

# POLITICAL SCIENCE, B.S.

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus

**End Campus:** University Park, World Campus

## 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.

## 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

## Entrance to the Major

Admission to the major requires a grade of C or better in MATH 110 or MATH 140 and a grade of B or better in PLSC 309. These courses must be completed by the end of the semester during which the admission to major process is carried out.

## Degree Requirements

**For the Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science, a minimum of 120 credits is required:**

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	13-14
Requirements for the Major	67-68

**6 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 6 credits of GQ courses.**

## Requirements for the Major

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 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of B or better</i>		
PLSC 309	Quantitative Political Analysis	3
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
PLSC 10	Scientific Study of Politics	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
MATH 110 or MATH 140	Techniques of Calculus I Calculus With Analytic Geometry I	4
PLSC 308 or PLSC 300	Introduction to Political Research Introduction to Independent Thesis Research	3
Select 9 credits from the following:		9
PLSC 1	American Politics: Principles, Processes and Powers	
PLSC 3	Comparing Politics around the Globe	
PLSC 7N	Contemporary Political Ideologies	
PLSC 14	International Relations	
PLSC 17N	Introduction to Political Theory	
Select 3-4 credits from the following:		3-4
CMPSC 101	Introduction to Programming	
CMPSC 121	Introduction to Programming Techniques	
CMPSC 203	Introduction to Spreadsheets and Databases	
Select 9 credits of data intensive PLSC courses from a department list		9
Select 9 credits of any 400-level PLSC course		9
Select 9 credits of methodology from the following:		9
GEOG 363	Geographic Information Systems	
GEOG 364	Spatial Analysis	
PLSC 410	Strategy and Politics	
STAT 380	Data Science Through Statistical Reasoning and Computation	
STAT 461	Analysis of Variance	
STAT 462	Applied Regression Analysis	
STAT 463	Applied Time Series Analysis	
STAT 466	Survey Sampling	
Courses from a department approved list		
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
LA 495	Undergraduate Field Experience or Practicum	
PLSC 494	Research Project	

PLSC 496 Independent Studies

Data intensive course from a department list

**Supporting Courses and Related Areas***Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better*

Select 12 credits from department approved list of courses in the arts, humanities, languages, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, and related fields. Students can take a range of courses across disciplines or concentrate their selection to complete a minor in a supporting field. 12

**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 and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)**

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

**Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)**

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

**Integrative Studies**

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

**Exploration**

- **GN,** may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 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 (<https://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.

**Program Learning Objectives**

- Students 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.
- 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.
  - 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.
  - Students will be able to describe both the application, and the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods in relation to particular problems.
- Students will develop the ability to create coherent, persuasive, and empirically grounded oral and written arguments.
  - Students will be able to construct and defend logical arguments.
  - Students will be able to present evidence to support empirical claims.
  - Students will be able to communicate ideas effectively in conformity with academic standards.

- 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.
  - Bachelor of Arts students in PLSC and INTPL will analyze problems and draw evidence based inferences using a broad range of techniques according to programmatic focus and individual preference.
  - PLSC Bachelor of Science majors will analyze problems and draw inferences using various data sources and statistical tools.
  - PLSC SODA majors will analyze problems and draw inferences using computational tools appropriate to large complex data sets.
- 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.
  - Students will be able to draw upon political science research to construct testable explanations of novel situations.
  - Students will be able to weigh the arguments, evidence and inferences used to address problems under conditions of uncertainty.
- Students will develop ethical reasoning and citizenship skills to participate in a global, pluralistic society.
  - Students will be able to trace the possible ethical implications of public policies and political structures and their consequences for democratic political values.
  - 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.
  - 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 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/>)

## University Park

### Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) 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](mailto: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 2024-25 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.

## Political Science, B.S. at 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 (GQ) <sup>**†</sup>	4 CMPSC 101, 131, or 203 (GQ) <sup>**††</sup>	3
PLSC 10 (GS) <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 1, 3, 7N, 14, or 17N <sup>*</sup>	3
PLSC 1, 3, 7N, 14, or 17N <sup>*</sup>	3 General Education Course	3
FYS/General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
ENGL 15, 30H, 137H, CAS 137H, or ESL 15 (GWS) <sup>‡</sup>	3 CAS 100, CAS 100A, CAS 100B, CAS 100C, CAS 138T, or ENGL 138T (GWS) <sup>‡</sup>	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
STAT 184	2 PLSC 308 <sup>*</sup>	3
PLSC 1, 3, 7N, 14, or 17N <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3
PLSC 309 <sup>*</sup>	3 Related Course In Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3
General Education Course (IL)	3 General Education Course (US)	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>

### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3 PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3
PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3 Methodology Course <sup>*</sup>	3
Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3 Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D (GWS) <sup>‡</sup>	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Fourth Year**

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Credits Spring</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3 PLSC Capstone <sup>*</sup>	3
Methodology Course <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3
Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3 Methodology Course <sup>*</sup>	3
Elective (WAC)	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 General Education Course (GHW)	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**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

<sup>1</sup> Select 18 credits of PLSC 400-level courses; at least 9 credits must be data intensive from department list

**University Requirements and General Education Notes:**

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity 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.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

## Political Science, B.S. at Commonwealth Campuses

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 (GQ) <sup>**†</sup>	4 CMPSC 101, 131, or 203 (GQ) <sup>*††</sup>	3
PLSC 1, 3, 7N, 14, or 17N <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 1, 3, 7N, 14, or 17N <sup>*</sup>	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
FYS/Elective	3 General Education Course	3
ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15 (GWS) <sup>‡</sup>	3 CAS 100, CAS 100A, CAS 100B, or CAS 100C (GWS) <sup>‡</sup>	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PLSC 1, 3, 7N, 14, or 17N <sup>*</sup>	3 General Education Course (US)	3
General Education Course (IL)	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GHW)	3
Elective (WAC)	3 Elective	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PLSC 10 (GS) <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 308 <sup>*</sup>	3
PLSC 309 <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3
Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3 PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D (GWS) <sup>‡</sup>	3 Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3
STAT 184	2 Methodology Course <sup>*</sup>	3
	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>

### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3 PLSC Capstone <sup>*</sup>	3
PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3 PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3
PLSC 400-Level <sup>*1</sup>	3 Methodology Course <sup>*</sup>	3
Methodology Course <sup>*</sup>	3 Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3
Related Course in Consultation with Adviser <sup>*</sup>	3 Elective	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**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

<sup>1</sup> Select 18 credits of PLSC 400-level courses; at least 9 credits must be data intensive from department list

### University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity 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.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

## 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 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 (<https://www.apsanet.org/CAREERS/Careers-for-Political-Scientists/Careers-Sectors-for-Political-Science/>)

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://www.apsanet.org/CAREERS/Careers-for-Political-Scientists/After-Completing-a-Bachelors-Degree/>)

## Contact

### University Park

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

202 Pond Lab

University Park, PA 16802

814-865-4597

<https://polisci.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/advising/>

<https://polisci.la.psu.edu>

## **World Campus**

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

220 Pond Lab

University Park, PA 16802

814-865-7515

[ajh38@psu.edu](mailto:ajh38@psu.edu)

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