POLITICAL SCIENCE, B.A. (ALTOONA)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Altoona

Program Description

The Political Science major offers the student an opportunity to understand not only American federal, state, and local governments, but also the political systems of other nations and the philosophies that underlie them. Courses are offered in American, comparative, and international politics, and in political theory and methodology. Internship opportunities are available.

What is Political Science?

Political science is one of the social sciences. It is the study of systems of governance and governmental institutions, political activity, political thought, and political behavior. Political science draws from many other academic disciplines, including economics, law, sociology, history, philosophy, geography, psychology, and anthropology. There are also subfields of political science, such as comparative politics, political theory, international relations, international law, public administration, and public policy. Political science students study how American government works (and doesn't work) and what can be done to improve government at the federal, state, and local level. In comparative government and international relations coursework, students study the politics and policies of other countries. Political theory courses examine the ideas of famous political philosophers, while courses on law and the legal process provide knowledge about the criminal justice and civil litigation systems.

You Might Like This Program If...

You are interested in how power and resources are allocated in society. Students in this major study governments, public policies, and political behavior in the United States and around the world from both a humanistic and scientific perspective. If you're interested in how history, culture, and economics shape our lives and impact things like economic development, conflict, foreign policy, terrorism, globalization, and the environment, then this is the major for you.

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have third-semester classification (http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/semester_classification.cfm).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Recommended Academic Plan for your intended program.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required.)

- Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
- Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

Knowledge Domains

- Arts (GA): 6 credits
- Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
- Humanities (GH): 6 credits
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 6 credits
- Natural Sciences (GN): 9 credits

Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)

- Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements.
Writing Across the Curriculum
3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits
A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work
Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition
The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/#advisingandplanningadegreeprogramtext).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

3 of these 24 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Requirements for the Major
In meeting these requirements, students must take at least one course at any level from the four fields offered in the department: Political Theory/Methodology, American Politics/Public Administration, Comparative Politics, and International Relations.

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select 12 credits from below the 400 level</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select 15 credits from the 400 level and above in political science</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select 9 credits in political science or in related disciplines from departmental list of approved courses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Substitutions may be made with the written permission of the faculty adviser.

Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate (IUG) Degree Program B.A. in Political Science and Master’s in International Affairs (M.I.A.)
The integrated undergraduate-graduate (IUG) degree program (B.A. in Political Science/M.I.A. in International Affairs) will provide an opportunity for strong students in Political Science to complete a Master’s degree with 5 total years of study.

An increasingly globalized economy is likely to escalate the demand for graduate training in international affairs. The career choices for graduates with this training will also expand sharply. The integrated degree program would prepare students for a variety of careers requiring an interdisciplinary background in politics and international affairs. Examples of types of entities hiring in these areas are federal, state, and local governments, international organizations, multinational corporations, international banking and financial institutions, media organizations and journalism, consulting firms, policy research centers, and development assistance programs and foundations. The School of International Affairs’ (SIA) Master’s in International Affairs (M.I.A.) represents a professional degree designed to prepare students to thrive in these increasingly global career paths.

The IUG degree in International Affairs and Political Science is both timely and consistent with the tradition of interdisciplinary studies at other schools of international affairs. It will also strengthen the School of International Affairs’ existing collaborations and interactions with the College of the Liberal Arts.

Admission Requirements
The number of openings in the integrated B.A./M.I.A. program is limited. Admission will be selective based on specific criteria set by the School of International Affairs. Students shall be admitted to an IUG program no earlier than the beginning of the third semester of undergraduate study at Penn State (regardless of transfer or AP credits accumulated prior to enrollment) and no later than the end of the second week of the semester preceding the semester of expected conferral of the undergraduate degree, as specified in the proposed IUG plan of study. Specific requirements:

1. Must be enrolled in the Political Science B.A. program.
2. Must apply to and be accepted into The Graduate School and the M.I.A. program in the School of International Affairs. Students must complete the Graduate School application (http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/portal). All applicants will submit GRE scores, two letters of recommendation and a personal statement addressing their reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in international affairs and discussing their plans and goals.
3. Although the program has no fixed minimum grade-point average, an applicant is generally expected to have a minimum overall GPA of 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) in undergraduate coursework and a minimum GPA of 3.5 in all coursework completed for the major.

4. Must include a plan of study identifying undergraduate credits to be applied to the M.I.A. degree elective requirements.

5. Must provide written endorsement from the head of Political Science.

**M.I.A. Requirements for the Integrated B.A./M.I.A.**

M.I.A. portion of the integrated B.A./M.I.A. will require the completion of a minimum of 42 credits at the 400 level or higher, at least 18 of which are from six core courses consisting of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 801</td>
<td>Actors, Institutions, and Legal Frameworks in International Affairs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 802</td>
<td>Foundations of Diplomacy and International Relations Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 803</td>
<td>Multi-sector and Quantitative Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 804</td>
<td>Global Cultures and Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 590</td>
<td>Colloquium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining credits are attained through completion of the approved elective courses.

In addition to the core curriculum and elective courses, M.I.A. degree candidates must complete either 1. a master's paper; or 2. a supervised internship placement. If the first option is chosen and the candidate opts to complete a paper, he/she must complete 3 credits of INTAF 594. The master's paper will involve integrating and showing mastery of the subject matter of the student's curricular emphasis, and may also involve original research. If the second option is chosen, the candidate will complete 3 credits of INTAF 595. The student will participate in a supervised internship of sufficient depth and professionalism that will allow the student to experience the integration of his/her curricular studies in an actual professional environment. A reflective paper will be submitted as a part of this credit requirement.

In order to graduate, M.I.A. degree students also will need to demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English. Proficiency will be defined as follows:

1. four semesters of a Penn State language sequence or its equivalent (15 credits with a quality grade of C or better using a 4.0 scale);
2. native acquisition, as shown by the candidate's personal history and approved by the SIA faculty; or
3. performance on a proficiency evaluation sufficient to equal four semesters of language learning; for this purpose, either Penn State's proficiency certification process or another pre-approved proficiency assessment may be used. Language study does not provide credits towards the degree.

**Integrated B.A./M.I.A. Degree requirements**

**Core Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>INTAF 804</td>
<td>Global Cultures and Leadership</td>
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<td>INTAF 590</td>
<td>Colloquium</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 594</td>
<td>Research Topics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or INTAF 595</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Electives**

Select 21 credits from a pre-approved list in the SIA, or by SIA faculty approved substitution

The following 12 credits may be double counted toward the B.A. and the M.I.A.:

- PLSC 415
- PLSC 441
- PLSC 550
- PLSC 554

**Sample Program of Study**

A typical sequence of coursework for a student in the IUG program would appear as follows:

**First Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 14 or PLSC 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6

**Second Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 3 or 20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-level course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Political Science, B.A. (Altoona)

Third Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400 level PLSC class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 7 or 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 801</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>INTAF 804</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 802</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>INTAF 506</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTAF 803</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>INTAF 590</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional 400-level PLSC, related course(s), or HIST/GEOG/Economics course(s) may be taken</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Additional 400-level PLSC, related course(s), or HIST/GEOG/Economics course(s) may be taken</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifth Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete 24 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 69

1 The following 12 credits may be double counted toward the B.A. and the M.I.A.:
- PLSC 415
- PLSC 441
- PLSC 550
- PLSC 554

Tuition Charges, Grant-in-Aid and Assistantships

Students admitted to the School of International Affairs through the IUG with Political Science may be considered to receive financial assistance.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will describe and identify the processes by which the authority to coerce is acquired, legitimized, and exercised in the United States, in other states, and in multi-state institutions and the various ends toward which those processes are directed.

2. Students will explain those processes and the ends they serve, formulate and discuss descriptive and normative generalizations about them, and paraphrase and summarize generalizations about them put forth by leading analysts of political phenomena.

3. Students will differentiate among types and phases of political processes, including the acquisition of authority and influence, agenda-setting, policy formulation and selection, legitimation, and implementation.

4. Students will interpret, justify, and criticize generalizations about political processes and ends.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of-class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information need to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy)

Altoona

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Middletown, PA 17057
717-948-4326
aus50@psu.edu

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising
814-865-2545
http://starfish.psu.edu
http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students/education/majors-and-minors

World Campus

Undergraduate Academic Advising
301 Outreach Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-3283
advising@outreach.psu.edu

Suggested Academic Plan

Altoona Campus

The course series listed below provides only one of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an Academic Requirements or What If report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.
### University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy University Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

GWS, GQ, GHW, GN, GA, GH, and GS are abbreviations used to identify General Education program courses. General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS, and Integrative Studies). Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Integrative Studies courses are required for the General Education program. N is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate an Inter-Domain course and Z is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate a Linked course.

### Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages) or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section ([http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information](http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information)) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses ([http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures](http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures)).

### Career Paths

Political Science is one of the most versatile majors in the liberal arts. The program provides students with an in-depth understanding of political issues while honing their ability to think critically and communicate persuasively. As a political science major, you will learn to conduct research and to evaluate information and assemble empirically supported arguments. These skills are necessary for success in a variety of careers, including law, public policy, lobbying, business, political campaigning, and government, as well as with non-profit organizations.

### Careers

Penn State Political Science graduates are serving as advisers to the State Department, as attorneys and management specialists in the Department of Justice; as speech writers, lobbyists and policy analysts on Capitol Hill; and even in the United States Senate. Our alumni have built successful careers in business, and as lawyers, teachers, and journalists. Many are successful entrepreneurs, some work for NGOs, others are leaders of major corporations. You can learn from their experience through our alumni mentoring program.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CAREERS ([http://www.apsanet.org/CAREERS/Careers-In-Political-Science/Careers-Sectors-for-Political-Science](http://www.apsanet.org/CAREERS/Careers-In-Political-Science/Careers-Sectors-for-Political-Science))

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES ([http://polisci.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/political-science-mentorship-program](http://polisci.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/political-science-mentorship-program))

### Contact

Altoona

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3000 Ivyside Park
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814-949-5782
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http://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/political-science/request-information

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http://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/political-science-and-public-policy/bachelor-arts-political-science

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814-865-4597
http://www.polisci.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/advising

http://www.polisci.la.psu.edu/

World Campus
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ajh38@psu.edu

https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/political-science-bachelors/overview