



Political Science

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Political Science at Richmond

Political science involves the description, analysis, and critical study of governments and their social and cultural environments; decision-making processes, laws and policies; and the relationships of these elements to one another. As such, political science has many subfields and shares many points of interest with other disciplines, such as economics, philosophy, history, sociology, and law. The major subfields in political science at the University of Richmond are American government, public policy, comparative politics, political theory, international relations, and research methods.

The political science major has unusually distinctive choices. In addition to the usual advantages of a small university — close working relationships with faculty and an excellent liberal arts education — students can enroll in a two-unit internship program at the General Assembly during spring semesters; participate in an internship in Washington, D.C. or Richmond; and minor in leadership studies, global studies, American Studies, PPEL, or law and liberal arts.

Internships

About 50 students participate in government internships each year. Some work with legislators, lobbyists, and government agencies involved in the legislative process at the Virginia General Assembly. Legislative internships carry two units of credit. Internship positions are also available in other agencies of state and local government in the Richmond area, and many students take advantage of the summer months to gain internship credits by working and studying in Washington, D.C.

Study Abroad

Study abroad offers an unparalleled opportunity for political science majors to deepen their understanding of both international and domestic politics. The simple act of living in another country provides insights into the different ways in which governments are organized and exercise power. Moreover, experiencing

life in a different political context enables students to explore how individuals in other countries engage with politics and how they perceive their role as citizens. From abroad, students witness the political, economic, and social challenges facing other countries, and they see firsthand how U.S. foreign policy is perceived from abroad.

Therefore, even if your coursework focuses on American politics, a study abroad experience will provide you with a comparative perspective that will enhance your understanding of politics in the United States. For example, through everyday observation, students will understand the differences in political discourse surrounding race, migration, immigration, religion, gender, and rights, among others. Students interested in public policy will benefit from studying how other countries both define and provide public goods and regulate activities inside their territory. Similarly, students interested in American political institutions will find living in another polity particularly enlightening, as they will have the opportunity to observe the effects of different electoral rules or explore the intricacies of a parliamentary system.

Career Opportunities

For students interested in law, political science is one of the most popular departments at the University of Richmond. The department offers courses that help to prepare students for law school. Students also have taken advantage of the Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law major, law and liberal arts minor, and the pre-law advising program. However, any one of several majors in the liberal arts will help prepare a student for admission to law school.

Majors in political science may also pursue a variety of careers in government, private organizations concerned with public or social policy, teaching, and business. Students may go directly into government or private sector work, or they may choose to enter specialized graduate programs in such fields as urban planning, public policy, or international affairs.

Graduate School Acceptances

- American University
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- The George Washington University
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- National Chengchi University (Taiwan)
- Northwestern University
- The Ohio State University
- Rutgers University
- Sciences Po (France)
- Stanford University
- University of California, San Diego
- University of Chicago
- University of Connecticut
- University of Florida
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Kentucky
- University of North Carolina
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Oxford
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Rochester
- University of Texas, Austin
- University of Virginia
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Vanderbilt University
- Villanova University
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Yale University

Law School Acceptances

- Boston College
- College of William and Mary
- Cornell University
- Dayton University
- Duke University
- Emory University
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- New York University
- Rutgers University
- Syracuse University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of Chicago
- University of Michigan
- University of North Carolina
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Richmond
- University of Virginia

- Vanderbilt University
- Wake Forest University
- Washington and Lee University
- Yale University

Recent Student-Faculty Research Projects

- “Aquinas and Suarez on Law” George Estrada with Kevin Cherry
- “Confucian Virtues and Political Legitimation in China and Vietnam” Anya Dinh with Dan Chen
- “Economic Predictors of Democratic Backsliding: A Comparison of Populist and Non-Populist Leaders” Jake Winter with Ernest McGowen
- “Gender Parity in the New Chilean Constitution: Is Equal Representation Enough?” Maria Zambrano Dávila with Jennifer Pribble
- “Higher Education Enrollments in the United States: Lessons from the Trump Effect,” Angel Tseng with Monti Datta
- “Law, Violence, and Property Expropriation in Syria: Impediments to Restitution and Return,” Emily Stubblefield with Sandra Joireman
- “Voter Verification in Congress and the States,” Meredith Patrick and Doug Rubin with Daniel Palazzolo
- “Policy Design and the Lived Experience of the Poor,” Ava Gural with Jennifer Erkulwater
- “Something Borrowed? Lower Court Influence on the United Kingdom Supreme Court,” Meghna Melkote and Bianca Wieck with Jennifer Bowie
- “Student Activism in Virginia: From Women’s Rights to the Debt Owed Slaves,” Rena X. Xiao with Andrea Simpson
- “Use of the Media in the Most Recent Elections in Canada, Great Britain and the United States,” Kate Metcalf with Tracy Roof

Scholarship Awards

The W. Ney and May Thompson Evans Scholarship is given to one or more outstanding Westhampton political science majors in their senior year. The Albright Scholarship is given to junior or senior political science majors with demonstrated financial need and strong academic performance. The Richmond Award goes to a graduating senior who has shown a

commitment to practicing political science in the Richmond metropolitan area. The Albright Book Award is given to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average in the Political Science major.

Notable Alumni

- **Frank Atkinson**, chairman, McGuire Woods Consulting; member of the cabinet of Virginia Gov. George Allen
- **H. Benson Dendy**, president, Vectre Corporation; member of the cabinet of Virginia Gov. Gerald Baliles and Gov. Charles Robb
- **James Derderian**, former chief of staff, House Commerce Committee, Washington, D.C.; Washington lobbyist
- **Kevin Farrelly**, manager for Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- **Sydney Freeman**, U.S. Department of State, Foreign Service
- **Brian Guay**, Ph.D., Duke University; assistant professor at Stony Brook University
- **Sandra Zuniga Guzman**, U.S. Department of State Foreign Service
- **Todd Haymore**, former Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry for the State of Virginia
- **Eric Leopp**, Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh; associate professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater
- **Sharon Lim**, financial manager, FreeFrom (supporting survivors of gender violence)
- **Jennifer McClellan**, U.S. House of Representatives for the 4th district, Virginia
- **B. Guy Peters**, Maurice Falk Professor of American Government at the University of Pittsburgh
- **Carter Quinley**, International Affairs Specialist at U.S. Department of Labor, founder of the Freedom Collaborative (combating human trafficking)
- **Andy Rich**, Ph.D., Yale University; executive secretary, Truman Foundation
- **Jaime Settle**, Ph.D., University of California at San Diego; associate professor of political science at William and Mary
- **Jeffrey Staton**, Ph.D., Washington University; professor of political science and law at Emory University
- **Mary Sue Terry**, former attorney general of Virginia and candidate for governor

- **Sean Theriault**, Ph.D., Stanford University; professor of political science at the University of Texas, Austin
- **Jessica Walrad**, policy director for Northwestern Medicine

Faculty Areas of Specialty

- American political thought
- American politics
- Asian politics
- authoritarian politics
- Black politics
- classical political theory
- civil rights and liberties
- comparative courts
- comparative politics
- constitutional law
- cultural politics
- democratic theory
- disability politics
- environmental justice
- European politics
- folk practices and politics
- global governance
- human rights
- inequality and poverty
- Interest groups
- international conflict and security
- international relations
- international theory
- Intersectional and women’s politics
- judicial behavior and politics
- Latin American politics
- modern and contemporary political theory
- modern day slavery
- political communication
- political economy
- political participation
- political theory
- political violence
- politics of development
- politics of the Middle East and North Africa
- post-conflict legal and property issues
- protest
- public law
- public opinion
- public policy
- research methods
- social movements
- social welfare
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- U.S. Congress
- U.S. foreign policy
- Virginia politics
- Western Balkans
- women’s property rights
- world public opinion



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