

What Is Political Science?

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CHAPTER

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- trace the development of political science through the ages
- differentiate among the ways of approaching political inquiry
- understand the distinctive character of Canadian political science
- consider what Canadian political scientists do and how they might go about doing it
- recognize how other fields of knowledge can help us learn about politics and government
- consider what the career options are for students of political science
- examine the presence of political science in the international community



WHAT IS POLITICAL SCIENCE?

Each day Canadians are bombarded with information from the media about political events occurring at home and around the world. On the radio we hear that our provincial government will close a hospital in our community. In the newspaper we read that many federal government departments still continue to waste and mismanage public monies in spite of the auditor general's long-standing struggle to make Ottawa more accountable for its spending decisions. On television we watch a documentary on starvation in Africa. We analyze this data, draw our own conclusions from it, and decide to act or not to act as a result of our evaluations. This constant barrage of information may leave us feeling overloaded and somehow threatened by the apparent complexities of the political world. But, like untutored music-lovers who discover after some instruction that they can understand music, we too can acquire an appreciation of politics and government.

FACTFILE Political science lagged behind other social sciences in developing its methods of inquiry throughout the twentieth century because researchers are divided on whether science is the best and only avenue for discovering political truth.

An understanding of politics is not a gift; it is an achievement. Learning to cope with the vast amounts of political information that come to us every day is a matter of training. We need to place this data in proper perspective by imposing some organization and structure on the flow of world events. First, we must be motivated to learn about the political personalities and decisions that affect our lives. Then we must apply a **methodology** to our process of learning that will give us a system for receiving new information. The information received becomes a contribution to a growing body of knowledge about politics and government, rather than a hodgepodge of seemingly unrelated events.

Learning how to study politics and government teaches us to think like political scientists. Their

field, the study of **political behaviour** and **political ideologies**, is expansive and requires a great deal of instruction, experience, and reading to master. Political scientists want to know how people *behave* with regard to matters of politics and government. The facts, concepts, and perspectives in this course are largely the product of decades of work by thousands of political scientists all over the world.

Like you, political scientists want to learn about politics in a meaningful way. Over the years, they have built a recognized academic discipline designed to discover the purpose and significance of all political behaviour. Nothing in politics just happens; events can be explained if a **systematic approach** to information is used. An introductory text in political science has the dual function of showing the student what information is politically relevant and how to organize this information in a coherent way.

An important task of political science is the orderly study of how politics affects the lives of people. People are both the causes and objectives of politics. The needs of people, their values, their beliefs, and their share of worldly possessions are the stuff of politics. For this reason, a knowledge of politics brings us closer to a knowledge of ourselves. Whether we are aware of it or not, each of us has a political dimension. Nothing occurs in politics that in some way does not relate to our private attitudes and behaviour.

None of our institutions (such as parliaments, congresses, and political parties) or processes (such as legislation, administration, and political change) exist apart from the political ideas and behaviour of people.¹ When we look at political phenomena from this perspective, we see the world of politics not only as political institutions but as groups of people interacting with each other because of different personal beliefs and expectations. It is in this context that we can define political science as the study of people as individuals or groups, engaged in political behaviour of all kinds. This behaviour encompasses the ways they think about

Focus On Allied Fields of Political Science

Political scientists cannot approach the study of politics in a narrow fashion. They must draw from many other fields of knowledge that help explain human political behaviour. For this reason, political science is truly an eclectic discipline. Even though political science collaborates with many other bodies of knowledge, it still retains its own character. There are at least nine specialized fields of study from which political scientists draw information to construct theories about political behaviour. A thumbnail sketch of each of these fields will help you understand the eclectic nature of political science.

Anthropology: Helps political scientists understand politics and government in their earliest and pre-industrial forms, using the insights of archaeology, biology, cultural history, and physiology.

Economics: Widely recognized as the most highly developed social science, economics involves the study of human behaviour as it is manifested in the production, distribution, and use of goods and services and as it relates to how governments attempt to manage economic affairs.

Geography: The study of how humans relate to their natural environment in social, economic, and political ways—how they relate to the social as well as the spatial and physical aspects of their environment. The term “geopolitics” is used to describe the relationship of politics to territory.

History: Historians provide political scientists with a chronological framework for under-

standing the present by interpreting past political ideas and events.

Philosophy: A body of knowledge concerned with the world of ideas and being, which provides modern political science with a rich tradition of political, social, and ethical thought.

Psychology: Studies the behaviour of individuals and groups in all of their private, social, and political manifestations. Psychological research has contributed to our understanding of the personality characteristics of political leaders, personality dynamics in voting behaviour, and the psychological factors informing political conflict.

Sociology: No other social science has as much affinity to political science as sociology, which is concerned with the comprehensive study of group behaviour. It is of special interest to political science because, in almost all instances, groups (parties, interests, electorates) are the basis of political behaviour.

Social Work: Many political scientists are drawn to social-work research because it allows for frontline insight into the failures of the political system to address problems of child neglect, domestic violence, drug abuse, violations of human rights, women’s rights, Aboriginal rights, and the effects of unemployment, gambling, and alcoholism on the lives of people.

Statistics: The discipline of statistics, with its methods for collecting, presenting, analyzing, and interpreting social data, is essential to the practice of political science.

politics, the political, legal, and governmental institutions they create, and the relations they develop in the international system.

FACTFILE Plato’s Academy was the first of the great European schools of political philosophy. It was dedicated to the normative study of politics and government, and established as an educational centre for the training of statesmen.

Focus On A Political Scientist

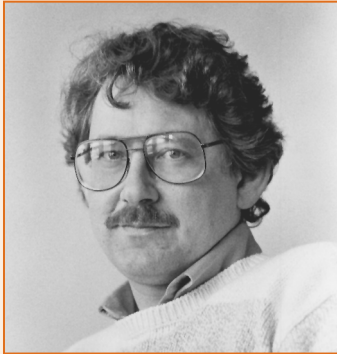
Profile of Dr. Leo Panitch

Dr. Leo Panitch is a distinguished political scientist and teacher of politics and government. Professor Panitch began his political science studies at the University of Manitoba. He completed his PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His scholarly and professional activities include writing books, editing the manuscripts of other professors for journals and publishers, and assessing research projects submitted by other political scientists to Canadian research councils and journals.

He teaches graduate and undergraduate political science courses at York University in Toronto. He especially enjoys teaching introductory courses. Because of his regard for his students, he conveys information in a language and within a frame of reference that undergraduates can appreciate.

Dr. Panitch believes that politics affects us all, and that we can affect politics.

Professor Panitch came to York University in 1984 from Carleton University, where he had established an international reputation as one of Canada's foremost political economists. From 1989 to 1994 he was chair of York's Department of Political Science. He is the author of numerous books and articles, including (among many others) *A World of Contradictions* (2002), *Fighting Identities* (2003), and *The New Imperial Challenge* (2004).



Panitch on Political Science

Dr. Panitch sees politics as something that manifests itself in human behaviour, in the world of political ideas, as well as in the natural function of all institutions. He says, "The study of politics is not just the study of parliaments or bureaucracies or even a broader study of the most powerful decision

makers in all spheres of society. It must be a study as well of the social forces 'from below.'" This important dimension to political science has to do with changing the system. It is not just about analyzing what the state and ruling class do, criticizing it on this basis, or even coming forward on the basis of this analysis with public-policy proposals for enabling the state to manage the system better. Rather, this dimension of political science is about understanding what is involved in changing the system from one based on class competition, exploitation, and conflict to one based on the elimination of classes and the development of a fully democratic, egalitarian, and co-operative society.

Political science has a role to play in demonstrating that most people are not just passive recipients of someone else's power. Through the study of political science, people learn that they can become leaders and educators in their own communities. To be a political scientist, in this conception, is to be someone who can help others change the world.

From the earliest times, political scientists have studied **normative** questions, questions about how people *should* behave in the world of politics and government. These students of politics ask such questions as, What is justice? How can we achieve it? What is good government? Who should lead us in our society? What should the individual's relationship with government be? Everyone has a stake in these kinds of questions because we all want society, acting through government, to resolve problems and make life much better for us. To know what "better" is, we have to think about ourselves and others in a normative way.

THE ORIGINS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

In one sense, the study of politics is as ancient as recorded history. In another sense, "political science" is a product of the twentieth century. Political science as a modern academic discipline took a lot of time to grow before the characteristics fundamental to a bona fide social science were present. It should be noted that there are many conceptions of what political science is, based on the many different ways one can view political reality.

FACTFILE Socrates, one of the greatest political philosophers, left no political writings of his own to be remembered. His influence has been felt almost entirely through the so-called Socratic dialogues of Plato.

Philosophers have been writing about politics for thousands of years. Some of them, notably Plato and Aristotle, made contributions to the study of politics that are relevant and debated today. However, *political science* as such did not exist until the twentieth century, and was not generally included among the social sciences until the 1950s. As this section will explain, most of the evolution of political science has occurred gradually over the centuries. In fact, you are about to trace the emergence of a very old discipline.

THE EARLY POLITICAL SCIENTISTS

The Greeks

We can trace the beginnings of the formal study of government and politics to the Greeks over 2400 years ago. The Greeks used the word "idiot" to refer to anyone who had no interest in politics. They took politics so seriously that they studied it as the "queen of the sciences." To them, the study of government was **architechtonic**, a highly organized and structured approach to building a society and its political institutions.

FACTFILE Plato believed that the ideal state should have a population of 5040. This number was not arbitrarily chosen, as it is capable of being divided by every number up to 10 and also by 12, a convenient figure for purposes of community organization, such as a community divided into 12 tribes and a state council divided into 12 committees.

The enduring contribution of the Greeks to political science lies in the way they thought about politics. They saw it as a natural form of human behaviour. They tried to discover the form of political society that would enable human nature to flourish and achieve its highest expression of reason. We know the Greeks did not apply the same methods currently used by modern social scientists. But they did possess a "social science attitude" through which they applied independent objective reasoning to the Hellenic world of politics.² In fact, the word *politics* itself is derived from the Greek word for city-state, *πολις* (*polis*). To the Greeks, the **polis** was the centre of the political universe.

Plato (427–347 BC) is credited with writing the first major study, widely regarded as a classic in political science. In *The Republic*, he displays the critical attitude that is necessary for the proper study of government and prescribes reforms and models for politics as actually practised. He elevated the study of politics to an independent academic enterprise when he founded an academy near

Athens. It is widely believed to have been the first school of political science and law.

Plato's student, Aristotle (384–322 BC), used systematic reasoning and critical inquiry in *Politics* to conclude that “man is by nature a political animal.” Aristotle held that all people are politicians, even though those in public office appear to be more political than others.

FACTFILE Aristotle was the first political theorist to classify constitutions in a systematic way and to study the role of law in society. He tutored Alexander the Great in 342, and with the help of Alexander he opened his own school, the Lyceum, in Athens in 335.

Political scientists usually think of him as the father of modern political philosophy and political science. When he established the Lyceum in about 335 BC, he employed special research assistants to compile information for political analysis. In fact, the Lyceum was dedicated to the scientific study of politics, because it used principles of knowledge from every known field of study. As far as we know from his work at the Lyceum, Aristotle was the first to recognize the **eclectic** nature of political inquiry and to encourage it in an institutional setting. We must credit Aristotle with nurturing the genesis of a modern political science, even though many other conditions had to evolve before it became the scholarly enterprise of today.

We can see that the Greeks viewed politics as an activity that is observable, classifiable, and understandable. Even in ancient times, it was clear to them that the serious study of politics was the only way to reform the weaknesses of a political system and to preserve the strengths of a civilization.

The Romans

Roman political thought made two special contributions to the study of government. The Romans focused their political inquiry on the study of law and on *public administration*. Knowledge of the law

was an important stepping stone to many appointed positions of government in the Roman Empire. The successes of the empire were due mainly to the Roman genius for the universal application of law and the imperial government administration.

FACTFILE By the sixth century, the Romans had developed the concept of law as legislation, not just as decrees. They included the principle of popular consent as a precursor to the modern notion of parliamentary lawmaking.

Cicero (106–43 BC) took the lead in studying and writing about Roman government and politics. His two major works, *The Republic* and *The Laws*, provide us with a clear analysis of how the Roman political system fused *ius civile* (civil law), *ius gentium* (law of man), and *ius naturale* (natural law). Indeed, he was the only outstanding Roman of his time who took an objective interest in law and public administration as aspects of a unique governmental system that aspired to rule the world. He demanded respect for those public administrators who brought both virtue and integrity to their profession. Without Cicero, the study of politics for the advancement of knowledge under the Roman Empire would not have taken place.

The Medieval Period

The medieval period lasted roughly from the fall of Rome in the fifth century to the Renaissance in the fourteenth. The astonishing growth of Christianity during this period turned the minds of the great writers from the general study of political affairs to theological and ecclesiastical concerns. In the words of Dunning, “the Middle Age was unpolitical.”³ The most notable writers were Augustine (354–430), John of Salisbury (1120–1180), Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274), and Marsiglio of Padua (1275–1343). While they wrote to influence governments and rulers, they did so as dutiful sons of the Church and with the main goal of positing theological doctrine. Thus, the attitude of the Church

toward society and the state became the subject of extensive controversy.

Augustine's great book, *The City of God*, was inspired by shock at the sacking of the "Eternal City" of Rome in 410; it was his attempt to explain such a devastating occurrence. In this book, Augustine posited two cities—the divine city of God and the secular city of people. Peace, harmony, and justice are found in the city of God, whose citizens are motivated by the love of God. The citizens of the city of humans are motivated by love of self and this city is, therefore, imperfect and doomed to end. Although Augustine was speaking primarily of two spiritual states, the city of God could also be identified with the Church, and the city of man with the Roman Empire.

FACTFILE Medieval education was provided, almost without exception, by men in the Church who taught in schools where the priesthood and nobility were educated, thus keeping ideas consistent with Catholic theology.

John of Salisbury advocated the supremacy of ecclesiastical over temporal power. He held that a monarch must rule in conformity with Church principles or risk being overthrown. Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelic Doctor," saw himself as primarily a theologian rather than a political philosopher. Although agreeing with Aristotle that the purpose of the state is to direct a person to virtuous living, Aquinas held that human virtue was only attainable through the knowledge of God. For him, the state was theologically oriented. Marsiglio of Padua is widely considered the bridge between the medieval period and the Renaissance. As a practising physician, his scientific outlook made him skeptical about the dogmatic character of much of medieval thought. Marsiglio broke with the Middle Ages by rejecting the supremacy of theology over politics. His use of *common sense*, *objective observation*, and *critical analysis* made him a modern thinker with whom contemporary social scientists can identify. He introduced a **secular** approach to a predomi-

nantly religious framework of thinking about the world.

FACTFILE When Galileo observed that the earth was not the centre of the universe, contrary to the teachings of the Church, he was forced to deny his own findings so as not to run against the prevailing politics of Catholic ideology.

Because the Christian Church so dominated intellectual and social life in the Middle Ages, existing political thought centred on moral questions of "ought" (dogma) rather than scientific questions of "is" (facts). But during the central Middle Ages, a new institution emerged that would profoundly affect intellectual life in Europe and the world to the present day. This was the *university*, which ranks as the most enduring medieval contribution to modernity. The rise of universities spawned the growth of an intellectual class of people committed to original and independent thought—all necessary for the evolution of a modern discipline dedicated to the study of government and politics.

The Renaissance

The Renaissance was a period of transition from the medieval to the "modern" world. Modern political science begins here: A new world was being born founded on nationalism, the power of human reason, and the emergence of the nation-state.

During the Renaissance, Europe witnessed a growing national consciousness and political centralization, developed an urban economy based on organized commerce and capitalism, and saw ever-greater secular control of thought and culture. People appreciated and even glorified the secular world, secular learning, and purely human pursuits as ends in themselves, separate from Church influence. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, intellectuals shook off the religious and institutional restrictions of medieval life to rediscover worldly things and a new place for the individual in a changing society.

FACTFILE Dante believed that no one before him had attempted to justify a single world ruler, and he knew how heretical such a position was for the politics of his times.

The dawn of the Renaissance is identified with the writings of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). Dante's work ushered in a revolutionary period of changing social values and a revival of interest in learning about Greece and Rome. Dante's most important political work, *De Monarchia*, contributed to political thought by stressing the need for monarchical world government, and by arguing that the pope and the emperor derived their authority directly and independently from God. Modern political science is indebted to Dante for his practical analysis of the instruments for the *peaceful settlement of disputes* between states. In *De Monarchia*, Dante envisioned a world order supported by global institutions that would legislate, arbitrate, and adjudicate peace.

Perhaps the best-known Renaissance thinker, whose works revived the national, secular, and scientific spirit that had lain dormant since the Greeks, is Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). If the most important discovery of the Renaissance was man, the most important discovery of Machiavelli was political man. Of Machiavelli, the seventeenth-century philosopher Francis Bacon wrote, "We are much beholden to Machiavelli and others that wrote what men do and not what they ought to do."⁴ Machiavelli asserted that the true guide to the science of politics was realism, and that all human behaviour must be observed for what *is*, not for what it *should* be.

FACTFILE In 1450, Machiavelli, in one of his many letters, made light of religion, blaming Christianity for the continuing division of Italy into five major states: Venice, Milan, Florence, Naples, and the Papal States.

In *The Prince*, and later in *The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titius Livius*, Machiavelli pointed out that when human beings occupy positions of power, ethics and morality tend to become lower

priorities. For this reason Machiavelli is unfairly labelled as if he invented assassination, corruption, and political expediency. But he never advocated immorality for its own sake; rather, his **amoral** views reflected a scientific objectivity in the study of human political behaviour. As a modern student of politics, Machiavelli replaced the "ideal" with the "actual." By doing so, he offered the first rigorous analysis of **power politics** in understandable language.

The Reformation

During the **Reformation**, politics once again became a subject in the writings of theologians. Appalled by the corruption of the Church and by its abuse of political power, reformers like Martin Luther (1483–1546) claimed that salvation was achieved through the faith of the individual Christian and not through the practices of the Church. Luther also weakened the Church's political authority by claiming that political leaders had power over the Church. Luther received much support from German princes who were resentful of the political power of the pope, who to them was an Italian ruler.

John Calvin (1509–1564) was converted to the ideas of the Reformation, but he went much further than Luther. Calvin was determined to establish God's "Holy Commonwealth" on earth, and he established a **theocracy** in Geneva, which he himself ruled with great strictness. Both Luther and Calvin saw themselves as free critics of the political and social order. But the study of politics became a popular intellectual concern at this time, with the rapid spread of the printing presses to over 250 European cities. This dramatically increased the output of political information, so necessary for the development of modern political science.

Jean Bodin (1530–1596), a political theorist who wrote prolifically for a conservative group known as the "politiques," coined the term *sciences*

politiques (political science). For him, political science was concerned with the study of sovereignty, the functions of government, and all institutions that make law. Even though this was a much more restricted definition of what is today regarded as political science, it was an important step in the evolution of the discipline. The emergence of politically independent states provided students of politics with materials for comparative political studies. This stimulated a scholarly curiosity about the various forms and functions of government and about the political behaviour of executives and legislators. The study of politics had become a self-conscious activity. Already, the field of political inquiry was recognizable and distinguishable from other fields of study.

The Age of Reason

The late seventeenth century, known as the Age of Reason, nourished a belief in the positive consequences of the free and unprejudiced use of the human intellect. This liberation of thought extended especially to political questions. People everywhere asserted their own ideas on the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of governments. The most outstanding political writers of the time considered such ideas as the dispersion of powers in government and in whom the supreme authority of the state should gather. Access to political information was almost limitless. Controversial political ideas were circulated in books, periodicals, and newspapers. Never before in European history had so many people shown so much interest in politics.

Perspectives

Thomas Hobbes on Human Nature

The English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) warned us about human nature. In his view, human nature was an expression of selfishness in its extreme. Humans are by nature competitive, believing that no one else is better or more deserving than they are. In the true state of nature (without any responsible government) human competition would create a “war of every man against every man,” the consequence of which is that “nothing can be unjust.” For Hobbes, these negative qualities made society an unsafe place, where life would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”

Hobbes’s beliefs about the cruelty and violence of human nature led him to conclude that a strong and powerful government, which he called the Leviathan (a sea monster), was essential to preserve life, property, justice, and freedom. Hobbes fled during England’s civil war,

which inspired his most famous work, *Leviathan* (1651). In it, Hobbes argued that government gets its power from the consent of the people in a **social contract**. But fear drives people to surrender their freedom in exchange for protection from an absolute government—the Leviathan, the only form of government that could successfully control the violence of human nature.

The Hobbesian view of human nature and life without responsible government paints a very pessimistic picture of human behaviour in the historic context. Yet today, we can observe the total breakdown of law and order in many societies, in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo, Rwanda, Somalia, and other places. On examination of the facts behind the troubles occurring in these communities, we are reminded of the pertinence of Hobbes’s views.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) advocated absolute government to control human behaviour, based on a special social contract, binding on all citizens, to protect them from the ruthlessness of their own selfish human nature. Hobbes is an important part of the philosophical tradition of political science. He employed the *deductive method* of reasoning, whereby his assumptions about human nature were used as premises for building an appropriate political system.

His contemporary, John Locke (1632–1704), used the same method of reasoning as Hobbes, but Locke held a much more optimistic view of human nature. He felt that government should be limited, accountable, and changeable to give people the freedom to be themselves rather than to protect them from themselves. The text of the United States' Declaration of Independence is a purely Lockean document. But the spirit of Locke's ideas

can also be found in Part I of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, where the **inalienable rights** of individuals are listed (sections 1–31). Political science is indebted to Locke for his advocacy of freedom of speech and inquiry. Without such freedom, an independent social science dedicated to the open discussion and critical analysis of government and all forms of political behaviour could never have flourished.

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755), argued for a separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government so that no one branch could ever dominate the political system. His revolutionary framework of government was later incorporated into the Constitution of the United States as well as the constitutions of most Latin American states.

Perspectives

John Locke on Human Nature

One of the most important people influencing early political thought in North America was the English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704). Locke's writings, especially his *Second Treatise on Government* (1690), provided rhetorical inspiration to the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States. While his ideas for the justification of revolution never attracted Canadians, his positive view of human nature inspired many early European settlers who came to Canada.

A contemporary of Thomas Hobbes, Locke also had to flee England's civil war. But unlike Hobbes, Locke never adopted a pessimistic view of human nature. Instead, he held that people are generally decent, orderly, social minded, and capable of governing their own behaviour. In his

Treatise on Civil Government (1688), Locke argued that "all men are by nature free, equal, and independent" and all enjoy "the rights to life, liberty and property." For him, these laws of human nature are self-evident to people who "make use of reason." People "consent" to enter into a social contract and "accept the bonds of government" in order to reach the highest level of personal and societal achievement.

But if the social contract is breached by a government that violates citizens' rights or is corrupt, the people have the moral right of revolution—to take whatever action is necessary to dissolve the coercive powers of government. In the United States, the constitutional right to bear arms flows from Locke's insistence that bad governments should not be tolerated.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was an intellectual groundswell in support of reform and change in eighteenth-century European society. The writers and critics who forged this new social attitude came to be known as the *philosophes*. The names Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Hume, and Kant are but a few associated with those intellectuals who wanted to reform thought, society, and government for the sake of human liberty. Their demands for freedom have shaped the constitutions and institutions of every modern democratic state.

FACTFILE From about 1830 to the beginning of the twentieth century, the Industrial Revolution in Europe spread to the United States and Canada. Here, the many new ideas about productivity fostered the belief that governments should be more productive by providing social services.

With the Industrial Revolution (beginning in the mid-eighteenth century) came a new era of revolutionary thought and events, including the American Revolution (1776) and the French Revolution (1789). This new age of revolution unleashed two complementary developments that advanced the growth of the social sciences. The first was the evolution of a widespread trust and belief that science and its exacting methods of inquiry would lead to the most reliable understanding of human behaviour; the second was the specialization of human skills and knowledge associated with the rapid growth of towns and cities, which was an incentive for people to choose professional careers in the study of political affairs.

Many of the intellectual responses to the Industrial Revolution were attempts to build an alliance of scientific methods and human knowledge. The British **Utilitarians** attempted to quantify political reform by advancing the scientific principle of utility—the greatest good for the greatest number. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), James Mill (1773–1836), John Stuart Mill (1805–1873), and Sir Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890) all proclaimed

a rational, scientific approach to political and economic affairs so that no single group would receive privileged consideration. This new attitude toward the study of political matters led to a greater use of the *empirical method*—learning that came from actual experience, through the senses, and that was subject to scientific testing for verification.

Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels attempted to apply science to international politics and world history. They presented their “scientific” philosophy of history to explain the development of humankind as a dialectic of class struggles leading to new social orders—from feudalism to capitalism and from socialism to communism (*The Communist Manifesto*, 1848). Marx’s “scientific” method for discovering socio-political truth had its pitfalls when measured by twentieth- and twenty-first-century standards. But his determination to derive an exacting method of studying political economy contributed to the birth of a real science of politics. Not long after his death in 1883, the most concentrated effort to apply scientific methods to political inquiry would take place in the United States.

MODERN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political Science in the United States

The emergence of modern political science and its establishment as an independent self-conscious discipline is intimately tied to the growth of universities in the United States.⁵ By 1875, British, French, and German scholarly influences in political studies had reached the United States, expressing themselves in the formation of university programs especially designed to train people in political science.

In June 1880, Columbia University (then called Columbia College) established its School of Political Science, headed by John W. Burgess.

Within a few years, the school launched the *Political Science Quarterly*, which quickly gained world recognition for the quality of its publications and continues to maintain its reputation today. At Johns Hopkins University, Herbert Baxter Adams developed a program of advanced training and research in history and political science in 1876, followed by the establishment of the Johns Hopkins Historical and Political Science Association in 1887. From the experience of these two universities, the teaching of political science as a unique academic discipline spread rapidly to the leading academic centres of the United States.

FACTFILE As the first modern organization of its kind, the American Political Science Association, founded in 1903, was the single most decisive factor that determined the professional status of political science in the world.

The American Political Science Association (APSA) was born in a period of intellectual ferment and political reform that came to be known as “progressivism.” Many of the original 214 members of APSA were progressives who wanted their colleagues to engage in scientific study of politics and government. Almost immediately, political science gained international respect as a distinct academic pursuit.

The *American Political Science Review* (APSR) began to publish in 1906 and attracted manuscripts from around the globe. It became the model journal of political science and was followed in 1907 by the *American Journal of International Law* and the *Academy of Political Science Proceedings* in 1910. Decade by decade, the number of journals increased to reflect the multiple interests and the newer methods of studying political science.

While the drive to Americanize political science characterized the first decades after the creation of APSA, European influences continued to hold their ground as departments of political science spread across the United States. These emigrés were gifted scholars. They, along with US-born and -trained practitioners, have been instrumental

in developing the two master approaches to the study of politics in the twentieth century—the traditional and behavioural approaches.

The Proven Ways of the Past

Despite the drive toward **scientism** in the inter-war years, European influences firmly embedded the traditional approach to political science in the United States. It should be noted that “traditionalism” was not identified as a conscious, coherent movement in political science until after World War II. In spite of this, what is now referred to as traditionalism remains important. Without it, the modern study of politics would not have achieved its present status as a credible social science.

Traditionalism in American political science embraces a wide variety of European approaches to political inquiry. Practitioners of political and social philosophy believe that a knowledge of classical political literature is essential for prescribing moral choices and **normative political theory** in the modern world.

FACTFILE The idea of applying the scientific method to the world of politics is known as *positivism*, first conceived as a method for the social sciences by Auguste Comte (1798–1857).

Traditionalists see themselves as practical observers rather than scientists. This is not to suggest that they are anti-science, but to them politics is an *art* that resists study by scientific methods. Policy questions relating to ethics, fairness, and justice readily lend themselves to traditional approaches of investigating political phenomena. Traditionalists see no need to separate facts from values; they recognize an intrinsic relationship between human political behaviour and morality. Thus, for the traditionalist, politics is best understood through informed judgment derived from careful study and observation, often by suggesting what ought to be done in order to perfect or improve a situation.

Let us outline the main components of the traditional approach that became so prevalent during the interwar years and today continues as a widely accepted practice in the international political science community:

- **Methodology:** The general goals of traditional political analysis are to *describe* and *explain* what one observes in the world of politics and government. The orderly understanding of politics proceeds from descriptive questions of “what” to explanatory questions of “why.” Analysis of the political world flows primarily from the personal style and informed judgment of the observer. Quantitative methods are rarely applied because traditionalists doubt whether human political behaviour can be scientifically measured.
- **Historical analysis:** Historical methods are used for political research. The researcher collects information and evaluations of a particular subject by using primary sources, such as public documents, to develop a chronology of events or ideas that leads to a conclusion.
- **Institutional analysis:** Analysis focuses on the structures and functions of political institutions through careful observation. The researcher presupposes that all significant politics takes place in institutional settings. The study of institutions provides answers to questions of authority, power, and legitimacy.
- **Legal analysis:** Formal legal terms, practices, and institutions in a political system are studied. This usually involves the analysis of charters, constitutions, the process of lawmaking, and interpretation.
- **Philosophical analysis:** The deductive method of reasoning is used to analyze normative questions. The analyst recommends political rules, values, and institutional needs from general premises about human nature and human behaviour. On the basis of the philosophical approach, traditionalists prescribe normative solutions to political problems.

- **Careerism:** There is a belief among traditionalists that political science should be used to prepare people for government service in public administration and diplomacy, teaching political science, political leadership, and service to international organizations.

The Scientific Pathway

Traditional political science did not remain unchallenged for long. A new generation of political scientists was the first in a long line of American practitioners who would aspire to a greater degree of precision in the analysis of political phenomena by using the skills of science and integrating concepts (such as **participant observation** and **detached observation**) applied in other social sciences, such as sociology and psychology.

As a point of fact, the term *behaviouralism* was recognized as part of a larger scientific movement occurring simultaneously in *all* of the social sciences, now referred to as the behavioural sciences. For political scientists, behaviouralism emphasized the systematic understanding of all identifiable manifestations of political behaviour. But it also meant the application of rigorous scientific and statistical methods to standardize testing and to attempt **value-free** inquiry into the world of politics.

FACTFILE The demand for value-free analysis in the social sciences was the brainchild of Max Weber, who held that the personal values and biases of the researcher should not influence the results of social research.

The rise of behaviouralism in political science was aided by major advances in survey and polling techniques and the use of computers to store and process information in all areas of human activity. This stimulated an information revolution in the mass production of scientifically generated data, particularly in the social sciences. After World War II, a growing number of American political scientists regarded behaviouralism as the only acceptable approach to making generalizations about political life.

Crosscurrents

Should a Political Scientist Always Be Objective?

No political scientist can escape values entirely. The world of politics and government inevitably generates issues that activate the strong personal beliefs a political scientist might have. Issues of justice and policy always involve possible conflicts with our personal beliefs as researchers. Political scientists think they know what is good and worthwhile in politics, and we have strong beliefs about the ways political goals should be achieved.

But science demands an objectivity and total neutrality of the researcher in the pursuit of truth. Should the personal values of a political scientist influence research conclusions? On the one hand, most political scientists will agree that objectivity elevates the credibility of research, in the sense that political scientists should not distort data to make them fit preconceived ideas or personal values. Thus, research reports should reflect actual, not desired, findings. On the other

hand, it is equally clear that no political scientist can expunge personal values from analysis.

Like everyone else, a political scientist is a member of a particular society at a given point in history, with a particular set of family and peer influences. Political scientists are infused with all sorts of values that may consciously or unconsciously play a role in their research.

In fact, personal values are part of the reason why one political scientist chooses to do research on parliamentary reform, while another turns an analytical eye to Canada's role in the United Nations. To overcome the bias that values may cause, political scientists stress replication—that is, the repetition of a study by other researchers to see how the results compare. If values have unwittingly influenced research findings, then replication by other political analysts should uncover this problem and correct it.

Since that time, American behaviouralists have claimed considerable success in assembling theoretical hypotheses in political science. To them, science can help explain, predict, and construct **generalizations** about the political world. Many behaviouralists believe in remaining neutral with respect to prescribing morals and values for a society. These are questions of concern for politicians and electorates. For the behaviouralist, the role of political science is primarily to gather and analyze facts as rigorously and objectively as possible.

FACTFILE Twentieth-century faith in science came from the assumptions of great thinkers born in the nineteenth century. Examples are Charles Darwin, Auguste Comte, and Ernest Rutherford, who believed that everything, even politics, is knowable in exact and predictable ways.

By letting the facts fall where they may, the analyst surrenders the moral implications of the data to other people. The following is an outline of the components of behaviouralism:

- **Approach:** The primary focus of political analysis is on the actual observable behaviour of individuals and groups rather than just on institutions. The analyst seeks to discover patterns and regularities of behaviour that can be expressed as verifiable generalizations.
- **Methodology:** The scientific method of inquiry is used to generate data for analytical purposes. The method involves four steps:
 1. organization and collection of information;
 2. classification of **variables**;

3. formation of **hypotheses** on the interrelationship of variables;
 4. testing of hypotheses.
- **Eclecticism:** Political science is developed as a discipline that integrates relevant findings from related natural and social sciences into a body of political knowledge. By working closely with other social sciences, political science contributes to a bank of testable knowledge, leading to **models** of human political behaviour.
 - **Goal:** A body of empirical generalizations stating relationships among variables for the purposes of explanation and prediction is assembled. This knowledge is recorded as sets of hypotheses that, when tested, provide answers to political questions of cause and effect. Behaviouralism is capable of constructing theories out of research from pure science, e.g., knowledge of politics for its own sake; or from applied science, e.g., knowledge of politics for the immediate application to society's problems.
 - **Professionalism:** Behaviouralist political scientists strive to conduct value-free inquiry. Practitioners avoid mixing their moral standards, ethics, and personal preferences with the design and conclusions of research projects. Behaviouralism spread rapidly across the United States after World War II, reaching its peak in the 1960s. The behavioural movement aspired to establish political science as a social-science discipline, meeting all the criteria by which any behavioural science is judged. There is no question that behaviouralism has had a permanent effect on the basic values and objectives of political science.

But as behaviouralism matured, it soon became obvious that the emphasis on methodology had sacrificed relevance for exactitude. Widespread frustration with the behavioural obsession to be "scientific" led to significant numbers of political scientists abandoning this approach to political enquiry. This group of predominantly younger

political scientists called upon the American Political Science Association to recognize the limitations of scientific detachment.

A Plea for Relevance

FACTFILE Political scientist Hans Morgenthau, in his book *Scientific Man versus Power Politics* (1961), declared that behaviouralism asks the wrong questions. For him, political science should address conceptions of human welfare and the common good.

Post-behaviouralism called for a literal re-vision—or viewing again—of the aims of political science.⁶ The practice of a post-behavioural political science has proved to be a healthy reassessment of basic goals and values within the discipline. The essence of the post-behavioural revolution is that political science has a *public* purpose. Not only must it strive to understand the political processes scientifically, but it must deliberately attempt to address the most urgent political problems of the contemporary world in an active and relevant way.

The credo of post-behavioural political science asks its practitioners to commit themselves to making this a better world. Thus, the object of contemporary political research should be to apply the precision of scientific inquiry to improve political systems. Post-behaviouralists confront pertinent issues at every level of society by advocating political action and reform for problems of the environment, domestic violence, education, health and welfare, gender equality, and unemployment, to name but a few.

For some, like Haas and Kariel, not to act on this knowledge is immoral.⁷ In making the connection between having the knowledge and using it as a social obligation, post-behaviouralists belong to a tradition inherited from the Greeks through to the establishment of modern political science.

Practitioners must aim their expertise at all of society, not just at privileged segments. The choice

of research projects is crucial and must reflect an immediate concern for the struggles of the day. The call to respond to the most pressing political issues facing society leads to the making of a political profession. Universities as well as professional associations cannot stand on the sidelines of the political turmoil they want to study.

Post-behaviouralism results in a healthy cynicism about our ways of discovering political truth—a skepticism that rejects the idea of postponing burning issues in times of stress until a sufficient body of systematic theory grows out of the extensive analysis of lesser matters. The components of post-behaviouralism are

- **Approach:** Political science is a composite of both traditional and scientific political knowledge. One task of the political scientist is to apply a varied approach that combines the use of precise measurement and prescriptive analysis. The practitioner makes value judgments based on information derived from scientific inquiry.
- **Methodology:** A great variety of methods can be used to evaluate political problems effectively. To the post-behavioural political scientist, methodology is concerned not only with a restricted scientific technique but also with broader questions of values, such as justice and morality.
- **Scope:** Political science has a public dimension that imposes professional responsibilities and moral obligations upon practitioners. The moral obligations require political scientists to direct their special skills to the public good.
- **Policy engineering:** Political scientists should focus their insights on problems of political organization and behaviour, with the object of *improving* society.

It is in the contexts of traditionalism, behaviourism, and post-behaviouralism that we can best appreciate the development of political sci-

ence in the United States.⁸ These three approaches have advanced the organization and respectability of political science as a modern social science everywhere in the world. They represent the broadest and most comprehensive efforts on the part of American practitioners to learn about the complexities of politics.

POLITICAL SCIENCE IN CANADA

Prior to the twentieth century, political science scarcely existed as a subject in Canadian colleges. In its infancy in Canada, political science was thought to be a natural part of economics, history, and philosophy. There was still some reluctance to lend the air of academic respectability to politics, let alone to recognize political science as an independent academic pursuit.

FACTFILE Political studies first appeared at Queen's University in 1877, then at the University of Toronto in 1888, where a professorship of political economy and constitutional history was established.

McGill University established its Department of Economics and Political Science in 1901, and shortly thereafter the internationally acclaimed Stephen Leacock became chair, a position he held from 1908 to 1936. The spread of separate political science departments occurred in a halting, hesitating way from the turn of the century to the 1950s. The University of Saskatchewan established its department in 1910, but many of Canada's universities, like McGill, offered courses in political studies only as adjuncts to other departments, such as economics, history, and philosophy. Thus the organization of political instruction and the development of political research grew very slowly. In fact, as late as 1958, Canada had produced an academic core of political scientists totalling only 33.⁹ But despite its meagre size, the determination of this small, highly competent group of political

scientists enabled the discipline to reach a self-consciousness of a different character from that of the powerful branch across the border.

From the beginning, Canadian political scientists, even those who would have accepted the label “scientist,” were much less concerned with the need to define the scope and methodology of their discipline than were their US colleagues. Early Canadian practitioners were much more flexible in adopting traditional approaches from Europe and were more tolerant of disciplinary developments.¹⁰

The Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA)

When the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) was formed in 1913, its first president, Adam Shortt, presided over political science as well as economics, sociology, and anthropology. This small but diversified association of professionals attracted members from many fields: administrators, journalists, lawyers, and politicians. And, unlike its American counterpart, the CPSA was organized to develop the study of politics by simply “studying political problems,” not with a mission to marry science to political inquiry. Upon its establishment, the CPSA gave recognition to political science as a pluralistic discipline: no one methodology design was implied or intended.

On the eve of World War I, Canadian political science was not of a clear and single mind with respect to the orientation the discipline should embrace. Its differentiation from other disciplines was far from complete, the emergence of a Canadian contingent of political scientists was still to follow, and the struggle for separate departments of political science would begin more than 40 years later. The establishment of the CPSA was a tremendous step forward and was decisive in determining much of what would happen to political science in future decades. But the outbreak of the war would slow its progress until 1929–1930 when the CPSA re-

vived its annual meetings and began to encourage a healthy pluralism in adopting approaches to political affairs.

The formation of an autonomous, domestic, university-based political science began in Canada after World War I.¹¹ At this time, a small number of able and influential political scientists established their presence not only by writing but also by teaching at Canadian universities.

In 1935, the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* (CJEPS) became solidly established as the central publishing organ of the CPSA. At this time, political scientists shared the journal with economists, and it provided extensive coverage in both fields. For many years the combined journal was able to accommodate the critical writings of both disciplines. But eventually the CJEPS was unable to provide the necessary exposure for the many specializations emerging in the study of political affairs. By 1968, a sufficient number of scholarly manuscripts were reaching the editorial desks of the CJEPS to warrant a separate journal, the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.

The Spread of Political Science Departments

During the interwar period, political science in Canada gradually became academically established. Usually, it was first introduced at the university level simply as a subject of study. In piecemeal fashion, political science gradually spread across the country and appeared as an independent academic discipline under separate departments: at the University of British Columbia in 1920, Acadia University in 1927, University of Ottawa in 1936, and the Université Laval in 1939.

The establishment of separate departments of political science proceeded swiftly in the late 1950s and the 1960s. From 1958 to 1969, over 30 institutions either separated political science from other departments or established new departments. The

number of political scientists teaching at Canadian universities grew from 33 in 1958 to over 500 in 1970.¹² Yet between 1960 and 1970, when faculty positions grew by 475, only 27 doctorates were awarded in Canada to political scientists. This led to the widespread recruitment of qualified non-Canadian political scientists, many of whom were drawn from the United States. They brought with them the various tenets and methodologies, mostly those of American political science. By 1970, nearly half of the more than 500 political science professors in Canada were foreign born. And although some had become naturalized Canadians, only 63 percent of the total number were Canadian citizens.

In the minds of some, this represented a threat to the national distinctiveness of the discipline. Many expressed fears that as the job market tightened, Canadian political scientists would not be able to find jobs. But because the majority of important departmental decisions still rested in the hands of Canadian political scientists at the associate and full-professor levels, these fears proved groundless, if indeed they were ever well founded. The situation eventually corrected itself, so that by the year 2000, nearly 90 percent of the newly appointed political scientists were Canadian citizens.

A Distinctive Canadian Political Science

There is no denying that American political science has played a major part in the history of Canadian political science. But Canadian political scientists have remained masters in their own house, combining and preserving the generalist influences from Europe with the trendsetting behavioural and post-behavioural influences from the United States.

During its short history, Canadian political science has nurtured its own identity and has earned the respect of the international political science community. Its healthy self-image is reflected in the current focus on Canadian institutional and

behavioural studies. Of the more than 1100 professional political scientists in Canada, nearly 50 percent regularly conduct research into the study of Canadian problems. About 40 percent of practitioners have research interests in foreign and cross-national politics, while the general field of international relations attracts about 10 percent of Canada's political scientists.¹³ This represents a vigorous dispersion of professional interest in both domestic and external affairs. Many practitioners have advised successive governments in Canada at all levels.

Canadian political science also owes a large debt to francophone influences. Because of its varied Canadian and European heritage, francophone political science has enriched the quality of political research in Canada by its eclectic approach to the discipline. In 1978, the Société québécoise de science politique (SQSP), formerly founded in 1964 as the Société canadienne de science politique, was a successful attempt to function autonomously from the CPSA. With its own journal, *Politique*, established in 1982, and a membership of about 400, the SQSP offers an interdisciplinary character to political research. Beyond a doubt, political science in Quebec has successfully asserted its claim as a recognized academic pursuit.¹⁴ In addition to the many universities in Quebec, the Collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEPS) have departments of political science.

It is obvious that the academic presence of political science is complete in Canada. Today, Canada relies upon an impressive entourage of its own experts to conduct independent political research into national and international affairs.

The Subject Areas of Canadian Political Science

1. **Canadian Politics and Government** focuses on political behaviour in Canada. It involves the study of interest groups, political parties,

public opinion, and the election process, as well as the activities of Parliament, the judiciary and the Supreme Court.

2. **Comparative Government and Politics** denotes the comparative study of several political systems, such as the major democratic, communist, and dictatorial countries, or countries within a region, e.g., in Europe or Latin America.
3. **International Politics and Relations** is the study of transnational politics. It has two major related components: international politics (the study of relations between countries), international and regional organizations, and international law.
4. **Political Philosophy** serves as a kind of underpinning for all political science study. It deals with major concepts, ideologies, and values. Throughout the ages, major political philosophers have asked the question, What constitutes a good government and how can it be established? Political philosophy speculates about “what ought to be” rather than “what is.”
5. **Public Administration** deals with the administration and enforcement of public policies at all levels of government, with a strong focus on administrative law, the bureaucracy, its organization, and personnel.
6. **Public Law** is the sub-discipline that focuses on the judicial process and, particularly, on the making and the enforcement of laws in the public realm.
7. **Public Policy** embraces all the laws, regulations, and rules made by the output agencies (legislature, executive, and judiciary) of a polity. It examines the total output of a political system.
8. **Municipal Government and Politics**, as the title implies, deals with the political activities and agencies closest to home—those on the local and regional level.

CURRENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

State-Centric Approach

Post-behaviouralism called on political scientists to conduct relevant research, commentary, and investigation. This resulted in a return to the *state* as the unit of analysis. Many characteristics of the state are taken as the focus of political science inquiry. These include the structural characteristics of the state (such as constitutions, legislatures, federalism, the judiciary, political parties, and interest groups). Also included are the behavioural characteristics of the state (such as its ideology, level of political participation, political recruitment, and political change).

The state-centred approach enables political scientists to apply analysis to the institutions of government. The state's machinery, its organizations, political leaders, and bureaucracy are evaluated by their ability to carry out political decisions and to enforce the laws and rules of government.¹⁵ Because the state is still an autonomous actor in the twenty-first century, it can be studied in terms of national interest, international co-operation, and its role in international organization.

Comparative Approach

All science involves making comparisons. Comparing units of inquiry enables us to find similarities and differences that may not be apparent on the surface of what we observe. Thus the act of comparing can help us discover new knowledge. Political scientists often compare events and institutions over time, what some call *diachronic* comparisons, e.g., the rules of the House of Commons in the 1940s compared with the rules in the 2000s. Or research can be done by making

synchronic comparisons, which involves comparing events or institutions across national borders, e.g., Canada's Parliament compared with the US Congress.¹⁶

The study of comparative politics and government is concerned with the history, institutions, behaviour, and processes of the world's political systems. Its goal is to discern uniformities and disparities and to distinguish the unique from the common. Using a comparative approach can help us explain the complex world of politics and government.

Marxist Class Analysis

In the Marxian framework, class conflict is the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class. Those who approach politics from Marx's viewpoint maintain that the capitalist class controls and exploits the masses of workers and controls the agenda of governments. They analyze political events with the assumption that political systems can alienate the majority of citizens and can enforce the many discriminations of race, gender, class, and age.

Marxist class analysis emphasizes that gender differences as well as racial-ethnic differences alter the power equation of society and reinforce its class divisions. Marxist political and economic analyses inspire heated debates across generations of social scientists. Although this approach is criticized, many of its ideas form the foundation of contemporary conflict theory.

Feminist Approaches

Feminist approaches direct attention to the importance of gender as an element in the political structure. Feminism is not one unified approach. Rather, there are different approaches among feminist political analysts. All agree we live in a political patriarchy, whereby government institutions

reflect a sex/gender system in which men dominate women and which values male-generated ideas more than those of women. Feminist research presupposes that gender circumstance is politically created and supported by the legal system. The discriminations and contradictions of the political system need to be exposed so that society can effect egalitarian changes.

In recent decades, feminist political scientists have criticized the objects and content of traditional research, as well as its methodologies and biases. They point to the limitations of andro-centricity (which means approaching an issue from a male perspective or analyzing gender issues only in terms of how they relate to men). Political science research in Canada, as elsewhere, contains sexist language and sexist results biased in favour of men.

The Global Approach

The global research perspective involves the study of the world as a political village, as well as our place in it. This approach is a logical extension of the phenomenon of globalization: What happens in the world affects everyone in Canada. Our government institutions must now be prepared to address global as well as national challenges. In effect, global challenges become national challenges.

The global research perspective presupposes that every focus of inquiry must accept the premise that the world has never been more interconnected. The national perspective is increasingly myopic and creates serious difficulties for resolving global issues. This research approach believes that, in an interconnected world, we can understand our political problems only to the extent that we consider those of others.

Analysts are aware that all national political systems are highly influenced by external events. These include acts of terrorism, increased dependence of national economies on external trade, international capital flows, corporate investments, and tourism

and labour migrations. They know that the financial marketplace is no longer just national but worldwide and immediate. On the political culture

side, they know that the new ideas, values, and norms are exported globally through transnational networks of communication.

Focus On Career Options for Political Scientists

Often, beginning students will ask about the career options available to them in pursuing a university political science program. This is especially true for students seeking careers in teaching (secondary and higher education), law, government, journalism, and business. Usually, political science is selected as a stepping stone to professions that require knowledge of the political system and political behaviour, such as law and journalism. However, political knowledge is a vital component of one's total expertise in all professions.

Teaching Political Science

In Canada and the United States, most people who choose a career in political science seek employment in a college or university. Currently, more than 1100 full-time political scientists are employed in about 66 departments across Canada. Most of these men and women have earned PhDs and make up a corps of highly qualified professors and research specialists in the field of political science.

The university setting is ideal for people who adopt political science careers. It provides the practitioner with a degree of academic freedom unavailable in most other walks of life. This means that a political scientist is free to choose any area of research related to politics. The university environment gives the political scientist sufficient distance from the potential conflicts of interest in society to generate honest analysis and unguarded criticism of public policy. At the same time, a political scientist can be as successful working alone as with other colleagues in the profession. The discipline is really quite flexible in this regard.

Across Canada, political science now shares its place in the high school curriculum with other social studies such as economics, geography, history, and sociology. Each year, more high schools include political science in their curricula, generating a need for political scientists to teach and develop courses at this level.

Law

The connection between the professions of law and political science has been long and persistent. In Canada, many political scientists have earned the respect of legal scholars by their in-depth studies of the process of lawmaking and public administration at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Traditionally, constitutional law, municipal law, and international law have been cultivated as a preserve of political science. For this reason, students with an eye on law school are drawn to undergraduate courses in political science because they are introduced to the fundamentals of legal thought, as well as to the structures of government, where laws are made. But, by itself, political science is not a prerequisite for admission to any law school in Canada. Actually, law students may hold a variety of undergraduate degrees (in business administration, English, history, and the natural sciences).

FACTFILE The prevalence of lawyers in politics is a Canadian tradition, with lawyers historically filling more seats in the House of Commons and the Senate than any other professional category.

Political science is the best preparatory field of study for law because it is concerned with

those institutions in which many lawyers seek employment. Many lawyers are salaried employees of Crown corporations, governments, labour unions, and pressure groups; they may also be active in partisan politics. All these bodies are the focus of political inquiry within the field of political science.

Journalism

In Canada today, all areas of human behaviour—economic, political, and social—are potential reportorial subjects. With the boom of the multimedia and the general rise of wages in the media, many students have trained for jobs as journalists in the press and broadcasting. Each year, graduates of Canadian schools of journalism take on the tasks of modern journalists as both a challenge and a responsibility.

No one seriously considering a career in journalism overlooks the importance of political science training. Within the fields of political science, students of journalism can focus on courses in public opinion, voting behaviour, pressure groups, political parties, federal and provincial governments, and international politics. These kinds of specialization have encouraged the collaborative undertaking of journalists and political scientists.

Interest Groups

Another career option for political scientists is with interest/pressure groups. There are thousands of public and private groups that attempt to influence government decision makers in the federal and provincial capitals. The greatest source of the influence of pressure groups is not money or other material rewards offered to bureaucrats and legislators, but information. Interest groups with the greatest stake in changing policy have the greatest incentive to conduct research on how policies affect them. The data

they collect is often the best or all that is available to an administrator or member of parliament.

FACTFILE There are more than 100 000 non-profit organizations in Canada, several hundreds of which are officially registered in Ottawa as “lobbyists.”

Some private trade associations use the lobbyists hired from within their ranks. Others recruit people from outside the group who know about the political system and the process skills of effective oral and written communication. There is an especially keen demand for people with political science training among groups that aspire to represent the public interest. This provides an important market for people who acquire the skills of political research and negotiation.

Government Careers

In Canada, the government is the economy’s largest employer. Currently, nearly 2.5 million Canadians are employed by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

Each federal department has employment opportunities for political scientists, although these opportunities are very competitive and have diminished considerably because the size of the federal cabinet has decreased significantly. But qualifications speak for themselves and trained political scientists can be in a favourable position when jobs are available.

In addition to positions that might surface in Canada’s political executive, there are also opportunities on Parliament Hill. The House of Commons currently has 308 MPs who hire assistants and staff for constituency work, both in Ottawa and in the riding. While work of this type is often temporary and subject to the fate of the MP who employs assistants, these jobs provide a window of opportunity for political scientists who want front-line experience in politics and government.

In the realm of governments, a promising employment area that political science majors may wish to consider is provincial government. Provinces have assumed increasing responsibilities in such areas as industrial development, human resource training, pollution control, consumer protection, and rehabilitation. Thus provincial governments, which now hire the greatest percentage of public employees, are being encouraged by the federal government to deal with a wider range of social problems.

Employment and Immigration Canada publishes *The Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations*, in which political science is listed as a special category of the social sciences. Many of Canada's graduate schools offer programs in public policy and public administration. Most of these institutions offer special courses to provide students with experience in government as graduate students. However, undergraduate education is usually enough preparation for obtaining employment.

FACTFILE About one-third of Canada's political science graduates find employment in the business sector of the economy with their major or honours undergraduate degree.

Business

All aspects of business—advertising, banking, finance, marketing, personnel, and public relations—can benefit from political science expertise. Because government plays such a large role in the economy, business cannot operate without knowledge of fiscal policy, regulation, government-grant programs, intergovernmental relations, and international relations. For people skilled in policy analysis and corporate affairs, business opportunities continue to open up.

A student can prepare for business, with the idea of becoming a specialist in the relationship between government and private enterprise. Most Canadian businesses, willingly or unwillingly, have extensive contacts with governments at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. In courses in local government, public administration, and organizational behaviour, the student is made aware of which political decisions affect economic policy, consumer and corporate affairs, and the role of bureaucracy in public affairs.

POLITICAL SCIENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In 1949, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) co-ordinated the establishment of the International Political Science Association (IPSA), now headquartered at Concordia University in Montreal. As of 2003, about 100 national political science associations were listed as collective members of IPSA, along with 1500 individual memberships. The association has been active in promoting the devel-

opment of political science in the international community. IPSA publishes the *International Political Science Review*, *International Political Science Abstracts*, and the *International Bibliography of Political Science*.¹⁷

Political scientists in democratic states tend to engage in open criticism of national and international issues. Each national association of political scientists bears the stamp of its own unique political culture, traditions, and ideologies.

In contrast to democratic states, political science in “authoritarian” states tends not to be open or critical, at least as a visible, legitimate discipline.

Political scientists in these countries are cautious and sensitive to government censorship and political repression. In some Latin American states, such as Guatemala and El Salvador, political scientists are closely watched and their politics are constantly scrutinized by government officials, sometimes with perilous consequences.

In the few remaining “totalitarian” states, the development of political science as an autonomous and independent discipline has been slow. It has been typical for governments in these states to monitor political criticism very carefully and to require those who engage in the social sciences to conform to the ideological line of the totalitarian system. Political analysts in these states tend to support the political and economic system they study.

Political inquiry has had a long and honourable history. For centuries, its practitioners have been analyzing basic questions about the politics of people in society. What is justice? What forms of government are best? Are rulers accountable? When and why must people obey? These are ancient issues, yet they engage us at every turn in our modern world. The great writers of the past—Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Augustine, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau—can still today inform us about these matters. All political scientists share with their ancestors the basic premise that the serious study of politics is crucial to the survival of humankind.

Chapter Summary

Political scientists are university-trained people who study political behaviour as it appears in both the public and private domains. It is not a science in the same sense as chemistry, in which there are observable and fundamental laws upon which complex events are precisely measurable and predictable.

Political science involves the study of political ideas, institutions and structures, political behaviour, and public policies. It uses research methods that are also applied in other fields such as anthropology, economics, geog-

raphy, history, law, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and statistics. Political scientists also draw on the large volume of knowledge that these disciplines have generated from their unique perspectives about the world of politics. We should also be aware that philosophers, scholars, critics, playwrights, poets, and politicians themselves have been observing and commenting on political processes since pen was first put to paper or stylus to tablet. What unites political scientists is a shared interest in whatever can be loosely termed “politics.”

Greek scholars developed a social-science mentality when they studied politics, regarding it as a serious intellectual pursuit and using comparative methods of analysis. In the centuries following ancient Greek civilization, the study of politics experienced a diversity of intellectual influences coming from the Romans, critics and leaders of Christianity, secular thinkers, and great historical transitions, such as the Renaissance, the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment, and the Age of Science and Technology. The evolution of political science in North America since the turn of the twentieth century has made major contributions to the credibility and future development of this body of knowledge.

The study of politics has not produced a social science with a common or unified approach to political knowledge. Three dynamic schools of thought—traditionalism, behaviouralism, and post-behaviouralism—have generated unique biases and methods for studying the world of politics and government. Several approaches to the study of politics that remain current in the field are the state-centric, comparative, Marxist, feminist, and global.

Political science is an eclectic discipline because in addition to building a recognizable and independent body of political knowledge, it draws significantly from other fields of knowledge, such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, social work, and statistics.

The development of modern, independent, and self-conscious political science in North America is linked to the growth of universities in Canada and the United States. Universities gave political science a unique academic presence, providing advanced training for public administrators and scholars.

The *traditional school* of political inquiry rejects the view that politics and government can be studied only

by applying rigorous scientific methods to generate a body of reliable knowledge. For traditionalists, politics can be understood by extensive study and with the informed judgment of trained observers.

Spawned by the formation of the American Political Science Association and by major advances in the use of statistical survey and polling techniques, *behaviouralism* emerged as a separate school of thought in the field of political science. Behaviouralists seek to employ the exacting methods of science to gather a theoretical body of knowledge about politics and government.

The *post-behaviouralist* movement in political science tries to reconcile the strengths of the traditional and behavioural approaches to the gathering of political knowledge. Post-behaviouralism encourages the political science community to ask the normative questions about society and to research the answers to these questions using reliable techniques and methods of science as much as possible.

Current political science includes the state-centric, comparative, Marxist, feminist, and global approaches.

Discussion Questions

1. In the formal study of politics and government, why must scholars draw from the insights of other disciplines to help them answer research questions? What are the perils and benefits of crossing into other branches of knowledge to learn about the world of politics?
2. What contributions did the Greeks make to the modern study of government and politics? Evaluate the development of political inquiry under the Romans, and during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. Why did it take so long for a self-conscious discipline dedicated to learning about politics to emerge as a professional pursuit?
3. Compare the development of political science in Canada and the United States.
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the three approaches outlined in this chapter—traditionalism, behaviouralism, and post-behaviouralism? Which of the current approaches to politics are you attracted to and why?
5. Consider the theoretical approaches to the study of politics and government. Which one(s) would you be inclined to use? Provide a thumbnail sketch of each and describe their contributions to political inquiry.