

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Degree Types: PhD

The Political Science PhD Program (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/graduate/>) is designed for students whose primary concern is a mastery of theories, methods of research, and substantive literature of the discipline of political science.

The program reflects an effort to address big questions in politics by combining multiple social science methodologies including quantitative, qualitative, experimental, interpretive methods. Committed to excellence in research and teaching, methodological diversity, and interdisciplinary collaborations, the department offers a stimulating intellectual community that is committed to diversity and equality of opportunity for students and faculty of all backgrounds.

We offer field training in American politics, comparative politics, political theory, international relations, and methods. Our graduate training strengths include:

- Race, Ethnicity and Politics (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/race.html>)
- Conflict Studies (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/conflict-studies.html>)
- Law and Politics (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/law-politics.html>)
- Public Opinion, Political Communication and Political Participation (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/public-opinion-communication-participation.html>)
- American Political Development (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/american-political-development.html>)
- International Theory (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/international-theory.html>)
- Comparative Historical Analysis (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/comparative-historical-studies.html>)
- Feminist and Gender Studies (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/research/subfield-specialties/gender-politics.html>)

Additional resources:

- Department website (<https://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/>)
- Program handbook(s)

Degree Offered

- Political Science PhD (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/political-science/political-science-phd/>)

Learning objective(s)/Students should be able to...

- Define a research question, identify and gather data, and analyze that data to answer the question.
- Identify major debates in field and demonstrate a capacity to assemble a syllabus for teaching.
- Gain familiarity with major debates in a field other than the primary field.
- Obtain skills related to pedagogical development and classroom management.

- Design a research project and produce fundable proposals.
- Identify methodological tools relevant to their research and be aware of developments on the field.
- Understand ethical practices and awareness of federal statutes governing research ethics.
- Contribute original research to a scholarly community.

Political Science Courses

POLI_SCI 305-0 Integrity and the Politics of Corruption (1 Unit)

This seminar delves into fraught political problems revolving around corruption and abuse of power. To tackle these problems, we examine two ideas related to "the people" First, the people as the owner of public property stolen by corrupt politicians. Second, the people as an agent with its own moral integrity. Both ideas combine abstract philosophy with concrete politics.

Ethical and Evaluative Thinking Foundational Disci

POLI_SCI 307-0 Deportation Law and Politics (1 Unit)

Analysis of deportation law and politics from colonial America through today. Requires two visits to Chicago immigration courts.

Ethical and Evaluative Thinking Foundational Disci Ethics Values Distro Area U.S. Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

POLI_SCI 320-0 The American Presidency (1 Unit)

Structural foundations and historical development of the American presidency; predominant scholarly theories of presidential power and leadership; contemporary issues and debates.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 220-0 or equivalent.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 323-0 Public Opinion and Voting Behavior (1 Unit)

Who votes and for whom. Social, psychological, economic, and political factors influencing election choices. Sources of opinions. Focus on American presidential elections with some comparative and nonpresidential material.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 220-0 or equivalent.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 324-0 Political Parties and Elections (1 Unit)

Role of political parties in a democratic society. Topics include nomination, national conventions, political funding, campaigns, party organization, and national, state, and local parties.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 325-0 Congress and the Legislative Process (1 Unit)

Organization of legislatures to make public policy; impact of constituents and political parties on legislative decision making; polarization; legislative-executive relations. Emphasis on the US Congress and contemporary politics.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 220-0 or equivalent.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 327-0 African American Politics (1 Unit)

Survey of black politics in the United States, including blacks' relations with government, whites, political parties, public policy, and electoral politics.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl U.S. Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

POLI_SCI 328-0 Public Policy (1 Unit)

The role of government in regulating economic and social behavior; theories of public policy making; sources and effects of public policy.
Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 329-0 U.S. Environmental Politics (1 Unit)

Political problems associated with human impact on natural environment; pollution, natural resources, public lands, land use, energy, and population.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

POLI_SCI 331-0 Politics of the Supreme Court (1 Unit)

Operation of appellate courts, with emphasis on the US Supreme Court. Decision making by appellate courts and the development of public policy.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 220-0 or POLI_SCI 230-0.

POLI_SCI 332-0 Constitutional Law I (1 Unit)

Introduction to interpretation of the US Constitution by the Supreme Court. Judicial review, federalism, congressional and executive authority, separation of powers. Taught with LEGAL_ST 332-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 220-0 or POLI_SCI 230-0.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 333-0 Constitutional Law II: Civil and Political Rights (1 Unit)

Consideration of US Supreme Court decisions dealing with civil and political rights, including equality, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. Taught with POLI_SCI 333-0 ; may not receive credit for both courses.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 220-0, POLI_SCI 230-0 or consent of instructor.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl U.S. Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

POLI_SCI 342-0 International Organizations (1 Unit)

An examination of the politics, law, and history of international organizations from the 20th century to the present. Emphasis on the main inter-governmental organizations including the United Nations, the WTO, the WHO, and international courts. Taught with POLI_SCI 342-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 240-0 or consent of instructor.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

POLI_SCI 345-0 National Security (1 Unit)

Basic issues in national security, focusing primarily on the United States. Topics include the nature of "national interest," major actors in national security policy making and military strategy, and the influence and role of the defense establishment.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 346-0 European Union in International Affairs (1 Unit)

Introduction to the institutions and policies of the European Union today.
Historical Studies Distro Area Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 347-0 Ethics in International Relations (1 Unit)

Role of ethical considerations in international relations: where and when ethical questions are raised and by whom; causes and predictability of tensions between the ethics and self-interests of nations and political figures.

Ethical and Evaluative Thinking Foundational Disci Ethics Values Distro Area Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

POLI_SCI 353-0 Politics of Latin America (1 Unit)

Patterns of socioeconomic development and regime forms in Latin America. Interaction of internal and international economic and political structures and processes.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 354-0 Politics of Southeast Asia (1 Unit)

Political economy of selected Southeast Asian countries, 1945 to present. Important themes include oligarchy and human rights.

Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 355-0 Politics of China (1 Unit)

This course offers an overview of modern China's politics and society. It is divided into three parts. The first part surveys Chinese history from the fall of the Qing dynasty to the end of Mao's era. The second part delves into China's economic reform and its distinct political system that combines high-growth capitalism with single-party rule. The third part focuses on several challenges confronting China and the world as a whole today, including climate change, populism, inequality, nationalism, and technological change. The course equips students with knowledge of China's political landscape as well as key concepts and theories in political science, such as revolution, democracy, and political legitimacy. The geopolitical unit known as China today will be understood through historical, comparative, and global perspectives.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 359-0 Politics of Africa (1 Unit)

Political structures and behaviour ; power relatoon ; political regimes ; development of modern political systems.

Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 361-0 Democracy and Autocracy (1 Unit)

Theories of the emergence and breakdown of democracy as well as of tensions between democratic and autocratic governance in contemporary democratic regimes. Comparisons of case studies in developed and developing countries.

Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 362-0 Politics of Europe (1 Unit)

Political development of Europe from the Peace of Westphalia to the European Union. Focus on states and state-making, regime types, economic development, and nationalism.

Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area Social and Behavioral Science Foundational Discipl

POLI_SCI 390-0 Special Topics in Political Science (1 Unit)

Designed for investigation of topics of interest to students and faculty that are not covered by other course offerings. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

POLI_SCI 403-0 Introduction to Probability and Statistics (1 Unit)

Set theory, sample spaces, combinatorics, conditional probability, Bernoulli and binomial random variables and distributions. Some discussion of estimation and inference.

POLI_SCI 405-0 Linear Models (1 Unit)

Theory and application of linear regression and extensions such as limited dependent variables. Consequences of violating the assumptions underlying the classical linear regression model.

Prerequisite: Knowledge of introductory econometrics.

POLI_SCI 406-0 Quantitative Causal Inference (1 Unit)

Quantitative strategies for causal inference in the social sciences. Topics include the causal analysis of experiments, regression for causal inference, instrumental variables, matching, synthetic controls, missing data, regression-discontinuity designs, and difference-in-differences strategies.

Prerequisite: POLI_SCI 405-0 or equivalent.

POLI_SCI 407-0 Experimental Political Science (1 Unit)

Experiments are a central methodology in political science. The design, implementation, and analysis of experiments raise a variety of distinct epistemological and methodological challenges. This class will review the challenges to experimentation, discuss how to implement experiments, and survey prominent applications. The class will touch on recent methodological advances in experiments and ongoing debates about the reliability of experimental studies.

POLI_SCI 408-0 Interpretive Methods in Political Science (1 Unit)

This seminar is intended for graduate students in political science and related fields who are interested in empirical research using interpretive methods. It examines a wide range of logics of research and argument and considers their utility for the study of politics.

POLI_SCI 409-0 Case Study and Small-N Methods (1 Unit)

This seminar offers an introduction to small-N and case study methods. The course focuses on tools for describing social and political phenomena and for analyzing causal relationships among these phenomena.

POLI_SCI 410-0 American Politics Field Seminar (1 Unit)

Introduction and review of major studies in American politics on such topics as the presidency, the Congress, the courts, interest groups, political parties, and voting behavior. A basic course for graduate students.

POLI_SCI 411-0 Theories of American Political Institutions (1 Unit)

Exploration of historical and contemporary debates in the study of political institutions, with a focus on U.S. politics (both federal and state legislatures). Includes theories of parties, Congress, President, bureaucracy, interest groups, and courts. Emphasis on key debates, theories, and evidence.

POLI_SCI 413-0 Theories of Political Behavior (1 Unit)

Contrasting approaches to the study of voting, theories of the survey response, psychological theories of mental process, models of public opinion, dispositional explanations of behavior, political participation, and mathematical models of social interaction.

POLI_SCI 414-0 The Presidency (1 Unit)

This graduate seminar surveys traditional and current scholarship on the American presidency. It examines major theories of executive power and leadership, unilateral action, and institutional change; and the dynamic relationship between the presidency and the Congress, the bureaucracy, the parties, and the public. Special attention is given to contemporary research on these topics.

POLI_SCI 418-0 American Political Parties (1 Unit)

Organizational structure of political parties and its consequences; the nature and redefinition of political party coalitions; conflict and consensus building within parties; changes within the parties and their effect on power distributions; parties in governmental decision making; party activists; and policy formation and its implications within the parties.

POLI_SCI 419-0 American Political Development (1 Unit)

The historical construction of politics in the U.S. Topics include liberalism and conservatism; state-building and party-building; industrialization and the welfare state; political traditions, regimes, and orders; electoral

realignments; constitutional development; social movements; and racial politics. Historical-institutional themes of timing and sequence, critical junctures, path dependence, policy feedback, political entrepreneurship, and intercurrence.

POLI_SCI 424-0 Public Opinion, the Media, and Democracy (1 Unit)

This course is concerned with public opinion, the mass media, and the role of the public in making U.S. foreign and domestic policy. Topics include the micro foundations of public opinion (especially policy preferences), the influence of public opinion on policy, leadership or manipulation of opinion, and the quality of political information made available to the public through the media, including the systematic biases or deficiencies.

POLI_SCI 440-0 International Relations Theory (1 Unit)

Contemporary international relations theory. Basic concepts on the philosophy of social science and substantive theories of international relations, including neorealism, neoliberalism, Marxism, and constructivism.

POLI_SCI 441-0 International Political Economy (1 Unit)

Surveys major issue areas, findings, and theoretical debates in the fields of International and Comparative Political Economy. Assessment of the relative importance of systemic and domestic factors in the evolution of international economic relations; the structure of dynamics of those relations.

POLI_SCI 442-0 International Organization (1 Unit)

Introduction to theory and practice of international organizations in IR. We examine the law, politics, and history of international institutions and the assumptions, methods, and ideologies used to study them. We look at theoretical models of IOs as well as practical politics and examples.

POLI_SCI 443-0 International Law and International Politics (1 Unit)

This seminar on international law builds on interdisciplinary approaches. It examines the social construction of norms in international affairs, legitimacy and fairness in shaping perceptions and behavior, and how institutions of international law shape international political processes and state behavior.

POLI_SCI 445-0 International Security (1 Unit)

Survey of debates in the field of international security emphasizing recent research. Topics include international conflict, laws of war, nuclear weapons, sovereignty, international justice, and humanitarian intervention.

POLI_SCI 447-0 Critical Studies in World Politics (1 Unit)

Scholarship on world politics in the Frankfurt School, Gramscian, and postmodern traditions.

POLI_SCI 449-0 Informal Institutions (1 Unit)

This course examines informal institutions: the rules and procedures that lack formal codification yet effectively structure political behavior.

POLI_SCI 450-0 Contemporary Theory and Research in Comparative Politics (1 Unit)

Major contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches such as society-centered, state-centered, political-institutional, political-cultural, and process-centered theoretical approaches; cross-national statistical and comparative-historical methodological approaches.

POLI_SCI 451-0 Comparative Political Economy of Developing Countries (1 Unit)

Examines political explanations for the divergence in economic performance among developing countries. Topics include the developmental state, collective action, property rights, and democracy.

POLI_SCI 452-0 Democratization (1 Unit)

The interrelationships between socioeconomic structures and democracy, the importance of political leadership, the historic relationship between capitalism and democracy, and contemporary tensions between market reform and democratization.

POLI_SCI 453-0 Modern Africa (1 Unit)

Interdisciplinary survey of current conditions in Africa; the place of Africa in the modern world.

POLI_SCI 454-0 Social Movements and Mobilization (1 Unit)

This graduate-level seminar explores the political conditions and processes shaping social and political mobilization, examining major theories from the fields of sociology and political science about social movements: collective challenges to authority that aim to change society or institute structural changes in an existing state or states.

POLI_SCI 455-0 Politics of Latin America (1 Unit)

This course provides an advanced introduction to the field of Latin American politics. The material is designed to familiarize students with both the substantive areas and the different theoretical and methodological orientations that characterize work in comparative politics on Latin America. The course assumes no prior knowledge of Latin America and is appropriate for graduate students who work mainly on other parts of the world.

POLI_SCI 458-0 Political Institutions (1 Unit)

The new institutionalism is one of the most important recent advances in political science. This course surveys the main varieties of institutionalism - historical, rational choice, sociological - focusing on their main methods and major findings.

POLI_SCI 459-0 Comparative Political Behavior (1 Unit)

Theories and approaches to studying citizen politics in different societies, including an emphasis on the roles of everyday people's information, identity, and cost-benefit analysis in shaping political events, as well as a consideration of how these processes interact with elite frames and with institutions.

POLI_SCI 460-0 Comparative Politics Proseminar II (1 Unit)

Survey of major topics in comparative politics. Contemporary state of the subfield, its evolution, and emerging research questions and controversies. Themes include institutions, identities, the state, regimes, inequality.

POLI_SCI 461-0 Ancient and Medieval Political Thought (1 Unit)

Close reading of Greek sources with attention to literary, cultural and historical context and problems of translation. Texts include works in history, philosophy oratory, drama (e.g., Aristophanes, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle). May be repeated for credit with different texts.

POLI_SCI 462-0 Early Modern Political Thought (1 Unit)

Close reading of late Medieval and Renaissance to early Enlightenment sources. Topics include the separation of church and state; social division and political unity; politics between anthropology and cosmology; the rise of individualism; the state as work of art. May be repeated for credit with different topics and authors.

POLI_SCI 463-0 Late Modern Political Thought (1 Unit)

POLI_SCI 464-0 Contemporary Political Thought (1 Unit)

POLI_SCI 465-0 American Political Thought (1 Unit)

An advanced introduction to the development of American political thought in the US, from the Revolutionaries to the Pragmatists. The seminar will attempt to convey the spirit and substance of the debates that have identified American political thought at different times. The course will attempt some thematic organization by attending to citizens and the state(s).

POLI_SCI 466-0 Comparative Political Theory (1 Unit)

This course explores the question of how to study political thought from outside the Western canon, and how to think normatively about polities outside the industrialized West. It involves an overview of the growing field of Comparative Political Theory, as well as related discussions in the disciplines of comparative literature, philosophy, history, and anthropology.

POLI_SCI 467-0 Issues in Contemporary Political Philosophy (1 Unit)

This course surveys core debates in contemporary political philosophy, providing students with familiarity in the Anglo-American tradition in the field.

POLI_SCI 468-0 Problems in Democratic Theory (1 Unit)

Consideration of issues such as whether democracy presupposes a demos that is socially unified. What are democracy's prospects in an age of globalization and transnationalism?

POLI_SCI 469-0 Special Topics in Knowledge & Politics (1 Unit)

Examination of the crisis - or promise - of meaning that results from the multitude of ways in which political and linguistic theorists have responded to the challenge to think about language in non-referential terms.

POLI_SCI 471-0 Game Theory: Math Models of Individual Political Behavior (1 Unit)

An introduction to game theory. Topics covered include individual decision-making under uncertainty; normal and extensive form games; games of incomplete information; repeated games. Applications to voting theory, collective action and institutional choice.

POLI_SCI 476-0 Politics of Violence (1 Unit)

This graduate seminar surveys recent research into the politics of contemporary and recent conflicts. Students have an opportunity to conceptualize the roles of violence, recruitment, mobilization and ideology, and social structures in shaping processes and outcomes of conflicts.

POLI_SCI 483-0 American Political Behavior Graduate Workshop (1 Unit)

Key debates and developments in research on American Political Behavior; the development, presentation and critique of student-generated original research.

POLI_SCI 484-0 Comparative-Historical Social Science Workshop (1 Unit)

This course is an interdisciplinary seminar designed for graduate students interested in comparative and historical work, broadly defined. Some of the work is more comparative and some is more historical. The workshop includes presentations of new work by Northwestern graduate students, Northwestern faculty, and leading outside scholars in the field of comparative-historical analysis.

POLI_SCI 485-0 Global Theory Workshop (1 Unit)

Sustained discussion of work in progress in analytical political thought, with special emphasis on research that is transnational in character; internal and guest speakers combined with the development, presentation and critique of student-generated original research.

POLI_SCI 486-0 Advanced Topics in Middle East Politics (1 Unit)

Advanced seminar on topics including state formation, regimes, political economy, political culture, political institutions, identity, social movements, and religion in politics. The focus is from the late Ottoman era through 2011 uprisings.

POLI_SCI 490-0 Special Topics in Political Science (1 Unit)

Investigation of topics of current interest to students and faculty not covered by other offerings.

POLI_SCI 495-0 Qualitative Methods (1 Unit)

This seminar provides a broad introduction to research design and qualitative methods. The first part of the course covers foundational issues, including conceptualization, measurement, and causality in a qualitative context. Part II introduces students to various approaches and techniques including case studies, process tracing, archival, ethnographic, and interview methods, considering the utility and tradeoffs of each.

POLI_SCI 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)

Contact the department for section and permission numbers. Permission of instructor and department required. May be repeated for credit.

POLI_SCI 519-0 Responsible Conduct of Research Training (0 Unit)

POLI_SCI 590-0 Research (1-3 Units)

Contact the department for section and permission numbers. Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit.