This concentration explores political institutions and processes and how and why they work as they do. Courses use historical and contemporary examples to understand the political system the founders established and the ways it has shaped modern politics. Students study institutions such as the presidency, Congress, courts, the bureaucracy, and political parties, with a focus on their organization and important patterns of behavior within them, such as interest group lobbying and campaigning.

Students may count a maximum of six (6) hours of credit of any combination of hours from PS 494 toward the advanced hours requirement. Not more than 6 hours of individual study courses in political science (PS 490) or 6 hours of internships (PS 491) or 6 hours of supervised research (PS 492) may be included in the major; a student with any mix of independent study hours and internship hours and supervised research hours may include a maximum of 9 hours of such credit in the major. (PS 496) is reserved for those seniors doing honors theses for distinction in political science and may not be counted in the 45-hour minimum required for the major.