POLITICAL SCIENCE

Chair: Leah Gilbert
Administrative Coordinator: Claire Kodachi

Political scientists examine the theory and practice of government, law, and politics within the history of political ideas and philosophy, as well as within the context of contemporary political practices. They use the tools and methods of the social sciences to seek knowledge of political institutions and processes, and to learn how to think critically about public policies and their consequences. Political scientists attempt to evaluate how behavior (individual, group, and mass) affects political institutions, and how institutions shape and constrain political choices.

Because of their understanding and interest in political systems, students who earn degrees in political science often enter such career fields as government service, law, journalism, politics, public policy analysis, and education. Knowledge about politics often extends into other spheres, as graduates also pursue careers in medicine, business, and finance.

Resources for Nonmajors

Since political science is intrinsic to a liberal arts education, the department makes its courses open to all students. Political science courses guide students in using the discipline's resources and developing descriptive, analytical, evaluative, and communicative skills needed by participants in a liberal democracy. Two courses are primers to the field: Introduction to Comparative Politics (POLS 102) and Introduction to American Politics (POLS 103).

The Major Program

The political science curriculum is organized around five subfields: American politics, comparative politics, political theory, public law, and methodology. Courses are offered in American politics and comparative politics at the introductory and advanced levels. Courses in public law, political theory, and methodology are normally taken only after students have completed introductory courses. The major culminates with a capstone course (which may take the form of a senior thesis by invitation). Capstone courses are advanced 400-level courses, usually specialized in their focus, that require intensive class discussion and a significant research paper. Note that a senior thesis is required for students seeking departmental honors.

Political science majors can pursue independent study under individual faculty supervision, including practical applications and experiences such as internships with elected officials, interest groups, and government agencies. The department's semester of study in Washington, D.C., one of the more distinguished programs of its kind in the country, includes class meetings with some of America's most influential politicians and decision-makers, combined with a rigorous curriculum of in-class instruction.

The political science department uses local and regional resources, including visits to the Oregon state legislature in Salem and county and city political offices in the Portland metropolitan area. Other resources include numerous governmental agencies in the Portland area, interest groups, and political movements.

Major Requirements

A minimum of 44 semester credits (11 courses), distributed as follows:

- POLS 102 Introduction to Comparative Politics
- POLS 103 Introduction to American Politics
- One course chosen from the following:
  - POLS 310 Pillars of Western Political Thought: Plato to Machiavelli
  - POLS 311 Pillars of Western Political Thought: Revolution and the Social Contract
  - POLS 312 Pillars of Western Political Thought: The Fate of Democracy
- One 400-level course chosen from the following:
  - POLS 400 Senior Thesis
  - POLS 402 Problems in Political Theory
  - POLS 420 Policy Analysis
  - POLS 425 Legal Regulation of American Democracy
  - POLS 435 Topics in Comparative Politics
- Five electives chosen from the fields below. Electives must satisfy the following conditions:
  - At least two must be at the 300 level.
  - Courses must be chosen from at least two of the following fields: American politics, comparative politics, political theory, public law.
  - Electives may include no more than two of the following courses and no more than one course at the 100 level:
    - ECON 100 Principles of Economics
    - IA 100 Introduction to International Relations
    - IA 220 Global South
    - IA 232 Southeast Asian Politics
    - IA 262 Religion & Global Politics
    - IA 290 Middle East Politics
    - IA 320 Democratization
  - Electives may not include POLS 244.

For all majors, courses in European and U.S. history, macroeconomics, and international political economy, as well as a semester in Washington, D.C., are recommended. Majors planning to attend law school should add courses in English literature, philosophy (including logic), mathematics, and history. Majors planning to attend graduate school in political science should take courses in mathematics, statistics, and other social sciences. Majors planning a career in politics, public policy, or urban planning should add courses in statistics, communication, economics, and psychology.

Minor Requirements

A minimum of 24 semester credits (six courses), distributed as follows:

- POLS 102 Introduction to Comparative Politics
- POLS 103 Introduction to American Politics
- Four electives chosen from the fields below. Electives must satisfy the following conditions:
  - At least one must be at the 300 level.
  - Electives may include no more than one of the following courses:
    - IA 220 Global South
    - IA 232 Southeast Asian Politics
Fields
The political science curriculum is organized into the following fields:

American Politics
- POLS 103 Introduction to American Politics
- POLS 252 Public Opinion and Survey Research
- POLS 253 Public Policy
- POLS 302 Political Parties and Elections
- POLS 307 Government and the Economy
- POLS 346 State and Local Politics
- POLS 350 Congressional Politics
- POLS 351 Presidential Politics
- POLS 359 Religion and Politics
- POLS 420 Policy Analysis

Comparative Politics
- IA 220 Global South
- IA 230 African Politics
- IA 262 Religion & Global Politics
- IA 290 Middle East Politics
- POLS 102 Introduction to Comparative Politics
- POLS 250 Transitions to Democracy and Authoritarianism
- POLS 314 Russian Politics in Comparative Perspective
- POLS 318 Civil Society, Politics, and the State
- POLS 325 European Politics
- POLS 435 Topics in Comparative Politics

Political Theory
- POLS 310 Pillars of Western Political Thought: Plato to Machiavelli
- POLS 311 Pillars of Western Political Thought: Revolution and the Social Contract
- POLS 312 Pillars of Western Political Thought: The Fate of Democracy
- POLS 313 Global Justice
- POLS 316 Ethics and Public Policy
- POLS 402 Problems in Political Theory

Public Law
- POLS 255 Law, Lawyers, and Society
- POLS 301 American Constitutional Law: Equal Protection and Due Process
- POLS 305 American Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties
- POLS 425 Legal Regulation of American Democracy

Methodology and Thesis
- POLS 201 Research Methods in Political Science
- POLS 400 Senior Thesis

Honors and Senior Thesis
In the spring semester, juniors who have achieved a GPA of 3.000 or higher in the major and overall are invited to apply to the department for placement in POLS 400. Students who fall below a 3.000 GPA may be granted an exception to apply on a case-by-case basis. Majors who have achieved a GPA of 3.500 or higher in the major and overall may be considered for honors. After the student completes and formally presents the thesis, the political science faculty determine whether to grant honors upon graduation.

Faculty


Courses
POLS 102 Introduction to Comparative Politics
Content: Introduction to the central questions in comparative politics. Fundamental differences in the organization of states, democratic political institutions (presidentialism versus parliamentarianism, for example), and domestic social forces (for example, social capital, ethnic versus nonethnic identities). The impact of political organization on economic performance and social peace.
Prerequisites: None.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 103 Introduction to American Politics
Content: The politics of the founding period; interactions within and among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches; the federal division of institutionalized powers; public opinion, interest groups, and political parties; the policy process in areas such as defense, welfare, civil rights and liberties, and international affairs.
Prerequisites: None.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.
POLS 201 Research Methods in Political Science
Content: Introduction to the methodological principles and issues in political science research, using readings within and beyond political science. Identifying variables and mechanisms, developing and testing theories, collecting and measuring data, and assessing a study's ability to achieve causal inference. Introduction to different approaches to research, including experiments, case studies, and regression analysis. Strongly recommended for sophomores or juniors who have declared a POLS major, as this course is a prerequisite for thesis and some senior capstone courses.
Prerequisites: POLS 102 or POLS 103.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 244 Practicum
Content: Opportunities for well-prepared students to put academic concepts and techniques to work in the marketplace. Specific activities vary; usually involve work with a public agency or private group. Credit-no credit. May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Considerable preparation before enrollment. Consult instructor and obtain the department's instructions about the program well in advance. Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 2-4.

POLS 250 Transitions to Democracy and Authoritarianism
Content: Why do some countries transition to democratic forms of rule while others do not? We will investigate this question by examining not only the rise of democracy, but also the origins and persistence of authoritarianism. While the course will consider historical processes of democratization and authoritarianism, emphasis will be placed on developments in the past 30 years. This course will draw on country examples from multiple world regions to illuminate why some autocrats have fallen and others have not - even in the current "age of democratization."
Prerequisites: POLS 102 or permission of instructor.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 252 Public Opinion and Survey Research
Content: The role of public opinion in the American political process; the problem of identifying the public and the extent to which this public exercises political authority; techniques of researching public opinion. Political socialization, formation of attitudes, group differences, mass opinion, elite opinion, direct action. Research design, data collection, scaling, analysis, and interpretation of data in the context of research on polling.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 253 Public Policy
Content: Introduction to major issues in contemporary U.S. public policy, including the environment, social policy, criminal policy, education, health care, and the economy. Examination of the policy-making process, including the role of key policy makers, audiences, and institutions; methods of evaluating public policy, focusing on the difficulties of attributing causal efficacy. Student-led debates and exercises.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 255 Law, Lawyers, and Society
Content: The role of law and legal institutions in the American political system. Examination of institutional actors such as lawyers, judges, and juries, as well as an examination of discrete case studies such as "mass torts" and the criminal justice system. What features define the American legal system; how does this system compare to those of other countries; what are its respective advantages and disadvantages?
Prerequisites: POLS 103.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 299 Independent Study
Content: Opportunities for well-prepared students to design and pursue a substantive course of independent learning. Details determined by the student and the supervising instructor. Credit-no credit. May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing and consent required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 2-4.

POLS 301 American Constitutional Law: Equal Protection and Due Process
Content: The U.S. Supreme Court and judicial review from 1787 to the present. The court's landmark constitutional decisions, as well as the theory and techniques of constitutional interpretation. The court's authority within the wider political and social context of American government, with emphasis on the court's jurisprudence in the areas of equal protection (including segregation and desegregation, affirmative action, gender discrimination, and sexual orientation discrimination) and due process (including privacy and abortion rights). Discussions of actual Supreme Court rulings, majority opinions, and dissenting arguments, as well as the political and historical context of those decisions in an effort to understand how and why the Supreme Court has played such an influential role in American politics and political thought.
Prerequisites: POLS 103.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.
**POL 302 Political Parties and Elections**
Content: Examination of the role of political parties as organizations, in the electorate, and in government. The evolution of parties in America and how they differ from interest groups. The intersection of race, identity, and ideology in American party systems and elections. How parties and elections are regulated by different levels of government, and the consequences of those regulations. The role of money in politics and the factors affecting polarization in the American electorate. Social choice theory and the construction and maintenance of democratic electoral processes.
Prerequisites: POLS 103.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Every third year, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 305 American Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties**
Content: Focus on the First Amendment, particularly free speech (including areas of national security, incitement to lawless action, individual and group defamation, indecency, and obscenity), as well as criminal defendants' rights (including Fourth Amendment search and seizure law, Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination, and Eighth Amendment prohibitions against cruel and unusual punishment in the context of the death penalty). Discussions of actual Supreme Court rulings, majority opinions, and dissenting arguments, as well as the political and historical context of those decisions in an effort to understand how and why the Supreme Court has played such an influential role in American politics and political thought.
Prerequisites: POLS 103.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 307 Government and the Economy**
Content: A framework for analysis of the policy-making process. History, dynamics, and trends of major U.S. economic policies. The scope of American domestic policy; subsidies and aids to business, labor, agriculture, consumers; antitrust policy and the Federal Trade Commission; public-utility regulation; natural-resources policies; full employment; antipoverty and defense spending.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Every third year, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 310 Pillars of Western Political Thought: Plato to Machiavelli**
Content: Great works of political philosophy from ancient Greece and Rome, early Christianity, and the Renaissance. Themes include the foundations of morality and justice, the role of hierarchy in politics, and the role of politics in cultivating human excellence. Works may include Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Plato's *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Republic*; Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*; Augustine's *City of God*; and Machiavelli's *The Prince*, among others.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 311 Pillars of Western Political Thought: Revolution and the Social Contract**
Content: What makes state authority legitimate? What, if anything, can warrant revolution as a means of political, social, or economic change? This course examines the origins of liberalism in early modern ideas of legitimacy, rights, and obligations, with primary emphasis on foundational thinkers from the crucial period between 1648 and 1848. Readings may include Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, and Martin Luther King Jr., among others.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 312 Pillars of Western Political Thought: The Fate of Democracy**
Content: Democracy aspires to level the political playing field, but when power is taken from the hands of elites, where does it go? How thoroughly can democratic politics transform a culture, and what, if anything, can check its influence? Is the democratic age safer from radical evil, or does it help produce fascism and totalitarianism? This course examines the pros, cons, and prospects of the democratic age, with primary emphasis on foundational thinkers from the early 19th century to the present. Readings may include Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, Walt Whitman, Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, and Michel Foucault, among others.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 313 Global Justice**
Content: Normative issues in international politics, including such topics as national sovereignty, just war theory, international intervention, human rights, cultural rights, secession and self-determination, the competing ethics of patriotism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism. Historical approaches through such thinkers as Thucydides, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, followed by contemporary readings, including such authors as Rawls, Walzer, Kymlicka, Rorty, Nussbaum.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Every fourth year, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POL 314 Russian Politics in Comparative Perspective**
Content: Comparative perspective of Russian politics. Examination of Russia's political development in the early 20th century through developments in the postcommunist period. Investigation of the ways Russia is both similar to and different from countries in the "West" former communist countries, and countries at Russia's same level of economic development, culminating in an analysis of how Russia is ruled today. Students will read predominantly scholarly articles, but will also be exposed to various materials from novels, news media, or films.
Prerequisites: POLS 102.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.
POLS 316 Ethics and Public Policy
Content: Rigorous consideration of controversial issues in contemporary normative political theory. Introduction to major frameworks for ethics. Topics may include abortion, euthanasia, punishment and the death penalty, multiculturalism, affirmative action, women's rights, gay rights, animal rights, just war theory, social welfare.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Every third year, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 318 Civil Society, Politics, and the State
Content: Analysis and evaluation of how civil society and social capital have promoted and shaped a variety of outcomes such as democratization and government performance. Students will critically analyze works from diverse regions of the world such as North America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Asia. In-class activities and a semester-long project will step students through the research process on a core concept within the subfield of comparative politics.
Prerequisites: POLS 102.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Every third year, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 325 European Politics
Content: Political challenges that face individual European countries and the European Union in the 21st century. Investigation of Europe's historical political development, followed by a combination of in-depth case studies and comparative analyses to examine topics such as political parties, electoral systems, political participation, immigration, and postcommunism. Frequent comparisons of the trajectory of Europe and individual European countries with the United States.
Prerequisites: POLS 102.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 346 State and Local Politics
Content: Examination of the operation of state and local governments. Using a comparative methodology, students will gain an understanding of how differences in political institutions among state and local governments substantially affect policy outcomes. The course will also examine how state and local politics and policymaking both complement and interact with the federal layer of government.
Prerequisites: POLS 103 and 201.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 350 Congressional Politics
Content: Constitutional foundations and the unfolding of various concepts of legislative power throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and into the 21st century. The dynamics of Congress, its staffing, and how it and individual members manage different visions of legislative power. Other branches of government examined to illuminate the functioning and malfunctioning of the legislative branch.
Prerequisites: POLS 103 recommended.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 351 Presidential Politics
Content: Constitutional foundations and the unfolding of various concepts of executive power throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The dynamics of the presidency and the extent to which one person can be held responsible for expanded responsibilities. The organizational models and practices of 20th-century presidents. Other branches of government examined to illuminate the functioning and malfunctioning of the executive branch.
Prerequisites: POLS 103 recommended.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 359 Religion and Politics
Content: Measuring religiosity and how or if religious participation affects political participation. The role of the church as a political institution. Religious leaders as political leaders. Emphasis on religion in American politics.
Prerequisites: POLS 103.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Every third year, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 400 Senior Thesis
Content: Choosing a definitive topic and narrowing it; developing a research design, doing the research, submitting drafts, revising drafts, polishing final copy. Presenting thesis to political science faculty and seniors for critique, rewrite of thesis. Final form due at end of semester. Normally taken for 2 credits in both fall and spring semesters of senior year for a total of 4 credits. A deferred grade will be issued for the first semester of the yearlong series. When the full sequence is completed, the given grade applies to both semesters.
Prerequisites: POLS 102, POLS 103, and POLS 201.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 2-4.

POLS 402 Problems in Political Theory
Content: Advanced analysis of a specific problem, theme, or concept intriguing to political theorists. Specific content varies. Themes have included revolution, utopia, the American founding, Nietzsche, identity and self-creation, and the philosophy of history.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Junior standing required. Open to sophomores only with consent of instructor.
Usually offered: Every third year.
Semester credits: 4.

POLS 420 Policy Analysis
Content: This course aims to introduce students to the public policy problems pertinent to Portland, Oregon, and teach quantitative policy analysis skills. We will examine the policies that Portland has tried in the past, evaluating their effectiveness, and consider policy solutions for the future. Students will learn several commonly used public policy methodologies, including cost-benefit analysis, systematic reviews, and the development and analysis of randomized control trials. The course will include numerous guest speakers who are experts in Portland public policy.
Prerequisites: ECON 103, MATH 105, MATH 123, MATH 255, POLS 201, or PSY 200.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.
**POLS 425 Legal Regulation of American Democracy**
Content: The legal regulation of the American political system. The equal protection concept of voting rights, particularly the "one person, one vote" rule and the Voting Rights Act, and federal campaign-finance regulation. Additional topics include the constitutional rights of political parties and the law relating to ballot propositions. Discussion of descriptive and normative issues. This course is taught at the law school.
Prerequisites: POLS 301.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POLS 435 Topics in Comparative Politics**
Content: Advanced seminar focusing on problems and concepts in comparative politics. Specific content varies; examples of topics include state failure and civil war, electoral competition and legislative behavior, migration and integration, institutional design, and ethnicity and nationalism. Assignments are organized around a substantial seminar paper (25 pages or longer).
Prerequisites: POLS 102.
Restrictions: Senior standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

**POLS 499 Independent Study**
Content: Same as POLS 299 but requiring more advanced work. May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing and consent required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 2-4.