**POLITICAL SCIENCE, B.S.**

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park, World Campus

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**Program Description**

The Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science emphasizes the technical aspects of political science knowledge development and application. In addition to broad coursework in political science, students will complete courses in statistics and research design, advanced classes in social science methods and upper level political science courses that employ quantitative research skills in exploring substantive themes. Students have the opportunity to complete either a research practicum within the Political Science Department, an internship or a TA-ship. This degree will serve students who are interested in political science from the point of view of the practitioner, as well as those who are interested in acquiring practical skills relevant to a variety of careers in politics, government and business.

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**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 an active learner interested in politics, government, policy or business and you enjoy solving problems and the elegance of the scientific method. You might also choose the Bachelor of Science if you are interested in working as a lobbyist, campaign strategist, or policy analyst. This program will enable you to develop a portfolio of concrete and immediately marketable set of skills that are increasingly necessary for employments in these fields.

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**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).

**Degree Requirements**

For the Bachelor of Science 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>19-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>67-68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

6 of these 45 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major.

**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 (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.

Requirements for the Major
This includes 6 credits of General Education courses: 6 credits of GQ courses.

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)).

Program Learning Objectives
Knowledge:
1. Students will develop substantive knowledge of the discipline of Political Science.
   a. Students will be able to define and use the concepts political scientists employ to make and substantiate knowledge claims.
   b. Students will be able to describe the central debates and theoretical frameworks of political science and international politics.

2. Students will develop knowledge about how political scientists use empirical analysis to gain insight into political and social processes, to advance political and social goals, and to evaluate the effects of programs and policies.
   a. Students will be able to explain multiple approaches to empirical research, such as large-scale observational research, experiments, surveys, case studies, formal modeling, and elite interviewing.
   b. Students will be able to describe both the application, and the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods in relation to particular problems.

Argumentation/Communication:
1. Students will develop the ability to create coherent, persuasive, and empirically grounded oral and written arguments.
   a. Students will be able to construct and defend logical arguments.
   b. Students will be able to present evidence to support empirical claims.
   c. Students will be able to communicate ideas effectively in conformity with academic standards.
2. Students will develop the ability to systematically analyze problems and draw evidenced based inferences. Students in different majors will accomplish this with different emphases depending on the courses they take as part of the BA/BS.
   a. Bachelor of Arts students in PL SC and INTPL will analyze problems and draw evidence based inferences using a broad range of techniques according to programmatic focus and individual preference.
   b. PL SC Bachelor of Science majors will analyze problems and draw inferences using various data sources and statistical tools.
   c. PL SC SO DA majors will analyze problems and draw inferences using computational tools appropriate to large complex data sets.

Critical Synthesis/Application:

1. Students will develop the ability to combine the substantive knowledge, modes of inquiry, and analytic skills learned in the classroom to address contemporary problems in an uncertain world.
   a. Students will be able to draw upon political science research to construct testable explanations of novel situations.
   b. Students will be able to weigh the arguments, evidence and inferences used to address problems under conditions of uncertainty.
2. Students will develop ethical reasoning and citizenship skills to participate in a global, pluralistic society.
   a. Students will be able to trace the possible ethical implications of public policies and political structures and their consequences for democratic political values.
   b. Students will be able to articulate the goals, conditions, and challenges of democracy and describe the roles of citizens and public officials in manifesting and preserving democratic values.
   c. Students will be able to critically evaluate the values inherent in the exercise of power through political systems, social structures, information, and collective action.

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)

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
University Park 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
---|---|---|---
MATH 110 or 140† | 3 | PLSC 1, PLSC 3, PLSC 7, PLSC 14, or 17† | 3
PLSC 10* | 3 | CMSPSC 101, 131, or 203*† | 3
PLSC 1, PLSC 3, PLSC 7, PLSC 14, or 17† | 3 | General Education course† | 3
General Education course | 3 | CAS 100, 100A, 100B, or 100C‡ | 3
ENGL 15, 30, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H‡ | 3 | General Education course† | 3

16 | 15

Second Year

Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits
---|---|---|---
PLSC 1, PLSC 3, PLSC 7, PLSC 14, or 17† | 3 | PLSC 308* | 3
PLSC 309* | 3 | General Education course† | 3
General Education course† | 3 | Methodology course* | 3
STAT 184† | 1 | General Education course† | 3
General Education‡ | 3 | General Health and Wellness (GHW) | 3
General Education | 3 | | |

16 | 15

Third Year

Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits
---|---|---|---
PLSC 400-level (w) | 3 | PLSC 404, 429, 447, or 476* | 3
Methodology course* | 3 | Methodology course* | 3
PLSC 404, 429, 447, or 476* | 3 | PLSC 408-level | 3
ENGL 202A | 3 | PLSC 408-level | 3
General Education | 3 | Elective course | 3

15 | 15

Fourth Year

Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits
---|---|---|---
PLSC 400-level* | 3 | PLSC 494, 496, LA 495, PLSC 404, PLSC 429, PLSC 447, or PLSC 476* | 3
Related PLSC course / In Consultation with Adviser* | 3 | Supporting Elective course* | 3
BA requirement\* 3 Supporting Elective course\* 3
Other Cultures (OC) / Elective\* 3 Elective course 3
Elective\* 3 Elective course 1
General Health and Wellness (GHW)\* 1.5

16.5 13

Total Credits 121.5

* 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.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL/CAS 137 in the fall semester and ENGL/CAS 138 in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and replace both ENGL 30 and CAS 100. Each course is 3 credits.

Advising Note:

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

Honors/Paterno Fellows Program

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>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 110 or 140*‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PLSC 3 (Honors section)*</td>
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<td>PLSC 10*</td>
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<td>CMPSC 101, 131, or 203*</td>
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<td>PLSC 1 (Honors section)*</td>
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<td>CAS 137H or ENGL 137H*</td>
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<td>CAS 138T or ENGL 138T*</td>
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Second Year

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<td>Methodology course*</td>
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<td>STAT 184*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Education / Honors / Ethics course</td>
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Third Year

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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 400-level*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PLSC 404, 429, 447, or 476*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology course*</td>
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<td>Methodology course</td>
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<td>PLSC 404, 429, 447, or 476*</td>
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<td>Supporting Elective course</td>
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<td>ENGL 202A</td>
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<td>PLSC 400-level Honors section</td>
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<td>PLSC 300 Honors section*</td>
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<td>Elective course</td>
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Fourth Year

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<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 404, 429, 447, or 476</td>
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<td>Supporting Elective*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting Elective / Honors section*</td>
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<td>PLSC 494H*</td>
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<td>PLSC 306 (Honors section)*</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Health and Wellness (GHW)</td>
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<td>PLSC 306 (Honors section)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective / US Cultures (US)*</td>
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<td>Elective course</td>
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</table>

15 13

Total Credits 120

* 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

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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.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL/CAS 137 in the fall semester and ENGL/CAS 138 in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and replace both ENGL 30 and CAS 100. Each course is 3 credits.

Advising Note:

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

Commonwealth Campuses

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### First Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATH 110 or 140*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 PLSC 1, PLSC 3, PLSC 7, PLSC 14, or 17*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 1, PLSC 3, PLSC 7, PLSC 14, or 17*</td>
<td>3 CMPSC 101, 121, or 203†</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 15, 30, or ESL 15‡</td>
<td>3 CAS 100, 100A, 100B, or 100C‡</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| General Education | 3 General Education course | 3       |

| Total Credits | 16 | 15 |

### Second Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 1, PLSC 3, PLSC 7, PLSC 14, or 17*</td>
<td>3 General Education course</td>
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<td>General Education course</td>
<td>3 General Health and Wellness (GH)</td>
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<td>General Education course</td>
<td>3 General Education course</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education course</td>
<td>3 Elective course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Elective course | 3 Elective course | 3       |

| Total Credits | 15 | 15 |

### Third Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 10*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLSC 309*</td>
<td>3 Methodology*</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT 184</td>
<td>1 PLSC Data Intensive*</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 202A</td>
<td>3 Supporting course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting course*</td>
<td>3 Writing Across the Curriculum</td>
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| Elective course | 3       |

| Total Credits | 16 | 15 |

### Fourth Year

<table>
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<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLSC 400-level*</td>
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<td>3 Methodology*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 PLSC 400-level*</td>
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<td>PLSC Data Intensive*</td>
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<td>3 PLSC Data Intensive*</td>
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<td>3 PLSC Data Intensive*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting course*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Capstone*</td>
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</table>

| Total Credits | 15 | 15 |

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listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

**Career Paths**

Students completing the Bachelor of Science degree develop a portfolio of concrete and immediately marketable set of skills that are in demand among employers. They are prepared to begin careers as campaign strategists, policy analysts and lobbyists, as well as in business and in national defense and other aspects of government. The program is also an excellent foundation for graduate study in law, public policy, business and the social sciences.

**Careers**

Penn State Political Science graduates are serving as advisors 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)

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (http://www.apsanet.org/CAREERS/Careers-In-Political-Science/After-Completing-a-Bachelors-Degree)

**Contact**

**University Park**

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

202 Pond Lab
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-4597
http://www.polisci.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/advising

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

**World Campus**

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

220 Pond Lab
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-7515
ajh38@psu.edu

https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-political-science-bachelor-of-science-degree/overview