

Optional specializations of the elective area "Political Science specialization"

Specialization „Democracy, Violence, Conflict“

Empirical evidence suggests that the global decline of democracy is accelerating. Democratic governments worldwide are being undermined by various developments, including citizens' distrust in democratic institutions and the legitimacy of elections, the rise of extremist actors with anti-pluralist agendas, increasing inequalities, polarization and fragmentation, as well as the spread of misinformation, hate speech and unprecedented relativism towards facts, evidence and expertise in general. These factors not only contribute to risky behavior, such as the rejection of public health recommendations, but are also likely to fuel societal conflict

- both at the interpersonal level through the erosion of social trust and the rise of harmful behavior such as hate crimes, and at the collective level through the rise of civil disobedience, protests and political violence. As this decline takes place, political leaders face unprecedented challenges from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, authoritarian regimes around the world deepen their oppression, and more than two-thirds of the world's population now live in declining democracies or authoritarian and hybrid regimes.

Against this backdrop, students in this specialization, applying an empirical and comparative perspective, examine the conditions that put pressure on democracies and help autocrats to consolidate their grip, as well as the resulting consequences. Students will examine the processes, actors, groups and technologies that strengthen and weaken both democracies and autocracies, creating new dimensions of social and political competition, individual and collective violence and conflict.

Specialization „Energy, Climate, Health and Sustainability“

The specialization area deals with the causes and consequences as well as the governance challenges associated with some of the most pressing sustainability problems of our planet (such as climate change, the energy transition or the challenges for functioning health systems). Understanding the causes of the underlying challenges is an important first step in the search for possible solutions.

Students in this specialization will examine different governance strategies and processes used within and between different levels of government (local, national, international and global) to address pressing sustainability challenges, as well as the role that civil society actors play in raising the profile of these issues.

Specialization „Law, Regulation, Ethics and Digitization“

Law and regulation not only provide the framework for the digitalization of various areas of life, but also represent a central shaping factor for politics. The specialization area should therefore enable students to name and weigh up basic and constitutional law positions with points of contact to digitalization, to classify political processes in connection with

digitalization in a legal context, to recognize regulatory challenges of digitalization, to evaluate possible solutions and to develop their own regulatory approaches. In this context, students are also introduced to ethical considerations and challenges as well as current digital policy developments based on digital law.

Specialization „International Relations and Global Governance“

As part of the Bachelor's degree program in Political Science, the focus area "International Relations and Global Governance" provides a profound understanding of the complex challenges and dynamics in international relations in politics and economics. Students are familiarized with theoretical concepts in order to examine problems in specific policy fields at regional, national, supranational and international level. A particular focus is on the analysis of political dynamics in a globalized world and how regional and global institutions and actors interact with each other. Further thematic priorities are the challenges in the areas of global governance, global health and security threats in international relations.