



The Passion

The ancient Greek scientist and philosopher Aristotle proclaimed politics “the queen of sciences.” Politics comes first, he said, because it orders and arranges other activities. It is how a city, a country, or a world decides what is important to do now and what can wait. Consequently, politics is as new as today’s headlines and as old as civilization itself. Political science studies politics wherever it occurs: in city council chambers, in Congress, in the corridors of the White House, and in the conference halls of international summit meetings. Even personal relationships in the work place and at home turn out to have political dimensions that interest political scientists.

The Program

Gonzaga’s political science program is designed to maximize a student’s postgraduate options. The program’s emphasis on effective writing skills, rigorous factual analysis, and the ability to synthesize ideas makes it strong preparation for any and all careers.

Many who study political science at Gonzaga later pursue careers such as law, teaching, public service, the Foreign Service, elected public office, or graduate study in political science. In addition, about one-third of the majors work in business. Gonzaga’s Political Science Department has a distinguished record of helping students achieve these goals.

The Department divides courses into three general areas: politics in America, in the world (within other countries or among nations), and political philosophy. To acquire a major in political science, students must complete at least two courses in each area. This ensures an appreciation for the breadth of politics. In addition, the Political Science Department runs integral parts of Gonzaga’s specialized programs in Pre-Law, Women’s and Gender Studies, Environmental Studies, and International Studies.

For us, the study of politics is, first and foremost, an exercise in understanding divergent values and how those values manifest themselves in people’s beliefs, actions, and laws. In order to reach such understanding, the faculty carefully locates events and theories in their social, historical, and cultural contexts. The Department seeks insights about the forces that create values rather than memorization of facts and figures.

Class formats range from lectures and discussions about the evolution of a certain ideology to role-playing scenarios that reenact important foreign policy

decisions. The Department uses these various teaching methods to help students realize that political science is both practical and theoretical, incorporating fact and value, ethics and utility, the mundane and the spiritual.

Outside the classroom, the Department strongly recommends independent research projects and public affairs internships. These opportunities are an excellent way for students to acquire practical experience while still in school. Recent interns have worked for judges, attorneys-general, public defenders, state legislators, governors, United States Representatives (including the Speaker of the House), Senators, Ambassadors, the Office of the Vice President, and a host of non-governmental and international organizations. Students obtain credit for their internships by conducting faculty-supervised analyses of their political activities and experiences.

The Potential

A recent survey of political science graduates found that more than 40 percent were lawyers and 33 percent were in business. The remainder were distributed among all levels of government and education, as well as all forms of journalism and law enforcement.

Recent Graduates Have Attended the Following Graduate Schools:

Georgetown University
Harvard University
University of Idaho
University of Minnesota
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Washington State University
Western Washington University
Yale University

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Recent Graduates Have Attended the Following Law Schools:

Georgetown University
Gonzaga University
New York University
Seattle University
University of Chicago
University of Washington
Willamette University
Yale University
Harvard University

Political science graduates who have chosen to enter the political arena immediately after graduation can be found working at the Pentagon, the State Department, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell's office, and on Spokane's city council. Many pursue interim careers in service in the Peace Corps, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Teach for America, and teaching English in foreign countries. Still others find meaningful work with non-profits, professional associations, interest groups, and non-governmental organizations.

The People

Beyond teaching, we sponsor a Model United Nations Chapter here at Gonzaga. Our professors also advise student clubs such as Young Democrats, College Republicans, and Stop Trafficking. In conjunction with the Gonzaga Student Body Association (also a popular organization among political science majors), these clubs sponsor guest lectures and debates on topics ranging from terrorism to civil rights to health care. During the 2000 Presidential Campaign, former Vice President Al Gore and Senator John McCain spoke on campus, and then Governor George W. Bush was invited as well. Additionally, Gonzaga's Law School invites undergraduates to attend lectures by its guest speakers, including Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

Faculty Contacts and Specialties:

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