

Department of Political Science

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Room 2306, West Hall

The Major in Political Science

The major in Political Science leads to the Bachelor of Arts degree. Political scientists study the origins, growth, evolution, and decline of governments; how they solve societal conflicts; and how governments ought to function. The specific subfields of the discipline include the study of American government and politics, comparative government and politics, international relations, political theory, public law, and public administration. Students majoring in the program have traditionally pursued careers in law, business, teaching, journalism, and government. The study of Political Science is of value in that all persons need an understanding of the political system which governs their lives. More than minimal knowledge of political systems, however, is required of those who would be employed by them. The law and public administration, for example, are creatures of government and politics. The thirty-hour course requirement in the major program permits students the flexibility to obtain a second major or a minor in other areas of personal and professional interest.

Students majoring in Political Science and Legal Assistant Studies (see below) are able to gain work experience related to their major through the VSU Co-op Program. Such experience may prove valuable in terms of career exploration, acquisition of new skills, and career development. Students seeking more information should contact their academic advisors or the Office of Cooperative Education, 229-333-7172.

Requirements for the Honors Track for Political Science Majors

The Honors Track in Political Science allows students to add a unique and more challenging dimension to their degree. Students must have a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) to enter the Honors Track. They must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 and a 3.0 in their Honors courses.

Within the major in Political Science, Honors Track students must complete three 4000-level courses from among the following options, with a grade of "B" or higher:

Code	Title	Hours
POLS 4820H	Honors Special Topics in US Government and Politics	3
POLS 4830H	Honors Special Topics in Comparative Politics	3
POLS 4840H	Honors Special Topics in International Politics	3
POLS 4850H	Honors Special Topics in Political Theory	3
POLS 4860H	Honors Special Topics in Public Administration	3

Honors Track students are also required to present their work in a suitable forum, such as the Student Brown Bag series, the VSU Symposium on Undergraduate Research, or an academic conference. An Honors Thesis is also an option, provided there is a departmental faculty member with sufficient expertise in the thesis area and willing to serve as thesis director. Credit for the Honors Thesis will be earned by the student's taking POLS 4700H. The Honors Thesis must comply with Honors Program guidelines. Students completing the Honors Track in Political Science major will have this option noted on their transcript.

- Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Political Science (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2025-2026/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/ba-political-science/>)
- Minor in Political Science (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2025-2026/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/minor-political-science/>)
- Minor in Public Administration (<http://catalog.valdosta.edu/archive/2025-2026/undergraduate/academic-programs/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/minor-public-administration/>)

Legal Assistant Studies

Political Science

POLS 1101. American Government. 3 Hours.

An examination of the fundamental institutions and political processes of the American system of government. Students are also given an overview of Georgia's Constitution, state politics, and state government institutions. POLS 1101 satisfies legislative requirements for U.S./Georgia Constitutions.

POLS 1101H. Honors American Government. 3 Hours.

A survey course to provide honors students with an understanding of the institutions and political processes of the American system of government, taught in an enriched environment. Students are also given an overview of Georgia's Constitution, state politics, and state government institutions. POLS 1101H satisfies legislative requirements for U.S./Georgia Constitutions.

POLS 2101. Introduction to Political Science. 3 Hours.

An introduction to Political Science as a field of inquiry. Surveys the subfields of the discipline of Political Science, including American, comparative, and international politics; political theory, public law, and public administration.

POLS 2401. Introduction to Global Issues. 3 Hours.

A survey of contemporary political issues arising both internationally and in the United States. Discussion will focus upon a number of controversial political topics currently being debated in the United States such as electoral reform, social and welfare issues, and role of the U.S. in the world. The course will also examine issues of a more international nature such as global security, international trade and economics, human rights, and the moral responsibilities of nation-states.

POLS 2401H. Honors Introduction to Global Issues. 3 Hours.

A survey of contemporary political issues arising both internationally and in the United States for honors students, taught in an enriched environment. Discussion will focus upon a number of controversial political topics currently being debated in the United States such as electoral reform, social and welfare issues, and the role of the U.S. in the world. The course will also examine global issues such as international trade and economics, human rights, and the moral responsibilities of nation-states.

POLS 2501. Current Issues in American Politics. 3 Hours.

A discussion of current political issues in America as well as their roots in the American social, economic, and political environments.

POLS 3000. Writing in Political Science. 3 Hours.

The introduction to tools necessary to write effectively in the field of Political Science.

POLS 3100. Scope and Methods of Political Science. 3 Hours.

An introduction to the foundations of politics as a science by examining what political scientists (and other social scientists) do and study. The course examines the basic concepts and approaches to understanding the political world and all it embodies, from analyzing a public policy to examining electoral behavior. It is designed to: introduce students to political science research; prepare students to evaluate research critically; interpret social scientific research; and provide students with the requisite skills to initiate and conduct research. POLS 3100 is taught in an electronic classroom using appropriate software packages.

POLS 3200. American State and Local Government and Politics. 3 Hours.

A study of American subnational governments and politics with special emphasis upon intergovernmental relations.

POLS 3210. United States Congress. 3 Hours.

A study of the United States Congress, focusing on the relationship between Congress and other political actors. Course topics will include congressional elections, the interaction between congress and executive and judicial branches of government, the roles of political parties, and leadership in the legislative process.

POLS 3220. Elections, Voting Behavior, and Political Parties. 3 Hours.

An overview of American elections with a focus on voter turnout, voting behavior, political parties, electoral systems and campaign strategies. Both congressional and presidential elections will be studied. Special emphasis will be placed on the history of American elections, the impact of partisan polarization, and the role of American third parties.

POLS 3230. Political Psychology. 3 Hours.

An examination of the mental processes that represent the source of public opinion and political behavior. The course addresses how public opinion and political behavior shape and are shaped by institutions such as the media, political parties, and interest groups as well as a consideration of the role of political elites are addressed.

POLS 3240. American Judicial Process and Behavior. 3 Hours.

A comprehensive examination of the workings of the American judiciary, its impact and compliance at both the state and the federal levels and the complex environment within which the courts function. Critical to the examination of both criminal and civil courts is the assumption that decisions made by judges play a powerful role in shaping public policy and that courts themselves are strongly influenced by other institutions and forces in the society.

POLS 3270. Public Opinion and Political Socialization. 3 Hours.

An examination of the origins, content, and impact of public opinion. Special emphasis is placed on the advantages and limitations of public opinion polling. The course also examines the main agents of political socialization. Topics of particular interest include the role of the family in political learning, racial differences in political socialization, and the influence of television on the formation of pre-adult political opinions.

POLS 3280. African American Politics. 3 Hours.

Also offered as AFAM 3280. A study of African Americans within the American political environment. Specific foci include representation, voting rights, attitudes toward policies seen as impacting African-Americans, and the role of race in elections.

POLS 3290. The American Presidency. 3 Hours.

The study of the role, powers, and responsibilities of the President of the United States within the constitutional system and the changing nature of the presidency.

POLS 3300. Comparative Politics. 3 Hours.

A study of key concepts and theories of comparative politics. Examines case studies from different types of political systems and regions of the world.

POLS 3400. International Relations. 3 Hours.

A study of key concepts of international relations. The course examines the evolution of the contemporary international system and conflict and cooperation among nation-states.

POLS 3520. Introduction to Political Philosophy. 3 Hours.

An investigation of the key arguments and strands of Western political philosophy. The course specifically focuses on the liberal philosophical tradition, from the Enlightenment to the present. The course thus examines the source of ideas that shape our government and politics today.

POLS 3530. American Political Thought. 3 Hours.

A study of the foundations of American political thought from the Puritan era to contemporary times.

POLS 3600. Introduction to Public Administration. 3 Hours.

A focus on the study of public administration processes and underlying theories within American government structures. Emphasis is on the pragmatic aspects of current government leadership and public agency management.

POLS 3610. Public Administration and Public Policy Formation. 3 Hours.

An examination of the basic problems involved in the development of public policy by government actors and institutions, with emphasis on public decision making, organizational theory, and political and administrative influences on the policy making process.

POLS 4100. Political Science Capstone Course. 3 Hours.

Prerequisite: POLS 3100. An application of Political Science research skills to the study of any topic within political science or its sub-disciplines. Students will prepare and present a formal research paper in political science in general or in their area of concentration.

POLS 4200. American Constitutional Law I. 3 Hours.

A comprehensive study of American constitutional law dealing with the structure and powers of the national government outlined in the first four Articles of the Constitution. The primary focus is on the Supreme Court's decisions and the doctrinal impact of those decisions on the structure and relationships of the three branches of the government (separation of powers) and between the national government and state governments (federalism).

POLS 4202. American Constitutional Law II. 3 Hours.

A comprehensive study of American constitutional law with emphasis on property rights and economic liberties, substantive and procedural due process, obtaining evidence, and rights to privacy. The primary focus is on the Supreme Court's decisions and the doctrinal impact of those decisions on the relationships among the national government, state governments, and citizens of the United States.

POLS 4203. American Constitutional Law III. 3 Hours.

A comprehensive study of American constitutional law focusing on civil rights, civil liberties, and equal protection. Constitutional claims examined include denial of rights under the Bill of Rights, the equal protection of laws under the 14th Amendment, and civil rights legislation enacted by Congress since the Civil War.

POLS 4210. Separation of Powers in the American Political System. 3 Hours.

An exploration of the political theory behind a separation of powers. Primary emphasis is placed on the relations between Congress and the President. Topics of particular interest include the origins and impact of divided government, the role of the Supreme Court in arbitrating disputes between the branches of government, and reform proposals to bridge the separation of powers.

POLS 4220. Administrative Law and Government. 3 Hours.

An overview of the administrative law process with the focus upon protecting the interests of all parties involved in the complex process of administrative law, policy formation and implementation.

POLS 4240. Politics and the Supreme Court. 3 Hours.

A review of landmark decisions of the Supreme Court. This course addresses issues related to the political climate surrounding such decisions. The political ramifications of Supreme Court cases are emphasized.

POLS 4250. Trial Advocacy. 3 Hours.

An examination of all aspects of presenting a case in trial. Students develop effective methods for analyzing and preparing cases for presentation in trial. Students will learn and use basic technical skills necessary as members of the University's Mock Trial Team at tournaments sponsored by the American Mock Trial Association. May be repeated for credit up to 9 hours for political science majors, with no more than 3 credit hours applicable to the major.

POLS 4251. Trial Advocacy II. 3 Hours.

Also offered as LEAS 4251. Supervised study of all aspects of presenting a case in trial with practice of trial skills in a mock setting. Students will compete in one or more mock trial competitions within the region and will write a research paper. The course may be taken three times for credit.

POLS 4260. Alternative Dispute Resolution. 3 Hours.

Also offered as LEAS 4260. The study of various methods of alternative dispute resolution. Topics include preparation for and techniques used in mediation, arbitration, and alternative dispute resolution. Ethics and professionalism in dealing with represented and unrepresented individuals will also be addressed.

POLS 4270. Southern Politics. 3 Hours.

An exploration of the unique and colorful political history and political culture of the American South. After considering the defining characteristics of the "old" southern politics, the course examines the most important features of the "new" southern politics and analyzes the changing role of the South in national politics. This course will focus on the "three R's" of southern politics: race, republicanism, and realignment.

POLS 4300. European Politics. 3 Hours.

A study of the politics and government of Europe. The course focuses on key political institutions and issues in major European countries, and the impact of integration on the nation-state.

POLS 4301. The European Union. 3 Hours.

A study of European Union politics and policies. The course examines the nature of the EU as a political system, key EU policies, and the EU's evolving role as a global actor. It also examines major theoretical debates about European integration and EU governance, including the relationship between the EU and its member states.

POLS 4310. Politics in Russia. 3 Hours.

A comprehensive study of the Russian political system with careful attention to the Soviet communist era. Major topics include the role of political parties, institutional changes, political culture, and leadership.

POLS 4320. Latin American Politics. 3 Hours.

A study of the politics and governments of the nation-states of Central and South America. The course focuses on key political institutions and issues in major Latin American countries.

POLS 4330. African Politics. 3 Hours.

Also offered as AFAM 330. A study of the domestic and international politics of Africa from the pre-colonial period to the present day.

POLS 4350. Politics in Developing Nations. 3 Hours.

The study of political institutions, processes and behavior within a comparative perspective.

POLS 4370. Comparative Constitutional Law and Judicial Politics. 3 Hours.

A cross-cultural examination of constitutional legal systems. The course focuses on such topics as institutions, legal professionals, judicial selection, judicial decision-making, and methodological issues involved in the cross-cultural study of legal processes and behavior.

POLS 4390. Constitutional Law and Judicial Politics of the European Union. 3 Hours.

An examination of constitutional law and judicial politics with emphasis on the legal and political framework of the European Union. The focus is on the following topics: legal and political institutions of the European Union, legal and political elites, judicial selection/recruitment of judges, judicial/political decision making and relevant issues involved in cross-cultural study of legal and political systems, and how decisions of the Court of Justice impact the economic balance and political stability of the European Union.

POLS 4400. International Organization and Law. 3 Hours.

Readings, cases, lectures and research on the functioning of the legal structures in the international system with special emphasis on the relation between law and politics.

POLS 4410. American Foreign Policy. 3 Hours.

A study of the domestic and external pressures that guide American foreign policy planners. Specific policies toward Russia, West Europe, China, and Latin America will receive special attention.

POLS 4420. Global Security Policy. 3 Hours.

The study of the political efforts to deal with threats to world order arising from war, nuclear proliferation, international terrorism, the environment, the economy, and related factors.

POLS 4430. National Security Administration and Policy. 3 Hours.

An examination of the organizational dynamics, political features, and policy outcomes of the national security decision-making process. Special attention will be placed on the changing role of the National Security Council.

POLS 4440. Model United Nations. 3 Hours.

A study of the role of the UN in the world today. Students will obtain experience in practicing diplomatic skills in a mock setting. Prepares students to represent accurately a member state of the UN in regional competition. The course may be taken three times for credit.

POLS 4442. Model UN II: Negotiation and Diplomacy. 3 Hours.

Supervised study of the UN, including all aspects of organizing a Model UN conference on campus and participating in the National Model UN Conference. The course may be taken three times for credit.

POLS 4450. Comparative Environmental Politics and Policy. 3 Hours.

A comparative examination of environmental movements, parties, and policies in selected countries and regions of the world. The course will also focus on cross-national forces such as non-governmental and international regimes.

POLS 4460. Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. 3 Hours.

An examination of the causes, effects, and variations in terrorist activity throughout the world. The course will also include political psychological, sociological, and medical readings. The course will also examine approaches, responses, and preventions of terrorism.

POLS 4600. Government Organization and Administrative Theory. 3 Hours.

A systematic analysis of theories of organization, management, and administration. Special consideration will be given to institutional, behavioral, and psychological factors.

POLS 4610. Public Personnel Administration. 3 Hours.

An examination of procedures and problems of governmental personnel administration. Studies of governmental agencies are encouraged to give students first-hand knowledge of governmental personnel administration.

POLS 4620. Public Finance Administration. 3 Hours.

A study of the activities involved in the collection, custody, and expenditure of public revenue, such as the assessment and collection of taxes, public borrowing and debt administration, the preparation and enactment of the budget, financial accountability and the audit.

POLS 4625. Healthcare Leadership. 3 Hours.

An overview of components of leadership strategies.

POLS 4626. Medical Terminology. 3 Hours.

An overview of the elements of medical language, construction of medical words and phrases, and terms related to the human body.

POLS 4630. Public Marketing and Branding for the Public Sector. 3 Hours.

An overview of public marketing and branding practices that exist in the public sector setting.

POLS 4640. Urban Politics and Administration. 3 Hours.

An analysis of the governmental function in urban areas. Emphasis is placed on the management role in a political context.

POLS 4650. Intergovernmental Relations. 3 Hours.

A study of federal, state, and local governmental interactions, with an emphasis on the implications of these interactions for public management.

POLS 4670. Quality Management in Public Administration. 3 Hours.

An examination of key current issues in public administration. The course explores the most current literature illuminating the issues facing public administration in today's demanding environment.

POLS 4680. Data Analysis and Visualization. 3 Hours.

An introduction to data analysis and data visualization skills to improve data literacy. Students will use real-world data and software to represent and discuss data accurately.

POLS 4700. Directed Study in Political Science. 1-3 Hours.

Directed readings in selected areas of political science with regular conferences between instructor and students. The course may be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit if topics are different.

POLS 4700H. Honors Directed Study in Political Science (Thesis). 1-3 Hours.

Directed study in selected areas of political science, with regular conferences between instructor and students, leading to the writing of a thesis. For students in the Political Science Honors Track.

POLS 4820. Special Topics in U.S. Government and Politics. 3 Hours.

Selected topics of political and current interest in U.S. government and politics. The course may be repeated for credit if topics are different.

POLS 4820H. Honors Special Topics in US Government and Politics. 3 Hours.

Special topics in U.S. government and politics for Political Science Honors Track. May be repeated for credit.

POLS 4830. Special Topics in Comparative Politics. 3 Hours.

Selected topics of political and current interest in U.S. government and politics. The course may be repeated for credit if topics are different.

POLS 4830H. Honors Special Topics in Comparative Politics. 3 Hours.

Special topics in comparative politics for Political Science Honors Track. May be repeated for credit.

POLS 4831. Special Topics in EU Politics. 3 Hours.

A study of selected topics in EU politics. Topics can include EU law and legal systems, federalism and multi-level governance, EU environmental policy, EU social policy, EU science and technology policy, EU media and communications policy, and European economic and monetary union.

POLS 4840. Special Topics in International Politics. 3 Hours.

Selected topics of political and current interest in international politics. The course may be repeated for credit if topics are different.

POLS 4840H. Honors Special Topics in International Politics. 3 Hours.

Special topics in International politics for Political Science Honors Track. May be repeated for credit.

POLS 4850. Special Topics in Political Theory. 3 Hours.

Selected topics of political and current interest in political theory. The course may be repeated for credit if topics are different.

POLS 4850H. Honors Special Topics in Political Theory. 3 Hours.

Special topics in political theory for Political Science Honors Track. May be repeated for credit.

POLS 4860. Special Topics in Public Administration. 3 Hours.

Selected topics of political and current interest in public administration. The course may be repeated for credit if topics are different.

POLS 4860H. Honors Special Topics in Public Administration. 3 Hours.

Special topics in public administration for Political Science Honors Track. May be repeated for credit.

POLS 4861. Public Economic Development. 3 Hours.

An examination of local economic development planning.

POLS 4862. Effective Writing in Public Administration. 3 Hours.

An overview of types of written communications in public administration and effective writing techniques for preparing those documents.

POLS 4863. Writing and Managing Grants in the Public Sector. 3 Hours.

A study of the different grant types and grant requirements. Students will identify an organization and consult with the leadership on a grant opportunity. Students will demonstrate their acquired knowledge through the completion of a grant.

POLS 4864. Information Management in the Public Sector. 3 Hours.

An examination of management of information resources within the public sector and the role of e-Government at local, state, federal, and international levels. Information technology aspects including hardware, software, and systems development will be addressed.

POLS 4865. Nonprofit Organization Management. 3 Hours.

Discussion of the vital role played by the nonprofit sector in society by addressing needs that neither business nor government are prepared to fulfill. Examines the scope, dimensions, and roles of nonprofit organizations, particularly those designated by the IRS as 5019d)(3), in order to understand their distinctive characteristics and functions.

POLS 4866. Project Management in the Public Sector. 3 Hours.

An overview of project management with a focus on public sector projects. Students will learn about project lifecycles including planning, executing, tracking, delivering, and project closure.

POLS 4867. Public Relations in Public Administration. 3 Hours.

An exploration of the importance of communication government and its constituents, which promotes the democratic process. Topics include the role of public information as a communication strategy; the impact of today's technology on public information; crisis and emergency communications; and ethical, legal and political aspects of public communications.

POLS 4868. Creating and Publishing Public Sector Websites. 3 Hours.

An examination of website content strategies used by leaders in government, education, nonprofits, and other organizations.

POLS 4900. Internship in Political Science. 3-12 Hours.

Supervised study in a structured governmental, political or other suitable environment, as approved by the department. Open to any student, regardless of major. The number of credit hours granted is dependent upon the particular program, academic work, requirements, and nature of participation. If a 6, 9, or 12 hour internship is taken, the student must use those additional hours as elective courses. The student may not use any additional hours above 3 in lieu of a political science course that is part of the major. Graded satisfactory and unsatisfactory.