Politics (or political science, as it is called at many schools) is the study of political ideas and institutions, public policies, and the political behavior of individuals and groups. The discipline contains several broad subfields—international relations, American politics, political theory, and comparative politics. Political scientists use a variety of techniques to understand better the political world around them.

The Program
The politics program is part of a liberal arts curriculum, and the discipline is presented to students with this in mind. We emphasize breadth rather than specialization, attempt to relate what we do to other disciplines, and constantly remind students that politics takes place within a broader context of social, historical, and intellectual forces. We therefore encourage our students to complement their work in government courses with study in related disciplines. We want to awaken students to the importance of public affairs, help them to function more effectively as citizens, and give them a perspective that can be used to integrate knowledge and information accumulated in a number of disparate courses.

What can I do with a degree in government?
Politics students get many opportunities to develop reading, writing, speaking, and analytical skills that are useful in a variety of careers. Since most of them have an interest in public affairs, they tend to gravitate toward careers that allow them to deal with public issues and work with other people. Many find the career path that interests them requires additional training. Law school is a favorite destination for government majors. But there is now an increasing interest in graduate programs—both traditional political science programs and specialized programs (public policy, public administration, international relations, communications, and journalism, for example). Others have gone directly from Centre into careers in government or the private sector. Several have found employment with a political party or an interest-group organization.

What is the politics major like?
Politics majors are required to take five introductory courses that cover the major subfields of the discipline, as well as the various approaches to political analysis. Introduction to Political Ideologies and Introduction to Comparative Politics are first-year courses. American Politics and Institutions, Introduction to International Relations, and Introduction to Political Analysis are sophomore-level courses. These courses provide the basic information necessary to take advanced courses and help to develop analytical skills as well as oral and written communication skills. Our courses offer a number of different emphases, including the historical development of political ideas and institutions as well as the issues, debates, and phenomena that characterize our modern political world.

After completing these introductory courses, students may go in a number of directions. The major requires at least six advanced courses, including Western Political Theory and the politics senior seminar. The minor requires three advanced courses. We also encourage our students to study abroad and seek out real-world internships that add depth and breadth to their educational experience.

What about outside the classroom and beyond campus?
Many politics majors participate in Centre's programs in China, England, France, Japan, or Mexico. All provide exceptional opportunities to observe politics and government in a different setting. Other possibilities for off-campus study also exist, either sponsored by the College—CentreTerm courses in Italy, Vietnam, and Cameroon are recent examples—or through other institutions. The Centre-in-Washington Internship Program allows students to earn a full term's credit while working and studying in the nation's capital. In addition, each year invited speakers give public lectures on topics of political importance. Often they also visit classes or meet with students informally.

"As a politics major, I’ve gained an appreciation and passion for the law and the inner workings of American government. My writing, critical thinking skills, and general knowledge have improved vastly due to the engaging professors, each of whom truly loves their field of study."

Preetha Suresh
Centre Class of 2013
Double Major: Politics and Spanish
Students who want to get involved in politics on campus may join Centre College Democrats or Centre College Republicans, two highly active organizations on campus.

Internships
Politics majors have availed themselves of internships in and around Danville and elsewhere in the country. These have included positions in local, state, and national government as well as in the private sector. Examples include working with U.S. Senators and Representatives, the Governor of Kentucky, state and federal courts, and local trial attorneys.

Who teaches politics at Centre?
DINA BADIE (B.A., M.A., Ph.D., University of Connecticut), Assistant Professor of Politics and International Studies. Research and teaching interests include the politics of oil, foreign policy, international relations, and East Asian and Middle East politics.

ROBERT BOSCO (B.A., Wheaton College; M.A., American University; Ph.D., University of Connecticut), Assistant Professor of International Studies. Teaches courses in religion and politics, international relations, international security, and international political economy. He is the contact person for graduate study in international relations.

LORI HARTMANN-MAHMOUD (B.A., Denison University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Denver), Hower Associate Professor of International Studies. Teaches courses in comparative politics, international relations, women in politics, and political economy. She has directed the Centre-in-Strasbourg Program, and led a CentreTerm program in Cameroon. She chairs the international studies program, and is the contact person for questions about graduate programs in comparative politics and international relations, the Peace Corps, and careers in the Foreign Service.

BENJAMIN KNOLL (B.A., Utah State University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Iowa), Assistant Professor of Politics. Teaches courses in American political behavior and institutions. He is the contact person for graduate programs in American politics.

JAMES P. LEAHEY (B.A., Centre College; J.D., Indiana University), Instructor. Teaches courses in the judicial process. He is also director of gift planning and associate College counsel. He serves with Professor Stroup as a pre-law advisor, and has taken students to Washington and Hawaii during CentreTerm.

J. CHRISTOPHER PASKEWICH (B.S., M.S., Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Ph.D., University of Connecticut), Assistant Professor of Politics. Teaches courses in political theory and American political thought. He is the contact person for questions about graduate programs in political theory.

LIA ROHR (B.A., The University of Arizona; M.A., Ph.D., Southern Illinois University), Visiting Assistant Professor of Politics. Teaching interests include American politics with a specialization in gender, legislative politics, campaigns and elections, research methods, political communication, and comparative politics.

DANIEL G. STROUP (B.A., University of Dayton; M.A., Ph.D., University of Virginia), Lively Professor of Politics and Law. Teaches courses in American politics and public law. He has participated in the CentreTerm study in Vietnam. He serves with Mr. Leahey as a pre-law advisor, and is the contact person for questions about graduate programs in public law, and law school.

Visit Centre
The best way to judge Centre is to tour the campus, attend a class, talk to the professors and students, and spend the night in a residence hall. We invite you to visit and encourage you to contact the Admission Office if you have any questions.

For further information about politics at Centre, write, call, or e-mail
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Politics Web Page
www.centre.edu/majors/politics.html

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