

Political Science

School

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (<http://www.stmarytx.edu/humanities/>)

School Interim Dean

Betsy Smith, Ph.D. (bsmith27@stmarytx.edu)

Department

Political Science (<https://www.stmarytx.edu/academics/department/political-science/>)

Program Director

Leona Pallansch, Ph.D. (Lpallansch@stmarytx.edu)

Mission Statement

The St. Mary's University Department of Political Science educates in the enduring values of social justice, equality, diversity, community, and the common good in global, national, and local arenas. Through the application of theory to practical situations and the inventive use of contemporary research methods and techniques, students learn to understand and propose humane solutions to public needs and problems. In the context of a Catholic and Marianist university, students and faculty alike work to experience and enhance the skills necessary for an active and effective life in democratic and transitioning societies. Likewise, Political Science faculty and students share a common purpose-- to inspire the civic conscience of the university community. As a result, in their many career choices, Political Science graduates are called to a life of service and civic engagement throughout the world.

Programs in Political Science

- Graduate Certificate for Dual Credit Teaching in Government (<https://catalog.stmarytx.edu/graduate/humanities-social-science/political-science/certificate-dual-credit-po/>)

PO 6000X. Continuous Graduate Enrollment. 0 Semester Hours.

PO 6300. Scope of Political Science. 3 Semester Hours.

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the principles of social science research design and the various statistical techniques used to manipulate social science data. Students will be introduced to various research techniques and methods utilized in all facets of the discipline from behavioral research to public policy analysis.

PO 6301. Public Administration and Policy. 3 Semester Hours.

A survey of the field of public administration and public policy including politics and the policy process, organization theory, management principles, human resources management, fiscal policy, program design and evaluation, and ethics.

PO 6302. Public Policy and Processes (same as PA 6302). 3 Semester Hours.

A survey of the field of public administration and public policy including politics and the policy process, organization theory, management principles, human resources management, fiscal policy program design and evaluation, and ethics.

PO 6303. Urban Political Institutions and Processes. 3 Semester Hours.

A study of power, conflict and consensus in the urban political arena. Includes a survey of the research sources and methods of research in urban politics. Trends in urban political representation, decision-making and service delivery.

PO 6304. Topics in American and state Governments. 3 Semester Hours.

Study of one of broad range of topics including political parties & interest groups, and local, regional, and state political systems.

PO 6305. Civic & Political Engagement (same as PA 6305). 3 Semester Hours.

A study of the interrelationships between the three branches of government, intergovernmental relations and major trends in state governments.

PO 6306. Topics in Public Law. 3 Semester Hours.

PO 6307. Civil Rights & the Law. 3 Semester Hours.

The role of the judiciary in the interpretation and application of constitutional and public law. Problems and issues arising from various legal areas as well as judicial behavior.

PO 6308. Topics in Political Theory. 3 Semester Hours.

PO 6309. Seminar in Political Theory. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to the schools of thought and methods of analysis that could include normative or empirical political theory. An in depth evaluation of the traditions of discourse in political thought to include classical and contemporary political theorists.

PO 6310. American Political Institutions: The Presidency, Congress, and the Judiciary. 3 Semester Hours.

A comprehensive examination of the structure, powers, and interactions of the three core branches of the American national government: the Presidency, Congress, and the Judiciary. The course emphasizes theoretical frameworks, historical development, and contemporary dynamics within and across institutions. Students will analyze the evolution of executive authority, legislative behavior, and judicial decision-making, with particular attention to interbranch conflict, institutional norms, and the implications of polarization, partisanship, and public accountability.

PO 6311. Political Behavior and Public Opinion. 3 Semester Hours.

An exploration of the theoretical foundations, empirical approaches, and substantive debates in the study of political behavior and public opinion. Drawing on major works and recent scholarship, students will examine how individuals form political attitudes, make voting decisions, and engage in various forms of political participation. Special emphasis is placed on the role of partisanship, ideology, identity, media, socialization, and political psychology. Students will engage critically with survey data and experimental research, and will evaluate how public opinion shapes and is shaped by political institutions, campaigns, and policy outcomes.

PO 6312. The U.S. Constitution: Federalism in Theory and Practice. 3 Semester Hours.

Explores the origins, development, and evolving interpretations of the U.S. Constitution with a central focus on the theory and practice of federalism. Through an examination of constitutional texts, Federalist and Anti-Federalist writings, Supreme Court decisions, and contemporary political science literature, students will analyze the philosophical foundations of constitutional democracy, the structure and distribution of powers between the federal and state governments, and the mechanisms of separation of powers and checks and balances. This course bridges historical and theoretical debates with practical issues in American governance.

PO 6313. American Political Thought. 3 Semester Hours.

Explores the development of American political thought from the colonial era to the present, focusing on the philosophical foundations of constitutional democracy, federalism, and governmental structures. Drawing on primary texts, students will examine the evolving debates about liberty, equality, power, race, and civic identity. The seminar integrates historical development with current controversies to show how American political thought informs both theory and practice.

PO 6314. State and Local Government. 3 Semester Hours.

Provides an in-depth examination of state and local government in Texas within the broader framework of American federalism. Emphasizing Texas-specific political institutions, intergovernmental relationships, and policy processes, the course explores the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the federal, state, and local levels of government. Students will analyze the structure of the Texas Constitution, the separation of powers in Texas, and the state's unique approach to elections, budgeting, and policymaking. Special attention will be given to the Texas Legislature, executive branch, judicial system, and local governments.

PO 6315. Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties. 3 Semester Hours.

Examines the development of constitutional law and the evolution of civil liberties in the United States. Using landmark Supreme Court decisions, theoretical frameworks, and contemporary case studies, the course analyzes key constitutional protections including freedom of speech, religion, privacy, due process, and equal protection under the law. The seminar pays special attention to the Court's role in interpreting the Bill of Rights, applying civil liberties protections through the Fourteenth Amendment, and balancing individual rights with government powers.

PO 6316. Political Philosophy & Community. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to the schools of thought and methods of analysis that could include normative or empirical theory. An in depth evaluation of the traditions of discourse in political thought to include classical and contemporary political theorists.

PO 6318. Introduction to Non-Profit Management (same as PA 6318). 3 Semester Hours.

A survey of the main body of literature in the nonprofit field. Topics may include mission design, budgeting, finance fiscal management, organizational design, human resource policies, legal issues, and ethics.

PO 6319. Topics in Non-Profit Management. 3 Semester Hours.**PO 6320. Behavior and Management in Public Service Organizations. 3 Semester Hours.**

An extensive review of the concepts of organizational theory and behavior applied to public organizational settings.

PO 6323. European Integration (same as IR 6323). 3 Semester Hours.

This course will examine the historical evolution of the European Economic Community, the economic and political impact of the collapse of Communism on Western Europe, and the problems/possibilities for future economic and political integration.

PO 6324. National Security Policy (same as IR 6324). 3 Semester Hours.

This course will examine the politics and economics of national security issues. Special emphasis will be given to the changing international paradigm (i.e., post Cold War) and the impact on domestic political and economic decision making.

PO 6342. Inter-American Security Issues (same as IR 6342). 3 Semester Hours.

This course will examine the politics and economics of current security issues in the Americas. Military and non-military security issues will be discussed. Examples are: narco-trafficking, role of the military, human rights, environmental policies, population, etc.

PO 6343. European Security Issues (same as IR 7350). 3 Semester Hours.

This course will examine the politics and economics of current security issues in Europe. Military and non-military security issues will be discussed. Examples are: the changing role of NATO, a united European defense system, environmental security issues, technological transfers, and immigration/refugee patterns.

PO 6345. Business, Government, and the Public (same as PA 6345). 3 Semester Hours.

A study of business as a political actor and its relationships with governmental and other non-governmental political actors. Specific policy areas to be analyzed may include work place safety and health, economic and industrial, environmental, consumer affairs, taxing and banking. A consideration of Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. economy may be included.

PO 6352. U.S. Latino/Latina Politics. 3 Semester Hours.

Examination of U.S. cities with significant Latino populations, as well as urbanization issues of U.S. - Mexican border.

PO 6353. Urban Issues in the Americas. 3 Semester Hours.

Comparative examination of phenomenon of organization in Latin America (e.g., Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Santiago, etc.).

PO 6354. Campaign Management. 3 Semester Hours.

This course is designed to give students an overview of the functioning of a political campaign. Topics covered include the creation of a campaign organization, development of a strategic plan, the use of media, fund raising activities, and the organization of field operations. This latter topic includes construction of databases, polling, phone banking and block walling. This is a survey seminar in applied political science.

PO 6356. Campaign & Advocacy. 3 Semester Hours.

Scope includes campaign finance law on the national, state, and local levels; history of growth of money and electoral campaigns; effects of money on American electoral system; research methods in campaign finance sources; campaign finance reform and democratic government.

PO 6358. Gender Politics. 3 Semester Hours.

This course is designed to provide students an overview of the relationship between gender and politics. Topics include: the role of women in politics, women as candidates, officeholders and voters, gender differences in attitudes and beliefs, and issues that have particular relevance to women, i.e. gender discrimination and equal rights.

PO 6362. Political Leadership. 3 Semester Hours.

This course examines leadership theories, models, and practices as they relate to effective and meaningful leadership in the political arena.

PO 6364. Public Policy Conflict Resolution. 3 Semester Hours.

This course examines the sources of public policy conflicts, ways of resolving and transforming conflict into constructive change, and the leadership competencies, skills and tools associated with effectively meeting this challenge.

PO 7300. Directed Readings. 3 Semester Hours.**PO 7302. Leadership and Organizational Culture. 3 Semester Hours.**

This is a course that offers a comparative study of organizations and how different types of organizations affect the nature and style of leadership. The environment, structure and culture of public, non-profit and private sector organizations and leadership will be compared and contrasted. The purpose of this course is to give the future public leader insight and understanding into the differences and similarities of the organizations that comprise public life and affect public policy.

PO 7303. Ethics and Public Services. 3 Semester Hours.

This course engages the student in thinking systematically about morals and conduct and making judgments about right and wrong as a public official. Three primary questions are addressed: 1) What counts? 2) What is at stake? 3) How can public officials ensure professional success and ethical survival?.

PO 7304. Public Budgeting and Finance (same as PA 7304). 3 Semester Hours.

This course focuses on the operational level of public budgeting and finance systems rather than the specific details of practice or theory. It is designed to train public managers to exercise control over the financial resources of their organization through an understanding of accounting, budgeting, and financial practices following the guidelines of the governmental Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAPP). This course helps public managers understand financial language and practices so they can interpret financial reports, control organizational resources, ensure that financial systems support each other, and maintain the financial integrity of their organization.

PO 7306. Urban Economic Development (same as PA 7306). 3 Semester Hours.

This course is designed to introduce the student to the rationale behind the development and growth of cities. This course will begin with a discussion of the origins of cities and what function they play in society and culminate with an explanation of the intricacies of the politics underlying why cities take the physical form that they do.

PO 7307. Lcl Politics & Pub. Conflit Res. 3 Semester Hours.**PO 8301. Public Service Internship (same as PA 8301). 3 Semester Hours.**

Credit will be awarded upon completion of two consecutive regular academic semesters or one regular academic semester and two summer semesters work with an elected or appointed official at the national state, or local levels. The PA graduate program director will coordinate the Internship with the public official under whom the Intern will serve. The Intern keeps a weekly log of his or her activities and will prepare at least one paper based upon special projects assigned during the Internship.

PO 8302. Public Service Internship (same as PA 8302). 3 Semester Hours.

Credit is awarded upon completion of two consecutive regular academic semesters or one regular academic semester and two summer semesters work with an elected or appointed official at the national, state, or local level. The PA graduate program director coordinates the Internship with the public official under whom the Intern serves. The Intern keeps a weekly log of his or her activities and prepares at least one paper based upon special projects assigned during the Internship. The course is repeated for a total of 6 hours.

PO 8310. Applied Public service Management (same as PA 8310). 3 Semester Hours.

Limited to in-service students (graduate students with one or more years of full-time employment in the public or non-profit sector). Students will be required to undertake an advanced organizational and strategic analysis of a public or non-profit organization under the supervision of a designed faculty member.

PO 8320. Applied Public Mgmt. 3 Semester Hours.**PO 8390. Organizational Behavior (same as A 8390). 3 Semester Hours.**

Comparative analysis of the major bodies of theory and empirical facts generated by the study of individuals and groups within various organizational settings. Special attention to the psychological and sociological variables crucial in interpreting and predicting behavior of individuals and groups within the organization, noting comparative aspects of management as related to service and governmental organizations and institutions.

PO 8601. Legislative Internship. 6 Semester Hours.**PO 9301. Internship. 3 Semester Hours.**

Credit will be awarded for work with an elected or appointed official at the national, state or local level. Three hours may be earned during a regular academic semester or six hours may be earned upon completion of two consecutive regular academic semesters or one regular academic semester with two summer semesters. A member of the graduate faculty will coordinate the Internship with the public official under whom the Intern will serve. The Intern keeps a weekly log of his or her activities (20 hours per week) and will prepare at least one paper based upon special projects assigned during the Internship. The course may be repeated for a total of 6 hours.