

Political Science

Learning Goals

1. To understand political theory, which focuses on the different ways, or methods, of studying politics.
2. To understand comparative politics, which entails the study of different governments and regime types and encompasses not only various regional area studies, but also the cross-national study of political institutions, processes, and behavior.
3. To understand American politics in which Americanists conduct behavioral, institutional, and theoretical analyses of topics in domestic and international politics, using a variety of methodologies ranging from moral and legal reasoning to historical analyses to mathematical modeling.
4. To understand international relations and foreign policy, which is the study of political, strategic, military, and economic interactions across national boundaries and is generally concerned with the relations between sovereign states, but increasingly, also analyzes the role of nonstate actors.

About the major

Political science defines, describes, explains, and evaluates phenomena such as war and peace, revolution and reform, stability and instability, voting and office holding, and crime and punishment.

Some students come to political science because they seek careers in politics or academics; others study political science to gain a greater knowledge of this central human concern. Consequently, the curriculum is designed to train students in a discipline, reveal the possibilities of politics, meet the demands of thoughtful citizenship, and prepare those students who intend to pursue further work in either graduate or professional school.

Course offerings are divided into four subfields: political theory, American politics, comparative politics, and international relations and foreign policy. The department does not require its majors to develop expertise in any particular subfield of political science. Instead, students are provided a basic foundation in all parts of the discipline, and are then permitted to explore their own interests via the courses they select to meet degree requirements and through independent study.

“At Middlebury I learned how to take a lot of complex information, distill insight from it, and apply that to new areas or new challenges. In that way, my Middlebury education was instrumental in making me into a technology founder, even though I spent most of my time reading political philosophy and constitutional law rather than studying technology. That is the beauty of the liberal arts education.”

—George Arison '00
Cofounder and CEO, Shift Technology

Reasons you might choose this major

- You are fascinated by the structure and function of local, national, and international organizations.
- You are ready to further enhance your understanding of how politics have shaped our world since antiquity.
- You are deeply invested in contemporary concerns, such as human rights, conflict and resolution, and the environment, and want to further broaden your expertise in these issues.
- You can see yourself working in a government agency, a nonprofit, public administration, the business world, education, or any other number of industries where a solid foundation in political science will serve you well.
- You are interested in law school or other graduate schools, for which political science majors are well prepared.



Translating Learning into Professional Competencies

Throughout your time at Middlebury, you will develop and enhance the following core professional competencies, skills, and dispositions highly valued by employers that will prepare you for leadership and success in any given field:

Critical Thinking: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.

Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers from diverse backgrounds.

Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits.

Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional development.

Where political science majors go

Applying your learning through internships . . .

Students pursue internships and research in a variety of fields, enabling them to apply their liberal arts learning in real-world settings. Internships, research, and self-directed projects enrich your academic experience and help prepare you for life after Middlebury. Students have interned or done research at the following:

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| The Legal Aid Society | Council on Hemispheric Affairs |
| Office of Congressman Joe Kennedy III | National Public Radio (NPR) |
| National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations | United Strategies |
| Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity | Human Rights First |
| CNN | U.S. Department of Education |
| Clinton Global Initiative | The Office of Senator Patrick Leahy |
| Evidence for Policy Design | Frontline PBS |
| Refugee Children Integration Program | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic |
| Office of the Mayor of NYC | Bank of America Merrill Lynch |
| White House Office of Communications | The Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey |
| Brooklyn District Attorney's Office | |
| Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC | |

. . . leading to meaningful, dynamic, and engaging career paths.

See just some of the many interesting ways our graduates have applied their liberal arts learning to engage the world. If you want to see what other Middlebury alumni are doing now, log into Midd2Midd and search by major. go/midd2midd

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| CBS News/60 Minutes, Associate Producer | Principal |
| New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, Project Manager | U.S. Department of Justice, Chief Counsel for Policy/National Security Division |
| U.S. Department of State, Foreign Service Officer | Snohomish County Superior Court, Judge |
| President of the United Nations General Assembly, Special Advisor | Northeast-10 Conference, Commissioner |
| Popular Mechanics/Hearst Magazines, Editor-in-Chief | Senator Dan Coats, Deputy Chief of Staff |
| Government of Canada, Global Affairs Policy Advisor | Council of Public Relations Firms, Senior Vice President/Director of Communications |
| US Department of Commerce, International Trade Specialist | National Labor Relations Board, Senior Counsel |
| Nike, Global Operations Manager | International Rescue Committee, Director of Planning and Operations/Policy & Practice |
| Sustainability Roundtable, President and CEO | Southern Poverty Law Center Senior Development Officer |
| World Bank, Senior Energy Specialist | Goldman Sachs (Singapore), Executive Director/Global Fixed Income Management |
| Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Financial Advisor/Global Peace Operations Initiative | Campaign for Accountability, Executive Director |
| Largent Government Solutions, LLC, | Massachusetts Senate Committee on Ways and Means, Fiscal Policy Analyst |