

Political Science

View Political Science Department website

The Political Science Department seeks to build skills necessary to understand and analyze contemporary politics and public policy. The major provides students with knowledge of political systems, analytical skills essential for evaluation of competing political claims, and the capacity to research topics in politics or public policy. Our students will have an understanding of institutions, processes, and behaviors in subnational, national, and international political systems as well as an understanding of key themes in political thought. Our students become familiar with the tools of investigation and analysis as they develop the ability to make judgments on political issues and communicate their views to others with a respect for multiple perspectives and a thoughtful approach to political discourse. This training prepares students for careers in government, law, public policy, government-related private sector activities, public advocacy, lobbying, journalism, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools. Graduates will also be prepared for admission to professional schools or graduate studies.

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the substance of the four subfields in Political Science
- Design and use appropriate methodological approaches to Political Science research
- Judge conclusions presented in written work
- Seek thoughtful analysis that respects the diversity of opinions in the political realm
- Demonstrate discipline appropriate research skills
- Design clearly constructed arguments
- Create concise presentations of scholarly work
- Demonstrate capacity to recognize/appreciate the context of a line of thought

Degree Requirements for the Major

General College Requirements

General College Requirements, including the following requirements to satisfy the major:

Breadth Requirement

Twenty-four (24) credit hours in required political science courses with at least one course in each of the four subfields of the discipline (as listed below),

- POSC 100: Introduction to Politics
- POSC 200: Scope and Methods of Political Science
- POSC 201: American Politics
- POSC 252: Comparative Politics
- POSC 262: Political Theory
- POSC 269: International Politics

Depth and Concentration Requirement

Students have the option of pursuing the general political science major or pursuing a specialized concentration within the major.

General Political Science Requirements

- Twelve (12) credit hours in upper level political science courses selected from any of the subfields.

Concentration Requirements

- Twelve (12) credit hours in upper level courses approved for the student's concentration. There are four concentration options available - American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, and Political Theory. Courses approved for each subfield are listed in the course catalog.

Capstone Requirement

To fulfill the twelve (12) credit capstone experience in political science, students must complete one 400-level seminar course approved for their concentration. Students without a concentration may select a 400-level seminar course from any one of the four subfields (or POSC 408: Studies in Public Policy).

All students must then fulfill one of the two options listed below:

- Option One: Students must complete one additional 400-level seminar from any of the four subfields and one 300-level course. Students with a concentration must select a 300-level

course approved for their concentration.*

- Option Two: Students must complete an eight (8) credit St. Mary's Project with a mentor from the Political Science Department. Students pursuing a concentration must complete an SMP on a topic related to their chosen concentration. With the permission of the chair of the Political Science Department, students may do a St. Mary's Project with a mentor in another department, provided the project topic is related in content and methodology to the discipline of political science.

Credit Requirements

- Students must earn a grade of C- or better, and maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 or better, in courses used to satisfy the major.
- The 48 credit hours of major requirements may include field experience and independent study approved by the department chair.

Double Majors

Environmental Studies and Political Science

- Students with a specific interest in Environmental Policy and Politics may consider a double major in Political Science and Environmental Studies. Students who complete the requirements for the Political Science major automatically satisfy the depth requirements for the Environmental Studies Public Policy and Social Science track.

*POSC 385: Topics in Political Science and Public Policy may be selected if they are approved for the student's desired concentration.

Degree Requirements for the Minor

General College Requirements

General College requirements.

Course Requirements

At least 24 credit-hours in political science as specified under the required and elective courses. The cumulative grade-point average of courses used to satisfy the minor must be at least 2.00.

- Required core course (four credit hours): POSC 100: Introduction to Politics
- Elective courses (20 credit hours) consisting of eight credit hours in political science courses at the 200-level and 12 credit hours in political science courses at the 300 or 400-level.

Requirements for Teacher Certification

A Master of Arts in Teaching program is available at St. Mary's College of Maryland after completion of the baccalaureate degree. Students who are interested in becoming teachers should contact the chair of the Department of Educational Studies or an education adviser in their major field of study for suggested coursework in educational studies, and their specific major. These consultations should take place during the first semester of the sophomore year.

Faculty

Diana Boros (department chair), Michael Cain, Todd Eberly, Matthew Fehrs, Susan Grogan, Walter Hill, Sahar Shafqat, Antonio Ugues