

LEARN TO UNDERSTAND POLITICS IN THIS AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE



LOOKING FURTHER

RUSSIA

YOUR PROGRAMME IN A NUTSHELL

The Master's in Political Science is a one-year, full-time programme that is taught entirely in English. The Master's programme is worth 60 credits. Your programme will start with a broad, common base before you go on to choose your own specialization. The schedule mixes extensive courses with more intensive ones and individual tutorials.

THE PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF

- Two general courses on theories and approaches
- Two courses on selected issues
- One course on research philosophy and design
- Thematic workshops
- Master's thesis

SPECIALIZATIONS

As part of the programme, you will opt for one of three specializations that focus on different aspects of global politics:

- Comparative and European Politics
- Global Environmental Governance
- International Relations and Transnational Governance

One of the selected issues courses corresponds to your chosen specialization, and so does the thematic workshop. Together, they provide a stepping stone towards your Master's thesis.



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THE TRANSNATIONALIZATION OF POLITICS WHEN BOUNDARIES SUBSIDE

The Master's programme in Political Science will provide you with thorough, broad-based training in political science theory and methodology. Above all, the programme aims to enable our students to critically examine political issues at a high level of conceptual abstraction and to carry out in-depth academic theoretical and empirical research on a political topic in a globalizing context. To this end, the programme familiarizes you with a broad range of theories and approaches that serve both explanatory and critical objectives.

The programme features three specializations: Comparative and European Politics, Global Environmental Governance, and International Relations and Transnational Governance. Upon completion of the Master's programme, you will be equipped to carry out successful independent research work. While the programme has a strong academic orientation, it will also prepare you to solve complex political problems in various professional fields, in government and public policy, for NGOs and for businesses that also have political dealings.



HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING IN THEORY AND METHODS

The programme has a strong focus on combining theoretical knowledge and professional and research skills like reasoning, writing, presenting and research techniques. The quality of our teaching is evidenced by our positive assessment results: our programme was voted best in the Netherlands in a recent Elsevier survey, and it received a positive evaluation from external experts representing NVAO, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders.

INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

The programme has a distinctly international orientation, with a particular focus on how processes of Europeanization and transnationalization affect national and international politics. In addition to its content, the programme is international in at least three ways: it is taught entirely in English, the student body is international, and the teaching staff is increasingly international in terms of both national origin and working experience.

YOUNG AND DYNAMIC

This Master's programme allows you to enjoy a personal approach to education, with a focus on working groups and intensive supervision. By being part of a small research community, you can connect with staff members with whom you share specific interests. Our lecturers are young, ambitious and dynamic, which makes for a lively and informal atmosphere. There is plenty of room for interaction and discussion, both among students and with the teaching staff. You will be encouraged to come up with your own ideas, and there is a great emphasis on developing argumentation to support your own findings.

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPICS

UNILATERALISM VS. GLOBALIZATION

Since 9/11, US foreign policy has witnessed a shift towards unilateralism and what some regard as an aggressive assertion of US power and national interests. This seems to contradict contemporary trends towards increasing global interdependence. Which theories of world politics allow us to make the most sense of these seemingly contradictory developments?

THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union consists of multiple and partially overlapping layers of governance. How does this complex multi-level system transform national political systems? To what extent does the process of Europeanization change national policy-making? And what are the implications for the democratic legitimacy of European politics?

THE RISE OF NEW PARTIES

Since the 1990s, a large number of new political parties have emerged in Europe, many of them labelled as populist or extreme-right. What distinguishes these parties from the established ones? And how do they affect the party systems and the way parties relate to each other?

CHOOSE A SPECIALIZATION BASED ON YOUR OWN INTERESTS

At the heart of Master's programme in Political Science lies the interaction between national, sub-national and international politics. In each of the three programme specializations you will focus on different aspects of globalization, from conflict resolution to European policy-making or climate-change politics.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Global as well as European governance have been intensifying. At the same time, the new millennium has also witnessed new forms of conflict as well as the apparent resurgence of interstate rivalry and geopolitics, as can be witnessed by the new arms race and in the increasing level of competition for natural resources. In this specialization you will become acquainted with the different theoretical perspectives from which these international dynamics can be analysed, and learn to apply them to topics of your interest.

COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN POLITICS

In the Comparative European Politics specialization you will analyse the characteristics and diversity of nation states, with a particular focus on the European context. Politics increasingly take place on different levels simultaneously. The so-called multi-level governance system of the European Union is a case in point. You will study how the processes of transnationalization affect patterns of political representation and the role of political parties and public policy-making. You will also practice techniques that will allow you to explain differences in the behaviour of political actors and the decisions that they make.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

In the Global Environmental Governance specialization you will study one of the great challenges humankind is facing today. Humans now influence all biological and physical systems on the planet. Almost no species, no land area, no part of the ocean has remained unaffected by the expansion of the human race. The perennial question is how to organize the co-evolution of societies and their surrounding environment. Essential to this are the newly emerging structures of transnational cooperation and governance, which are at the heart of this specialization.

WIDEN YOUR PERSPECTIVES WITH...

MULTIPLE POINTS OF VIEW

There are always multiple perspectives to every political issue. This is even more so as politics become increasingly international. The Master's programme in Political Science provides you with the theories and tools to organize these perspectives and to arbitrate between them.

Political activity now takes place in an increasingly transnational context. The roles played by multinational companies, NGOs like Greenpeace, international organizations like the World Bank, and global media like CNN and Al Jazeera embody this trend. The transnationalization of economic, social and political issues – such as financial markets, migration, human rights and global warming – is reflected more and more in the emergence of new institutional forms of regulation and governance.

At the same time, established political patterns and traditional national and local political actors – such as electorates, parties, organized interests and governing bodies – remain important for studying processes of political transformation within a changing social and economic environment. It is precisely this interaction between national, sub-national and international politics that lies at the heart of this Master's programme.

ALEXANDRE HATTINGA VERSCHURE, MASTER'S STUDENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

"I have always had an interest in international relations. Why do states wage war? In what situations are economic factors more important than human rights? Which conditions are needed for states to get to work on environmental problems? I have learned to find answers to these questions in the theories available and to test them by systematic investigation."

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LOOKING FURTHER

After completing the Master's programme, you will be superbly equipped to carry out independent research work. While the programme has a strong academic orientation, it also prepares you to solve complex political problems in various professional fields, in government and public policy, for NGOs and for businesses that also have political dealings.

CAREER PROSPECTS

As a graduate of the Master's programme in Political Science at VU University Amsterdam, you will be capable of working effectively in a multidisciplinary environment and of appreciating political complexities. You will be uniquely qualified to contribute to political and policy decisions that must take account of a wide range of political interests and views . You might easily find yourself working as a policy analyst or advisor in a government ministry or an international organization such as the EU. Graduates also go to work for international non-governmental organizations, lobby groups and policy consultancy firms. You will also be well qualified to enter the field of journalism.

PHD RESEARCH

The thorough training in research skills offered by the programme will also prepare you for participation in PhD research at VU University Amsterdam or other postgraduate institutes around the world. The Political Science Department conducts research on Multi-Layered Governance in the New Europe and Beyond.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To gain admission, you must hold the equivalent of a university Bachelor's degree in Political Science, international relations or a related discipline. If you have a university Bachelor's degree in a non-related discipline or a degree that is not equivalent to a three-year Dutch university degree, you may be admitted subject to the successful completion of the one-year pre-Master's course in Political Science. The Examination Board will determine whether you are eligible for admission to either the Master's programme or the pre-Master's course.

PRE-MASTER'S COURSE

The pre-Master's course in Political Science is designed to equip students with the academic skills and knowledge they need to join and successfully participate in the Master's programme.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Master's programme is taught entirely in English. You therefore need an excellent working command of English, which you are required to prove in your application.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.VU.NL/POLITICALSCIENCE**

NINO KERESLIDZE, GRADUATE OF THE
POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAMME

"The Faculty of Social Sciences at VU University Amsterdam is the ideal place for academic and career opportunities. As a Georgian student I was granted the full VU University Amsterdam Scholarship to take the Master's programme in Political Science. We met with EU officials during a class excursion to Brussels organized by Dr. Ben Crum. This helped me enormously while I was writing my Master's thesis and during my job search. Looking back, living in Amsterdam was a great experience."

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MORE INFORMATION

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- Details of the various tracks and profiles
- Information on application and registration
- Studying abroad

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WWW.VU.NL/PROGRAMMES

For general information
about studying at
VU University Amsterdam

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