

# POLITICAL SCIENCE

## Faculty

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Politics is the means by which citizens seek to control power and resources for the purpose of governing a community. At its best, politics is pursued to define and address common problems and challenges. Political science, then, is the study of the theory and practice of politics at the local, state, national, and international levels. Political Science majors are introduced to the four main subfields comprising the discipline: political philosophy, American politics, comparative politics, international relations. Through coursework in these four areas students:

- acquire a basic understanding of core political science concepts and vocabulary derived from the four key subfields of the discipline
- consider how their own values influence their understanding of what constitutes good governance.
- develop a theoretically, historically, empirically-based analytical framework for evaluating past, present, and future developments in the world of politics.
- apply their political understanding as engaged citizens, with an emphasis on
  - working collaboratively with a diversity of interests to develop positions that reflect deliberation and differing perspectives
  - participating in politics in a civil and constructive manner to further the interests of the individual and the community

Political science students also have opportunities to put their theoretical learning to practical use through internships and other off-campus experiences. These opportunities include the Lutheran College Washington Semester (LCWS), study abroad, and a mock trial program.

The political science department sponsors an honors program for motivated students. For information see the department chair.

In accordance with American Bar Association recommendations, Concordia College does not offer a specific pre-law curriculum; but rather, encourages all students interested in the law to pursue a well-rounded liberal arts education. In addition, Concordia's pre-law advisors design individual programs to fit students' strengths and interests, including coursework with a specific focus on the law. These programs are remarkably varied but all share the goals of clear thinking, critical reading, careful argumentation and persistent intellectual curiosity. Coupled with one-on-one advising and support during the law school application process, pre-law advisement and programming is designed to help students discern whether they have an aptitude for the study and practice of the law, and to empower those that do to succeed (see Pre-Law (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/pre-professional-programs/pre-law/>)).

## Programs Offered

### Major

- Political Science Major (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/arts-sciences/political-science/political-science-major/>)

### Minor

- Political Science Minor (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/arts-sciences/political-science/political-science-minor/>)
- Pre-Law Minor (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/arts-sciences/political-science/pre-law-minor/>)

## Courses

### PSC 111 - Hot Topics in Political Science, 4 credits.

This course invites participants to begin critical thinking about political issues. We will spend the semester reflecting on what politics is, how it may be understood, explained or seen. The course will serve both as an exercise in understanding politics and as an invitation to carry out further inquiries. While it will not introduce participants to political institutions, it will introduce them to political thinking.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

### PSC 121 - Thinking about Politics: An Introduction to Political Science, 4 credits.

This course introduces students to the foundational theories and concepts that frame the study of politics in all four disciplinary subfields through discussion of the works of political philosophers who have wrestled with fundamental questions regarding human nature, the nature of good governance, and the ranking of political values such as rights, liberty, and justice.

**Frequency:** *Every Semester*

**Core designations:** Humanities H

### PSC 175 - Careers and Vocations in Political Science, 1 credits.

This course is designed to help students become familiar with the wide variety of career options available to political science majors. It is also intended to enable students to explore how their interests and talents intersect with the kinds of jobs that political science majors typically take up. This course will feature guest speakers and guidance from political science department faculty.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

### PSC 211 - U.S. Political System, 4 credits.

This course serves as an introduction to the American system of government. Primary emphasis is on the constraints placed upon political activity by our constitutional system, the development and maturation of political institutions, recent trends in political behavior, and the overall representative nature of our system of government.

**Frequency:** *Every Semester*

**Core designations:** U.S. Cultural Diversity U, Social Science S

### PSC 241 - International Politics, 4 credits.

This course explores basic concepts and theories in international politics through a historical overview of the evolution of the international system. Special emphasis will be given to changes that have transpired in the system and issues currently shaping international politics. This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Every Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

### PSC 250 - Pre-May Seminar, 2 credits.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**PSC 256 - Comparative Politics, 4 credits.**

This course is an introduction to the concepts, approaches, issues and debates that animate the field of comparative politics. The focus is on the study of politics in countries other than the United States and on making comparisons across geographical space and historical time. Students will become familiar with different kinds of regimes and states and gain an appreciation of the forces that shape politics in diverse contexts. This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Every Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 300 - May Seminar, 4 credits.**

**Frequency:** *May Seminar*

**PSC 303 - Jurisprudence, 4 credits.**

This is a course about legal reasoning or, more correctly, about how judges decide cases. Students will study how judges are selected for their positions and how judges can and should justify their actions and written opinions in cases. The primary focus is on legal reasoning in federal courts, especially the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 305 - Global Political Islam, 4 credits.**

The course introduces students to the global landscape of Islam and the broad spectrum of thought and practice in contemporary Muslim politics. In order to enhance their classroom learning experience, students will spend up to 20 hours outside class interacting weekly with the local Muslim community in a service-learning based opportunity. The objective is to apply abstract classroom learning about Muslim politics to the complex real life-situations and issues facing Muslim families in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Corequisites:** PEAK 400

**Core designations:** Social Science S

This course is PEAK Required

**PSC 311 - Methods and Techniques of Political Analysis, 4 credits.**

Students learn to conduct scientific investigations of political phenomena by conducting and testing theories of individual interest. Emphasis is placed on the use of analytic tools and techniques such as computers and statistics, and on the interpretation of their output, rather than on the derivation and calculation of statistics. This course can also count toward the global studies program and the environmental and sustainability studies program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 325 - Russian Politics, 4 credits.**

This course introduces students to the evolution of the Russian state since the end of the Cold War. The central question guiding the course: "Is Russia sustainable - politically, economically, socially, and environmentally?" Students will study the state of Russia's post-1001 political institutions; its commodity-based economy and the associated environmental costs; and the lives of its ordinary citizens to assess Russia's influence on global stability.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Social Science S

**PSC 328 - Politics of Development, 4 credits.**

Even as living standards have risen dramatically for some people and countries, large parts of the world remain desperately poor. Spurring economic development and lessening global inequalities are two of the central challenges of our time. This course will explore the political forces and processes that shape global and local efforts to promote development, while also evaluating the effectiveness of noteworthy development initiatives. This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 332 - U.S.-China Relations, 4 credits.**

This course provides an overview of the evolution of U.S. relations with China since the early 1800s, including early trade relations, efforts to isolate China after the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in 1949, and the impact of the developments at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Contemporary topics to be discussed include China's continuing economic reforms, regional and global security issues, human rights, and the status of Taiwan. This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Social Science S

**PSC 335 / ENVR 335 - Climate Change and Conflict, 4 credits.**

This course will challenge our traditional understanding of what causes armed conflict. We will investigate the possible linkages between climate change and violent conflict. As the 21st century climate deteriorates, will conflict propensity increase around the world? If so, where and why? Special attention will be devoted to the rise of water wars.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 338 - Chinese Politics, 4 credits.**

The rise of China as an economic giant and aspiring superpower has made the country a powerful actor in global affairs. This course will equip students with a sophisticated understanding of China's political history and current domestic political situation so that they may be astute observers and analysts of trends in China and of China's engagement with the world. This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 350 / ENVR 350 - Environmental Policy-Politics, 4 credits.**

One of the greatest challenges of our time is determining how to generate global prosperity while ensuring that the ecological environment in which we live remains healthy enough to continue to support thriving human populations. This course focuses on environmental politics and policy at the national and sub-national levels, examining how various perspectives and interests intersect in the struggle to develop the policies that govern the interaction between humans and the natural environment. It is for all students who wish to prepare themselves to engage with the environmental challenges that will increasingly dominate public life in the coming decades. This course can also count toward the global studies program and the environmental and sustainability studies program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

**Corequisites:** PEAK 400

**Core designations:** Social Science S

This course is PEAK Required

**PSC 352 - U.S. Foreign Policy, 4 credits.**

This course is intended to provide a historical survey of U.S. foreign policy primarily since World War II. Particular emphasis will be placed on the principles, interests and theoretical perspectives shaping American foreign policy throughout this period. Attention will also be devoted to the problem of formulating foreign policy for a post-Sept. 11 era. This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 355 / ENVR 355 - Petroleum Politics & Planet, 4 credits.**

This course explores the links between energy, politics, and the environment through several critical topics of global importance associated with our expanding use of energy and its impact on our environment. Alternatives to fossil fuels, such as renewable and efficient energy will be examined as solutions to our current fossil fuel-based economy, which is unsustainable.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 360 - International Security, 4 credits.**

This course explores evolving concepts of security and possible responses to security threats including, but not limited to, the threat and use of military force. Although a portion of the semester is devoted to the study of U.S. national security issues, this is not exclusively a course in U.S. national security policy. Security will be explored from international and global perspectives as well. Attention will also be devoted to the emergence of so-called non-traditional threats to security (e.g. economic instability, environmental degradation, human rights violations, ethnic conflicts, and organized crime). This course can also count toward the global studies program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Social Science S

**PSC 362 - Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties, 4 credits.**

The case method is used to study and analyze the Constitution of the United States as it has been interpreted by the Supreme Court. Freedom of speech and religion, civil liberties, and due process in criminal cases are among the topics considered.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 363 - Constitutional Law: Governmental Powers, 4 credits.**

The case method is used to study and analyze the Constitution of the United States as it has been interpreted by the Supreme Court. Federalism, separation of powers, and regulation of the economy are among the topics considered.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 365 / ENVR 365 - Global Sustainability Issues, 4 credits.**

This course examines two general categories of global issues - sustainable development and ecological sustainability - and the various interpretive perspectives that offer understandings of each. Integrating the contributions of several disciplines, we examine the historical origins and future trends of these problems, their causes and consequences, and their potential solutions. In addition, students will learn a variety of transferable skills, including the ability to construct policies and negotiate differences among competing interests. This course can also count toward the global studies program and the environmental and sustainability studies program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Social Science S

**PSC 380 - Special Topics, 0-4 credits.**

Courses covering various topics of interest in this particular discipline are offered regularly. Contact department or program chair for more information.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**PSC 381 - Political Parties and Interest Groups, 4 credits.**

This course explores the actions of political parties and organized interests as they seek to affect policies by presenting candidates for election, soliciting and contributing funds to those candidates, lobbying, engaging in demonstrations, and a host of other means. Students will study the two-party system, the role parties play as instruments of governance, minor parties, the organizational maintenance of interest groups, and group influence, among other topics.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 386 / SPAN 386 - Modern Spain: A Critical Look, 4 credits.**

Offered as part of the fall semester program in Segovia, Spain, this course examines a series of moral and ethical questions raised by modern Spanish history, from the Spanish Civil War and a study of the ideologies in conflict, the participation of American volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, U.S. government policy during the war, aspects of the 36-year dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, population movements, the political assassination of Franco's hand-picked successor, Basque nationalism and ETA terrorism (the latter of which originated during the Franco regime), to the Spain after the transition to democracy, the Spain of the European Union and the global world.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Prerequisites:** SPAN 312 (may be taken concurrently)

**PSC 388 - Campaigns and Elections, 4 credits.**

The course goal is to help students become skilled political participants. Learning techniques, (e.g., political games and simulated campaigns, electoral and survey data analyses) and actual campaign work provide students with the opportunity to hone their political skills and gain the insights necessary for effective political action.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 390 - Academic Internship, 1-8 credits.**

**Frequency:** *Every Semester*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**PSC 393 - Public Policy, 4 credits.**

This course explores the nature and content of a select number of American public policies, with a special emphasis on comprehending the values that underpin their making. Students are asked to evaluate current policies and proposals for reform, and are put in a position to encounter the consequences of these policies by engaging in an off-campus policy-related service experience.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** PSC 111 or PSC 211

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 411 - Political Philosophy, 4 credits.**

This course is a history of political philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche. Substantial portions of the following texts are read and analyzed: Plato's "The Republic," Aristotle's "Politics," Hobbes' "Leviathan," Locke's "Second Treatise of Civil Government," Rousseau's "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality," Engels' "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" and Nietzsche's "On the Genealogy of Morals." These texts help students understand the differences between ancient and modern political thought, as well as the origins of the major alternatives of 20th-century politics - liberal democracy, socialism and communism, and fascism. This course can also count toward the philosophy major.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** Humanities H

**PSC 433 - American Presidency, 4 credits.**

This course focuses on how presidents seek to provide leadership in a constitutional system that fragments power and puts explicit checks on presidential action. As students examine presidential leadership, they will study the founding, structure and development of the office; how presidential candidates seek office; the relationship of the president to other actors in the political system; and the impact of personal characteristics on presidential behavior.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** PSC 211

**Core designations:** Social Science S

**PSC 441 - Ethics and International Relations, 4 credits.**

The role of ethics or morality in international relations is the primary focus of this course. The potential for moral choice in the realm of international politics is explored from a variety of theoretical/philosophical perspectives, as well as through particular foreign policy dilemmas. Specific issues that may be addressed include: military and humanitarian intervention; human rights; nationalism and self-determination; the erosion of state sovereignty; terrorism; and weapons proliferation.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Social Science S

**PSC 480 - Independent Study, 1-4 credits.**

This course provides an opportunity for individual students to conduct in-depth study of a particular topic under the supervision of a faculty member. Contact the department or program chair for more information.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**PSC 487 - Directed Research, 1-4 credits.**

This course provides an opportunity for individual students to conduct research in a specific area of study, completed under the direction of a faculty mentor. Specific expectations of the research experience to be determined by the faculty. Repeatable for credit. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes