



Political Science

The ancient Greek scientist and philosopher Aristotle proclaimed politics “the queen of sciences.” Politics comes first, he said, because it orders and arranges other activities. It is how a city, a country, or a world decides what is important to do now and what can wait. Consequently, politics is as new as today’s headlines and as old as civilization itself. Political Science studies politics wherever it occurs: in city council chambers, in Congress, in the corridors of the White House, and in the conference halls of international summit meetings. Even personal relationships in the workplace and at home turn out to have political dimensions that interest political scientists.

THE PROGRAM

Gonzaga’s Political Science program is designed to maximize a student’s postgraduate options. The program’s emphasis on effective writing and public speaking skills, rigorous factual analysis, and the ability to synthesize ideas makes it a strong preparation for any and all careers. Gonzaga’s Political Science Department offers both a **major** (31 credits) and a **minor** (18 credits) in Political Science.

Many who study political science at Gonzaga later pursue careers in law, public policy, electoral politics, the Foreign Service, or graduate study in political science. Others become teachers and some public servants. About one-third of political science majors work in business. Gonzaga’s Political Science Department has a distinguished record of helping students achieve these goals.

The Political Science Department contributes many courses to Gonzaga’s interdisciplinary programs in **Environmental Studies**, **International Studies**, **Native American Studies**, and **Women’s and Gender Studies**. It also offers courses of interest to those interested in pursuing careers in the legal profession.

The Department divides its courses into three general areas: **political theory**, **American politics**, and **comparative politics/international relations**. To acquire a major in Political Science, students must complete **at least two courses in each area**. This ensures an appreciation for the breadth of the discipline.

The faculty believe that the study of politics requires an understanding of how values develop and manifest themselves in people’s actions and laws. In order to reach such understanding, the faculty carefully situate events and theories in their social, historical, and cultural contexts.

Class formats range from lectures and discussions to small group research projects and presentations, as well as role-playing simulations and experiential learning.

DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

The Department strongly recommends **public affairs internships**. Internships are an excellent way for students to acquire practical experience and explore future careers while still in school. Students obtain credit for their internships by conducting faculty-supervised analyses of their activities and experiences.

Recent interns have worked for judges, attorneys-general, public defenders, state legislators, governors, U.S. Representatives and Senators, ambassadors, the Office of the Vice President, the U.K. Houses of Parliament, and a host of non-governmental and international organizations. A special relationship with American University’s Washington Semester Program allows students to **study and intern in Washington, D.C.**, while continuing to receive their same financial aid and scholarships and paying Gonzaga tuition rates.

Finally, the Department strongly recommends **study abroad**. Students can, for example, intern in the House of Commons in the U.K. through the Hansard Society program, immerse themselves in the Spanish language through a home-stay study abroad program at the University of Granada in Spain, or study with students from dozens of countries at Erasmus University in Rotterdam or Loyola University in Beijing.

As for extracurricular activities, the Department sponsors a **Model United Nations program**, which sends students to New York City to compete with students from all over the country. GU political science professors also advise student clubs such as the Model United Nations and a club devoted to eradicating human trafficking. In conjunction with the Gonzaga Student Body Association (also a popular organization among political science majors), these clubs sponsor guest lectures and debates on topics ranging from terrorism to civil rights to health care. Desmond Tutu, Thomas Friedman, and Jane Goodall have spoken at Gonzaga as well. GU’s Law School invites undergraduates to hear oral arguments before the Washington State Supreme Court when the court holds sessions at Gonzaga.

OUTCOMES

A recent national survey of Political Science graduates found that more than 40% were lawyers and 33% were in business. The remainder were distributed among all levels of government and education, as well as all forms of journalism and law enforcement. Recent graduates have attended the following graduate schools:

- American University
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- University of California, Riverside
- University of Idaho
- University of Massachusetts
- University of Minnesota
- University of Oregon
- University of Virginia
- University of Washington
- Washington State University
- Western Washington University
- Yale University

Recent graduates have attended the following law schools:

- Georgetown University
- Gonzaga University
- Harvard University
- New York University
- Seattle University
- University of Chicago
- University of Washington
- Willamette University
- Yale University

Political Science graduates can be found working at the Pentagon, the State Department, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell's office, the American Red Cross,

Washington state's legislature, and in Spokane city agencies. Many pursue interim careers in service in the Peace Corps, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Teach for America, and teaching English in foreign countries. Still others find meaningful work with non-profits, professional associations, interest groups, and non-governmental organizations.

THE PEOPLE

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