GOVERNMENT MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

A government major will give you the opportunity to acquire broad knowledge of political science and to undertake in-depth study in a particular concentration, either American politics, comparative politics, international politics, or political theory. Each concentration has its own introductory course, survey courses, and advanced seminars. Concentrators are usually required to take the introductory course and three upper-level elective courses in the chosen subfield. In addition to taking these four courses within the concentration, majors are required to take at least one course in at least two of the three subfields outside the concentration. This requirement assures that majors acquire breadth across the discipline as well as depth in at least one subfield.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

To be admitted as a government major, your academic history must show that you have completed at least one government course with a grade of B- or better, and your General Education Report must confirm that you have already—by the end of your third semester at Wesleyan—formally completed stage I of the General Education Expectations.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- To complete the major requires nine approved government credits
- You may count toward the major only one introductory course (GOVT151, GOVT155, GOVT157, or GOVT159)
- Five of the eight remaining courses must be upper-level Wesleyan GOVT courses in the range 201-399
- The remaining three courses numbered 201 or higher may be:
  - Tutorials in the Government Department (maximum two; only one thesis tutorial may count)
  - A course in a “cognate” discipline (maximum one; must be approved in advance by your advisor)
  - Political science courses at other U.S. institutions or abroad (maximum two; or three in a year of study abroad)
  - Additional Wesleyan government courses in the range 201-399

THE FOLLOWING MAY NOT COUNT TOWARD THE MAJOR:

- Student forum courses
- Teaching apprenticeships
- First-year seminars (FYS versions of GOVT151, GOVT155, GOVT157, or GOVT159 may count as the one introductory course)
- Internships either in the United States or abroad
- The Government Department does not grant credit for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or courses taken on ad-hoc programs (e.g., summer study abroad) prior to matriculation at Wesleyan. The only pre-matriculation credits that the department will accept are the government (political science, politics, etc.) credits that the University has authorized from a transfer student’s previous full-time institution.

MAJORS MUST CHOOSE AND COMPLETE A CONCENTRATION:

- Four courses, at least three of which must be taken at Wesleyan, complete a concentration as follows:
  - American politics: GOVT151 and three upper-level American politics courses
  - International politics: GOVT155 and three upper-level international politics courses
  - Comparative politics: GOVT157 and three upper-division comparative politics courses
  - Political theory: Any four political theory courses

BREADTH ACROSS THE DISCIPLINE:

- Concentrators are usually required to take the introductory course and three upper-level elective courses in the chosen subfield.
- In addition to taking these four courses within the concentration, majors are required to take at least one course in at least two of the three subfields outside the concentration.

This requirement assures that majors acquire breadth across the discipline as well as depth in at least one subfield.

GENERAL EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

- Stage 1 must be complete to become a government major.
- Stage 2 must be complete to receive honors in government.

PACING

- Majors with fewer than four government courses by the end of the junior year must drop the major.

DOUBLE/MULTIPLE MAJORING

- No student with a university GPA below 88.33 may be a government major if he or she has another major.

For more information, please visit the department’s majoring page (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/majoring).

COURSES FOR NON-MAJORS

Many students take government courses without majoring in government. We sometimes offer First-Year Seminars (FYS), but demand for our regular courses is high, so we cannot offer as many FYS courses as we would like. First-year students and sophomores are welcome, however, to take the introductory courses we offer in each of our four concentrations. Another option is QAC201, the social science methodology course that is offered by the Quantitative Analysis Center and cross-listed as GOVT201 (it counts toward the government major). Most of our survey courses are open to first-year students and sophomores, although majors usually have preference.

GENERAL EDUCATION

- Stage 1 must be complete to become a government major.
- Stage 2 must be complete to receive honors in government.
- For more information about Government Department regulations involving the General Education Expectations, please visit the Government Department’s majoring page (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/majoring).
STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

Students who complete the government major should be able to explore systematically a range of political issues and modes of argumentation, drawing on the knowledge, analytical abilities, and quantitative or qualitative skills they have acquired through their courses. They should also be better prepared to think critically, write clearly, and speak effectively. By acquiring these capabilities, government majors prepare themselves for lives of contribution in public service, education, law, business, journalism, and other fields.

STUDY ABROAD

For more information about deciding to study abroad, applying to, and getting faculty preapproval for study-abroad courses, please visit the department’s study abroad page (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/studyabroad.html).

Up to two courses on an approved one-semester study-abroad program may count toward the major. Majors on full-year programs may count a third course with the approval of their major advisor. No credit toward the major or toward graduation will be approved for internships, introductory courses, or certain School for International Training courses. No credit toward graduation will be approved for internships. A student seeking major credit must give the preapproving faculty member a course title and a written course description before the first day on which the course meets, either in person before departing (preferable) or by e-mail from abroad (if the title and course description are unavailable before departure).

To get credit for study-abroad courses, either toward the major or toward graduation, requires preapproval (before the end of the study-abroad program’s preregistration period) either from your faculty advisor (for government majors) or from the department chair (non government majors).

Students may count toward the major no more than two credits earned in courses taken away from Wesleyan, whether in a study-abroad program or in another U.S. institution, except in the case of a full year of study abroad, in which case the faculty advisor has full discretion on whether to authorize credit for a third course toward the major and toward graduation.

The department will not authorize course credit during study abroad for internships or introductory courses.

Independent study projects conducted abroad may be included among the two study-abroad courses that may be counted toward the government major (up to three if you study abroad for a whole year). Your advisor may choose to give tentative approval for an independent study project, subject to a review of your written work after you return.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced Placement credit may not count toward the government major.

PRIZES

In addition to honors and Phi Beta Kappa nomination, the department offers six prizes to students who excel in the government major. A list of recent prize winners (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/for_majors/studentachievements.html) of these prizes are listed on the Wesleyan Government Department website.

Davenport Prize: To senior majors who show excellence in the study of political science

Parker Prize: To a sophomore or junior who excels in public speaking

Rich Prize: To a senior whose orations are judged best in composition and delivery

Skirm Prize: To the best research or writing project completed by a government major in his or her junior year

Titus Prize: To support the summer studies of a deserving Wesleyan junior majoring in government, the College of East Asian Studies, or the College of Social Studies

White Fellowship: To majors who show excellence in the study of political science

The department is also formally represented in the Public Affairs Center (http://www.wesleyan.edu/pac) on committees that award Davenport Grants and the Hallowell Prize in the study of social science, as well as on the committee that awards the Carol A. Baker ’81 Memorial Prize for the development and recognition of the accomplishments of junior faculty.

TRANSFER CREDIT

For information on how to apply for Government Department authorization to transfer credit from U.S. academic institutions, please visit the department’s transfer of credit page (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/transfercredit.html). For information on how to apply for Government Department authorization to transfer credit from approved study-abroad programs, please visit the department’s study abroad page (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/studyabroad.html).

Requests for Government Department-approved transfer of credit from U.S. academic institutions must be made before the first class meeting of the course whose credit you wish to transfer.

Approval will be granted if, and only if, the course for which you wish to transfer credit is

- Upper level. Introductory courses may not be counted.
- In the field of government (political science, politics).
- Equivalent in terms of contact hours, content, and requirements to Wesleyan courses.
- Offered at a four-year, accredited institution.
- Graded. Credit/no credit courses may not be transferred.

RELATED PROGRAMS OR CERTIFICATES

- Civic Engagement Certificate (catalog.wesleyan.edu/certificates/civic-engagement)
- Environmental Studies Certificate (catalog.wesleyan.edu/certificates/environmental-studies)
- International Relations Certificate (catalog.wesleyan.edu/certificates/international-relations)

For a full list of all certificates, please visit Wesleyan’s course listing (WesMaps (http://www.wesleyan.edu/wesmaps)). Government courses count toward several of them, and Government Department faculty are involved in several of them in addition to those listed above.
HONORS

For more information on honors at Wesleyan in general, University Honors regulations, evaluation of honors theses, and recipients of honors in government in previous years, please visit the department’s honors page (http://www.wesleyan.edu/gov/honors.html).

To be eligible for honors in government you must (1) be a government major on track to complete the major requirements in a timely fashion; (2) achieve a university grade point average of 90.00 or above, calculated at the end of the spring semester of the junior year; and (3) have completed stage I of the General Education Expectations.

To become a candidate for honors in government, the student must meet the three eligibility conditions and complete the Thesis Application Form. Optimally, the student will meet with a potential tutor (tenured, tenure-track, or full-time visitor in the Government Department) and discuss a thesis project prior to submitting an application. After the Government Department faculty reviews the applications, students will be notified whether they will be a candidate for honors and the name of their thesis advisor. In some years, students who meet the eligibility requirements will not be able to stand for honors in government because there may be no full-time government faculty member to serve as a tutor. Each available government faculty member decides for whom he or she will serve as a thesis tutor.

Students may count either GOVT409 or GOVT410, but not both, toward the eight upper-level courses needed to complete the government major. Only one thesis tutorial credit may count toward the major.

To receive honors in government, students must (1) complete the government major; (2) complete both stage I and stage II of the General Education Expectations; (3) write a thesis judged to be of honors quality; and (4) maintain a university grade-point average of 90.00 or above through the end of the first semester of their senior year.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The government thesis involves one-on-one tutorials (GOVT409/GOVT410) with a supervising faculty member for a full year, culminating in the submission of an honors thesis, many of which are about 100 pages long.

Seniors seeking a capstone experience lasting a single semester can choose either an individual undergraduate tutorial (GOVT401/GOVT402) or a survey course or seminar that requires a final independent research paper at least 15 pages in length whose topic is chosen by the student. It is not unusual for students to take several such courses during their junior and senior years, sometimes exploring related topics from a variety of different angles. In some advanced survey courses or seminars, students may engage in a capstone experience that culminates in a work of nontraditional scholarship—service learning, public blogs, civic engagement, etc., rather than a standard research paper.