About the Department
Political science provides students with an in-depth education in politics and political life. In the Political Science Department, we explore the four major fields of the discipline, including American politics and public policy, international politics, comparative politics, and political theory.

Our faculty strives to educate students to “think politically” and “scientifically.” To think “politically” involves serious reflection on the nature of politics, including such dimensions as “power,” “freedom” and “justice,” whether we are wrestling with American politics, the politics of the United Nations or the politics of the European Union. We think “scientifically” when we try to understand politics through the lens of the scientific approach. This means the development of theories and concepts about politics and their assessment in the light of empirical evidence, i.e. facts, data. Through this approach, students are able to develop the building blocks for good argument.

Finally, our program is directed toward the goal of good citizenship. We live in a time of incredibly rapid change and upheaval, presenting us with enormous challenges and opportunities to understand the political processes and structures that determine how we deal with such important issues as national security, rising inequality, civil liberties, the environment and the economy. Our goal in the Political Science Department is to help our students gain an understanding of politics, power and social justice so that they can become critical thinkers and politically engaged citizens. We work closely with the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE), SU’s non-partisan institute committed to undergraduate learning that sparks interest in public affairs and civic engagement, through student voting drives, candidate debates, guest speakers and internships.

Dr. Adam Hoffman moderating a debate on same sex marriage in Maryland.

“Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.” — Pericles
Student/Faculty Community

We are committed to close student-faculty communication, particularly in the classroom with vigorous discussion and one-on-one informal conversations outside the classroom. Our program is also writing-intensive, where we give students every opportunity to reveal what they have learned, lay out reasoned arguments, and explore their understanding more fully through papers and essays. Through these experiences, students find their own “political voice,” which can empower them to be good citizens beyond the university experience.

Department Specialties, Internships, and Prelaw

Presently, the faculty specialties cover a wide variety of areas for political investigation. In American politics, we offer a broad range of courses, including public policy, congress, constitutional law and environmental politics, among others. In political theory, we explore “grand theory” as well as political ideologies and theories of justice. Our comparative politics specialties include Middle East politics, East Asian and Chinese politics, Latin American politics, and Western European politics. Finally, our faculty also offer many courses in international politics, some of which address American foreign policy, the United Nations and international political economy.

Political science is the most common undergraduate field of study for students applying to law school. Our department understands the connection between law and politics, as many of our classes and programs provide opportunities to help students understand the political forces that shape how laws are made, at the state, national and international levels. While there is no specific prelaw major, the department’s prelaw advisor helps students design their programs to achieve the skills necessary for success on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), with the application process and for success in law school. Services provided to assist students include periodic seminars or workshops, and a prelaw handbook to guide you through the various phases of your undergraduate career as well as the law school application process. Students will also find our program heavily involved with various internship opportunities. The Political Science Department coordinates a variety of internships, including a program with the Maryland General Assembly, as well as local internships with local elected officials, advocacy groups, law firms, legal aid and many others. The department also works with PACE and The Washington Center (TWC) to provide our majors the opportunity to live, study and work in Washington, D.C. for a semester, interning in The White House, CNN, Fox News, Congress or in one of many federal agencies. This program allows students to earn 16 credits toward the completion of their degree.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH A POLITICAL SCIENCE DEGREE?

For those students who are contemplating graduate study after SU, the political science major prepares them quite well for law school (J.D.), public policy graduate school (M.P.A. or M.P.P.), and master’s or Ph.D. programs in international relations and political science.

Students who graduate our program with a B.A. in political science can be found at the highest levels of government, in politics and law, and across the business world. Many are working in federal, state, county and local government legislatures and agencies throughout Maryland, while others have cultivated successful careers in journalism and business. A degree in political science can lead to a career in:

- Government as a policy analyst, legislative assistant or congressional staff member
- Advocacy groups, think tanks and Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) as a researcher or analyst
- Public relations and public affairs
- Lobbying
- Law enforcement and intelligence analysis
- Political campaigning as a campaign manager
- Polling agencies as a pollster or data analyst
- City and town administration as a city manager
- Journalism
- Education as a social studies teacher

Contact Information

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