

The Politics Major

Politics is the study of man in communities and deliberation about how best to order man's social existence. The main objective of Ave Maria University's Politics major is to advance students' critical understanding of the nature and purpose of political life. Students are presented with differing theoretical perspectives from which to understand and assess certain perennial political problems. Through careful analysis of how statesmen and scholars from antiquity to the present have answered the great political questions, students expand their intellectual horizons and cultivate sharp analytical and critical skills. While the quest for truth is at the root of the study of politics, many of the course offerings also recapture the arts of civil debate and respectful disagreement.

Among the distinctive features of the Politics Department are its foundations in political philosophy and American government. In political philosophy, the Department promotes inquiry into the nature of justice, authority, forms of social order, law, political regimes, and international relations. In American government, it promotes the study of constitutional law, the history of American politics, public and foreign policy, and comparative politics. These twin foundations complement one another. Courses in the field of American government serve to test the theoretical underpinnings of political philosophy; courses in political philosophy offer normative perspectives from which to evaluate issues and events in American government. This broad and principled yet exact knowledge of political life is designed to provide a solid foundation for specialized graduate work, entry into law school, careers in the public or private sector, and life-long learning.

Ave Maria University cultivates in its students a sense of public responsibility and a respect for the common good. Therefore emphasis is placed upon normative principles and purposes of government, as well as the factual operations and history of the United States system of government.

Required Major Courses

POLT 201 Introduction to Political Thought
POLT 202 Comparative Politics
POLT 203 American Civilization (cross-listed with HIST 203)
POLT 205 International Relations
POLT 301 American Government
POLT 302 Catholic Political Thought
POLT 304 Constitutional Law
POLT 490 Senior Seminar

Elective Major Courses (two required)

POLT 204 Introduction to Political Research
POLT 305 Public Policy
POLT 307 The United States Presidency
POLT 308 The United States Congress
POLT 309 The Judiciary of the United States
POLT 314 U.S. Foreign Policy
POLT 415 Special Topics in Politics
HUMS 301 Humanities Seminar I
HUMS 302 Humanities Seminar II

Minor in Politics

A Minor in Politics is available. The Minor requires POLT 201, 203, and 302. In addition, the student must complete three Politics courses. As in the requirements for the Major in Politics, HUMS 301, 302 Humanities Seminar I, II may count toward the Minor in Politics.

Course Descriptions

POLT 201 INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THOUGHT

A survey of classic works of political thought that have shaped our common political language. Students hone their critical and analytical writing skills as they acquire a deeper understanding of some of the most important concepts, problems and debates that shape our public and private lives.

POLT 202 COMPARATIVE POLITICS

An introduction to the diverse ways that political societies throughout the world organize themselves, both politically and constitutionally. The course compares ideological systems such as liberalism and socialism, constitutional frameworks such as parliamentary and presidential systems, and political practices through case studies of nations such as the United Kingdom, France, China, Mexico, and Russia.

POLT 203 AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

This course covers the major events and themes in the development of the U.S. Republic, from its colonial origins to the present day. Special concentration is paid to the development of the American political system. It is meant to provide special background for U.S. students interested in the history of their own nation, as well as Ave Maria's foreign students who are interested in the history and system of governance of their host country. This course is cross-listed as a history course, HIST 203.

POLT 204 INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL RESEARCH

This course explores the conceptual, theoretical, methodological and analytical foci of political science. Consideration is given to a wide spectrum of theoretical perspectives to highlight how they shape research questions, to research methods, and to units of analysis ranging from the micro-level analysis of individuals to the macro-level analysis of social structures and systems.

POLT 205 INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This course provides an introduction to the contemporary international system and its evolution from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. The course offers a contrast of the realist and liberal approaches to international relations in explaining international wars, ethnic conflicts, and economic problems. It also provides an historical overview of major developments in world history relevant to international relations from the nineteenth century to the present day.

POLT 301 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Building upon POLT 203, this course is a closer study of the fundamental principles of the American political system and their implications for current policies and practice.

Politics

POLT 302 CATHOLIC POLITICAL THOUGHT

A close study of important works of Catholic political thinkers from the patristic period to the present. Besides St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, the course could include texts by Bellarmine, More, Suarez, Tocqueville, Brownson, Santayana, Acton, Maritain, Rommen, Messner, Murray, McCoy, Costanzo, Schall, Molnar, George, Finnis, and the social encyclicals since Pope Leo XIII.

POLT 304 CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

This course provides analyses of fundamental tenets of American constitutional law, seminal Supreme Court decisions, and jurisprudential debates about the scope and meaning of the Constitution and of the judicial role in American society. Juridical decisions are placed in historical context, and are considered in light of past interpretations, American history, dominant political philosophies, methods of interpretation and overall coherence.

POLT 305 PUBLIC POLICY

This course considers several prominent issues of public policy and provides an overview of public policy-making processes in the United States. Policy issues considered may include public education, welfare, youth at risk and criminal law, abortion, marriage, human reproduction, health care, immigration, military governance, terrorism, and the environment.

POLT 307 THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENCY

A study of the constitutional design and practical operation of the U.S. Presidency as well as the selection of presidents. The course examines the rise of the modern presidency, the character of executive power, and the nature of democratic leadership.

POLT 308 THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

An examination of the national legislature comparing the understanding of the Congress at the Founding with contemporary practice. The course considers the key constitutional and traditional differences between the House and the Senate, basic rules and procedures of how a bill becomes a law, the fundamentals of the electoral process, Congressional campaign strategies, redistricting and appointment, and the interaction between Congress and the rest of the "Washington" establishment.

POLT 309 THE JUDICIARY OF THE UNITED STATES

A study of significant operations and powers of federal and state courts. The course also considers the impact of judicial decisions and the possible political role of the judiciary in the United States.

POLT 314 U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

This course offers an overview of key events that have shaped America's foreign policy from the Revolutionary period to the War on Terror. It also explores America's strategic and ideological commitments that have shaped these events. Themes examined include the tension between America's expansionist and isolationist tendencies, its universalistic aspirations, its liberal and realist traditions of thought, and its role as nation-builder with developing countries.

POLT 415 SPECIAL TOPICS IN POLITICS

The topics for this seminar vary. They are determined by faculty and students interests.

POLT 490 SENIOR SEMINAR

The senior seminar is the capstone course for all majors and designed to be the last course in the Politics sequence. The course has several objects: to present a topic and texts that comprehend and build upon the student's previous coursework in the department; to hone the student's skill in spoken argument and intellectual conversation; to develop the student's skill in written argument, through a lengthy term paper; to test the student's comprehension of seminal works through an oral examination.

POLT 495 INTERNSHIP IN POLITICS

The internship is a curricular-related work-experience through which students have the opportunity to apply accumulated knowledge to work in the field of politics. An internship for which academic credit may be given must enhance the development of the student's college-level skills in communicating ideas and information, analyzing information and arguments, problem-solving, or the like. Upperclassmen, normally seniors, are eligible. Permission of the Department Chair must be sought in advance of substantial completion of the internship. (variable credit)

☞ Politics

Typical Plan—Politics Major

Freshman Year

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
MATH 100, 120, 150, or 151	4	THEO 105 Sacred Scripture	4
LITR 103 Literary Tradition I	4	LITR 104 Literary Tradition II	4
HIST 101 Western Civ I	4	HIST 102 Western Civ II	4
LATN 101 or 103 Elem Latin	4	LATN 102 or 104 Inter Latin	4
MUSC 101 Gregorian Chant*	0		
Total	16	Total	16

*may be taken in the Fall or Spring semester.

Sophomore Year

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
PHIL 205 Nature and Person	4	PHIL 206 Ethics	4
THEO 205 Sacred Doctrine	4	HIST/POLT 203 Amer Civ	4
Science I with Lab	4	Science II with Lab	4
POLT 201 Intro to Pol Thought	4	POLT 202 Comp Politics	4
Second Arts Practicum*	0		0
Total	16	Total	16

*may be taken in the Fall or Spring semester.

Junior Year

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
POLT 301 American Govt	4	POLT 205 International Relat	4
POLT 304 Constitutional Law	4	POLT 302 Cath Pol Thought	4
General Elective	4	General Elective	4
General Elective	4	General Elective	4
Total	16	Total	16

Senior Year

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Politics Elective	4	POLT 490 Senior Seminar	4
Politics Elective	4	Elective	4
General Elective	4	THEO 400 Living in Christ	4
General Elective	4	PHIL 400 Phil Perspectives	4
Total	16	Total	16