
Political Science

The Department of Political Science combines the energies of students and departmental faculty in active learning and honest scholarship. The goals of the department are these: 1) to employ the principles of discovery learning in developing an understanding of both the foundational concepts of systems of government and the theoretical concepts that animate contemporary public affairs; 2) to create a balanced perspective among the subdisciplines within political science; 3) to empower students to integrate lessons learned in other disciplines with those framed in political science; and 4) to prepare students for an effective transition, after graduation, to either career employment or graduate studies.

The department recommends that every major in political science completes at least one guided, practical program such as a local internship; a structured service learning experience; a semester in Washington, D.C.; an international travel program; placement with a state or local agency or an administrative, legislative or judicial assignment. The department develops these opportunities and matches students, depending on their interests and skills. The curriculum provides academic credit for such programs.

Requirements for a major in Political Science:

Ps 100, Introduction to American Government or Ps 150, American 20th Century Political History

Ps 201, Comparative World Government and Politics

Ec 209, Principles of Macroeconomics

Ps 250, Research Methods

Ps 275, Public Policy Analysis

Ps 325, The American Presidency or

Ps 350, American Congress

Ps 360, International Relations

Any one of the Constitutional law courses: Ps 372, Fundamental Freedoms: The First Amendment; Ps 374, Civil Rights: The Fourteenth Amendment; or Ps 375, American Constitutional Development

Ps 377, Development of Political Thought

Ps 460, Public Administration

Ps 488, Senior Comprehensive Examination

Ps 495, Capstone Senior Seminar

and two additional courses offered by the department.

Transfer students who seek to major in political science must complete a minimum of 50% of their credits in political science at Benedictine College.

Requirements for a minor in Political Science:

Ps 100, Introduction to American

Government or Ps 150, American 20th

Century Political History

Ps 250, Research Methods

Ps 275, Public Policy Analysis

and nine additional credits in courses offered by the department.

Transfer students who seek to complete a minor in political science must complete a minimum of 50% of their credits in political science at Benedictine College.

Requirements for a minor/concentration in pre-Law:

Ps 100, Introduction to American Government or Ps 150, American 20th Century Political History

Ba 371, Legal Environment of Business or

Ba 472, Business Law

Ps 372, Fundamental Freedoms: The First Amendment or

Ps 374, Civil Rights: The Fourteenth Amendment

Ps 375, American Constitutional Development

Ps 377, Development of Political Thought or

Ph 485, Political Philosophy or Ph 486, Philosophy of Law

Py 450, Law and Psychology

Requirements for a minor in Economics and Politics:

Ps 100, Introduction to American Government or Ps 150, American 20th Century Political History

Ps 275, Public Policy Analysis

Ps 360, International Relations
or Ps 421, Comparative Political Systems
Ec 209, Principles of Macroeconomics
Ec 210, Principles of Microeconomics
Ec 300, Contemporary Economic Thinking

Travel Opportunities:

The department conducts travel experiences that advance discovery learning. Within the past several years students have attended the American Political Science Association annual meeting; presented papers at regional and national conferences; immersed themselves in presidential politics at the Iowa caucuses since 2000; taken part in familiarization trips to Washington, D.C., and regional academic centers. Departmental faculty coordinates and supervises these experiences.

Law School and Graduate Study:

The political science major is an excellent preparatory course for the student seeking admission to law school. The combination of constitutional and policy studies equips students with the requisite body of theory and practice associated with success in law school.

Political science majors who plan on graduate studies in this discipline should enrich themselves with upper-division coursework in economics, sociology, languages, and the highest level of mathematics for which they are suited.

Career paths for the Political Science major:

Political science is an excellent portal to many careers. These include: public administration; law; policy advocacy for corporations and tax exempt organizations; management within industries that are highly globalized or regulated; administration in trade and professional associations.

Students who plan to earn certification to teach social sciences in elementary or secondary schools will coordinate their curricular requirements with the college's departments of education and of political science, among others.

Ps 100

Introduction to American Government (3) (B)

This course is an introduction to the American system that emphasizes: the Constitution, federalism, political socialization, political parties and interest groups, and the balance of the three branches of government. Included is a survey of state and local government issues as well as the fundamentals of financing American government. The course highlights the processes of civic education and of electoral consent. (PC)

Ps 150

American 20th Century Political History (3) (B)

This course examines the history, politics, culture, and economics of The American Century. Students will explore events and personalities through contemporaneous newspaper and broadcast media stories, as well as modern scholarly references. The course seeks to answer these questions: Why did these events occur; who or what caused them; what damage was done and how have these lessons given America the wisdom to choose better in the 21st century? (HP, PC)

Ps 198

Special Topics (1–4)

Courses under this title address topical or classical questions important for occasional scrutiny. Aimed at lower-division students, most often these will be conducted as seminar style courses. Depending on the changing subject matter of the course, a student may enroll more than once.

Ps 201

Comparative World Government & Politics (3) (F)

This course examines the ways the politics and cultures of states affect the way they organize their governments. It will lay heavy emphasis on the comparisons and contrasts found in the governments of the Developed

World and with its more democratic institutions (Europe mainly) and such other worlds as the Muslim nations and underdeveloped nations in the Third and Fourth Worlds that are governed in more authoritarian and totalitarian ways. (PC, GP)

Ps 250

Research Methods (4) (F)

This course is an intensive offering that combines research and analytical skills for use in political science. The course includes research design, hypothesis testing, data collection and analysis, quantitative and qualitative methods, and practical applications of these concepts. (QA, SM, WC)

Ps 275

Public Policy Analysis (3) (S)

This course introduces the concepts and techniques of identifying, specifying and implementing public policy strategies designed to remedy contemporary American problems for which government action is the presume, preferred solution. Case studies and problems will include applications at the local, state, and federal levels. (WC)

Ps 322

European Politics (3) (D)

Ps 322 provides a critical and analytical evaluation of the pluralist political systems within the European Union. The course examines the response of the electorate within those countries and the ability of those governments to provide coherent and effective policies. Special attention will be devoted to the interdependence of political and economic advances.

Ps 325

The American Presidency (3) (D)

This course examines contemporary theories of the President as policy-maker, internationalist and political figure. An historic survey of trends within presidential studies provides context for a review of the twentieth century literature in this area. The course provides a challenging view of the nominating and

election process as the means for selecting qualified persons to lead America. The President is assessed as manager through the appointment and effective engagement of staff and cabinet members. (HP, PC)

Ps 350

The American Congress (3) (D)

This course begins with an historic review of the Congress, its methods and its dynamics, arising from its Constitutionally-mandated duties. The Congress is examined as the most politically sensitive branch of government and the one presumed to be most responsive to public opinion. Special attention is devoted to the very active period since 1945 during which much legislation, oversight, and reform occurred. The course also explores interrelationships among members of Congress and its own leaders, the President, interest groups, federal agencies, political parties and the judiciary.

Ps 360

International Relations (3) (D)

This course provides a contemporary view of the political and economic dynamic that characterizes the growing global community. A special emphasis is set on the effects of regional alliances, such as the European Union and the broader impact that these alliances create. The course surveys the effects of civil wars, nationalistic movements and economic disparity as predictive of governmental stability and consequent international imperatives. (PC, GP)

Ps 370

Film and Politics (4) (D)

This course examines how films tell political stories, frame political issues, and advocate political outcomes. There are two major questions this course will address: How fairly have films told the stories they depict and what effects have these films had on politics? A major component of the course will be an examination of film as a communications medium, including techniques, aesthetics, originality, artistry, and economics. The

other component is the political dimension, including trends in issue advocacy and characterizations of American institutions, such as the Congress and the Presidency. (PC, VC, WC)

Ps 372

Fundamental Freedoms: The First Amendment (3) (D)

This course provides an analysis of the Supreme Court's interpretation of the religion, speech, press, and association clauses of the First Amendment. The course considers both historical development of legal doctrine in these areas and contemporary issues and the application of doctrine. The goals of the course include providing students with a substantive body of knowledge; developing their ability to analyze legal arguments; and encouraging them to evaluate contemporary and future problems using the skills they develop.

Ps 374

Civil Rights: The Fourteenth Amendment (3) (D)

This course provides an analysis of the Supreme Court's interpretation of privileges or immunities, due process, and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. The course considers both historical development of legal doctrine in these areas and contemporary issues and the application of doctrine. The goals of the course include providing students with a substantive body of knowledge; developing their ability to analyze legal arguments; and encouraging them to evaluate contemporary and future problems using the skills they develop.

Ps 375

American Constitutional Development (3) (D)

This course begins with a study of the background and the principles of the American constitutional system. Particular attention is paid to the development of the Constitution and its historical antecedents, as well as the evolutionary interpretation of its meaning

by the U.S. Supreme Court. Landmark cases are explored as exemplary of the gradual rise in prominence of the Supreme Court and its present status as a co-equal branch of the American government. (HP, PC)

Ps 377

Development of Political Thought (3) (D)

This course traces the growth of fundamental concepts that underlie all forms of government, such as justice, authority, freedom and liberty. The course includes a survey of ancient and contemporary authors whose work grows out of both the religious and the secular traditions. Modern forms of government will be analyzed as products of political philosophy and ideology. (PC, PI)

Ps 390

Applied Politics (3) (D)

This course provides credit for a supervised, structured experience within the political arena. It may take the form of involvement in campaigns, elections or some aspect of party politics or of advocacy work within an interest group. A written report must be filed with the department relating to the student's experience. This course is open to majors and only with permission of the department chair.

Ps 398

Special Topics (1–4)

Topics not included in the regular course offerings, suited for upper-division students. Usually conducted in a seminar/discussion format. May be taken more than once if subject matter varies sufficiently.

Ps 421

Comparative Political Systems (3) (D)

This course surveys the modern forms of government in selected countries. Comparisons will be developed between democratic and authoritarian systems of government. By analyzing the formal constitutions and the actual functioning of these countries, the course will link the historical and social backgrounds with the present economic and political status of each nation's citizenry.

Ps 432**International Law (3) (D)**

This course presents the role that contemporary international law plays in the creation and maintenance of world order. These topics are central to this course: primary courses of international law, procedural and substantive issues in public and civil international law, jurisdictional principles and international dispute settlement.

Ps 441**Interest Group Politics (3) (D)**

This course explores the structure and roles that interest groups serve in the American political system. Varied groups are scrutinized, including their origins, funding systems and methods for developing and advocating a public policy agenda. Special emphasis is placed on the often competitive and occasionally collaborative relationships these groups sustain with the Congress, judiciary, President, administrative agencies and state governments.

Ps 455**Political Parties and Elections (3) (F)**

This course presents the outstanding features of the American party system with particular attention directed toward the organization and functions of American political parties. Consideration is given to the formation of public opinion and of selected problems in the composition of the American electorate as well as the federal and state laws that govern elections and campaigns.

Ps 460**Public Administration (3) (F)**

This course aims at contributing to an understanding of American institutions through a study of the structure, mission and management of federal, state and local bureaucracies. Special emphasis is placed on budgeting and program functions as well as evaluation methods. The course focuses on central program areas such as human services, capital projects and public safety. A necessary feature will be

a survey of government revenue sources and their historic and long-term sufficiency. (OC, PC)

Ps 470**Public Implementation in State and Local Governments (3) (S)**

Ps 470 offers an effective understanding of the role of these principal American governmental institutions. The focus of this course will be an examination of the effectiveness of these units in providing their traditional services, such as education, police protection and other human services. Special consideration will be given to inter-governmental relationships, especially when states are required or expected to manage programs that had been shifted from federal jurisdiction.

Ps 479**Internship (1–6)**

Internship is the name given to a supervised, practical academic experience as well as appropriate service or experiential learning opportunities. The course is an elective open to majors, with the consent of the department chair.

Ps 488**Senior Comprehensive Examination (cr)**

Serves as a requirement for graduating political science majors. This is a standardized battery of tests drawn from the recognized content areas within the discipline of political science.

Ps 495**Capstone Senior Seminar (3)**

This course is required of all political science majors and restricted to those with senior standing. The course operates as a comprehensive review of all coursework and it features a major research project.

Ps 499**Directed and Honors Research (1–3)**

This course provides honors or research-oriented students to pursue specialized topics

with supervision and collaboration of a member of the department faculty. Topics may be multi-disciplinary or of unusual complexity

and will require a major work product. This course is open to majors, with consent of the department chair.

Suggested sequence of courses for a bachelor's degree in Political Science

Freshman Year			
Gs 150, BC Experience	cr	Ec 209, Macroelectronics	3
Ps 100, Introduction to American Govt.	3	Historical foundation	3
Th 101, Introduction to Theology	3	Aesthetic experience	3
En 101, English Composition	3	Skills & perspectives course	2-3
So 101, General Sociology or Py 100, General Psychology	3	Foreign Language	4
Foreign Language	4		
	16		15-16
Sophomore Year			
Ps 201, Comparative World Government & Politics	3	Ps 250, Research Methods	4
Pe 115, Wellness for Life	1	Ps 275, Public Policy Analysis	3
Faith foundation	3	Pe Activity course	1
Ph 175, Principles of Nature	3	Aesthetic experience	3
Ac 209, Principles of Financial Acctg. or first course in finance, pending requisites	3	Faith foundation	3
		Understanding the Natural World foundation	3-4
	16		17-18
Junior Year			
Ps 325, American Presidency or Ps 350, The American Congress	3	Ps 377, Development of Political Thought	3
Ps 372, Fundamental Freedoms: The First Amendment	3	Political Science Elective	3
or Ps 374, Civil Rights: The Fourteenth Amendment		Political Science Internship/Service Learning Experience (elective)	1-4
or Ps 375, Amer Constitutional Dev		Understanding the Natural World foundation	3-4
Pc 360, International Relations	3	Non-departmental elective (upper- division)	3
Philosophical inquiry	3		
Non-departmental electives	5		
	17		13-17
Senior Year			
Ps 488, Senior Comp Exam	cr	Ps 460, Public Administration	3
Ps 495, Capstone Senior Seminar	3	Political Science elective	3
Political Science elective	3	Non-departmental elective (upper-division)	9
Non-departmental elective (upper-division)	9		
	15		15