

June 25, 2009

Dear Incoming Political Science Major:

Let me be among the first of the faculty to welcome you to Saint Joseph's University and to the Political Science Department. You are about to embark on an exciting four years, when you will expand and challenge your mind and continue to develop your sense of responsibility and concern for others and for the world itself.

As Political Science majors, you will have an exciting program of courses and an award-winning group of faculty (for the quality of their teaching, advising, and research). This combination, along with your enthusiasm and diligence, makes for an excellent college experience, as classes are relatively small and students and faculty develop strong and helpful relationships.

In a few weeks, you'll be coming to campus for academic orientation. There you will begin to learn about the curriculum for a Political Science major. I have also attached a guide that outlines the courses that you will take throughout the four years. You may also download the worksheet from our [web site](#). As you think about courses, remember that there are three different types of classes that you need to complete as an SJU student: **GER courses** –General Education Requirements that ensure that you have a broad and appropriate liberal arts and Jesuit education; **Major courses** –the requirements in your major; and **Electives** – the classes that you choose to take to finish out your program, often completing a minor or double major in the process. All SJU students have 20 GER courses to take, and Political Science students have 12 additional major courses and 8 electives.

I can't stress enough how important thinking about your academic program is. Please understand that you have many exciting opportunities at SJU, in general, and as a Political Science major, in particular. First of all, I want to encourage all of you to consider studying abroad at some point during your career. Living and studying in a foreign country (especially when you are using another language) is an invaluable experience that will help you grow intellectually and emotionally, and it is one that employers and graduate schools find quite attractive on a resume. In addition, as a Political Science student, you have two different internship opportunities. One is to spend a whole semester with The Washington Center (www.twc.org), an organization that has been in existence for decades and its job has been to place college students from around the country in semester-long internships (whether with the federal government, lobbying groups, non-governmental organizations) in Washington, DC and provide them support. Students receive a semester's worth of credit for their time in Washington, when they work 35-hours a week, take a class, and write an independent-study paper. Another possibility is to intern in the Philadelphia area and receive credit for one upper division course. Lastly, SJU is part of the Mid-Atlantic Model European Union Consortium and participates each year in a Model European Union simulation (held in Washington, DC) with

other colleges and universities from around the region. Each of these experiential learning opportunities – study abroad, the Washington Center, Philadelphia-area internships, and Model EU – are easy to fit into a Political Science Department major and are open to most upper-class majors. And Human Resource Professionals all say that experiential learning distinguishes students and that they look for students with these types of experiences when they make hiring decisions.

While thinking about the next four years is exciting, I'm sure you want a bit of guidance about your immediate future. In their fall semester, most first year Political Science students (and this can vary depending on AP credit and other specifics) take

ENG 1011 (Craft of Language)

HIS 1011 (Western Civilization I)

a foreign language course

MAT 1171 (Math for Social Science majors or higher if you have the mathematical aptitude)

and one introductory Political Science course.

This year, you will take one of two freshman seminars: POL 1011 Introduction to American Government and Politics or POL 1031 Introduction to Comparative Politics. A freshman seminar means that the course will be restricted to freshman majors and will have a maximum of 20 students. The POL 1011 course will introduce students to the study of American Government and Politics, while POL 1031 examines the nature of politics in different countries of the world, focusing on why democracy occurs (or doesn't), why and how economies, politics, and cultures are related, and how political change occurs in different systems. This year, the countries under study are the United Kingdom, Japan, Russia, China, and Nigeria. You should note two points. First, both courses will be offered again in the Spring (so you should not feel as if you **MUST** take either course now), and second, that POL 1011 is required for all majors, but POL 1031 is one introductory course that you **may** take to fulfill your major requirements. All students must take POL 1011, and then they choose two out of the three remaining introductory courses. These three classes include POL 1031, POL 1051 (Introduction to International Politics) and POL 1071 (Introduction to Political Thought). These other courses - POL 1051 and POL 1071 - are not available as freshman seminars for POL majors this fall semester.

So, enjoy your summer. I will see you at a welcome session on the Sunday before school starts, August 30. If you have any questions, please contact the Department at 610-660-1917 where you'll speak to Ms. Marge Ryan-Atkinson, or e-mail me at lbaglion@sju.edu.

Sincerely,
Lisa A. Baglione
Professor and Chair