DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

https://www.uvm.edu/cas/polisci

Harold Lasswell, one of the founders of political science as an academic discipline, defined the field as the study of “who gets what, when and how.” As the role of the state has grown — in the economy, education, environment, health, culture, international interactions, and many other fields — understanding governance and the political process has become essential to explaining modern life.

The academic field of political science is divided into four subfields: American politics, political theory, international relations, and comparative politics (the study of the domestic politics of countries other than the United States). At the University of Vermont, students can take courses in all four subfields from experienced teachers who are also leading scholars in their areas of research. Whether students are interested in American politics, law, women’s issues, environmental politics, political theory, international relations, or the politics of different world areas, they will find members of the department teaching courses and doing cutting-edge research in their fields of interest.

MAJORS

POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

Political Science B.A.

MINORS

POLITICAL SCIENCE MINORS

International Politics

Political Science

Public Policy Analysis

Courses

POLS 021. American Political System. 3 Credits.
Institutions, processes, and problems of American government.

POLS 028. D1: Race & Ethnicity in the US. 3 Credits.
Examines race and oppression in American society by looking at the experiences of four groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos and Asians.

POLS 029. D1: Amer Civil Rights Movemnts. 3 Credits.
Examination of American racial discrimination; emphasis on strategies and actions of NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, Black Panthers, Nation of Islam, to end racial discrimination.

POLS 041. Intro to Political Theory. 3 Credits.
Examination of basic problems in political philosophy, e.g. morality and law; punishment; freedom; equality; obligation and disobedience.

POLS 051. Intro International Relations. 3 Credits.
Examination of the basic theoretical concepts in international relations. Introduces the student to systemic, domestic, and individual levels of analysis for assessing foreign policy decisions.

POLS 071. Comparative Political Systems. 3 Credits.
Examination of political behavior, political structures, and political processes from a cross-national perspective.

POLS 091. Internship. 1-3 Credits.
On-site supervised work experience combined with a structured academic learning plan directed by a faculty member or a faculty-staff team in which a faculty member is the instructor of record, for which academic credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 095. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
Introductory courses or seminars on topics beyond the scope of existing departmental offerings. See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

POLS 096. Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
Introductory courses or seminars on topics beyond the scope of existing departmental offerings. See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

POLS 119. D2: LGBT Politics and History. 3 Credits.
This course explores the history, strategies, conflicts, and issues surrounding the various movements advancing the claims of LGBT rights, as well as the roles LGBTQ people play as participants in American politics and culture. Prerequisite: POLS 021, GSWS 001, or Instructor permission. Cross-listed with: GSWS 105.

POLS 120. The Politics of Sex. 3 Credits.
The evolution of sexual politics within the United States. Includes examinations of shifting debates over marriage, reproduction, abortion, LGBT rights, sex education, and teen sexuality. Prerequisite: POLS 021 or GSWS 001. Cross-listed with: GSWS 155.

POLS 121. Law & Politics. 3 Credits.
Examination of the U.S. courts focusing on the legal and political factors that influence court action, and judicial action that affects public policy. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 122. Constitutional Law:Gov Powers. 3 Credits.
Emphasis on developing skills of legal analysis. Historical origins and general principles of constitutionalism. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 123. The Vermont Political System. 3 Credits.
Analysis of the political processes and institutions of governance in Vermont in the context of the federal system and other American states. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 124. The Presidency. 3 Credits.
The functions and activities of the president and staff. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 125. Political Parties & Elections. 3 Credits.
Analysis of U.S. political parties and elections, including partisan realignments throughout history, campaign technology, and voting for president and Congress. Prerequisite: POLS 021.
POLS 127. The Congressional Process. 3 Credits. 
Organization, procedure, and behavior of the chambers of the U.S. Congress. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 129. D1: Const Law: Civil Rights Amer. 3 Credits. 
Critical examination of role of judiciary in enforcing 14th Amendment’s "Equal Protection Clause. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 130. SU: U.S. Environmental Politics. 3 Credits. 
Environmental and natural resources politics in the American context. Analysis of the environmental movement and political theories, issues, processes, and institutions. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 131. Political Leadership. 3 Credits. 
Methods of identifying leaders, their relationships with nonleaders and with one another, their impact on public policy, and their personalities and social backgrounds. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 132. US Supreme Court: Proc & Process. 3 Credits. 
The U.S. Supreme Court as one of the three major political institutions, including the selection process, intracourt politics, and dynamics of court decision making. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 133. Public Opinion/Political Part. 3 Credits. 
Theories and the empirical study of public opinion and political participation. Topics include: public opinion polling methodology, the origins of political outlooks, ideology, authoritarianism, generational politics, public opinion on race, voting behavior. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 137. Politics and the Media. 3 Credits. 
The role of the media in politics, including how media presentation and interpretation of events affect public opinion, political institutions, and public policy. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 138. Const Law: Civil Liberties. 3 Credits. 
Investigation of the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the First Amendment, rights of the accused, and the right to privacy. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 139. Public Policy: Tools & Processes. 3 Credits. 
Examination of public policy process with particular focus on tools used to fashion public policy such as contracts, regulations, legislation, and presidential orders. Prerequisite: POLS 021.

POLS 140. American Political Thought. 3 Credits. 
Introduction to the main currents of political thought in America today (including liberalism, conservatism, libertarianism, and more), considering their moral and philosophical foundations and investigating them in historical perspective. Prerequisite: Minimum Sophomore standing.

POLS 141. History of Political Thought. 3 Credits. 
Development of Western political thought from Plato to Aquinas. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 142. History of Political Thought. 3 Credits. 
Modern political thought from Machiavelli to Nietzsche. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 143. Advanced Political Theory. 3 Credits. 
This course examines selected works by the leading political thinkers of the twentieth century. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 144. Democratic Theory. 3 Credits. 
This course explores the nature of democracy. Students will examine both recent debates in democratic theory and classical sources of democratic ideas. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 145. Intermediate Political Theory. 3 Credits. 
Intermediate courses on topics in political theory beyond the scope of existing departmental offerings. See Schedule of Courses for specific titles. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 146. International Security. 3 Credits. 
Theoretical and empirical examination of the security of the international system and the states within it, with particular emphasis on 21st century security challenges. Prerequisite: POLS 051.

POLS 147. 20th C Political Thought. 3 Credits. 
This course examines selected major works by the leading political thinkers of the twentieth century. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 148. Democratic Theory. 3 Credits. 
This course explores the nature of democracy. Students will examine both recent debates in democratic theory and classical sources of democratic ideas. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 149. Intermediate Political Theory. 3 Credits. 
Intermediate courses on topics in political theory beyond the scope of existing departmental offerings. See Schedule of Courses for specific titles. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 150. International Organization. 3 Credits. 
Theory and practice in supranational institutions. Prerequisite: POLS 051.

POLS 151. American Foreign Policy. 3 Credits. 
Overview of the United States’ involvement with the world. Focuses on the domestic political, institutional, and ideological influences on the formation of policy. Prerequisite: POLS 051.

POLS 152. American Foreign Policy. 3 Credits. 
American foreign policy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 153. International Politics. 3 Credits. 
Formation and operation of the state system in the 20th century. Emphasis on Great Power involvement, Arab-Israeli issues, regional conflict, transitional ideologies. Prerequisite: POLS 051.

POLS 154. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 155. International Environmental Politics. 3 Credits. 
Examination of official and informal processes and institutions that have developed among, across, and beyond nation states for global environmental governance. Prerequisite: POLS 051.

POLS 156. International Security. 3 Credits. 
Examination of theories defining the post-World War II development project, alternatives to the project, and their relevance to solving global development problems. Prerequisite: POLS 051.

POLS 157. Intro to Political Theory. 3 Credits. 
Introduction to the main currents of political thought in America today (including liberalism, conservatism, libertarianism, and more), considering their moral and philosophical foundations and investigating them in historical perspective. Prerequisite: Minimum Sophomore standing.

POLS 158. American Political Thought. 3 Credits. 
Modern political thought from Machiavelli to Nietzsche. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 159. International Environmental Governance. 3 Credits. 
Introduction to the main currents of political thought in America today (including liberalism, conservatism, libertarianism, and more), considering their moral and philosophical foundations and investigating them in historical perspective. Prerequisite: Minimum Sophomore standing.

POLS 160. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 161. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 162. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 163. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 164. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 165. International Political Economy. 3 Credits. 
Examination of the major theories in international political economy. Specific topics include trade, finance, development, foreign direct investment, and the multinational corporation. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or EC 011.

POLS 166. D2: Middle East Politics. 3 Credits. 
State formation in the Middle East and problems it has occasioned. Review of modern history and examination of contemporary politics of several countries. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 167. D2: Middle East Politics. 3 Credits. 
State formation in the Middle East and problems it has occasioned. Review of modern history and examination of contemporary politics of several countries. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 168. International Relations. 3 Credits. 
State formation in the Middle East and problems it has occasioned. Review of modern history and examination of contemporary politics of several countries. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 169. International Relations. 3 Credits. 
State formation in the Middle East and problems it has occasioned. Review of modern history and examination of contemporary politics of several countries. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 170. International Relations. 3 Credits. 
State formation in the Middle East and problems it has occasioned. Review of modern history and examination of contemporary politics of several countries. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 171. Western European Government. 3 Credits. 
A comparative examination of the British, German, and French political systems. Prerequisite: POLS 071.
POLS 172. Politic & Society in Russian Fed. 3 Credits.
Examines the nature of politics and the development of post-Soviet social and economic institutions in Russia. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 173. Canadian Political System. 3 Credits.
Institutions, process, and problems of the Canadian polity. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 174. D2: Latin American Politics. 3 Credits.
Comparative examination of selected Latin American political systems. Prerequisite: POLS 071 or HST 063 or SPAN 145 or SPAN 146.

POLS 175. D2: Govt & Politics of China. 3 Credits.
Institutions, processes, and problems of government of China. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 176. D2: Govt & Politics of Japan. 3 Credits.
Institutions, processes, and problems of government in Japan. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 177. D2: Pol Sys of Trop Africa. 3 Credits.
Development of differing political systems in African countries located south of the Sahara and north of South Africa. Prerequisite: POLS 071, or one course in African Prerequisite: POLS 071, or one course in African Studies.

POLS 180. SU: Comparative Envir Pol. 3 Credits.
The politics of environmentalism and sustainability from a cross-national perspective, covering social mobilization and nonstate actors, party politics, institutions and governance, policy development, and the role of culture, values, and knowledge in the convergence and divergence of political response. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 181. Fund of Social Research. 4 Credits.
Introduction to research methods in social science. Includes examination of research design, measurement, data collection, data analysis, and the presentation and theoretical interpretation of research findings. Prerequisites: STAT 051 or higher; three hours of Sociology or Political Science; minimum Sophomore standing. Cross-listed with: SOC 100.

POLS 182. Ancient Law. 3 Credits.
Comparative study of three major ancient legal systems and their roles in their respective societies: ancient Near East (Sumerian to Hittite), Greek, and Roman. Prerequisite: Three credits in Classics, History, Philosophy, or Political Science. Cross-listed with: CLAS 147, HST 147.

POLS 190. Teaching Assistantship. 1-3 Credits.
Undergraduate student service as a teaching assistant, usually in an introductory level course in the discipline, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 191. Internship. 1-18 Credits.
On-site supervised work experience combined with a structured academic learning plan directed by a faculty member or a faculty-staff team in which a faculty member is the instructor of record, for which academic credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 192. Internship. 1-18 Credits.
On-site supervised work experience combined with a structured academic learning plan directed by a faculty member or a faculty-staff team in which a faculty member is the instructor of record, for which academic credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 195. Intermediate Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

POLS 196. Intermediate Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

POLS 197. Independent Study. 1-18 Credits.
A course which is tailored to fit the interests of a specific student, which occurs outside the traditional classroom/laboratory setting under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 198. Undergraduate Research. 1-18 Credits.
Undergraduate student work on individual or small team research projects under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 220. Topics in Law. 3 Credits.
In-depth analysis of selected topics in law. May repeat for credit with different content. Prerequisites: POLS 021, three hours at 100-level.

POLS 222. Constitutional Law II. 3 Credits.
Selected topics in constitutional law. Prerequisite: POLS 122.

POLS 225. Intergovernmental Relations. 3 Credits.
Problems of the federal system. National-state-local cooperative administration of selected public functions. Prerequisite: POLS 021, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 226. Topics on the Presidency. 3 Credits.
Further study of the executive branch and its operations. Selected topics, e.g., presidential decision making, White House staffing and operations, congressional-executive relations. Prerequisite: POLS 124.

POLS 228. Congress & Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.
Congress’s role in foreign policy making, emphasizing congressional action in the post-Vietnam period. Prerequisite: POLS 021, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 229. Seminar in American Politics. 3 Credits.
POLS 230. VT Legislative Research Srvc. 3 Credits.
Involves students in policy research for the Vermont State Legislature on a wide range of topics, including the environment, health, and welfare. Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

POLS 232. Comparative State Politics. 3 Credits.
Politics, policy, and institutions of state governments of the U.S.; techniques for comparative analysis of these aspects of politics. Prerequisite: POLS 021, three hours at the 100-level.
POLS 234. Topics in Public Opinion. 3 Credits.
This course will examine the quality and sophistication of public attitudes, and the motivations that underlie political participation and electoral choice. Prerequisites: POLS 021, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 235. Gender and Law. 3 Credits.
Examination of the interaction between gender and law in American society. Topics covered include workplace law, family law, and personal autonomy. Prerequisites: POLS 021, three hours at the 100-level. Cross-listed with: GSWS 258.

POLS 237. Pol Effects of Entertain Media. 3 Credits.
Investigates the relationship between popular film, TV, books, and/or video games and people’s perspectives on politics. Prerequisite: POLS 137.

POLS 238. Law & Public Policy. 3 Credits.
Examination of courts as policymakers, relationships with other actors in the policy process, fields in which courts play policy roles, and difficulties facing judges. Prerequisite: POLS 021, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 241. Justice & Equality. 3 Credits.
Examination of contemporary normative theories of distributive justice and equality. Prerequisites: POLS 041 and three hours at the 100-level, or PHIL 140, PHIL 142, PHIL 143, or PHIL 144. Cross-listed with: PHIL 242.

POLS 244. Liberalism and its Critics. 3 Credits.
This course examines the works of leading contemporary liberal political theorists, and also works representing various theoretical approaches critical of liberalism. Prerequisite: POLS 041, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 245. Ethics and Public Policy. 3 Credits.
Over the course of the semester, we explore some of the most difficult moral questions that confront citizens and policymakers today. Topics include the ethics of war and torture, abortion and euthanasia, hate speech, immigration, and other related issues. Prerequisite: POLS 041, PHIL 010, PHIL 141, or SOC 101.

POLS 246. Global Justice. 3 Credits.
Addresses normative political theory that asks what obligations, if any, citizens and their states have internationally. Topics include human rights, immigration, global poverty, humanitarian military intervention, and more. Prerequisite: POLS 041.

POLS 249. Seminar in Political Theory. 3 Credits.

POLS 251. Foreign Pol Newly Indep States. 3 Credits.
Examines the development of foreign relations of post-Soviet states, with a special focus on Russia and the post-Communist era. Prerequisite: POLS 051, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 254. East Asian Political Economy. 3 Credits.
Examination of the historical, political, economic, and international factors for the rise of East Asia since the Second World War. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or POLS 071, Prerequisites: POLS 051 or POLS 071, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 257. Pol of European Integration. 3 Credits.
Survey of the European Union including historical development, public opinion, governmental institutions, internal policies, external relations, and future prospects. Prerequisites: POLS 051 or POLS 071, and three hours at the 100-level; or appropriate International Studies background.

POLS 258. Causes of War. 3 Credits.
Examination of various theories explaining the outbreak of war, with applications to historical cases. Prerequisites: POLS 051, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 259. Sem in International Relations. 3 Credits.
POLS 260. War, Strategy and Politics. 3 Credits.
The domestic, international, and geopolitical factors determining states’ choice of strategies and tactics in interstate conflicts and confrontations. Contemporary and historical examples. Prerequisites: POLS 051, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 261. Topics American Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.
In-depth examination of selected topics related to the making and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Prerequisites: POLS 051, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 263. Third World Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.
The particular security and political economic challenges facing states in the process of nation-building in Latin America, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia. Prerequisites: POLS 051, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 265. East Asian Political Economy. 3 Credits.
Examination of the historical, political, economic, and international factors for the rise of East Asia since the Second World War. Prerequisite: POLS 051 or POLS 071, Prerequisites: POLS 051 or POLS 071, three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 266. D2:Politics of Persian Gulf. 3 Credits.
Covers the political systems of the states bordering the Persian Gulf, the role of oil in regional politics and the international relations of the region. Prerequisite Prerequisite: POLS 157 or POLS 168.

POLS 268. Oil and Politics. 3 Credits.
Explores the relationship between energy resource wealth and political outcomes in oil-producing states and examines the geopolitical role of oil in the international system. Prerequisites: POLS 071, three hours at 100-level.

POLS 270. D2: Mexican Politics. 3 Credits.
An in-depth examination of the Mexican political system. Topics will include an overview of Mexican history, one-party authoritarian rule, democratization, and political economy. Prerequisites: POLS 071 and three hours at the 100-level; or appropriate International Studies background.

POLS 272. Eastern European Pol Systems. 3 Credits.
Examination of Eastern European political systems with emphasis on the role of ethnic conflict and Marxist-Leninist ideology. Prerequisites: POLS 071, three hours at the 100-level.
POLS 276. British Politics. 3 Credits.
Topics include the role of the citizenry; the character of political and governmental institutions; and policy making in particular fields. Northern Ireland is also covered. Prerequisites: POLS 071, three hours at the 100-level; or appropriate International Studies background.

POLS 277. Comparative Ethno-Nationalism. 3 Credits.
Ethnicity and nationalism in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Political, historical, social, and economic factors are examined comparatively. Prerequisite: POLS 071; three hours at the 100-level.

POLS 279. Seminar in Comparative Politics. 3 Credits.

POLS 280. D2: Central Asian Politics. 3 Credits.
This course explores political and economic change in Soviet and post-Soviet Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Prerequisites: POLS 071, three hours at the 100-level; or appropriate Russian/East European Studies background.

POLS 290. D2: Post-Soviet Ethnic Conflict. 3 Credits.
Examines ethnic conflict in various post-Soviet states including Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Estonia and Russia. The material includes both theories of nationalism/ethnic conflict and case studies to generate theoretical explanations for cases of conflict. Prerequisite: POLS 071.

POLS 291. Internship. 1-18 Credits.
On-site supervised work experience combined with a structured academic learning plan directed by a faculty member or a faculty-staff team in which a faculty member is the instructor of record, for which academic credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 292. Teaching Assistantship. 1-3 Credits.
Undergraduate student service as a teaching assistant, usually in an introductory level course in the discipline, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 293. Senior Honors Seminar I. 3 Credits.
Examination of major contemporary research topics in political science. Admission by invitation only.

POLS 295. Advanced Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
Advanced courses or seminars on topics beyond the scope of existing departmental offerings. See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

POLS 296. Advanced Special Topics. 1-18 Credits.
Advanced courses or seminars on topics beyond the scope of existing departmental offerings. See Schedule of Courses for specific titles.

POLS 297. Independent Study. 1-18 Credits.
A course which is tailored to fit the interests of a specific student, which occurs outside the traditional classroom/laboratory setting under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.

POLS 298. Undergraduate Research. 1-18 Credits.
Undergraduate student work on individual or small team research projects under the supervision of a faculty member, for which credit is awarded. Offered at department discretion.