

American Government and Politics

There are over 30 undergraduate courses in American Politics which cover broad areas including public opinion and elections, public policy and administration, political parties, interest groups and factions, Congress, the Chief Executive and the courts, constitutional law and legal process and the bureaucracy. The study of American government and politics prepares students for careers in law and for work in government and with interest groups.

Comparative Government and Politics

The department offers a wide variety of courses concerning the political systems of foreign countries or cultural areas. Students may focus on a particular geographical area such as Latin America or the European Union, a particular country such as China, or on some component of national political systems such as parties, political opinion or pressure groups or legislatures. Students who are interested in foreign area studies should acquire competence in the relevant language. The study of comparative government and politics enhances one's understanding of American politics and provides a good foundation for students considering a career in foreign affairs, law, journalism or international business.

World Politics

World politics explores the principles that underlie the operation of the global political system and illustrates these principles with contemporary material. It exposes the student to several key questions in the area of international relations:

- Who are the major actors in international affairs?
- What kind of order exists in relations between nations?
- What mechanisms exist for change?
- What regularities exist in the behavior of actors toward one another that give shape or direction to the system?

Students may specialize in areas such as foreign policy, regional subsystems or international systems. The study of world politics helps a student develop a global perspective that will make him or her a better citizen of the world. It also helps those wishing to pursue a career with a multi-national corporation, an international law firm, the foreign service or an international agency.

Methods of Political Analysis

There is a sustained demand for political scientists who can design, conduct and evaluate quantitative research. Opportunities include careers as methodologically sophisticated teachers and researchers. Local, state and national governments require skilled professionals who can conduct original studies, administer research programs and translate the results of research into a form that can be used in making policy decisions. Opportunities also exist in the private sector – in consulting firms, foundations, research institutes, polling organizations and multi-national corporations. The department offers several political analysis courses at the undergraduate level with opportunities for further research training on the graduate level.

Political Theory

Political theory is the method of studying politics that examines the recurrent questions underlying the entire field of political science. It raises questions about the values with which political systems deal and about the methods by which we can know and understand the functioning of these political systems. Students interested in political theory gain an overview of the history of political thought from ancient Greece to the 20th century, and pursue more specialized topics such as democratic political theory, ethics and public policy or the theoretical foundations of political science. Political theory courses enhance course work in other subfields and serve as foundation courses for those who plan careers in law or teaching.