

POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR (B.A.)

<https://cola.unh.edu/political-science/program/ba/political-science-major>

Description

The study of government and politics, to which the courses and seminars of the Department of Political Science are devoted, includes the development of knowledge of political behavior by individuals and groups as well as knowledge about governments: their nature and functions, their problems and behavior, and their interactions—at the national and international levels as well as local, state and regional levels.

Much of the learning offered by the Department of Political Science can also be regarded as essential for good citizenship, since political knowledge helps to explain the formal and informal institutions by which we are governed and the forces that lead to policy decisions, and also seeks to clarify the issues and principles that encourage people toward political involvement. In addition, such learning is especially valuable to students planning to enter local or national government or other public service related fields, including the Foreign Service, and it will be of great help to those who intend to study law and enter the legal profession. For teaching, particularly at the college level, and for many types of government service, graduate work may be indispensable. An undergraduate major in political science will provide a helpful foundation for any further study of politics and related fields in the social sciences and humanities. Such an emphasis will also be valuable for students seeking careers in journalism, international organizations, and the public affairs and administrative aspects of labor, financial and business organizations.

Requirements

The major in political science consists of at least 10 courses (40 credits) and not more than 12 courses (48 credits). The minimum grade requirement is C- per course. Any grade lower than a C- will not count toward major. The required minimum overall GPA for major coursework is 2.0.

Code	Title	Credits
Major Program Requirements ¹		
POLT 401	Politics and Society	4
POLT 402	American Politics and Government	4
POLT 403	United States in World Affairs	4
Six 500-level courses:		24
Select 3 subfield courses, 1 from each of 3 different subfields below.		
Select 3 elective courses from any of the 5 subfields below. ²		
Subfield: American Politics		
POLT 500	American Public Policy	
POLT 502	State and Local Government	
POLT 504	American Presidency	
POLT 505	American Congress	
POLT 506	Parties, Interest Groups, and Voters	
POLT 507	Politics of Crime and Justice	
POLT 508	Supreme Court and the Constitution	
POLT 509	Managing Bureaucracy in America	
POLT 510	Media and Politics	
POLT 511	Women & Politics	
POLT 512	Public Opinion in American Politics	

POLT 513	Civil Rights and Liberties
POLT 580	Selected Topics Am Politics
Subfield: Political Thought	
POLT 520	Politics, Justice, and Morality
POLT 521	Rights and the Political Community
POLT 522	Dissent and the Political Community
POLT 523	American Political Thought
POLT 524	Politics and Literature
POLT #524W	Politics and Literature
POLT 584	Selected Topics in Political Thought
Subfield: Comparative Politics	
POLT 544	Of Dictators and Democrats
POLT 545	People and Politics in Asia
POLT 546	Wealth and Politics in Asia
POLT 548	Drug Wars
POLT 549	The Politics of Markets
POLT 550	Comparative Government and Society
POLT 551	Ethnicity, Violence, Democracy
POLT 552	Contemporary European Politics
POLT 554	Revolution and Protest in Latin America
POLT 556	Politics in China
POLT 559	Comparative Politics of the Middle East
POLT #588	Selected Topics in Comparative Politics
Subfield: International Politics	
POLT 560	World Politics
POLT #561	Introduction to International Political Economy
POLT 562	Strategy and National Security Policy
POLT #563	The Global Information Grid's Disruptive Impact on Government, Politics, and Society
POLT 565	United States Policy in Latin America
POLT 566	Asian Challenge to Global Order
POLT 568	International Security
POLT 569	The Rise of China
POLT #570	Counterterrorism: Nation states' responses to terrorist activity
POLT 592	Selected Topics in International Politics
Subfield: Methods	
POLT 595	Smart Politics
Discovery Program Capstone	
Select one 700-level POLT course	
Total Credits	40

¹ Once students declare the major, POLT 401, POLT 402, POLT 403 must be completed within the first calendar year.

Note: POLT #407, POLT 440A, POLT #444, POLT 444B do not count toward the major.

² Students can take any POLT course at the intermediate level or higher (500-799) to count toward elective credit. ECON 402 Principles of Economics (Micro) or ECON 605 Intermediate Microeconomic Analysis and ECON 401 Principles of Economics (Macro) or ECON 611 Intermediate Macroeconomic Analysis may also be used to fulfill the fifth or sixth elective in this sequence. Additional economics courses will be considered by petition. Only one economics course can count toward this requirement. If students substitute an economics course for a POLT 500-level course, the economics course cannot be used to satisfy Discovery Program category requirements.

Candidates for a degree must satisfy all of the University Discovery Program requirements in addition to satisfying the requirements of each individual major program. Bachelor of arts candidates must also satisfy the foreign language proficiency requirement.

Political Science majors may use one major-required course to satisfy one Discovery category requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Knowledge Base:** a proficient knowledge base of the five subfields of Political Science including American Government, Political Theory, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Methods. Areas of strength include the study of public opinion, comparative politics and international relations, political economy, environmental politics, Latin American politics, Middle Eastern politics, and Asian politics. In this regard, the program fosters the development of a strong empirical foundation through multiple levels of courses. Majors are required to complete each of the following: POLT 401 Politics and Society, POLT 402 American Politics and Government and POLT 403 United States in World Affairs.
- **Research Skills:** A second goal is to advance the students' abilities to understand and use basic political science research skills. These include computer literacy, knowledge of credible sources of information, basic statistical applications, and support for foreign language proficiency. We also strive to help students identify interesting and important research questions clearly and concisely, gather and assess various types of information, and come to well-reasoned conclusions.
- **Critical Thinking:** The third objective involves enhancement of student cognitive abilities and critical thinking. We hone the ability to analyze, assess, and reconstruct findings in written, oral, and graphical form. We strive to promote students who are self-disciplined thinkers who understand the rigorous standards of research, are intelligent consumers of political information, and are able to understand and weigh multiple perspectives and interpretations.
- **Communication Skills:** Another aim is to enhance the written and oral communication skills of our students. We support the goals of the writing intensive requirement and expose students to different genres and conventions in academic writing. Most 500 and 700-level courses emphasize cultivating strong writing and reading skills, while at the 700-level, student engagement in sustained discussion becomes the centerpiece of instruction in many seminars. Writing instruction includes emphasis not only on research papers but on short analytical essays, précis, and reviews that ask students to synthesize complex information, develop arguments, and delve more deeply into interpretation. In some courses, part of this work includes iterated practice of grammar and stylistic choices through revision and proposal assignments.
- **Professional Socialization and Support for Post-Graduate Training and Placement:** The sixth aim of the program is to give students the requisite skills, preparation and knowledge base to become capable and responsible political actors in their chosen professional careers and future goals. We expect our students to be exposed to the ethics and organizational culture of political science specifically and the social sciences generally. We aim to provide a foundation of professionalism for students who enter both the private and public sectors upon graduation and for those who continue their studies beyond the B.A.
- **Inspire Curiosity and Enthusiasm for Inquiry:** A final goal is to foster a spirit of inquiry. Faculty in the Department hope to stimulate curiosity about the political world and inspire life-long learners who are engaged in the political process at the local, national and global levels.