

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT (POLS)

The Politics and Government curriculum presents different and often conflicting points of view on a variety of important political ideas in the Western political tradition (for example: democracy, freedom, equality, development, and power). Study of how different individuals have looked at these ideas, as well as how such ideas have been practiced in the contexts of real institutions and political controversies, enlarges the mind, develops the tools necessary for effective citizenship, and serves to cultivate critical reasoning. Students are encouraged to find ways to address problems, such as the loss of biodiversity, disparities between neighboring communities and personal responsibility, global gender and social inequalities, foreign policy decision making and international security, and the relationship between private and public life in a democracy. As political scientists we seek to understand the causes of wars, social injustices, economic disparities, and uneven technological growth for the purpose of alleviating suffering and providing sustainable solutions. Students study these questions through an engagement with historical texts as well as case studies and ongoing contemporary debates.

The faculty is committed to teaching students how to affect social change through active citizenship –whether in local, state, national or international communities. By learning from different people and situations in internships and service learning, Western students are prepared for graduate or professional school or to better understand and prepare for careers in business, journalism, government service, or public life. Such internships have ranged from working in local law offices or offices at the state capitol to interning in United States Senate offices in Washington, D.C. The Politics and Government Program offers a standard major, a global studies emphasis, a pre-law emphasis, a secondary licensure emphasis, an Environmental Management Emphasis (with a 3+2 Master in Environmental Management), a standard minor, and a pre-law minor.

Program Goals

The four central goals of the Politics and Government program are:

- Consistent with the Western Colorado University Mission, the Politics and Government program prepares students to assume constructive roles in society.
- Politics and Government develops students' abilities to engage critically and analytically with issues, problems and practical dilemmas.
- The Politics and Government program develops and advances a current curriculum to meet the demands of our students as well as those of Western's mission in innovative, creative and intellectually stimulating ways.
- Politics and Government provides students with co-curricular and professional training opportunities (e.g. Model United Nations, a competitive mock trial team, internships, graduate school and prelaw advising) to provide professional pathways for graduates.
- Environmental Management Emphasis (with a 3+2 Master in Environmental Management) (<https://catalog.western.edu/>

[undergraduate/programs/politics-government/environmental-management-master-environmental-management/](https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/environmental-management-master-environmental-management/))

- Politics and Government Comprehensive Major: Global Studies Emphasis (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-comprehensive-global-studies/>)
- Politics and Government Comprehensive Major: Pre-Law Emphasis (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-comprehensive-pre-law/>)
- Politics and Government Comprehensive Major: Secondary Licensure Emphasis (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-comprehensive-secondary-licensure/>)
- Politics and Government Comprehensive Major: Secondary Licensure Emphasis (with a 3+2 Master of Arts in Education) (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-comprehensive-secondary-licensure-3-2/>)
- Politics and Government Major: Standard Program (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-standard-program/>)
- Politics and Government Minor (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-minor/>)
- Politics and Government Pre-Law Minor (<https://catalog.western.edu/undergraduate/programs/politics-government/politics-government-pre-law-minor/>)

Capstone Course Requirement

The following courses in the Politics and Government Major fulfill the capstone course requirement: POLS 485 Studies in Political Theory; POLS 486 Studies in American Politics; POLS 487 Studies in International Relations; POLS 488 Studies in Comparative Politics.

Politics and Government Courses

POLS 117. Introduction to Political Ideas (GT-SS1). (3 Credits)

An introduction to political analysis through a study of important political concepts and theories, as well as their historical development. Students study the ideas and practices of the public and philosophical development of concepts such as citizenship, democracy, equality, justice, liberty, or power. GT-SS1

POLS 180. Introduction to American Politics (GT-SS1). (3 Credits)

Introduces institutions and processes of American politics, including themes such as constitutionalism, representation, participation, political development, political economy, civil liberties and rights, public policy, and the ideas and values of American democracy. GT-SS1

POLS 197. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)

POLS 250. Politics of the Environment. (3 Credits)

A survey of key issues of national and international environmental politics, the course introduces students to the historical foundations and ongoing debates concerning the environment. A specific political lens informs our discussions while students analyze theoretical, cultural and political domains of various political systems and the ways in which they have gained importance on the international scene. Some of the main issues discussed in class involve a survey of international environmental treaties, government responses to environmental disasters and crises, environmental justice movements, environmental causes of war and displacement, democratic participation as a tool for environmental change, indigenous modalities of treating the environment, and the politics of environmental agreements and developments in the United States. Students learn to examine the connections between the environment and politics in a critical, engaged and broadly-informed way. Prerequisite: POLS 117 recommended.

POLS 255. Introduction to Comparative Politics (GT-SS1). (3 Credits)

An introduction to the challenges and problems encountered in the study of comparative politics. Students examine various issues of local and national governance through a comparative lens. By looking at similar political phenomena in several contexts, students explore the question of why some countries have successfully developed their political, economic and social systems while others are lagging behind. Some of the issues examined in the class deal with women's rights, poverty, underdevelopment, the environment, and democracy. Prerequisite: ENG 102 with a grade of C- or above, or instructor permission. GT-SS1

POLS 260. Introduction to World Politics (GT-SS1). (3 Credits)

An introduction to some of the more important concepts and approaches to understanding world politics. Students examine the politics between different countries and seek to answer questions about the promise and peril of the global future. Questions contemplated include: What are the sources of political conflict and how can they be minimized? Under what conditions will nation states cooperate with each other to accomplish common goals? Should tyranny and human rights violations justify humanitarian intervention? Prerequisite: ENG 102 with a grade of C- or above; or instructor permission. GT-SS1

POLS 282. Issues in State and Local Government. (3 Credits)

Using the foundations of American Federalism, the class examines policy issues at the state and local levels. With a comparative perspective and, at the same time, with particular attention paid to Colorado, some of the themes examined in states and localities include: budgets and economic policy, education, energy, and environmental Policy. Prerequisite: recommended POLS 180.

POLS 297. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)**POLS 300. Constitutional Law I. (3 Credits)**

A study of the historical development of the United States Constitution and Supreme Court through the most important Supreme Court decisions. The course focuses on the areas of jurisdiction of the courts, development of the common law, the separation of powers, federalism, and the inter-state commerce power. Prerequisite: POLS 180 or instructor permission.

POLS 301. Constitutional Law II. (3 Credits)

A continuation of POLS 300. An examination of the constitutional protections of individual liberties as defined by the Supreme Court. Students study the historical development of the Supreme Court's point of view in such areas as freedom of speech, subversion and disloyalty, religious freedom, church-state separation, and equal protection of the law. Prerequisite: POLS 180 recommended.

POLS 309. Political Theory I- Ancient to Early Modern. (3 Credits)

A survey of the historical development of western political theories from their origins in ancient Greece to the development of early modern political theories such as liberalism and republicanism. Students study thinkers such as Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, William Shakespeare, Niccolò Machiavelli, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Prerequisite: POLS 117 recommended.

POLS 310. Political Theory II-Modern and Contemporary. (3 Credits)

A survey of the historical development of modern and contemporary political theories since the French Revolution. Issues investigated might include the rise of liberal democracy and its critics, the impact of the industrial revolution on modern politics, and how technological change and environmental limitations have affected contemporary political thought. Students study thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Hannah Arendt, and Michel Foucault. POLS 117 recommended

POLS 331. The Politics of the Presidency. (3 Credits)

After more than two centuries of change and development, the presidency stands not only as the nation's preeminent public office but also its most problematic. This course examines the design and creation of the office, the impact various officeholders have made on shaping future expectations, and the problems of contemporary leadership. Prerequisite: POLS 180 recommended.

POLS 340. Politics of Social Movements. (3 Credits)

A study of social movements, past and present, in both domestic and international contexts. Students examine theories on why social movements develop, spread, and decline, while considering the factors that lead to their successes and failures. Through an examination of transnational movements, students consider the roles of social networks and participatory democracy in a globalized world. Prerequisite: ENG 102 or instructor permission.

POLS 350. Human Rights. (3 Credits)

An engagement with the history and current developments in international human rights practices, offering a justification and critique of universal human rights through the lens of various schools of thought, discussing pre and post-WWII developments with attention to specific cases, and examining the relationship between culture, globalization and human rights violations in the 21st century. Prerequisite: ENG 102 or instructor permission.

POLS 355. The Global South. (3 Credits)

A historical and case specific engagement with the Global South with a focus on global political and economic processes such as colonialism and post-colonialism, development, foreign aid, humanitarian intervention, and neoliberal globalization. Notion of an epistemology of the Global South is addressed: How do we know/study the Global South? What are the political implications of the knowledge production about the Global South? Prerequisites: Junior standing or instructor permission.

POLS 360. American Foreign Policy. (3 Credits)

Not since the Roman Empire has any nation had as much economic, cultural and military power as the United States does today. Yet, as has become all too evident through the problems of terrorism, environmental degradation and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, that power is not enough to solve many global issues. This course examines the way in which U.S. foreign policy is made and the variety of ongoing and emerging foreign policy problems the U.S. faces in the context of their evolution. Prerequisites: POLS 255 and/or POLS 260 recommended.

POLS 370. Political Economy. (3 Credits)

A study of economic systems that focuses on the structure and uses of economic power and the relationship between economic and political power. Students think about questions such as: What is capitalism? What varieties of capitalism exist around the world? How has capitalism changed over time? Ultimately, students consider the relationship between capitalism, freedom, and democracy. Prerequisite: ENG 102.

POLS 376. American Political Thought. (3 Credits)

A study of American political thought from the colonial period to the present day through a survey of key thinkers and social movements. Students gain an appreciation for dominant views and key controversies within American political thought, as well how the ideas of challengers, such as Abolitionism, Populism, Progressivism, the Labor Movement, the Women's movement, the New Deal, and the Civil Rights Movement, have reshaped the accepted order. Prerequisite: POLS 117 or POLS 180; or instruction permission.

POLS 380. The United Nations. (3 Credits)

A study of the United Nations, focusing on the relationship between the UN, the proliferation of human rights regimes and international human development. Students think about the importance of creating international norms, working toward a sustainable world peace, political efficacy, and human rights in the world. A Model UN simulation is part of the course requirements. Prerequisite: ENG 102 or instruction permission.

POLS 390. Mock Trial. (3 Credits)

Students explore a hypothetical criminal or civil case prepared by the American Mock Trial Association. Students study case materials, including affidavits and evidence, learn rules of evidence, and prepare for trial. After dividing into roles of prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, and witnesses, students plan strategies, rehearse witnesses, draft direct and cross examinations, and construct opening and closing statements. Students develop skills related to law, practiced and improvisational public speaking, teamwork, and argumentation. Co-requisite or Prerequisite: ENG 103. Or instructor permission. Course may be repeated twice for credit.

POLS 392. Independent Study. (1-4 Credits)**POLS 397. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)****POLS 485. Studies in Political Theory. (3 Credits)**

Senior seminar in political theory with varying topics. This course meets the Capstone requirement. Prerequisite: senior standing or instructor permission.

POLS 486. Studies in American Politics. (3 Credits)

Senior seminar in American politics with varying topics. This course meets the Capstone requirement. Prerequisite: senior standing or instructor permission.

POLS 487. Studies in International Relations. (3 Credits)

Senior seminar in International Relations with varying topics. This course meets the Capstone requirement. Prerequisite: senior standing or instructor permission.

POLS 488. Studies in Comparative Politics. (3 Credits)

Senior seminar in Comparative politics with varying topics. This course meets the Capstone requirement. Prerequisite: senior standing or instructor permission.

POLS 492. Independent Study. (1-3 Credits)**POLS 499. Internship in Politics and Government. (1-12 Credits)**

Credit earned in an internship may be applied to the Major or Minor with advisor approval.