Political Science, BA

Department of Political Science, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

60 credits

Introduction

Political Science is one of the oldest fields of academic inquiry. Social ideals and their realization through law were systematically studied in ancient Greece. In an increasingly interdependent world, the study of politics and government has flourished as the relations between persons, groups and nations have become more complex, and questions of freedom and authority have challenged every citizen. Modern Political Science is equally concerned with questions of political philosophy and with the pursuit of social scientific research. These concerns are reflected in a broad and diverse curriculum.

The Political Science faculty is committed to the belief that understanding politics and government is essential to a well-educated person, vital to democratic citizenship, indispensable to effective public service, and critical to the maintenance and ethical progress of a free society.

Why Consider a Political Science Major?

The Political Science curriculum prepares students for careers in public service-related occupations in both government and business. Many students majoring in Political Science go on to law school, graduate school and into related professions.

Contact Information

Political Science Department Chair
Amir Abeli
Arntzen Hall 415
360-650-2912
Amir.Abeli@wwu.edu

Administrative Services Manager
Joan Blackwell
Arntzen Hall 415
360-650-2505
Joan.Blackwell@wwu.edu

Program Coordinator
Erica Steele
Arntzen Hall 415
360-650-2446
Erica.Steele@wwu.edu

Sample Careers

Campaign Manager | Politician | lobbyist | Attorney | Public Relations Specialist | FBI/CIA Agent | Consumer Advocate | Journalist | Labor Relations Specialist | City Manager | Author | Urban Planner

Major/Career Resources

www.wwu.edu/careers/students_choosingamajor.shtml

How to Declare (Admission and Declaration Process):

Students are eligible to declare the political science major and any of the majors combined with political science if they have completed any two of the following core courses: PLSC 230, 261, 271, 291, or the equivalent course(s) at another college or university. Due to high student demand and limited capacity, immediate access to specific courses cannot be guaranteed. Priority is given to seniors and juniors who need courses to graduate. Students should stop by the political science department office, Arntzen Hall 415, and an advisor will review their transcripts and assist them in completing the declaration process.

Grade Requirements

A grade of C- or better is required for a student's major or minor courses, and supporting courses for majors and minors.

Requirements

- PLSC 101, 435, 443, 444, 447 and 448 credits apply toward the major but do not count in any field. No more than 10 credits of internship or independent study may be counted toward the major.
- Core courses in each of the four fields are required. They are:
  - PLSC 250 for American Politics and Public Policy
  - PLSC 261 for Political Theory
  - PLSC 271 for International Relations
  - PLSC 291 for Comparative Politics
- Students must complete:
  - One upper division course in any two fields (no course may count for more than one field)
- One course from:
  - PLSC 431, PLSC 432, PLSC 433, PLSC 434

Balance of required 60 credits in any Political Science courses

Courses in the four fields are organized as follows:
American Politics and Public Policy:
  • PLSC 359 - The American Political System Credits: 5 GUR: SSC
  • PLSC 311 - Introduction to Law and the Legal System Credits: 5 GUR: SSC
  • PLSC 313 - Law, Courts, Society: Non-legal Perspectives of Law Credits: 5
  • PLSC 314 - The U.S. Supreme Court: Law and Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 391 - Queer and Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 323 - African American Politics Credits: 4
  • PLSC 327 - Urban Politics and Policy in the U.S. Credits: 4
  • PLSC 330 - American Democracy and the Politics of Education Credits: 5
  • PLSC 345 - Women and Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 346 - Politics of Inequality Credits: 5 GUR: ACGM
  • PLSC 347 - Race, Politics and Public Policy Credits: 5
  • PLSC 348 - Environmental Justice Credits: 5
  • PLSC 353 - State and Local Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 357 - Health Policy Credits: 4
  • PLSC 366 - Research in Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 431 - Constitutional Law: Separation of Powers and Federalism Credits: 5
  • PLSC 438 - Constitutional Law: Civil Rights and Liberties Credits: 5
  • PLSC 450 - Environmental Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 463 - The American Presidency Credits: 3
  • PLSC 472 - Policy-Making and Policy Analysis Credits: 4
  • PLSC 491 - Senior Seminar in American Politics and Public Policy Credits: 3-5
  • PLSC 446 - Politics and Social Change Credits: 4
  • PLSC 450 - Parties, Campaigns and Elections Credits: 4
  • PLSC 457 - Philosophical and Ethical Issues in Law Credits: 5
  • PLSC 459 - Managing An International Ecosystem Credits: 5

Political Theory:
  • PLSC 360 - Introduction to Political Theory Credits: 5 GUR: HUM
  • PLSC 362 - Classical Political Thought Credits: 4
  • PLSC 364 - Contemporary Political Theory Credits: 4
  • PLSC 372 - Senior Seminar - Political Theory Credits: 3-5
  • PLSC 459 - The Rise of Modern Political Economy Credits: 4
  • PLSC 463 - American Political Thought Credits: 4
  • PLSC 465 - Feminist Political Theory Credits: 4
  • PLSC 471 - Race and Political Theory Credits: 3
  • PLSC 472 - Comparative Political Thought Credits: 5
  • PLSC 473 - Politics and Culture Credits: 5
  • PLSC 480 - Politics, Government and Religion Credits: 4
  • PLSC 493 - Issues in Political Theory Credits: 4

International Relations:
  • PLSC 271 - Introduction to International Relations Credits: 5 GUR: SSC
  • PLSC 310 - The International Security of East Asia Credits: 5
  • PLSC 312 - International Relations of South Asia Credits: 4
  • PLSC 315 - Why We Fight Credits: 4
  • PLSC 325 - Quebec Politics and Quebec-US Relations Credits: 4
  • PLSC 366 - Research in Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 370 - Global Issues in International Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 372 - International Political Economy Credits: 5 GUR: SSC
  • PLSC 376 - American Foreign Policy Credits: 5
  • PLSC 399 - The Politics of Democratization Credits: 5
  • PLSC 492 - The European Union and the Process of European Integration Credits: 4
  • PLSC 434 - Senior Seminar in International Politics Credits: 3-5
  • PLSC 436 - Managing Environmental Commons Credits: 5

Comparative Politics:
  • PLSC 201 - Introduction to Comparative Politics Credits: 5 GUR: SSC
  • PLSC 301 - The British Parliamentary System Credits: 5
  • PLSC 302 - Western Europe Credits: 5
  • PLSC 307 - Government and Politics of East Asia Credits: 5
  • PLSC 308 - African Political Systems Credits: 5
  • PLSC 309 - Globalization from Political, Economic, and Social Perspectives Credits: 5
  • PLSC 312 - International Relations of South Asia Credits: 4
  • PLSC 315 - Why We Fight Credits: 4
  • PLSC 325 - Quebec Politics and Quebec-U.S. Relations Credits: 4
  • PLSC 357 - Health Policy Credits: 4
  • PLSC 366 - Research in Politics Credits: 5
  • PLSC 372 - Comparative Foreign Policy Credits: 5
  • PLSC 385 - Political Geography Credits: 5
• PLSC 385 - Nationalism, Genocide and Global Politics Credits: 5
• PLSC 390 - The Politics of Development Credits: 5
• PLSC 399 - The Politics of Democratization Credits: 5
• PLSC 402 - Regional European Society and Politics Credits: 4
• PLSC 403 - The European Union and the Process of European Integration Credits: 4
• PLSC 406 - Canadian Government and Politics Credits: 4
• PLSC 430 - Modern Chinese Politics Credits: 4
• PLSC 433 - Senior Seminar in Comparative Politics Credits: 3-5
• PLSC 435 - Managing Environmental Commons Credits: 5
• PLSC 449 - Politics and Social Change Credits: 4
• PLSC 452 - Comparative Political Parties and Party Systems Credits: 4
• PLSC 453 - Comparative Electoral Systems Credits: 4
• PLSC 491 - Issues in Political Economy Credits: 4

Departmental Honors

Entrance requirements

Students must satisfy the following eligibility requirements prior to registration for PLSC 496 Honors Tutorial. The student must:

• Be a declared political science major with senior standing
• Have a 3.50 GPA in all upper-division political science courses
• Have completed both of the following:
  • Core requirements for the major (PLSC 250, PLSC 261, PLSC 271 and PLSC 291)
  • Credit requirements in the area most closely related to the thesis topic
• Have completed one of the following:
  • Two years of foreign language with a B (3.0) or better GPA; the Honors advisor, at his or her discretion, may choose to waive this requirement for students who demonstrate a satisfactory reading knowledge of the language
  • PLSC 366 Research in Politics, or an equivalent class in social statistics under advisement, and earn a grade of B (3.0) or better
• Submit the completed Honors Contract to the political science department office with proper faculty signatures

Completion Requirements

To graduate with honors in political science the student must:

• Maintain a 3.50 grade point average in all upper-division political science courses
• Complete 4-6 credits of PLSC 496 Honors Tutorial over two quarters under the supervision of a faculty thesis advisor
• Give an oral presentation of the thesis in arrangement with the faculty thesis advisor
• Submit a copy of the honors thesis to the political science department office before the final grade is assigned

University Graduation Requirements

General University Requirements 2019-20
Writing Proficiency Requirement (WP)
180 Minimum Total Credits
60 Minimum Upper Division Credits
Residency Requirement
Minimum Grade Requirements
Final Quarter Requirement