

“The block plan lets the professors fit the class schedule to the needs of the class, rather than fit the needs of the class to the schedule.”

David Yamanishi, Associate Professor of Politics

Cornell College understands the term “politics” to embrace everything people do that is related to making and enforcing group decisions.

Politics includes government in the narrow sense that most people use the term, but it is not limited to that. Politics addresses practical questions: “Who has power?” “How are governments organized?” “How are decisions made?” Politics also considers the ideas and values—like liberty, equality, justice, democracy, and law—that influence how people think about governance.

This is a department of political science, but it is also a department of political philosophy and a department of government. The department feels a kinship with biology, psychology, sociology, and economics, and also with philosophy, history, and literature. It embraces the broader term politics over narrower terms like government and political science because it better reflects the breadth of our mission and interests.

The department also embraces the college’s commitment to creating an environment that is conducive to liberal learning and an appreciation of diversity. Each member of the department offers a different intellectual background, method of inquiry, scope of interest, and conception of what is important in politics.

Cornell students are also eligible for membership in the Pi Sigma Alpha national political science honor society.

BENEFITS OF ONE COURSE AT A TIME

One Course At A Time allows the department to routinely blend political theory with real-world practice. With several hours of uninterrupted time each day, students in these courses are able to explore topics in depth and make use of a wide range of learning activities.

For example:

- **Role-playing simulations that extend for multiple days:** Campaigns and Elections devotes 20 hours to a single simulation, On the Campaign Trail, that allows student teams to organize and manage competing campaigns. Students in International Politics spend several sessions on a diplomatic simulation of pre-World War I Europe. The International organizations course includes a United Nations Security Council role-playing simulation that involves responding to a contemporary crisis.
- **Field trips to nearby and far-away places:** Day trips to museums and consulates in Chicago, Minneapolis, and St. Louis are easy. Ethics and Public Policy students have routinely traveled to national and state capitals for periods of a few days to a week or more. Wilderness Politics takes students for an extended excursion into the Boundary Waters canoe area wilderness. And courses in international and comparative politics have been taught in China, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Brazil, India, Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- **Reading or research days where no class is scheduled:** Students have independent time to use resources at other institutions, conduct on-site research, or interview during the normal school day.
- **Documentary and feature films:** Films can be discussed the same day, or even the same morning, rather than be divided across multiple sessions.
- **Internships for a block or longer:** One Course At A Time makes it easy for students to schedule internships for credit in places like Washington, D.C. And because students can intern throughout the year, they have less competition for meaningful work, allowing better and more interesting work. As a result, graduates build worthwhile and influential relationships before they graduate.

The immersion experience enabled by the block plan enhances the benefits of Cornell’s

Faculty Bios & Courses

CHRIS KROMPHARDT *Visiting Assistant Professor of Politics*

Teaches courses in American politics, campaigns and elections, politics and media, and constitutional law. His recent research focuses on how the demographics and ideological commitments of Supreme Court law clerks affect their justices’ votes on cases before the court. Ph.D., political science, University of Alabama.

APARNA THOMAS *Associate Professor of Politics and Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies*

Teaches courses in international relations, comparative government, and gender, sexuality, and women’s studies. She teaches advanced courses related to women in politics, strategies to alleviate poverty, and comparative health care systems. She currently serves as Cornell’s faculty advisor to the India studies program sponsored by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. She also leads a women in politics course in India every other year. Ph.D., political science, Western Michigan University.

small class sizes and liberal arts approach. By the end of day two, faculty and students have interacted together for eight hours, something that would take most of three weeks on a semester schedule.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

The politics major provides a range of experiences in three subfields: political thought, international relations and comparative government, and American politics. Minors are available in each of these subfields. The faculty offer diverse perspectives and expertise, ranging from judicial politics to global feminism, and American political ethics to human rights.

SENIOR CAPSTONE

As the capstone for the major, students can enroll in POL 483 or, for qualified students, course credit for an independent project directed toward pursuit of departmental honors. In 483 each student will choose a topic within politics to explore, through group discussion and peer review, presentations, and a paper that critically reviews existing research to advance an argument.

ON-CAMPUS RESEARCH

One professor recently worked with students on a research project on political campaigns. The research involved compiling a data set that allowed them to better study the dynamics of a political campaign, especially as the essential tasks of campaigning have moved online. They used that data to examine how campaign messages vary over the course of the campaign and in relationship to the competitive nature of the race. The team presented its findings at the Midwest Political Science Association conference.

INTERNSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Politics students are encouraged to pursue internships as an integral part of their coursework. The Cornell Fellows program supports many such opportunities and is especially valuable to politics majors, with six Cornell Fellowships directly related to politics. Through Cornell Fellows, top students routinely work for the office of U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley, U.S. Rep. David Loebsack, Global Zero, the Civil Rights Commission, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, and a fellowship related to sustainable agriculture in India.

Students have also found non-Fellows internships with a very wide variety of organizations: The Democratic and Republican parties at the national and state level, the Department of Agriculture, the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, and numerous federal and state political campaigns and offices, among others.

The politics department also maintains excellent relationships with two external programs: The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, and The Washington Internship Institute.

Several politics majors have won fellowship support for graduate study. Among many other programs and awards, students have received funding from the Fulbright and Rangel programs. At least one graduate in politics or international relations has earned a Fulbright in each of the past seven years.

AFTER CORNELL

ALUMNI CAREERS

Fellow, Global Zero, Washington, D.C. (Class of 2018)

Intern, Rio Grande Foundation, Albuquerque, New Mexico (Class of 2018)

Healthcare organizer, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Richmond, Virginia (Class of 2017)

Volunteer, City Year, Boston (Class of 2017)

Compliance associate, Capitol Compliance Associates, Washington, D.C. (Class of 2017)

Field director, Julie Johnson for Texas, Dallas (Class of 2016)

Field associate, Americans for Prosperity, Washington, D.C. (Class of 2016)

Owner-operator, Onyx Process Services, Detroit, Michigan (Class of 2015)

AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer, Iowa City, Iowa (Class of 2015)

Generation Progress, Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C. (Class of 2015)

GRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED

J.D., Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts (Class of 2018)

Master in Public Policy, Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales (Class of 2017)

J.D., William & Mary Law School, Williamsburg, Virginia (Class of 2016)

M.A., international politics, Aberystwyth University, Aberystwyth, Wales (Class of 2016)

M.B.A., Roosevelt University, Chicago, Illinois (Class of 2016)

J.D., University of Iowa Law School, Iowa City, Iowa (Class of 2016)

J.D., University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah (Class of 2015)

J.D., University of Texas, Austin, Texas (Class of 2015)

DAVID YAMANISHI *Professor of Politics*

Teaches courses in international relations and comparative politics. Within international relations he focuses on state power vis-à-vis other states, the international system of states, and international political economy. His comparative politics courses deal with the themes of democratization, development, and human rights both globally and with special emphasis on Latin America and Europe. Ph.D., political science, University of California, Los Angeles.