**POLITICAL SCIENCE, B.A. (BEHREND)**

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus  
**End Campus:** Erie

### Program Description

The discipline of political science consists of different related subfields such as American government, international relations, comparative politics (the study of different political systems), political theory, law, and public policy and administration (the study of how governments accomplish objectives). The major offers students the opportunity to take course work in most subfields as well as seek practical experience through an internship. All students are encouraged to develop research and writing and statistical skills. Many students have continued their education in law or graduate school.

### Crime and Law Option

This option requires coursework in criminology and law and helps to prepare students for careers in law and criminal justice, including students planning on law school.

### International Relations Option

This option requires coursework in international politics and comparative politics and prepares students for careers with international institutions or in business in other countries, and for graduate school work in international affairs.

### Politics and Government Option

This option allows students to choose their own concentrations of coursework within political science and helps to prepare students for a variety of careers, including government employment, social studies secondary education, activist politics, and graduate school in political science.

### Public Policy Option

This option requires coursework related to how to make government and policy decisions effectively and prepares students for careers with government offices, businesses, interest groups, or think tanks related to public policy, or in public administration, or for graduate degree programs in public policy or public administration.

### 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 want to understand how political and governmental decisions are made.  
- You love discussing and analyzing events in the news.  
- You're interested in how the legal system works.  
- You're interested in how diplomacy works.  
- You're looking for a degree that is useful in many different career paths.

### 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** (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 120 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>9-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>42-43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0-7 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 0-6 credits of GS courses; 0-4 credits of GQ courses; 0-3 credits of GH courses.

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 coursework in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned.

### 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
- 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.

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**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/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**
Each student must earn at least a grade of C in each 300- and 400-level course in the major field.

To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn a grade of C or better 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).

**Common Requirements for the Major (All Options)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 1</td>
<td>American Politics: Principles, Processes and Powers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 3</td>
<td>Comparing Politics around the Globe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 14</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Courses**
Select one of the following:
- PLSC 7N Contemporary Political Ideologies
- PLSC 17N Introduction to Political Theory
- PLSC 17W Introduction to Political Theory

**Supporting Courses and Related Areas**

**Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better**
Select 12 additional credits of PLSC courses not used to complete other requirements. At least 12 credits from Additional and Supporting Courses must be at the 400-level.

**Requirements for the Option**
Select an option: 18-19

**Requirements for the Option**

**Crime and Law Option (18 Credits)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC 5</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 12</td>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 13</td>
<td>Juvenile Delinquency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIMJ 100</td>
<td>Introduction to Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better**
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 (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/)

Erie

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2020-21 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).

Erie 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 15 or 30†</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PLSC 1 or 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 1 or 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language (Level One)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Foreign Language (Level Two)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 14 Credits

Second Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 14 or 17N</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PLSC 14H or 17N</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS 101††</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ENGL 202A††</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language (Level Three)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 16 Credits

Third Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL SC 400-level*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PL SC 400-level, Writing Across the Curriculum (W) course*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 16.5 Credits
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 (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/).

Additional Notes
Both US (United States Cultures) and IL (International Cultures) must be completed within the degree requirements.

Program Notes: Students can double count US & IL requirements for general education courses but not for the Other Cultures requirement.

Academic Advising Notes: The course series listed above is only one of many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The number of electives required varies per student. Please be sure to consult with an adviser about your intended plan.

Career Paths
The B.A. in Political Science program emphasizes the development of key intellectual skills, ingraining the habits of questioning, debating, challenging, and shaping coherent and persuasive arguments. You'll be expected to master effective writing, speaking, and reasoning, and conduct upper-level research in public affairs—skills that are impressive to future employers. Penn State Behrend has a comprehensive support system to help you identify and achieve your goals for college and beyond. Meet with your academic adviser often and take advantage of the services offered by the Academic and Career Planning Center beginning in your first semester.

Careers
Employers of recent Penn State Behrend B.A. in Political Science graduates include the FBI, CIA, U.S. State Department, Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Pennsylvania General Assembly, and NASA. Recent Political Science graduates work as attorneys for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Michigan Attorney General, The Nature Conservancy, and GEICO, and in policy positions at Toyota Motors, Erie Insurance, and the Center for Naval Analyses. Other recent graduates work in education at the University of California, Los Angeles, University of Notre Dame, University of Connecticut, and in many secondary schools.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM (http://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/academic-programs/political-science/)
Opportunities for Graduate Studies
Recent Penn State Behrend Political Science alumni have attended the law schools at Cornell University, University of Pittsburgh, New York University, George Washington University, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, University of Illinois, Duquesne University, and Boston College. Other recent graduates have pursued graduate-degree programs in fields such as public policy and international relations at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown University, Oregon State University, Cornell University, Cleveland State University, University of Pittsburgh, Johns Hopkins University, Pepperdine University, Fudan University in China, and England's Cambridge University.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (http://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/academic-programs/political-science/)

Professional Resources
• American Political Science Association (http://www.apsanet.org/)
• American Society for Public Administration (https://www.aspanet.org/)
• United Nations Public Administration Network (http://www.unpan.org/)

Contact
Erie
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
170 Irvin Kochel Center
4951 College Drive
Erie, PA 16563
814-898-6108
HumSocSci@psu.edu

http://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences (http://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/)