

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Interim Chair: Jonathan Brown, Ph.D. (jnb047@shsu.edu)

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Political Science is an exciting discipline, mixing the drama of politics with the development of analytical and communication skills. Students examine:

- elections and campaigns
- the causes and impact of war
- the creation, implementation, and adjudication of law
- the interplay among government, business, and nonprofit sectors

The discipline prepares students to compete in a changing global economy, helping them land jobs in the fields of law, government, nonprofits, and business.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Political Science is to provide students with theoretical knowledge and understanding of core concepts and principles in Political Science while helping students develop practical experience and skills that are necessary for the marketplace. Within that context, the department focuses on programs and courses that emphasize civic engagement, public service, and citizenship and ethics at the local, state, national, and global levels.

To carry out this mission, the Political Science faculty endeavor to:

- Develop students' analytical, writing, speaking, interpersonal, and professional skills;
- Develop students' ability to work as effective members of a team;
- Develop students' ability to utilize technology to solve problems and accomplish goals;
- Prepare students for professional careers in the 21st century;
- Build students' citizenship skills, knowledge, and activism;
- Help students understand human beings in their diversity and gain an appreciation for democratic values; and
- Prepare students to make meaningful contributions to local, state, national, and global communities.

Academic Programs

The department offers courses in five areas:

- American government and politics
- international relations and foreign policy
- comparative politics
- public administration and policy
- political theory and methodology

Highlights

Political Science faculty members bring unique backgrounds to the classroom. They have strong academic and real-world credentials, with doctorates from top schools and practical experience in government and politics.

Suggested Minors

The Public Administration and Public Policy minor is offered through the Department of Political Science. This is an online minor designed to serve students who wish to pursue careers in the public and nonprofit sectors.

The Legal Studies minor is also offered through the Department of Political Science and is designed to help prepare students for law school and the legal profession.

Additional minors compatible with political science include: Applied Ethics and Critical Thinking, Communications Studies, Criminal Justice, History, Mass Communication, Philosophy, Sociology, and Statistics. Students may pursue a minor of their choice. See the SHSU Undergraduate Catalog for a listing of all minors offered at SHSU.

Career Opportunities

The Political Science curriculum lays the foundation for numerous exciting careers. By developing students' critical thinking, writing, and awareness of public problems, students graduate well prepared for jobs in business, government, nonprofits, and teaching. Recent graduates currently work as lawyers, judges, elected officials, lobbyists, nonprofit managers, business leaders, teachers, professors, talk-show hosts, and military officers.

Political Science also helps prepare students for graduate school or law school. Recent graduates have been accepted into high ranking graduate programs in political science, campaign management, and public administration. SHSU is one of the top seven percent of national universities in producing law-school students.

- Bachelor of Arts, Major in Political Science (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/ba-political-science/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Integrated Studies: Legal Writing and Communication Concentration (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/integrated-studies/bs-integrated-studies-concentration-legal-writing-and-communication/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Integrated Studies: Social and Data Analytics Concentration (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/integrated-studies/bs-integrated-studies-concentration-social-and-data-analytics/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Integrated Studies: Sustainable Community Management Concentration (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/integrated-studies/bs-integrated-studies-concentration-sustainable-community-management/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Political Science (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/bs-political-science/>)
- Minor in Applied Ethics and Critical Thinking (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/minor-applied-ethics-and-critical-thinking-minor/>)
- Minor in Legal Studies (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/minor-legal-studies/>)
- Minor in Political Science (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/minor-political-science/>)
- Minor in Public Administration and Public Policy (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/political-science/minor-public-administration-and-public-policy/>)

Student Organizations and Activities

The Department of Political Science promotes student activities on campus and in the community. Our students hold positions in student government, campus social service, and political organizations. Our students volunteer with local organizations such as Boys and Girls Club, the SAAFE House, the Wounded Warrior Project, and Habitat for Humanity. The department recognizes student achievement with membership in Pi Sigma Alpha, the national Political Science honor society.

Internships

Advanced students are encouraged to gain professional experience, make contacts, and explore career options through the department's successful internship program and the internships offered through SHSU's LEAP Center (<https://www.shsu.edu/centers/leap/>). Recently, students have interned in city and county governments, the state legislature, the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of State, nonprofit groups, both major political parties, and law offices.

Scholarships

In addition to the University's student financial aid programs, the Department of Political Science also offers scholarships to majors and minors. For information, contact the department secretary. Information on University scholarships is available on the Office of Academic Scholarships website (http://www.shsu.edu/~fao_www/scholarships/) at or by phone at (936) 294-1672.

POLS 2304. Introduction to Political Science. 3 Hours.

Students explore the discipline of political science, including the discipline's subfields, literature, major theories, research methodology, and major debates. Students apply the tools of the discipline to analyze contemporary issues in governing, policy, and political behavior.

POLS 2305. American Government. 3 Hours. [TCCN: GOVT 2305]

Students examine American government at the national level and develop the knowledge to engage in political and civic life. Topics may include the origin and evolution of the U.S. Constitution, political behavior and attitudes, political parties, interest groups, the media, and the three branches of government - Congress, the Executive Branch, and the Judiciary. Course Equivalents: POLS 2301 .

POLS 2306. Texas Government. 3 Hours. [TCCN: GOVT 2306]

Students examine Texas government and politics. Topics may include the Texas Constitution; Texas' role in the federal system; political culture; individuals' political values and participation; interest groups; parties; elections and campaigns; the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; and fiscal, social, and economic policies.

POLS 3302. Introduction to Public Policy. 3 Hours.

Students explore how governmental entities in the U.S. make public policy. Using various policy models, students analyze the effect of policy environments, actors, processes, policy characteristics, and politics on the nature of policy outputs. Students learn to evaluate policies using a variety of program evaluation methodologies.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3330. American Politics. 3 Hours.

Students learn the terminology, concepts, theoretical perspectives, and methods used in the study of American politics. Students examine theories of collective action and individual behavior to answer key questions in the study of political institutions and mass behavior in the United States.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3331. Local Political Systems. 3 Hours.

Students examine the structure, process, and politics of local governments in Texas and the nation. Local governments may include metropolitan governments, special districts, county governments, rural and small town politics, and urban and suburban political structures. At each level, topics may include home rule, leadership recruitment and behavior, local elections, budgeting, services, and intergovernmental relations. Course Equivalents: POLS 2331

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3332. State Political Systems. 3 Hours.

Students compare state-level politics in Texas with others in the U.S. Topics may include the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; the states' roles in the federal system; political culture; individuals' political values and participation; interest groups; parties; elections and campaigns; and fiscal, social, and economic policies. Course Equivalents: POLS 2332

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3334. Judicial Systems. 3 Hours.

Students examine the development of judicial systems and the policy making role of courts. This course is an orientation course for pre-law students and others interested in the legal aspects of government.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3335. Political Ethnic Minorities and Gender. 3 Hours.

Students examine the ways in which political theory, behavior, beliefs, and public policy relate to race, ethnicity, and gender in the U.S. Course Equivalents: POLS 2335

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3336. The Presidency and Executives. 3 Hours.

Students examine the executive offices of the President, state governors and the heads of local governing bodies in the United States. Topics may include comparative institutional development, roles, structures, processes, and functions.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3337. The Congress and Legislatures. 3 Hours.

Students examine the powers, organization, procedures, and operations of legislative bodies in the United States. Topics may include selection of legislators, legislative leadership, influence of lobbyists, political parties, legislative committees, executives, and legislative roles and norms.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3338. Victims' Rights, Politics, and Policy. 3 Hours.

Students examine the politics and policies of victims' rights, exploring the emergence of victims' rights as a political issue and as a social movement. Students study victims' rights policies and programs at the local, state, national, and international level and analyze their development, their implementation, and their impact.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3339. Nonprofit Organizations. 3 Hours.

Students gain an overview of the development of nonprofit organizations, examining their history, roles, and types. Topics may include nonprofit and government relations, nonprofit and business relations, nonprofit and policymaking, nonprofits in an international context, and organizational issues.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3360. Political Parties and Interest Groups. 3 Hours.

Students examine political parties and interest groups in U.S. politics, exploring their development and evolution, their organization and functions, and their role in politics. More specific topics may include the influence of parties and interest groups on political values, participation, voting, campaigns and elections, governing, and effects on policy.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3361. Central and Eastern European Politics. 3 Hours.

Students compare the political systems of Central and Eastern European states, including the European portions of the former Soviet Union, with emphasis on the problems of transition from communism to democracy and market economy.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3364. Politics and The Media. 3 Hours.

Students examine the role and impact of the media (the Internet, radio, television, and the various forms of print media) on U.S. politics. Topics may include the impact of the media on campaigns and election outcomes, the media as a source of political information, the agenda setting power of the media, the role of the free press in a democracy, and citizens' relationship to the media. The course may also consider the relationship between the media and politics in other nations. The course makes use of textbooks but also relies heavily on contemporary media.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3365. Introduction to Comparative Politics. 3 Hours.

Students examine important issues and trends in world political systems that places American government and politics in a comparative context. Students learn the terminology, concepts, and methods of comparative politics. Topics may include institutions, behavior, constitutional processes, political parties and interest groups, public policy, political development, transitions from authoritarianism to democracy and from statist to market economies, sources of domestic violence, and other major concerns of the field. Course Equivalents: POLS 2365

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3366. Public Administration. 3 Hours.

Students explore national public administration with emphasis on the political processes within the surrounding administrative agencies. Topics may include development of the administrative function, policy formulation and budgeting, the relations of administrators to Congress, interest groups, courts, and the public. The course may include coverage of state and local topics related to public administration. Course Equivalents: POLS 2366

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3368. Asian Politics. 3 Hours.

Students compare contemporary politics and governments in Asia. Students examine the history and culture of each country as well as the dynamics of change in the region. The course encompasses most of the countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia, including China, Japan, the Koreans, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Time permitting, the course may include India and South Asia.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3369. Religion and Politics. 3 Hours.

Students examine the historical and contemporary relationship between religion and politics. Topics may include politics and religion in the United States, the proper role of religion in American public life, the relationship between religion and state in the Islamic world, religion and conflict situations, and the role of religion in conflict resolution.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3370. Western European Politics. 3 Hours.

Students compare contemporary politics and governments in Western Europe. The course typically concentrates on Britain, France, Germany, and Italy but usually includes other important and interesting countries, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and the Scandinavian countries. The course also covers the European Union - its policies, institutions, and expansion.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3372. Contemporary Political Theory. 3 Hours.

Students examine political, moral, and legal ideas from the 20th century to the present. They analyze the connection between moral theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, and pluralism and political/legal theories concerning justice, human rights, and the rule of law. Students also differentiate between historical, theoretical, and normative discourses.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of Political Science.

POLS 3373. Ideologies and Democracy. 3 Hours.

Students investigate the meaning of the term 'ideology' and the various ideologies that have informed political life in the modern world. Students examine liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism, feminism, environmentalism, and radical Islam. Students study democracy in its various modern conceptions along with the question: Is democracy an ideology?

Prerequisite: 6 hours in POLS.

POLS 3374. Quantitative Methods for Political Science. 3 Hours.

Students study research design and the quantitative methods used in contemporary political science research. Students apply the tools of social science inquiry in a series of projects designed to examine phenomena such as political attitudes and behavior. The course emphasizes descriptive statistics, tabular and graphic presentation of data, measures of association and correlations, and multivariate analysis in political research.

Prerequisite: POLS major, 6 hours POLS, and permission of the department.

POLS 3375. Politics of The Middle East. 3 Hours.

Students examine contemporary patterns of government and politics in the Middle East. The course encompasses most of the countries of the Middle East, including Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. North Africa may also be included. Students study the historical legacies and continuing impact of colonialism and nationalism, political Islam and secularism, challenges of authority, and legitimacy. Students also explore the ways in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and regime change in the region impact U.S. foreign policy and the region more broadly.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3377. Survey of Political Theory. 3 Hours.

Students examine the political ideas, philosophers, and relevant historical events in Western Europe over the past two thousand years. Students study the representative political writings from the time of Plato to Nietzsche, addressing political values and ideas in their original historical context as well as independently of any particular historical or cultural limitations.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3378. American Political Thought. 3 Hours.

Students study American political ideas and movements from colonial times to the present.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3379. Research and Writing in Political Science. 3 Hours.

Students gain knowledge of basic research methods and design in the social sciences, with particular attention to survey research. Students develop research and writing skills including how to locate, evaluate, and cite electronic and printed sources; how to conduct a literature review; how to write proposals, reports, and research papers; and how to edit proposals, reports, and papers.

Prerequisite: POLS major, 6 hours POLS, and permission of the department.

POLS 3380. Introduction to International Relations. 3 Hours.

Students examine the relations between nation-states in the international system and the factors influencing their behavior. Topics may include the changing nature of the international system; the political and economic sources of tension, war and diplomacy; international law and organization; and the bases of power.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3381. American Foreign Policy. 3 Hours.

Students examine the domestic and international forces which influence the development of American foreign policy. The course emphasizes the post-World War II era and may include discussion of U.S. foreign policy at the settlement of World War II, the politics and crises of the Cold War, and America's role in the post-Cold War world order. Course Equivalents: POLS 2381

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3385. International Law and Organizations. 3 Hours.

Students examine the role of international organizations and law. Topics may include the evolution of the United Nations (UN) and its precursors, UN structure and governance, the UN's role in international peace and security, emerging human rights law, laws governing war, and issues related to economic development and the global environment.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3386. International Political Economy. 3 Hours.

Students examine the interplay between states and markets and the interaction of the world economy and international politics. Students study the nature of political economy, the major ideologies and approaches, and specific topics that may include the political ramifications of international trade, investment, debt and financial markets and the impact of globalization on the human condition and the environment.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3387. Latin American Politics. 3 Hours. [TCCN: GOVT 2311]

Students examine contemporary patterns of government and politics in Latin America with emphasis on institutions, processes, behavior. Students study the historical, social, and economic background factors affecting the region, along with major issues of U.S.-Latin American relations. For selected nations, topics may include problems of democracy, authoritarianism, and political development.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3391. Government Organization and Management. 3 Hours.

Students compare governmental organizations within society and analyze their impacts upon practices of administration in public agencies. Students explore the management tools available to governmental agencies and their capabilities and limitations.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3392. Economic Policy. 3 Hours.

Students examine the roles of modern government in the economy and society, including regulating and promoting business activity.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3393. Social Policy. 3 Hours.

Students examine of the roles, actions, and problems of modern governments in dealing with social issues such as education, health, housing, transportation, and welfare services.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3395. Environmental Policy. 3 Hours.

Students examine major environmental issues and policies affecting the United States and the rest of the world. Topics may include clean air and water, endangered species, invasive alien species, public land management, ecosystem management, the conservation of biodiversity, nuclear power, waste disposal and energy production and use.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 3398. Gulf Seminar. 3 Hours.

Students analyze issues in the Gulf region from multidisciplinary perspectives, including physical science, social science, humanities, and the arts. Students focus on systems thinking, including issues of scale from local to global, to assess environmental, societal, economic, policy, and community-related challenges in the Houston metro area, Southeast Texas, and the broader Gulf region. Readings, discussion, and undergraduate research methods are emphasized.

Prerequisite: Junior standing and approval of the instructor.

POLS 4081. Problems in Political Science. 1-3 Hours.

Students examine a single special topic which cuts across the usual subfields of political science. Topics may include political socialization, ethnic politics, crises in political systems, research techniques, and other subjects. Students may repeat this course when the topic varies. They may earn between 1 and 3 hours credit. Variable Credit (1-3). Course Equivalents: POLS 4381

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 4094. Political Science Internship. 1-6 Hours.

Students gain professional field experience through department-approved internships in public sector organizations. Students work under the supervision of an on-site coordinator and a political science faculty member. They may earn up to 6 hours of internship credit. Variable Credit (1 to 6).

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS and the permission of the department.

POLS 4095. Independent Studies. 1-3 Hours.

Advanced students in Political Science, who are capable of independent study, engage in advanced readings and directed research. Registration is upon the approval of the Chair of the Department of Political Science and the instructor directing the course. This course may be taken for Academic Distinction Credit. Variable Credit (1-3). Course Equivalents: POLS 4395

Prerequisite: 6 hours of Political Science and departmental permission.

POLS 4334. Constitutional Law I: Civil Rights and Liberties. 3 Hours.

Students study the opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court and examine the development of rights and liberties through the Court's interpretation of the Bill of Rights.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 4335. Constitutional Law II: Gov Powers & State-Federal Relations. 3 Hours.

Students study the opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court and examine the development of government powers at the state and federal level through the Court's interpretation of the Constitution.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 4372. Political Attitudes & Behavior. 3 Hours.

Students examine political attitudes and behavior by exploring the sources of political knowledge; how political attitudes are formed and changed; how public opinion is measured; and why people vote the way they do.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 4383. International Human Rights. 3 Hours.

Students examine the theory and practical meaning of human rights. Issues covered may include the definition of human rights; the relationship between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights; the meaning and impact of humanitarian and international human rights law; the impact of cultural relativism in the definition and assessment of the promotion and protection of human rights; the significance of different religious perspectives; the question of the legitimacy of humanitarian interventions; and the effects of globalization on human rights perceptions and practices.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 4384. Conflict Studies. 3 Hours.

Students examine the causes of international conflict and the path to international peace. Topics may include changes in the nature of war, theories of the onset of interstate war, and the various methods of achieving peace.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

POLS 4385. Political Violence & Terrorism. 3 Hours.

Students examine political violence that occurs within states, including violence perpetrated by the state against its own citizens and violence that accompanies anti-government movements. Students study cases and theories of political violence, as well as methods of their resolution. Specific topics may include state repression, domestic and transnational terrorism, guerilla warfare, civil wars, and revolution.

Prerequisite: 6 hours of POLS.

Director/Chair: **Jason S Enia**

Aisha Saratu Ahmadu, PHD (asa059@shsu.edu), *Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, PHD, Mississippi State University; MBA, New Mexico State University; BA, Midwestern State University*

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