A hallmark of the study of American Politics is diversity of subject, approach, and method. The subject matter comprises, among other things, analysis of Congress, the bureaucracy, interest groups, the Presidency, voting, public opinion and participation, race and ethnicity; the conceptual approaches include, among other perspectives, rational choice, historical, and behavioral perspectives; and the field encompasses, among other methods, quantitative analysis of aggregate data, qualitative fieldwork, survey research and randomized experiments.

No single department can represent fully this diversity. But the department faculty in American Politics (together with colleagues in the Graduate School of Business) comes remarkably close. The core graduate sequence in American Politics – PS 420A, B, and C – accordingly, introduces students whose first or second field is American Politics to the gallery of both faculty and research in American Politics. PS 420A focuses on analysis of political institutions, PS 420B addresses the analysis of individual behavior while PS 400C focuses on research design and practice.

Requirements for American Politics as a field:
Students who wish to designate American Politics as a first or second subfield must take at least five graduate level courses listed under the American Politics section of the University Bulletin. Students are required to take the PS 420A, B, and 400C sequence. Students are also required to take two elective courses before advancing to candidacy. The electives are to be 3xx or 4xx courses offered by a member of the American Politics field. Electives that fulfill this requirement in 2015-16 include:

Fall:
PS 320R: The Presidency (Moe)
PS 326: Race and Racism in American Politics (Segura)
PS 344: Politics and Geography (Rodden)

Winter
PS 322A: Advances in Political Psychology (Sniderman)
PS 326T: Politics of Education (Moe)

Spring
PS 421K: Questionnaire Design for Surveys and Lab Experiments (Krosnick)

Workshop
The American Politics Workshop (PS 422) is an important forum for students to engage with new and exciting American Politics research. It also offers students an opportunity to further integrate themselves into a professional community comprised of Stanford faculty, scholars from other institutions, and most importantly, of student peers at all stages of doctoral work. All American Politics students are strongly encouraged to attend the Workshop regularly.

Comprehensive Examination:
Students are encouraged to take the comprehensive examination at the beginning of their second year so they can go on to advanced course work and research. The exam in American Politics requires students to demonstrate knowledge of concepts and research findings on major political phenomena at the level of individuals and institutions.