POLITICAL SCIENCE, BA

WHY STUDY POLITICAL SCIENCE?

There are many definitions of political science. But whether a definition focuses on the analysis of governmental structures, or influences on voter choice, or the relationship between national governments, or the best form of government, at base, political science is about the systematic study of power. Whether power is exercised formally, as is the case between government and the individual, or informally, as is the case between individuals, it is the systematic study of power relationships that provides the subject matter for the discipline. Majors in political science obtain not only an understanding of the workings of government, but they also develop important skills in critical thinking and analysis. These skills make them ideal candidates for careers in law; in government at the state, national, and international levels; in business; in journalism; and in politics.

WHAT CAREERS DO POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS PURSUE?

Poli Sci majors learn quickly, work well in teams, and have basic understanding of the policy process and the operations of government. Poli Sci majors understand that for every endeavor, no matter how important, there is a mountain of ordinary grunt work that has to be done. Poli Sci majors can be counted on to do the foot-work, put in the face-time, and endure the slog necessary of everything of consequence.

Poli Sci majors go on to work in all levels of government. Local and state governments have a direct impact on the quality of life of all Americans. Courses on state and urban government, public policy, administrative law, and public administration are especially valuable. Quantitative and statistical skills developed in these courses and applied in the internships many of our students do provide a powerful combination.

Poli Sci majors go on to work in a wide range of International careers, in business, Foreign Service, and non-governmental organizations. Political Science offers a wide variety of courses in comparative politics, international relations and organizations, public policy, political development, and interest group politics. These courses in combination with economics, statistics, computer science, and international trade.

Poli Sci majors pursue careers in campaign management, political polling, national political committees, and consulting. They will have taken multiple courses in the American political system, comparative political parties, elections, public opinion, and voting behavior; as well as committing themselves to developing their writing and data analysis. There are over half a million campaigns in the United States annually, and while entry-level jobs have long hours, low pay, and enormous demands, they are places where you can "cut your political teeth." Local campaigns lead to statewide or national campaigns, and then perhaps to consulting and polling if that strikes your interest.

Poli Sci majors have also traditionally gone into law. Some lawyers are litigators while others are employed by corporations, government, and other organizations. Political Science track fits nicely for students seeking law degrees as official credentials to "practice law" and those students who seek a law degree as an additional "tool" to make positive impacts in their professional areas of interest. Some individuals with legal training work in other areas, such as corporate or public management. The department offers a wide variety of political theory, constitutional law, and public policy courses that will help you explore the interaction between law, politics, and society.

HOW TO GET IN

HOW TO GET IN

Students in the College of Letters & Science can declare Political Science by completing a form on the department website (https://polisci.wisc.edu/advising-and-major-information/).

Students in other schools and colleges interested in adding the Political Science major to their primary degree program need an online form signed by the Political Science advisor in order to obtain permission from their home school/college to add the additional major.

Students declared in the Political Science certificate may not be declared in the Political Science major at the same time. Students who do wish to declare this major must first cancel their declaration in the certificate.

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext) section of the *Guide*.

| General Education | • Breadth—Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits
• Breadth—Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits
• Breadth—Social Studies: 3 credits
• Communication Part A Part B *
• Ethnic Studies *
• Quantitative Reasoning Part A Part B *

* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements. |

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum.

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Mathematics	Complete the University General Education Requirements for Quantitative Reasoning A (QR-A) and Quantitative Reasoning B (QR-B) coursework.
Language	• Complete the fourth unit of a language other than English; OR • Complete the third unit of a language and the second unit of an additional language other than English.
LS Breadth	• 12 credits of Humanities, which must include 6 credits of literature; and • 12 credits of Social Science; and • 12 credits of Natural Science, which must include one 3+ credit Biological Science course and one 3+ credit Physical Science course.
Liberal Arts and Science Coursework	Complete at least 108 credits.
Depth of Intermediate/ Advanced work	Complete at least 60 credits at the intermediate or advanced level.
Major	Declare and complete at least one major.
Total Credits	Complete at least 120 credits.
UW–Madison Experience	• 30 credits in residence, overall; and • 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit.
Quality of Work	• 2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison • 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW–Madison

NON–L&S STUDENTS PURSUING AN L&S MAJOR

Non–L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the major requirements. They do not need to complete the L&S Degree Requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

30 credits are required in the following areas:

DISTRIBUTION [1]

Code	Title	Credits
Three courses and three areas required:		**9-12**
International Relations		
POLI SCI 140	Introduction to International Relations	
POLI SCI/ CHICLA/ HISTORY/ LACIS 268	The U.S. & Latin America from the Colonial Era to the Present: A Critical Survey	
POLI SCI 340	The European Union: Politics and Political Economy	
POLI SCI 343	Theories of International Security	
POLI SCI 345	Conflict Resolution	
POLI SCI 346	China in World Politics	
POLI SCI 347	Terrorism	
POLI SCI 348	Analysis of International Relations	
POLI SCI 350	International Political Economy	
POLI SCI 354	International Institutions and World Order	
POLI SCI 356	Principles of International Law	
POLI SCI 359	American Foreign Policy	
POLI SCI 377	Nuclear Weapons and World Politics	
POLI SCI 390	Study Abroad Topics in Political Science: International Relations	
POLI SCI/ECON/ ENVIR ST/ URB R PL 449	Government and Natural Resources	
POLI SCI 455	African International Relations	
POLI SCI 652	The Politics of Development	
American Government		
POLI SCI 104	Introduction to American Politics and Government	
POLI SCI 184	Introduction to American Politics	
POLI SCI 205	Introduction to State Government	
POLI SCI 206	Introduction to Political Psychology	
POLI SCI/ LEGAL ST 217	Law, Politics and Society	
POLI SCI/ CHICLA 231	Politics in Multi-Cultural Societies	
POLI SCI 272	Introduction to Public Policy	
POLI SCI/ AFRICAN/ AFROAMER/ HISTORY 297	African and African-American Linkages: An Introduction	
POLI SCI/ CHICLA 302	Mexican-American Politics	
POLI SCI 304	The Political Economy of Race in the United States	
POLI SCI 305	Elections and Voting Behavior	
POLI SCI 306	American Political Parties	
POLI SCI 311	United States Congress	
POLI SCI 314	Criminal Law and Justice	
POLI SCI 315	Legislative Internship	

POLI SCI 402	Wisconsin in Washington Internship Course
POLI SCI 405	State Government and Public Policy
POLI SCI 408	The American Presidency
POLI SCI 411	The American Constitution : Powers and Structures of Government
POLI SCI 412	The American Constitution: Rights and Civil Liberties
POLI SCI 414	The Supreme Court as a Political Institution
POLI SCI 416	Community Power and Grass Roots Politics
POLI SCI 417	The American Judicial System
POLI SCI/ PUB AFFR 419	Administrative Law
POLI SCI 470	The First Amendment
POLI SCI 481	Honors Seminar on Race and Politics in the United States
POLI SCI 490	Study Abroad Topics in Political Science: American Government
POLI SCI 511	Campaign Finance
POLI SCI 515	Public Opinion
POLI SCI/ AFROAMER 519	African American Political Theory
POLI SCI 602	Wisconsin in Washington Advanced Public Policy Course

Political Theory

POLI SCI 160	Introduction to Political Theory
POLI SCI 360	History of American Political Thought
POLI SCI 361	Contemporary American Political Thought
POLI SCI/ CLASSICS/ HISTORY 362	Athenian Democracy
POLI SCI 363	Literature and Politics
POLI SCI 364	Christian Political Thought
POLI SCI/ ILS/ITALIAN/ LITTRANS 365	Machiavelli and His World
POLI SCI 460	Topics in Political Philosophy
POLI SCI 463	Deception and Politics
POLI SCI/ GEN&WS 469	Women and Politics
POLI SCI/ AFROAMER 519	African American Political Theory
POLI SCI 590	Study Abroad Topics in Political Science: Political Theory

Comparative Politics

POLI SCI 120	Introduction to Comparative Politics
POLI SCI 182	Introduction to Comparative Politics (Honors)
POLI SCI/ CHICLA 231	Politics in Multi-Cultural Societies

POLI SCI/ASIAN/ GEOG/HISTORY/ SOC 244	Introduction to Southeast Asia: Vietnam to the Philippines
POLI SCI/GEOG/ HISTORY/ SLAVIC 253	Russia: An Interdisciplinary Survey
POLI SCI/GEOG/ HISTORY/ SLAVIC 254	Eastern Europe: An Interdisciplinary Survey
POLI SCI/ASIAN/ HISTORY 255	Introduction to East Asian Civilizations
POLI SCI/ AFROAMER/ ANTHRO/ C&E SOC/ GEOG/HISTORY/ LACIS/SOC/ SPANISH 260	Latin America: An Introduction
POLI SCI/ AFRICAN/ AFROAMER/ ANTHRO/ GEOG/HISTORY/ SOC 277	Africa: An Introductory Survey
POLI SCI/ AFRICAN/ AFROAMER/ HISTORY 297	African and African-American Linkages: An Introduction
POLI SCI 320	Governments and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa
POLI SCI 322	Politics of Southeast Asia
POLI SCI 324	Chinese Politics
POLI SCI/ INTL ST 325	Social Movements and Revolutions in Latin America
POLI SCI/ INTL ST 327	Indian Politics in Comparative Perspective
POLI SCI 328	Politics of East and Southeast Asia
POLI SCI 329	African Politics
POLI SCI 330	Political Economy of Development
POLI SCI 332	German Politics
POLI SCI 334	Russian Politics
POLI SCI 336	Democracy (and Its Uncertain Future)
POLI SCI 338	The Civil-Military Paradox in U.S. Politics and Society
POLI SCI 339	Non-Democracies
POLI SCI/ JEWISH 341	Israeli Politics and Society
POLI SCI 344	The Russian War on Ukraine: Causes and Consequences
POLI SCI 349	Global Access to Justice
POLI SCI/ CHICLA/ HISTORY/ LACIS 355	Labor in the Americas: US & Mexico in Comparative & Historical Perspective
POLI SCI 370	Islam and Politics
POLI SCI 421	The Challenge of Democratization

POLI SCI/ CHICLA/ HISTORY 422	Latino History and Politics	
POLI SCI/ GEN&WS 429	Gender and Politics in Comparative Perspective	
POLI SCI/ INTL ST 431	Contentious Politics	
POLI SCI 432	Comparative Legal Institutions	
POLI SCI/ RELIG ST 433	Religion and Politics	
POLI SCI/ INTL ST 434	The Politics of Human Rights	
POLI SCI/ GEN&WS 435	Politics of Gender and Women's Rights in the Middle East	
POLI SCI 437	Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict	
POLI SCI 438	Comparative Political Culture	
POLI SCI/ INTL ST 439	The Comparative Study of Genocide	
POLI SCI 529	Arab-Israeli Conflict	
POLI SCI 534	Socialism and Transitions to the Market	
POLI SCI 538	Politics and Policies in the European Union	
POLI SCI 635	Comparative Politics of Sport	
POLI SCI 690	Study Abroad Topics in Political Science: Comparative Politics	
Total Credits		**9-12**

RESEARCH METHODS

Code	Title	Credits
Complete one course from:		**3-4**
POLI SCI 170	Research Methods in Political Science	
POLI SCI 270	Understanding Political Numbers	
POLI SCI 274	Political Choice and Strategy	
POLI SCI 348	Analysis of International Relations	
POLI SCI/ JOURN/ URB R PL 373	Introduction to Survey Research	
Total Credits		**3-4**

ELECTIVES

Additional POLI SCI courses to attain 30 credits in the major.[2]

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- 2.000 GPA in all POLI SCI courses and courses that count toward the major
- 2.000 GPA on 15 upper-level credits in the major, taken in residence[3]
- 15 credits in POLI SCI, taken on campus

HONORS IN THE MAJOR

To declare Honors in the Major, students must have at least one POLI SCI course for Honors, at least a 3.300 University GPA, and meet with the major advisor to discuss the requirements.

To earn Honors in the Major, students must satisfy the requirements for the major (above) *and* these additional requirements:

- Earn a 3.300 or higher University GPA
- Earn 3.500 GPA or higher in all POLI SCI courses
- Complete at least 15 credits in POLI SCI for Honors to include:[4]

Code	Title	Credits
Complete one of these Thesis sequences:		6
POLI SCI 681 & POLI SCI 682	Senior Honors Thesis and Senior Honors Thesis	
POLI SCI 683 & POLI SCI 684	Senior Honors Thesis Seminar and Senior Honors Thesis Seminar	
Additional POLI SCI courses taken for Honors [4]		9
Total Credits		**15**

FOOTNOTES

[1] Courses may only meet one Distribution area. A course may meet both a Distribution and the Research Methods requirement, but will only be applied once toward the 30 credits required in the major.

[2] No more than 6 total credits of Directed Study (POLI SCI 199, POLI SCI 698, POLI SCI 699) and Internship (POLI SCI 315) may count in the major.

[3] POLI SCI courses numbered 300 and higher count as upper-level in the major.

[4] A grade of B or higher is required to earn Honors credit.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Total Degree	To receive a bachelor's degree from UW–Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.
Residency	Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.
Quality of Work	Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop an understanding of and appreciation for the methods and approaches of diverse subfields in Political Science--#American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory--#and their relevance to important theoretical and pragmatic questions.
2. Analyze different forms and practices of governance both democratic and non#democratic.
3. Argue effectively and defend propositions with intellectual integrity, while considering a range of alternative points of view and evidence.
4. Analyze relations among individuals, civil society, political institutions, and states.
5. Analyze the motivations and consequences of political decision# making and activities.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

This Four-Year Plan is only one way a student may complete an L&S degree with this major. Many factors can affect student degree planning, including placement scores, credit for transferred courses, credits earned by examination, and individual scholarly interests. In addition, many students have commitments (e.g., athletics, honors, research, student organizations, study abroad, work and volunteer experiences) that necessitate they adjust their plans accordingly. Informed students engage in their own unique Wisconsin Experience by consulting their academic advisors, Guide, DARS, and Course Search & Enroll for assistance making and adjusting their plan.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
POLI SCI 104, 120, 140, or 160	3-4	POLI SCI 104, 120, 140, or 160 (complete two)	3-4
Communications A	3	Literature Breadth	3
Quantitative Reasoning A	3	Foreign Language (if needed)	4
Foreign Language (if needed)	4		
	14		**15**

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
Declare the major		POLI SCI elective	3
POLI SCI/CHICLA 231, 297, or 355 (satisfies Ethnic Studies requirement)	3-4	Communications B	4
POLI SCI 270, 274, or 348 (satisfies Quantitative Reasoning B requirement)	3-4	Physical Science Breadth	3
Biological Science Breadth	3	Literature Breadth	3
I/A COMP SCI, MATH or STAT (if BS)	3	I/A COMP SCI, MATH, or STAT (if BS)	3
INTER-LS 210	1		
	15		**16**

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
POLI SCI course 300 and above	4	POLI SCI course 300 and above	3
Humanities Breadth	3	Humanities Breadth	3
Science Breadth	3	Science Breadth	3
Elective	4	Elective	6
		Apply for Senior Thesis (optional)[1]	
	14		**15**

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
POLI SCI course 300 and above	4	POLI SCI course 300 and above	6
POLI SCI 681, 683, or 691 (optional)[1]	3-4	POLI SCI 682, 684, or 692 (optional)[1]	3-4
Elective	9	Elective	6
	16		**15**

Total Credits 120

[1] Students wishing to write a senior thesis (with or without Honors) should apply in the spring of their third year.

THREE-YEAR PLAN

This Sample Three-Year Plan is a tool to assist students and their advisor(s). Students should use it —along with their DARS report, the Degree Planner, and Course Search & Enroll tools — to make their own three-year plan based on their placement scores, credit for transferred courses and approved examinations, and individual interests.

Three-year plans may vary considerably from student to student, depending on their individual preparation and circumstances. Students interested in graduating in three years should meet with an advisor as early as possible to discuss feasibility, appropriate course sequencing, post-graduation plans (careers, graduate school, etc.), and opportunities they might forgo in pursuit of a three-year graduation plan.

DEPARTMENTAL EXPECTATIONS

Students planning to graduate within three years with a Political Science major should enter the University with a minimum of 18 advanced standing credits, and have satisfied the following requirements with course credit or via placement examination:

- Communication Part A
- Quantitative Reasoning Part A
- 18 credits of any elective coursework
- 3-4 units of foreign language

Students missing one or more of these requirements upon entering the University should talk to their advisor about completing coursework over Summer terms to stay on track for a three year timeline.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
POLI SCI 104, 120, 140, or 160	4	Declare the Major	
POLI SCI 104, 120, 140, or 160	4	POLI SCI 104, 120, 140, or 160	4
Biological Science Breadth	3	POLI SCI Elective	3
Literature Breadth	3	Communication B	4
Intermediate or Advanced COMP SCI, MATH, or STAT (if BS) or Elective (if BA)	3	Literature Breadth	3
		Physical Science Breadth	3
	17		**17**

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
POLI SCI/CHICLA 231, 297, or 355 (satisfies Ethnic Studies)	3-4	POLI SCI course 300 and above	4
POLI SCI 270, 274, or 348 (satisfies Quantitative Reasoning B)	4	POLI SCI course 300 and above	3
Humanities Breadth	3	Humanities Breadth	3
Science Breadth	3	Intermediate or Advanced COMP SCI, MATH, or STAT (if BS) or Elective (Intermediate or Advanced level) (if BA)	3
Elective	3	Elective (Intermediate or Advanced level)	3
		INTER-LS 210	1
		Apply for Senior Thesis (optional)[1]	
	16-17		**17**

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
POLI SCI course 300 and above	4	POLI SCI course 300 and above	4
POLI SCI 681, 683, or 691[1]	4	POLI SCI course 300 and above	3
Science Breadth	3	POLI SCI 682, 684, or 692[1]	4
Electives (Intermediate or Advanced level)	6	Electives (Intermediate or Advanced level)	6
	17		**17**

Total Credits 101-102

[1] Students wishing to write a senior thesis (with or without Honors) should apply in the spring of their second year.

ADVISING AND CAREERS
ADVISING

The Department of Political Science has academic advisors who are available to meet with you to offer guidance on:

- Course selection
- Program planning
- Internship opportunities
- Study abroad programs
- Scholarship opportunities
- Student research interests
- Transfer and study abroad credits

Information about scheduling appointments can be found here (https://polisci.wisc.edu/advising-and-major-information/#advising). ***Please note that no advising appointments are scheduled via email.***

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Political science majors who wish to enroll in the following course(s) must obtain prior consent/authorization:

- Directed Study
- Thesis
- Proseminars (varies by specific course; check footnotes in the class schedule)
- Specific Topic
- Other advanced-level coursework with consent of the instructor in lieu of other required courses

Information and course descriptions are posted on the department website prior to each enrollment period. POLI SCI 315 Legislative Internship is available by application only. Specific deadlines will be announced each semester. Students with a classification making them ineligible for certain courses due to retroactive or AP credits may see the instructor for possible permission to enroll on a space available basis. Students who wish to enroll in a course that is closed may use the online wait list available through the Student Center in MyUW. The number of credits for variable credit courses is determined by course format and contact periods for a specific semester as noted in the class schedule. For graduate programs, see the Graduate section of this Guide.

L&S CAREER RESOURCES

Every L&S major opens a world of possibilities. SuccessWorks (https://successworks.wisc.edu/) at the College of Letters & Science helps students turn the academic skills learned in their major, certificates, and other coursework into fulfilling lives after graduation, whether that means jobs, public service, graduate school or other career pursuits.

In addition to providing basic support like resume reviews and interview practice, SuccessWorks offers ways to explore interests and build career skills from their very first semester/term at UW all the way through graduation and beyond.

Students can explore careers in one-on-one advising, try out different career paths, complete internships, prepare for the job search and/or

graduate school applications, and connect with supportive alumni and even employers in the fields that inspire them.

- SuccessWorks (https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/)
- Set up a career advising appointment (https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/)
- Enroll in a Career Course (https://successworks.wisc.edu/career-courses/) - a great idea for first- and second-year students:
  - INTER-LS 210 L&S Career Development: Taking Initiative (1 credit)
  - INTER-LS 215 Communicating About Careers (3 credits, fulfills Comm B General Education Requirement)
- Learn about internships and internship funding (https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/)
  - INTER-LS 260 Internship in the Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Activate your Handshake account (https://successworks.wisc.edu/handshake/) to apply for jobs and internships from 200,000+ employers recruiting UW-Madison students
- Learn about the impact SuccessWorks has on students' lives (https://successworks.wisc.edu/about/mission/)

PEOPLE

PEOPLE

Please see the Faculty (https://polisci.wisc.edu/faculty-2/) and Administration and Staff (https://polisci.wisc.edu/administration-staff/) sections of the Political Science website.