Political Science

The doctoral program in political science at Washington University is one of the top programs in the country. Graduate students take classes and engage in research with a faculty recognized nationally and internationally as among the most expert, active, and productive in the country.

Our graduate program is relatively small. We admit around eight students into the PhD program each year, and most of these complete the doctorate, generally in four to five years. There are approximately 40 graduate students currently in residence.

Washington University’s PhD program in political science is designed to prepare students for academic careers in research and teaching at major institutions across the country. While our program stresses the importance of political methodology (applied statistics) and formal theory (game theory and mathematical modeling), our program is designed to train all students in these methods, regardless of their mathematical background. We provide professional training in the discipline through our professional development seminar and we encourage our students to attend professional meetings and participate in convention programs.

We have active research groups in American politics and institutions, comparative politics, international political economy, positive and normative theory, and political methodology. A number of students also work in the field of political economy, collaborating with faculty in political science, economics, law, and business.

It is important to emphasize that we do not regard these subfields as separate entities. Many of our faculty have research and teaching interests that transcend political science subfields, as well as traditional disciplinary boundaries. We have strong connections with other departments at Washington University, including economics, anthropology, the law school, and with various interdisciplinary research centers on campus.

Financial Support

Our incoming classes are fully funded, covering tuition and living expenses. We try to provide financial support for our students during most if not all of their time at Washington University. This support comes from several sources — fellowships awarded by the university, teaching and research assistantships in the political science department, summer teaching, and research fellowships from outside sources such as the National Science Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, and so on. More information about funding and other matters of interest to prospective students can be found on the frequently asked questions (FAQs) page of our website: http://polisci.wustl.edu/graduate/faq.

Professional Training and Job Placement

The graduate program prepares students primarily for academic careers in research and teaching. The curriculum is designed to help students master the best work being done in political science, and to become producers of original research themselves. Political science today makes extensive use of quantitative techniques, and our curriculum aims to provide all students with command of these approaches, to be both literate and numerate, and to be able to employ them in their own research when appropriate. The frequently asked questions (FAQs) section of our website (http://polisci.wustl.edu/graduate/faq) provides more details on our curriculum.

We pride ourselves on our job placement on the academic job market. Our graduates go on to have successful careers in tenure track jobs. Our placement record is among the top in the discipline. In the last few years we placed a majority of our PhDs into tenure track jobs at research universities such as Penn State University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Florida State University, University of Kentucky and others.

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Chair
James Spriggs II
Sidney W. Souers Professor of Government
PhD, Washington University
American Politics; Empirical legal studies; Judicial process and politics; U.S. Supreme Court

Endowed Professors
Randall Calvert
Thomas F. Eagleton University Professor of Public Affairs and Political Science
PhD, California Institute of Technology
Formal political theory; American political institutions; Constitutional politics

Lee Epstein
Ethan A.H. Shepley Distinguished University Professor
PhD, Emory University
American Political Institutions; Judicial Politics; Law and Politics

James L. Gibson
Sidney W. Souers Professor of Government
PhD, University of Iowa
Judicial politics; Democratization; Political psychology; Political tolerance; Survey research; Quantitative research methods; South African politics; Law and society
Norman Schofield
Dr. William Taussig Professor of Political Economy
PhD, Essex University in Government
Formal theory; comparative politics

Steven S. Smith
Kate M. Gregg Distinguished Professor of Social Science
PhD, University of Minnesota
American politics; Congressional politics; Russian legislative politics; Development of political institutions

Professors

Brian Crisp
PhD, University of Michigan
Comparative Politics; Electoral Systems; Legislative Politics; Interbranch Relations

Matthew Gabel
PhD, University of Rochester
Comparative Politics; Legislative; Judicial; Mass Behavior; European Politics; Health Policy

Jeff Gill
PhD, American University
Political methodology; Bayesian methods; Statistical computing; Markov chain; Monte Carlo; Voting; Bureaucracy Research methods; Scottish politics

William Lowry
PhD, Stanford University
American politics; Public policy; Natural resources

Margit Tavits
PhD, University of Pittsburgh
Comparative Politics; Parties and Elections; Political Institutions; Democracy; Corruption; European Politics; Post-Communist Politics

Associate Professors

Daniel Butler
PhD, Stanford University
American Politics

Justin Fox
PhD, University of Rochester
Game Theory; American Political Institutions

Clarissa Rile Hayward
PhD, Yale University
Political Theory

Frank Lovett
PhD, Columbia University
Political Theory

Ian MacMullen
PhD, Harvard University
Contemporary Political Theory; Education, Religious & Cultural Pluralism; Individual Autonomy; Citizenship

Sunita Parikh
PhD, University of Chicago
Comparative politics; Race and ethnicity; Institutions; Comparative methods; Federalism; Collective violence

Andrew Rehfeld
PhD, University of Chicago
Political Representation; Democratic Theory; History of Political Thought; Political Theory; Philosophy of Social Science

Guillermo Rosas
PhD, Duke University/Washington University
Comparative politics; Political economy; Latin American politics

Betsy Sinclair
PhD, California Institute of Technology
American politics; Political methodology; Individual political behavior

Assistant Professors

Dawn Brancati
PhD, Columbia University
Democracy and Intrastate Conflict

Jacob Montgomery
PhD, Duke University
American politics; Statistical methods

Andrew Reeves
PhD, Harvard University
American politics; Electoral politics; Political accountability

Jon Rogowski
PhD, University of Chicago
American Politics

Degree Requirements

Requirements for the PhD Degree

Students in the PhD program are expected to acquire:

- a broad understanding of several fields of political science as a discipline,
- methodological competence sufficient to be productive professionals, and
- specialized expertise in a particular field of concentration.

The procedures and requirements described below are designed to facilitate achievement of those objectives. Students who fail to fulfill requirements will be considered in bad standing and will be dismissed from the program.

General Course Requirements

In general, all students must successfully complete — with a grade of B or better — the following four core courses:

- Mathematical Modeling in Political Science (Pol Sci 5052): first semester
• Quantitative Methods I (Pol Sci 581): second semester
• Quantitative Methods II (Pol Sci 582): third semester
• Game Theory (Pol Sci 506)

Mathematical Modeling in Political Science (Pol Sci 5052) may be waived on recommendation of the methods and formal theory committees if a student already has a strong command of college calculus and its application to social science.

More information on degree requirements for each specific field and a program summary timeline can be found in our Guide to Graduate Study, which can be found at http://polisci.wustl.edu/graduate.