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**COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE (POL111)**


**DEPARTMENT: ECONOMICS**

**LEVEL:100**

### **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE.**

Political science is that branch of the social sciences that studies the state, politics, and government. Political Science deals extensively with the analysis of political systems, the theoretical and practical applications to politics, and the examination of political behavior. The Greek thinker, **Aristotle**, defined political science as the study of the state. Many political scientists view themselves as being engaged in fleshing out the connections between political events and conditions, and by this understanding they hope to construct a system of general principles that posit the way the world of politics works. Political science is not a standalone field and it intersects many other branches like sociology, economics, history, anthropology, public policy among others. Political scientists are much sought after these days because of the changing landscape of politics across the world and since the society wants to understand how the political world works, they need someone to explain the nuances of the political economy. Any casual perusal of the newspapers and the television channels reveals that political scientists are at the forefront of debates and discussions for their knowledge and expertise.

#### **Scope of Political Science**

The scope of political science is vast and experts have divided the field of political science into five sub-disciplines that are political theory, public administration, comparative politics, international relations, and public law. It needs to be noted that these sub-disciplines cover the entire gamut of the modern political economy and provide the basis for the study and understanding of how the global political economy works. The study of the matters concerning the allocation and distribution as well as the transfer of power is one of the main preoccupations of political scientists. The success or otherwise of the governance structures is gauged by political scientists who examine the multifaceted and multilayered factors at work that contribute to good or bad governance. The scope of the political scientists has now been broadened to include the realm of the study of the democratic elections across the world. In other words, with the explosion in the political systems all over the world, political scientists, 

and their scope of study has been considerably enhanced.

### **The Importance of Political Science**

The importance of political science lies in the fact that all of us live within political systems and we are affected by the changes in the global political economy. With the advent of globalization, there has been a concomitant rise in the interest taken by the people of the world in understanding the political systems of other countries. Hence, political scientists become valued and important as they provide the lens through which we can understand the global political economy. There are many universities that provide graduate and higher-level degrees in political science and in recent years, because of the renewed interest in political science as a field of study, there are many takers for these courses.

This article sets the context for the subsequent discussion on the various aspects of political science and its relevance to the modern political economy.

### **Political Science and Other Social Sciences**

As mentioned in the introductory article in this module, political science is the systematic study of the state and the workings of the political economy. The study of political science gives people the ability to influence and persuade the authorities to conform to broad developmental thrusts and to steer the direction in which the government is headed. Since political science is concerned with the study of the global political economy, it has links to other social sciences like history, sociology, philosophy, and psychology. It needs to be mentioned that political science is that branch of the social sciences that is concerned with the workings of the global political economy and hence, shares a symbiotic relationship with the other social sciences that study the other parts of the global political economy. We have chosen history, sociology, philosophy and psychology in this article as these are the disciplines that have a bearing on how political scientists go about their work.

Political science is intimately linked to history as the patterns of the past provide clues to the future. There can be no better guide to understanding the present and to predict the future than by studying the events in the past and extrapolating them to the future. For instance, when political scientists try to predict the likely direction, which the global political economy takes, they would be relying on history to predict political behavior. Next, political science is closely intertwined with sociology as both branches attempt to study human behavior in groups. Whereas sociology studies the entire societies, political science is concerned with the political systems that are part of the larger society. The study of the interactions between the people and the state is something that both sociology and political science aim to do and hence, there is a symbiotic relationship between sociology and political science.

### **Philosophy, Psychology, and Political Science**

The next aspect is to do with philosophy. Since political behavior and governance are studied in terms of political philosophy which deals with abstract notions of the role of the state and the relationship of people and the state with an emphasis on understanding the concepts of public welfare and larger social good, both political science and philosophy have common grounds in these aspects. The final social science discipline chosen is psychology and as this discipline studies human behavior in society, there are meeting points between political science and psychology as they both are concerned with the examination of why people in the larger political economy behave the way they do.

Finally, political science cannot be a standalone or isolated field as all branches of the social sciences purport to explain the larger questions concerning people and the state. Hence, there are symbiotic relationships between political science and other sub-disciplines of social sciences as they have common ground in their quest to understand how political systems work and how politics and governance play themselves out.