

FALL 2026 COURSE OFFERINGS

The study of politics is central to a liberal arts education and to inform educated citizenship. Our courses focus on major political issues across local, national, and global contexts. Students learn how power operates, how policy is formed, and how to participate thoughtfully in public life.

POLITICAL SCIENCE & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MAJOR

100-LEVEL COURSES

PSCI 100 Foundations of American Government (3 cr.)

MWF 10:00–10:50 AM | Towle MWF 11:00–11:50 AM | Towle Tu/Th 11:00 AM–12:15 PM | Oakley

This is an introductory level course. In this course, we examine the American political system, including the Constitution, civil rights, and civil liberties, Congress, the presidency, the courts, federalism, elections and campaigns, and political parties. Selected contemporary issues in American politics are also examined. In this course, we emphasize how to think like a social scientist and, therefore, this course fulfills the social sciences requirement for the core curriculum.

PSCI 116 Law and the Legal System (3 cr.)

Tu/Th 2:00–3:15 PM | Egan This is an introductory level course designed for first year students. This course examines the fundamental principles and issues of American law that every citizen needs to know, including the legal process and legal theories. This course also counts as an elective in the Legal Studies minor.

200-LEVEL COURSES

PSCI 201 International Relations (3 cr.)

MWF 10:00–10:50 AM | Dr. Christiansen

This course is designed for first- and second-year students planning to major in political science, international studies, and/or philosophy, politics, and economics. It is an introductory examination of the nation-state system, with emphasis on the factors governing the behavior and interaction of states. In this course, we examine various international relations paradigms. Fall Only.

PSCI227 Politics of Race and Ethnicity (3 cr.)

Tu/Th 2:00–3:15 PM | Dr. Oakley

This course is designed for second year students and is open to non-majors. In this course, we look at the way race and ethnicity are defined and socially constructed, and how these factors matter in the political realm. The course first explores theories of how race and ethnicity matter in society in general and then turns to issues of equal protection and discrimination, political participation differences, public opinion differences, and descriptive representation. The course also considers the legacy of the civil rights movement and the form it takes today. This course cross counts for many programs. Please check the program electives to see if this course will count in your major or minor.

PSCI 290 Investigating Politics (3cr.)

Online Async | Towle

Majors and Minors only. This course should be taken in the sophomore year and it is a prerequisite to PSCI 360 Political Analysis (3) and PSCI 498 Senior Seminar (3). This is the first research and writing intensive course in the three-course methods sequence of the political science and international studies majors. In this course, we will review types and quality of sources, and we will learn to find and use primary and secondary sources appropriately. The course is strongly centered on the use of hot-topic current events to get students to see the value of research skills and put those skills to use in various styles of political writing. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status required.

300-LEVEL COURSES

PSCI 312 Parties and Elections (3cr.)

MW 2:00–3:15 PM | Towle

This course is intended for juniors and seniors majoring in political science. It is an examination of the operations and functions of American political parties, as well as the various processes of nominations and elections at all levels in the country. Topics covered also include campaign finance, congressional

400-LEVEL COURSES

PSCI 405 LSAT Prep (1 cr.)

W 4:00–5:15 PM | Prof. Egan

This course prepares students to take the Law School Admissions Test. Normally taken in the semester prior to the student's intended LSAT exam. This is a one credit course and as such, it does not count as elective credit toward the political science major or minor.

PSCI 498 Senior Seminar (3 cr.)

M 6:00–9:00 PM | Oakley

T 5:00–8:00 PM | Jung

Majors only. This is the capstone course for political science and international studies majors. It is a requirement in both majors. The seminars are led by political science department faculty on a variety of subjects. The aim is to refine students' skills in researching, writing, speaking, and critical thinking. In this course, we seek to foster reflection in students on possible career paths and life-long learning. Prerequisite(s): Senior status required. PSCI 290 Investigating Politics (3) and PSCI 360 Political Analysis (3). Fall Only.

"The Political Science Department prepared me well for complex problem solving and analysis in the world beyond campus."

— Mark McDevitt
Chief of Staff, Rep. Lori Trahan (D-MA)

WHERE OUR GRADUATES GO

- Intelligence Analyst, FBI
- Foreign Service Officer, Dept. of State
- JD — Cornell, Catholic U, St. John's
- Capitol Hill — Congressional Staff
- MBA — Villanova | MA — Georgetown

REGISTRATION NOTES

- IS crosslists: PSCI 201, 338, 360, & PSGE 315
- PSCI 290 open to IS & PS majors only
- PSCI 498 sections capped to balance enrollment
- PSCI 405 (LSAT Prep) = 1 credit hour

LEARN MORE

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districting, the role of the media, and campaign strategies. Particular focus is placed on the federal elections taking place in the semester when the course is offered. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status required. PSCI 100 Foundations of Political Science (3). Fall, Even Years.

PSCI 338 American Foreign Policy (3 cr.)

MWF 11:00–11:50 AM | Christiansen This course is designed for majors or minors in political science, international studies, and history. It is most appropriate for juniors or seniors yet may also be recommended for academically advanced sophomores. This course is a study of the making and execution of American foreign policy with an emphasis on the enduring struggle to balance power and principles. Case studies may also be treated, with an emphasis on the modern era. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status required. PSCI 201 International Relations (3).

PSGE 360 Political Analysis (3cr.)

MWF 1:00–1:50 pm | Christiansen

Majors and Minors only. This course should be taken in the junior year, and it is a prerequisite to PSCI 498 Senior Seminar (3). This is the second research and writing intensive course in the three-course methods sequence of the political science and international studies major. This course focuses on the principles and problems of data collection in qualitative and quantitative research, and basic competence in the use of statistics for hypothesis testing and measuring central tendency, variability, and correlation. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status required. PSCI 290 Investigating Politics (3).

PSGE 315 Asian Culture and Politics (3 cr.)

Tu/Th 11:00 AM–12:15 pm | Jung Tu/Th 12:30–1:45 PM | Jung

This course is intended for (1) students with junior or senior standing from any major or (2) political science, international studies, or PPE majors with sophomore, junior, or senior standing. This is an upper-level elective surveying the political landscape of Asia. Topics include: the historical legacy of Colonialism across Asia, variation among political regime types, democracy and democratization, models of economic development, and the future of conflict and cooperation in the region. Counts as a Global Encounters requirement in the Core Curriculum. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore status required.

Mount St. Mary's University is a private, liberal arts, Catholic university located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Schedule subject to change. Contact the department for the most current course availability and section information.

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DEPARTMENT FACULTY

- Dr. Maureen Oakley, Chair
- Dr. William Christiansen
- Prof. Ed Egan
- Dr. Yuji “Julia” Jung
- Dr. Michael Towle

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Students interested in political science or international studies are encouraged to meet with the department chair or their academic advisor to discuss course selection, major requirements, and career pathways.

CAREER PATHWAYS

Political science graduates pursue careers in law, government, public policy, journalism, education, intelligence, diplomacy, and nonprofit leadership.

RELATED MINORS

- Political Science Minor (18 cr.)
- International Studies Minor (18 cr.)
- Legal Studies Minor (18 cr.)