The proposition that politics is the “comprehensive science,” as claimed by Aristotle, provokes debate at Bowdoin as elsewhere. Some argue that it is not a science; others that it is not comprehensive. Yet the bases for the claims and counterclaims both rest on the pervasiveness of matters political throughout society; on the perennial quest of human beings for the discovery and application of a common set of purposes regarding their common life; and on the multiplicity of skills needed to explore and understand such matters. Generations of students have found the study of politics a fascinating endeavor for these very reasons.

Courses within Bowdoin’s Department of Government and Legal Studies are divided into four subfields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, and International Relations. Courses are further grouped within introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels.

First-year students interested in government choose among a wide range of seminars (limited to sixteen students) and introductory lecture courses (limited to fifty students). Each is designed to provide an introduction to one of the major disciplinary subfields. In the seminars, students are encouraged to analyze and discuss important political concepts while developing research and writing skills. Recent first-year seminars have included The Pursuit of Peace; Political Leadership; Global Media and Politics; Human Being and Citizen; East Asian Politics; and Fundamental Questions: Exercises in Political Theory.

Intermediate-level courses are designed to introduce students to or extend their knowledge of a particular aspect of government and legal studies. Examples of intermediate courses include The American Presidency, The Politics of the European Union, Classical Political Philosophy, Campaigns and Elections, International Law, Japanese Politics and Society, and Environmental Policy and Politics.

Advanced courses give seniors and qualified juniors with appropriate backgrounds the opportunity for in-depth exploration of topics within their fields of concentration. This can occur in the context of a seminar (limited to fifteen students), through independent study with a member of the department, or through the honors program.

Major and Minor Programs
In their junior and senior years, students going on in government normally pursue either a nine-course major or a five-course minor program. Majors are required to complete a four-course concentration in one of the department’s subfields, as well as to take at least one course in each of the other three subfields. Courses for the major may include a first-year seminar and two introductory courses and must include at least one advanced-level course. Many government students elect to spend one or two terms in study away programs either abroad or in the United States, and are able to transfer up to two credits applicable to their government major or minor.

Advanced Study and Honors
Government majors are expected not just to develop a broad understanding of the field, but also to reach a level of intellectual depth and sophistication in their particular area of concentration that permits them to do substantial advanced research. Every government and legal studies major is required to complete an advanced seminar or to produce a substantial independent study project under the direction of a member of the faculty. Many top students will go on to complete a two-semester honors project, each overseen by an advisory committee of three members of the department.

Study Away
The Washington Semester Program, based at American University in Washington, DC, offers students an ideal opportunity to pursue their studies at the seat of our government. The program offers courses on a variety of topics, including American politics (national government and public law), economic policy, foreign policy, gender and politics, international environment and development, justice, and peace and conflict resolution. Courses are taught by American University faculty and often include as guest speakers members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, ambassadors, business leaders, top journalists, and domestic and international policy makers.

Government students may also choose from among several study away programs outside the United States. In recent years, students have participated in programs at the London School of Economics and the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Students seeking to graduate with honors in government should contact the honors director for specific information. They must prepare an honors paper, which is normally the product of two semesters of independent study work, and have that paper approved by the department. A committee of faculty members works closely with students to help them choose topics and obtain necessary research materials. Honors candidates are expected to defend their theses orally in the spring.
Government and Legal Studies

Faculty

Ericka A. Albaugh, assistant professor of government, B.A. (Pepperdine), M.A. (Tufts), Ph.D. (Duke), teaches courses in comparative politics, African politics, development, and ethnic relations.

Barbara Elias, assistant professor of government, B.A. (Brown), M.A., Ph.D. (Pennsylvania), specializes in international security, foreign policy, counterinsurgency war, Afghanistan, and the Middle East.

Paul N. Franco, professor of government, B.A. (Colorado College), M.Sc. (London School of Economics), Ph.D. (Chicago), teaches the history of political philosophy and contemporary political theory.

Michael M. Franz, associate professor of government, B.A. (Fairfield), M.A., Ph.D. (Wisconsin-Madison), teaches courses in citizenship and representation in American politics and political behavior. He is chair of the department.

Laura Henry, John F. and Dorothy H. Magee Associate Professor of Government, B.A. (Wellesley), M.A., Ph.D. (California-Berkeley), teaches Western and Eastern European politics, comparative politics, and social movements.

Christopher Heurlin, assistant professor of government and Asian studies, B.A. (Carleton), M.A., Ph.D. (Washington, DC), teaches courses in contentious politics, democratization, Chinese politics, US-China relations, and Asian communism.


Richard E. Morgan, William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Constitutional and International Law and Government, B.A. (Bowdoin), M.A., Ph.D. (Columbia), teaches constitutional law and political science, with a specialization in the history, law, and politics of the First Amendment.


Andrew Rudalevige, Thomas Brackett Reed Professor of Government, B.A. (Chicago), M.A., Ph.D. (Harvard), specializes in American politics and political institutions, especially the presidency and the executive branch.

Jeffrey S. Selinger, assistant professor of government, B.A. (Rutgers), M.A., Ph.D. (Cornell), teaches courses in American politics, political parties, public policy, and American political development.


Honors Projects

Recent honors theses in government and legal studies include:

- Governmental Efficiency in an Age of Expanding Transparency
- Non-State Threats in Cyberspace and Implications for US Security Strategy
- The American Lawgiver: On Founding the Liberal Democratic Republic
- The Agrarian Tradition in Political Philosophy
- “The Banner Made All of the Difference”: The Tea Party Movement and Its Place in the Republican Party
- The Compelled Speech Doctrine: A Libertarian Defense Against Antidiscrimination Law?
- The Truth, Perhaps: Pierre Manent and the Nature of Our Political World
- Speech and Security: The Holder Case
- After the War: Explaining the Effectiveness of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Programs in Post-Conflict Societies
- Advancing Liberalism: The Influence of Rousseau’s Philosophy on Tocqueville’s New Political Science
- From Left to Right? White Evangelical Politicization, GOP Incorporation, and the Effect of Party Affiliation on Group Opinion Change
- Turkey and the European Union: A Class of Misconceptions?
- Fear the Black Sheep! Explaining Changes in Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in the United States and Switzerland
- On Different Tracks: Overt-Covert Foreign Policy in the Middle East
- From Colonialism to Insurgency: Governance and Identity in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas
- Changing Perceptions of Terrorist Detainees in the United States: Civilians vs. Enemy Combatants

For more information about Bowdoin, please write or call: Dean of Admissions Bowdoin College, 0000 College Station Brunswick, ME 04011-8441 207-725-3100 admissions@bowdoin.edu

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For more information, go to: bowdoin.edu/government/

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