



Political Science

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FACULTY

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DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The study of political science examines the relations of people and organizations as they seek to order their world. Special attention is paid to the development of explanations of the political process and to the effect of politics on social life and social values.

At Saint Mary's College the study of political science emphasizes two concerns: the basic characteristics of politics and the theories and methods for the rigorous analysis of political phenomena. To satisfy these concerns the departmental program provides a wide variety of courses in the traditional subfields of political science: American politics and law, comparative politics, international politics, and political theory. Second, students are encouraged to experience politics directly in the world's "laboratory" of political activity. Opportunities for experiential learning exist in certain courses, in the Washington Semester program, and through the department's internship program.

Graduates of the department enter a wide variety of careers. Majors routinely enter law schools and paralegal programs, business schools, and graduate schools in public administration, international politics, and political science. They begin careers as legislative aides, public administrators, teachers, journalists, or managers in the private sector.

TEACHER PREPARATION

The Political Science Department in conjunction with the Education Department offers courses leading to state licensing for History/Social Studies.

ADVANCED WRITING PROFICIENCY

Political science majors satisfy their Advanced Writing Proficiency requirements by completing their Senior Comprehensive in the department.

SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE

The Senior Comprehensive consists of a major research paper which may be completed on campus or on the Washington Semester program. Washington Semester theses must be reviewed and approved by department faculty.

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will learn to identify and examine the underlying philosophical terms and concepts which shape politics.
- Students will gain knowledge about the political institutions of the United States and other nations and will be able to utilize this knowledge to identify, explain and compare political outcomes.

- Students will be able to identify the subfields of political science and understand and evaluate the goals, perspectives, approaches, and research methods of each subfield: political thought, comparative politics, American politics, and international relations.
- Students will gain knowledge about the diverse research methods used by political scientists, be able to evaluate the relative merits of these approaches, and effectively use some of them to carry out political research.

PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Bachelor of Arts, Major in Political Science—POSC (27 hours)

All of the following:

POSC 201	American Politics	3 hours
POSC 204	Political Thought	3 hours
POSC 206	International Politics	3 hours
POSC 207	Comparative Politics	3 hours
POSC 210	Research Methods in Political Science	3 hours

Four of the following (12 hours):

American Politics and Law

POSC 307	Introduction to American Law	3 hours
POSC 313	Mass Media and Public Opinion	3 hours
POSC 314	Political Participation	3 hours
POSC 315	Political Parties and Interest Groups	3 hours
POSC 320	Congress and the Legislative Process	3 hours
POSC 322	The Presidency	3 hours
POSC 323	The U.S. Constitution	3 hours
POSC 324	American Civil Liberties	3 hours
POSC 325	American Political Development	3 hours
POSC 355	Public Administration	3 hours

Comparative Politics

POSC 304	Latin American Politics	3 hours
POSC 329	Middle East Politics	3 hours
POSC 330	Comparative Politics Proseminar	3 hours
POSC 360	The Politics of Race	3 hours
POSC 365	Gender and Politics	3 hours
POSC 370	Democratization	3 hours

International Politics

POSC 316	International Law and Organization	3 hours
POSC 319	The Global Politics of International Development	3 hours
POSC 326	Global Environmental Politics	3 hours
POSC 333	Transnational Feminisms	3 hours
POSC 346	The Politics of Globalization	3 hours
POSC 416	United States Foreign Policy	3 hours

Political Theory

POSC 301	The Quest for Human Rights	3 hours
POSC 341	Politics and Religion	3 hours
POSC 342	American Political Thought	3 hours
POSC 344	Catholic Political Thought	3 hours
POSC 350	Politics and Film	3 hours

Other courses

POSC 390	Special Topics in Political Science	1–3 hours
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Minor in Political Science—POSC (15 hours)

Three of the following (9 hours):

POSC 201	American Politics	3 hours
POSC 204	Political Thought	3 hours
POSC 206	International Politics	3 hours
POSC 207	Comparative Politics	3 hours
POSC 210	Research Methods in Political Science	3 hours

Two of the following (6 hours):

American Politics and Law

POSC 307	Introduction to American Law	3 hours
POSC 313	Mass Media and Public Opinion	3 hours
POSC 314	Political Participation	3 hours
POSC 315	Political Parties and Interest Groups	3 hours
POSC 320	Congress and the Legislative Process	3 hours
POSC 322	The Presidency	3 hours
POSC 323	The U.S. Constitution	3 hours
POSC 324	American Civil Liberties	3 hours
POSC 325	American Political Development	3 hours
POSC 355	Public Administration	3 hours

Comparative Politics

POSC 304	Latin American Politics	3 hours
POSC 329	Middle East Politics	3 hours
POSC 360	The Politics of Race	3 hours
POSC 365	Gender and Politics	3 hours
POSC 370	Democratization	3 hours

International Politics

POSC 316	International Law and Organization	3 hours
POSC 319	The Global Politics of International Development	3 hours
POSC 326	Global Environmental Politics	3 hours
POSC 333	Transnational Feminisms	3 hours
POSC 346	The Politics of Globalization	3 hours
POSC 416	United States Foreign Policy	3 hours

Political Theory

POSC 301	The Quest for Human Rights	3 hours
POSC 341	Politics and Religion	3 hours
POSC 342	American Political Thought	3 hours
POSC 344	Catholic Political Thought	3 hours
POSC 350	Politics and Film	3 hours

Other courses

POSC 390	Special Topics in Political Science	1–3 hours
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Note: The following courses cannot be used as Political Science electives:

POSC 151	Political Issues
POSC 160	Global Political Issues
POSC 290	Model UN
POSC 495/496	Senior Thesis I, II
POSC 497	Independent Study
POSC 499	Internship in Politics



WASHINGTON SEMESTER PROGRAM

The department participates in a program designed to let students spend a semester in Washington, D.C. studying the operations of the national government. The program, a cooperative arrangement between over 100 colleges and the American University, features seminars, an internship, and a supervised research project. Acceptance in the program is restricted to political science majors with at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA. Completion of POSC 201 (and, for Foreign Policy, Peace, and Conflict Resolution, and International Law and Organization programs, POSC 206) is required for candidacy. Selection is based on the quality of the student's work in the department and the soundness of the proposed research project. The department makes the final determination concerning acceptance into the program. Completion of the program fulfills two of the elective courses in the major, and the research project can fulfill the senior thesis requirement.

INTERNATIONAL STUDY

Students may elect to attend other international study programs with institutional approval. The department reserves the right to approve international study courses that students wish to apply to major or minor requirements, up to a maximum of six hours.

POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES (POSC)

INTRODUCTORY COURSES

The following survey courses are offered regularly for students who are fulfilling General Education requirements or initiating the study of politics.

151 Political Issues (3)

An analysis of various political ideas, systems, issues, and/or phenomena designed to introduce students to political thinking.

160 Global Political Issues (3)

This course will introduce students to some of the most important contemporary global political issues such as the impact of economic globalization on politics and culture, the sources of war and political conflict, gender inequality, poverty, United States foreign policy, and the role of international institutions.

ADVANCED INTRODUCTORY COURSES

All of the following courses are required for majors in political science, and are open to students in other majors. The courses are offered every other semester.

201 American Politics (3)

This course serves as an introductory survey of the major principles, institutions, processes, functions, and behavioral patterns of the American political system. It helps students to develop a broad, diverse, and articulate base of knowledge and understanding of American politics and government.

204 Political Thought (3)

The evolution of Western political theories surveyed through a discussion of leading political thinkers and their values.

206 International Politics (3)

An introduction to the theories which attempt to explain the ways nations interact with each other, and an application of these theories to selected problems of the contemporary international scene.

207 Comparative Politics (3)

An introduction to the use of theory, analytic concepts, and evidence to compare political history, processes, institutions, and outcomes in select nation-states.

210 Research Methods in Political Science (3)

An introduction to the principle research methods used by political scientists. You will learn and understand the key terms used in the scientific method and how they are applied to both quantitative and qualitative political analysis.

ELECTIVE COURSES

The elective courses are grouped by subfield, but students are free to select any course in any subfield if prerequisites are fulfilled. Normally these courses are taught every other year.

I. AMERICAN POLITICS AND LAW

307 Introduction to American Law (3)

A study of American law examining the Common Law tradition, federal and state court systems, criminal and civil law and procedure, and current legal issues. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing.

313 Mass Media and Public Opinion (3)

A study of the nature and development of public opinion focusing on the socializing role of the family, school, and the workplace. Special attention is given to the mass media and new media as a socializing agents. Prerequisite: POSC 201.

314 Political Participation (3)

A study of various forms of political participation, their causes, and their impact on democratic rule in the United States. Differences between elections and related conventional participation and other unconventional methods of participation are discussed. Prerequisite: POSC 201.

315 Political Parties and Interest Groups (3)

An examination of the structure and behavior of American parties and interest groups and their impact on public policy. Prerequisite: POSC 201.

320 Congress and the Legislative Process (3)

An analysis of the structure, processes, and behavior of the United States Congress as a representative institution. Prerequisite: POSC 201.

322 The Presidency (3)

The course focuses on the role of the American president in the political system, including the expectations of the Constitution and public about the role of the president, presidential selection, presidential achievements, and uses of power. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing.

323 The U.S. Constitution (3)

A study of the interpretation of the Constitution by the U.S. Supreme Court, with emphasis on the judicial interpretation of presidential and congressional powers, judicial review, federalism, the role of government in the economy, and a broad survey of individual rights. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing.

324 American Civil Liberties (3)

An examination of the Bill of Rights and the Western concept of natural rights. After the Bill of Rights is analyzed in general, a specific topic will be examined, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, or due process rights. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing.

325 American Political Development (3)

A study of how certain American political eras introduced new political ideas, movements, policies, and institutional changes, such as the 1930s, 1960s, and 1980s. Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing. May be repeated with a different instructor.

355 Public Administration (3)

A study of bureaucratic behavior in the United States including the origins of bureaucracy, organization theory, problems of agency management, personnel and budgeting, and the interaction of bureaus with other political institutions. Prerequisites: junior/senior standing.

II. COMPARATIVE POLITICS

304 Latin American Politics (3)

A study of politics and political institutions in selected Latin American states with special attention to problems of development and institution-building.

329 Middle East Politics (3)

A study of politics and relationships of Middle Eastern countries with emphasis on the contemporary situation. Prerequisite: POSC 206 or 207.

330 Comparative Politics Proseminar (3)

The course will examine the major methodological “schools” of thought and approaches including rational choice, institutional, historical, political economy, and game theory analysis. It is designed to be of particular interest to students who are considering writing their Senior Thesis on a topic in comparative politics. Prerequisite: POSC 207.

360 The Politics of Race (3)

This course will examine the political uses of race as a social and political idea through comparative study of selected case studies from the around the world. The course will emphasize the diverse ways race has been used to build political power.

365 Gender and Politics (3)

This course will combine theoretical and empirical analysis of gender as a political issue. Case studies will permit comparative analysis of the diverse ways in which gender emerges as a political issue within distinct social, economic, cultural, and political contexts. The course will also assess the value of gender analysis in the field of political science. This course may be repeated with a different instructor.

370 Democratization (3)

This course will use a wide range of case studies to analyze the complex factors shaping the formation and consolidation of democratic governments within diverse political, cultural, and historical conditions. Special attention will be paid to the issues of gender and globalization. Prerequisite: POSC 207 or permission of instructor.

III. INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

316 International Law and Organization (3)

A study of the nature and scope of international law; the various types of international organizations, their goals and functions; and international regimes. Prerequisite: POSC 206.

319 The Global Politics of International Development (3)

A comparative analysis of the process of political and socioeconomic development in selected political systems of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

326 Global Environmental Politics (3)

This course introduces students to major global environmental problems and to the negotiations, treaties, and diplomacy regarding attempts to solve them. Topics we will focus on include social pressure groups, population pressures, biodiversity, climate change, epistemic communities, regimes, global and regional environmental governance, trade and the environment, sustainable development, environmental refugees, bio-safety, and energy.

333 Transnational Feminisms (3)

In this course, we will discuss feminist analyses of gender, colonialism, and economic globalization. The first part of this course will consider a variety of feminist theoretical perspectives on the gendered, classed, and racialized dynamics of colonialism and globalization. Next, we will examine the particularities of women's lives globally and their different histories and social histories. Finally, we will look at some of the feminist transnational activism and mobilization around issues of conflict, environment, capitalism, and labor. Some of the questions we will consider are: How does globalization impact existing (gender) inequalities? How does globalization trouble the “North-South” divide? What political, social, and economic ramifications does the outsourcing of reproductive labor have?

346 The Politics of Globalization (3)

This course seeks to understand the major theoretical perspectives on International Political Economy (IPE) and their implications for policy. After a brief introduction to the field of IPE, we will spend a few weeks tracing the historical evolution of the global political economy. We will then examine a range of different problems in the global economy: the internationalization of production, the challenges of international development, the North-South Gap, and the 2008 financial and economic crises.

416 United States Foreign Policy (3)

An analysis of the internal and external factors which influence the formulation and execution of the foreign policy of the United States. Major concepts, issues, and case studies of foreign policy are discussed. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing.

IV. POLITICAL THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

301 The Quest for Human Rights (3)

This course discusses the history of conceptions of rights. It also looks at the strategies involved in political debates about rights (also listed as JUST 301).

341 Politics and Religion (3)

This course engages students in thinking critically about the relationship between religion and politics in the U.S. and in selected other countries. How religion and politics ought to relate, and how they relate in actual practice will be considered.

342 American Political Thought (3)

This course is a survey of American political thought that takes a historical approach, considering representative writings from each of the major periods in the history of political thought in the United States.

344 Catholic Political Thought (3)

A survey of Catholic political thought that considers the work of authors ranging from St. Augustine to John Courtney Murray and that examines issues such as the relationship between reason and revelation, the proper relationship between religious and civil authority, the dignity of the human person, and the necessary political implications of that dignity. Prerequisite: POSC 204. RLST 225 or 232 recommended.

350 Politics and Film (3)

In Politics and Film, students will learn how to identify, understand, analyze, and communicate political ideas as portrayed and presented in films. While most of the films, readings, and class discussions focus on American politics, some content will pertain to the political science fields of political theory, international relations, and comparative politics.

V. OTHER COURSES

290 Model UN (1)

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the structure, activities and procedures of the United Nations, as well some of the central features and challenges of international law and diplomacy. Student will represent a UN member at the American Model UN Conference. May be repeated for credit.

390 Special Topics in Political Science (1–3)

The presentation of selected subjects of special relevance not included in regular departmental offerings. Prerequisite determined by instructor.

495–496 Senior Thesis I, II (1, 1)

Tutorial provided on the writing of the senior thesis. Graded *S/U*.

497 Independent Study (1–3)

Specialized research supervised in a tutorial setting. No more than six hours of independent study in any one department may be used to meet graduation requirements. Independent study does not fulfill elective requirements for majors or minors.

499 Internship in Politics (1–3)

Supervised field work in an agency of government. Open only to junior or senior majors who have completed POSC 201 and two elective courses in the department. It does not fulfill elective requirements for majors or minors. Graded *S/U*.

