Political Science

Degrees Offered

• Master of Arts
• Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the Program

To give advanced training to students who desire to enter research or teaching fields relating to American politics, public policy (either U.S. domestic or international), comparative politics, and/or international politics, and to those seeking careers as policy analysts in government or the private sector.

Faculty

The Department of Political Science has nineteen full-time faculty members. The major strengths of the graduate faculty consist of American politics (specialties include political institutions, interest groups, public opinion, and judicial politics), public policy (specialties include bureaucracy, health policy, social welfare policy, and urban and land use policies), international politics (specialties include U.S. foreign policy, comparative foreign policy, international political economy, and national security policy), comparative politics (specialties include development politics; comparative political parties; Latin American, Western European, Canadian, and Far Eastern regional politics; and cross-national political analysis), and research methods.

Research

Graduate students have opportunities to conduct research with political science faculty. Several members of the faculty regularly co-author papers with graduate students. Some graduate students have coauthored articles and book chapters with faculty and have worked on externally-funded grant projects.

Financial Aid

The department has a number of assistantships and fellowships available for students in both the M.A. and Ph.D. programs. Students interested in financial assistance should apply directly to the Department of Political Science. Graduate assistants may enroll for no more than nine credit hours per semester (excluding colloquium).

Faculty

Chair

• R. Scott Crichlow - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)

Professors

• Richard A. Brisbin, Jr. - Ph.D. (John Hopkins University)
  American Constitutional Development, Law and Public Policy
• Joe D. Hagan - Ph.D. (University of Kentucky)
  Barnette Professor, International Relations and World Politics, Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis
• Hong N. Kim - Ph.D. (Georgetown University)
  Comparative Politics (Asia), Comparative Public Policy
• Kevin Leyden - Ph.D. (University of Iowa)
  Congress, Political Behavior, Interest Groups, Research Methods
• Donley Studlar - Ph.D. (Indiana University)
  Eberly Distinguished Professor, British Politics, Comparative Politics (European and English-speaking Regimes), Gender and Ethnic Politics
• Jeffrey S. Worsham - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin)
  Director of Graduate Studies, Public Policy (Regulation, Social Welfare), Bureaucratic Politics and Public Administration

Associate Professor

• Neil Berch - Ph.D. (University of Washington)
  Public Policy (Political Economy), American Politics (State and Local)
• R. Scott Crichlow - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)
  International Relations, Foreign Policy Decision-making, Middle East Politics
• Robert D. Duval - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
  Methodology, International Politics and Policy, Public Policy (Energy, Environmental, and National Security)
• John Kilwein - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
politics

Associate Chair, Public Law, Judicial Politics, Public Policy, Public Administration

- Jason MacDonald - Ph.D. (The George Washington University)
  American Politics, Congress, Research Methods
- Philip Michelbach - Ph.D. (University of California)
  Political Theory, American Political Thought, German Political Thought, Comparative Democratic Theory

Assistant Professor

- Erin C. Cassese - Ph.D. (State University of New York)
  American Politics and Political Behavior; Gender, Religion, and Public Opinion; Political Psychology, Research Methods
- Christina Fattore - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
  International Relations, International Political Economy, International Organization, European Union Politics
- Patrick Hickey - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
  American Political Institutions, Presidency
- Cyanne Loyle - Ph.D. (University of Maryland)
  Comparative Politics (Developing Areas), Conflict, Contentious Politics, Human Rights
- Karleen West - Ph.D. (University of Iowa)
  Comparative Politics (Developing Areas), Political Parties, Latin American Politics

Master of Arts

The master of arts is designed to provide students with a broad knowledge of political science and the policy-making process. This includes the study of many over-arching factors shaping political thought, analysis, decision-making, and an examination of specific influences that shape public policies at the international, national, state, and local levels of government. A problem-analytic approach, drawn from both political science and economics, is used to develop the ability to comprehend, assess, and evaluate issues, problems, and policies in the public sector. Prospective graduates are expected to be skilled at gathering and interpreting data as well as reporting, writing, and analyzing policy options and political behaviors. Most graduates will take jobs in government or with private firms needing specialists in policy analysis; however, this degree also leaves students well-placed for further study of these issues in Ph.D. programs.

Prerequisites/Requirements

Ideally, applicants for the master of arts degree should have a B.A. in political science (with a minimum of six hours in economics). However, students from other fields and disciplines are also encouraged to apply. In addition, the applicant should have an overall grade point average of 3.0 and should submit three letters of recommendation from faculty familiar with their work. All students must also submit the results of the Graduate Record Examination.

In order to remain in good standing, students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative average and receive a 3.0 average in each semester for which they are enrolled. Students who do not maintain a 3.0 cumulative average will be placed on probation and will be suspended if they fail to regain a 3.0 cumulative average in their next nine hours of study. Admission to candidacy for the M.A. degree requires that the student complete a minimum of thirty-six hours. Students must complete work in political science methodology and statistical methods. All students must enroll in POLS 799 each semester in residence.

Doctor of Philosophy

The doctor of philosophy degree is designed for people planning careers as researchers and teachers in institutions of higher education or as policy analysts in government or the private sector. All students are expected to complete coursework in three of the four major subfields (the subfields include American politics, international politics, comparative politics, and public policy) and to pass general exams in two of them. The student’s coursework will provide them with a firm grounding in relevant literatures and prepare them to make their own contributions to the fields in which they specialize. Coursework is also available to train students as expert analysts who will leave the program with a comprehensive knowledge of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, as well as a thorough understanding of the dynamics of political institutions. The design of the program will ensure that our graduates are trained in research methodology and statistical techniques.

Admission

Admission to the Ph.D. program is open to students with either a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Students with degrees in political science, economics, public administration, sociology, psychology, engineering, social work, business, law, medicine, or journalism are encouraged to apply. Applicants should have a grade point average of 3.5. Some training in statistics and a strong background in written communication is desired. In addition, all applicants must submit the results of the Graduate Record Examination and at least three letters of recommendation from faculty familiar with the applicant’s work. Applicants from foreign countries must submit the official results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as well. Admission will be based on an overall assessment of the individual’s record.
Minimum Requirements

Students must complete fifty-seven hours of coursework (fifteen hours in each of their three substantive fields plus twelve hours of research methods). In addition to their coursework, students must also pass written comprehensive examinations in two of their specialty fields and complete and defend a dissertation. All coursework completed for the M.A. at West Virginia University also counts toward the Ph.D.; coursework from other institutions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

In order to remain in good standing, students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative average and receive a 3.0 average in each semester for which they are enrolled. Students are required to spend at least one year (two semesters) in residence and enroll in a full-time graduate program of no less than nine semester hours each semester. All graduate students must enroll in POLS 799 each semester in residence.