careers in campaign management, political polling, national political committees, and consulting. They will have taken multiple courses in the American political system, comparative political parties, elections, public opinion, and voting behavior; as well as committing themselves to developing their writing and data analysis. There are over half a million campaigns in the United States annually, and while entry level jobs have long hours, low pay, and enormous demands, they are places where you can 'cut your political teeth'. Local campaigns lead to statewide or national campaigns, and then perhaps to consulting and polling if that strikes your interest.

Poli Sci majors have also traditionally gone into law. Some lawyers are litigators while others are employed by corporations, government, and other organizations. Political Science track fits nicely for students seeking law degrees as official credentials to 'practice law' and those students who seek a law degree as an additional 'tool' to make positive impacts in their professional areas of interest. Some individuals with legal training work in other areas such as corporate or public management. The department offers a wide variety of political theory, constitutional law, and public policy courses that will help you explore the interaction between law, politics, and society.