

# 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 also are 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/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://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:**

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	18
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36

**3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements 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.**

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 (<https://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

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

### 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 (<http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#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 (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

**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 major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

## 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>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Supporting Courses and Related Areas</b>		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
	Select 12 credits from below the 400 level	12
	Select 15 credits from the 400 level and above in political science	15
	Select 9 credits in political science or in related disciplines from departmental list of approved courses <sup>1</sup>	9

<sup>1</sup> Substitutions may be made with the written permission of the faculty adviser.

## Program Learning Objectives

- 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.
- 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.
- Students will differentiate among types and phases of political processes, including the acquisition of authority and influence, agenda—setting, policy formulation and selection, legitimization, and implementation.
- Students will interpret, justify, and criticize generalizations about political processes and ends.
- Students in all majors will develop substantive knowledge of the discipline of Political Science.
  - Students will be able to define and use the concepts political scientists employ to make and substantiate knowledge claims.
  - Students will be able to describe the central debates and theoretical frameworks of political science and international politics.

## 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 needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

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

## Altoona

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## University Park

**Liberal Arts Academic Advising**

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Majors and Minors web page (<https://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students/education/majors-and-minors/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

## World Campus

**Undergraduate Academic Advising**

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

## Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2021-22 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition (*Note: the archive only contain suggested academic plans beginning with the 2018-19 edition of the Undergraduate Bulletin*).

## Political Science, B.A. at 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.

### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PLSC 1, 3, 14, or 17*	3 PLSC 1, 3, 14, or 17*	3
ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15†	3 Political Science Elective*	3
PSU 3	1 World Language Course Level 2	4
World Language Course Level 1	4 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3	
	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>

### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PLSC 1, 3, 14, or 17*	3 PLSC 1, 3, 14, or 17*	3

Political Science Elective*	3 World Language Course Level 4	4
World Language Course Level 3	4 CAS 100‡	3
STAT 100 or 200‡	3-4 General Education Course	3
ENGL 202A or 202C‡	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
	<b>16-17</b>	<b>14.5</b>

### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Political Science 400-level Course*	3 Political Science 400-level Course*	3
Political Science Elective Course	3 Political Science 400-level Course*	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
US Cultures Course	3 General Education Course	3
Other Cultures Course	3 General Education Course	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Political Science 400-level Course*	3 Political Science 400-level Course*	3
Political Science Elective	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
Elective	3 Elective	3
International Cultures Course (IL)	3 Elective	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>13.5</b>

### Total Credits 122-123

- \* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
- ‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
- # Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
- † Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

### 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 [2nd language 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 (<https://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 (<https://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 POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM (<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/>)

## Contact

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### Harrisburg

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<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/political-science-and-public-policy/bachelor-arts-political-science> (<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/political-science-and-public-policy/bachelor-arts-political-science/>)

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

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