

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Chair: [Nathan Bigelow](#)

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A major in political science or international relations provides students with an understanding of the great issues of politics in a rapidly changing international environment. Employing historical, comparative, philosophical, legal, and experiential approaches to the study of politics, the department places heavy emphasis on student mastery of theoretical and methodological foundations, critical thinking skills, and effective writing and speaking skills.

Degrees Offered in Political Science

Major in Political Science

Major in International Relations

Minor in Political Science

Minor in International Relations

For a multidisciplinary program incorporating political science, please refer to the [Philosophy, Politics, and Economics \(PPE\) Program](#).

A **major in political science** consists of:

PSCI Base (3 courses)

_____ PSCI 110 American Government and Politics

_____ PSCI 120 American Political Thought

_____ PSCI 130 Introduction to International Relations *or* PSCI 140 Introduction to Global Comparative Politics

PSCI Methods (1 course)

_____ PSCI 270: Research Methods *or* PSCI 271 Quantitative Methods

PSCI Depth (5 courses)

_____ any level PSCI course

_____ 300 level or higher PSCI course

_____ 300 level or higher PSCI course

_____ 400 level or higher PSCI course

_____ 400 level or higher PSCI course

Total Credits Requirement = 9 course credits

A major in international relations consists of:

IR Base (3 courses)

_____ PSCI 130 Introduction to International Relations

_____ PSCI 140 Introduction to Global Comparative Politics

_____ PSCI 110 American Government and Politics *or* PSCI 120 American Political Thought

PSCI Methods (1 course)

_____ PSCI 270 Research Methods *or* PSCI 271 Quantitative Methods

IR Depth (5 courses)

_____ any level PSCI course in the sub-field of international relations or comparative politics

_____ 300 level or higher PSCI course in the sub-field of international relations or comparative politics

_____ 300 level or higher PSCI course in the sub-field of international relations or comparative politics

_____ 400 level or higher PSCI course in the sub-field of international relations or comparative politics

_____ PSCI 430 International Relations Theory *or* PSCI 440 Advanced Comparative Politics

Other Considerations When Planning for the Major:

- Students must also complete a modern language through the 236 level.

Total Credits Requirement = 9 course credits

A minor in political science consists of:

Core Courses (2 courses)

_____ PSCI 110 American Government and Politics

_____ PSCI 120 American Political Thought

_____ PSCI 130 Introduction to International Relations

_____ PSCI 140 Introduction to Global Comparative Politics.

Electives (3 courses)

_____ Any level PSCI course

_____ 200 level or higher PSCI course

_____ 300 level or higher PSCI course

Total Credits Requirement = 5 course credits

A **minor in international relations** consists of:

Core Courses (2 courses)

_____ PSCI 130 Introduction to International Relations

_____ PSCI 140 Introduction to Global Comparative Politics.

Electives (3 courses)

_____ Any level PSCI course

_____ 200 level or higher PSCI course in the sub-field of international relations

_____ 300 level or higher PSCI course in the sub-field of international relations

Total Credits Requirement = 5 course credits

COURSES

PSCI 110 American Government and Politics

An introduction to the theoretical foundations, governing institutions, and political processes of American government; including an overview of the cultural and ideological background of the American system of government, an analysis of constitutional foundations, and an examination of the many actors involved in governing. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every Semester)

PSCI 120 American Political Thought

An introduction to the political theory of the American republic and the Texas Constitution through a study of primary texts, including the Declaration of Independence, Articles of

Confederation, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and Anti-Federalist writings, as well as the writings and speeches of Jefferson, Marshall, Calhoun, Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Special attention is given to the connection between politics and government, the origin and purpose of civil government, the forms of government, the spirit of democratic regimes, federalism, the geographical, governmental, and sociological configuration of the American democratic republic, and the American dilemma of racial inequality. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth and Half Writing Competency. (Every fall)

PSCI 130 Introduction to International Relations

An introduction to the post-Cold War international political system with emphasis on the institutions, issues, and geopolitical forces that affect the interactions of the state and non-state actors in the contemporary global community. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every fall)

PSCI 140 Introduction to Global Comparative Politics

An introduction to the theories, methods, and approaches of the field of comparative politics providing a foundation for understanding and analyzing contemporary political systems. Why do we compare, what do we compare, and how do we compare when analyzing political systems? Why do some societies have democratic political systems and others authoritarian ones? What contributes to political stability and instability? Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every spring)

PSCI 220 The Constitution and Civil Liberties

Through careful examination and discussion of leading U. S. Supreme Court cases, this course will examine freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, the rights of privacy, racial and gender equality, voting rights, and due process of law. From the Court's contending majority and minority opinions, the course will seek to extract the fundamental philosophic differences about the rule of law, the extent of human freedom, the dignity of the human person, and the need for a virtuous citizenry in a modern republic devoted to liberty and equality. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every other spring)

PSCI 235 Model United Nations

This course involves an examination of the United Nations and includes participation in a regional or national Model United Nations conference. Through both classroom and experiential learning, students will be introduced to international organization theory and will conduct a detailed investigation of the structure and role of the United Nations, the country they will represent, and the issues relevant to the committee on which they will serve in the conference. The course also will include an examination of international diplomacy and negotiation, decision-making, and conflict resolution theory as they relate to participation in the conference. May not be repeated for course credit. (Every spring)

PSCI 236 Model United Nations

This course involves an examination of the United Nations and includes participation in a regional, national, or international Model United Nations conference. This course is intended for students that have already taken Political Science 235 and seek to participate in Model UN for a second semester. PREQ: Political Science 235. (Every spring)

PSCI 250 Intermediate Topics in Political Science

A study of selected topics drawn from any of the subfields of political science and designed primarily for students beginning the study of political science. May be repeated when topic varies.

PSCI 260 Intermediate Directed Study

Supervised research study in political science using one or more research techniques on an issue from any of the subfields of political science. May be repeated for a total of one course credit unit.

PSCI 270 Research Methods

Study of the basic research techniques used in the scientific study of politics. The course will focus on the development of sensible, ethical, and systematic scientific research designs. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every fall)

PSCI 271 Quantitative Methods

An examination of basic social science statistics used in political science to summarize data, describe relationships between variables, make inferences from samples to estimate population parameters, and application of control. While the course focuses on quantitative approaches, it does so within a framework of research design; including theory development, hypothesis specification, sampling technique, and research ethics. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth and Quantitative Competency. (Every spring)

PSCI 310 Congress

An examination of the legislative branch of American government. Topics include the evolving institutional structure of Congress, the theory and practice of representation, congressional elections, and a detailed examination of the federal policy-making process. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every other spring)

PSCI 311 The Presidency

An examination of the role of executive leadership within the American political system. Topics include the foundations and evolution of presidential power, the dynamics of presidential elections and public opinion, and the interaction of the executive with the legislative and judicial branches. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every fall)

PSCI 313 State and Local Government

A comparative examination of the 50 states and nearly 90,000 local governments that make up the sub-national governing structure of United States. Topics include theories of federalism; deviation in political culture; institutional variation in state government; as well as the establishment, evolution and modern practice of local government. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every fall)

PSCI 315 Campaigns and Elections

An examination of the electoral process within the American political system. Topics include suffrage; voting behavior; the role of candidates, political parties, interest groups and the media; and the history of campaign finance and various reform efforts. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Offered on an occasional basis)

PSCI 318 Public Administration

An historical study of public administration within the context of American constitutionalism and the dynamics of popular government in America. Special attention is given to the problem of reconciling the growth of the administrative state under pressures from modern industrial society and the concurrent democratic demand for government by the people. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every other fall)

PSCI 350/450 Advanced Topics in Political Science

A study of selected topics in political science drawn from any of the subfields of political science and offered on an occasional basis. Prerequisites vary. May be repeated when subject varies.

PSCI 410 U.S. Constitutional Law

This course will principally address the place of the national judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, in the U. S. constitutional system through a careful analysis of the great cases that have shaped the development of constitutional law. The course gives special consideration to the literal text of the constitution, to the political and legal theories behind the constitution, and to the historical context in which the great cases have arisen. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or History 162 or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every fall)

PSCI 415 The Common Law

This course explores the history of the Common Law in England and in America from approaches historical, philosophical, and linguistic. Careful attention is given to the foundations of the Common Law in Franco-Norman feudalism and to the development of a system of law that contributed greatly to the sense of English national identity and to English greatness even though the origins of this law and the language in which it was written were not English at all. A critical part of this historical and philosophical investigation is the reading of the greatest writers on the Common Law: Sir John Fortescue, Sir Edward Coke, Sir Matthew Hale, William Blackstone, James Chancellor Kent, and Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. The reading of these great English and American writers brings into focus the political theory at the core of the Common Law that became a critical foundation for political and personal liberty in England and the United States and for the development of a dynamic commercial economy supported by private property rights and the obligation of contract. PREQ: Political Science 120 or History 133 or History 134 or History 162 or History 331 or History 332 or any philosophy course or instructor permission. (Every other spring)

PSCI 417 Public Policy

This course involves a broad examination of public policy in the United States. Topics include an

analysis of theoretical understandings of power in the policy-making process; an exploration of the prerequisites and processes of policy change, within the context of the policy process; and an examination of a specific policy area (past topics include welfare, affirmative action, and health policy). PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every other spring)

PSCI 420 Political Theory

A detailed analysis of Plato's *Republic*, Thomas Aquinas' *Treatise on Law*, Machiavelli's *Prince*, and a selected work of Nietzsche, with emphasis on the place of statesmanship, law, religion, education, economics, and the family in political life. Special attention is given to the tension between philosophy and political life. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or any philosophy course or any religious studies course or instructor permission. (Every other fall)

PSCI 425 Political Philosophy and Religion

A study of the relationship between religion and politics and religion and political philosophy as seen by great Islamic, Jewish, and Christian writer from late antiquity through the Middle Ages, including St. Augustine, Al-Farabi, Averroes, Maimonides, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, and Marsilius of Padua. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or any philosophy course or any religious studies course or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Offered on an occasional basis)

PSCI 428 The Origins of Modern Liberalism

Through the study of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Benedict Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*, John Locke's *Second Treatise*, and Rousseau's *Second Discourse* and *Social Contract*, this course will examine the philosophic sources of modern views of human nature, natural rights, social contract, and secular rule inspiring the American and French revolutions and underpinning the modern western liberal democracies, in particular the United States. As part of this concentration on the origins of modern liberalism, the course will give careful attention to the conscious project of these early modern writers to replace classical and religious views of human nature and political life with notions the modern writers considered more conducive to human life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course or any philosophy course or any religious studies course. (Offered on an occasional basis)

PSCI 430 International Relations Empire Politics

In this course we will utilize the principle theories and literature in the field of international relations to define what empire is and explain why and how empires are created. We will examine the main theories in IR not only as lenses for explaining why empire occurs, but will also be looking at the ways in which the theories themselves have been justifications for empire. This course will utilize literature that deals with both traditional understanding of empire and colonialism, as well as more recent literature studying the nature of globalization and neocolonialism. By the end of this course you will be well acquainted with different theoretical approaches to explaining and understanding empire in the world today. PREQ: Any 100-level political science course and Junior or Senior standing or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every fall)

PSCI 440 Advanced Comparative Politics

This course provides an advanced investigation into the main theories of comparative politics. We will address key scholarly writings on topics such as political institutions, political culture, identity, development, and democratization. PREQ: Any 100 level political science course and Junior or Senior standing, or instructor permission. Requirements met: Social Sciences Breadth. (Every other year)

PSCI 460 Advanced Directed Study

Student investigation of topic of interest related to the major or minor working in collaboration with a faculty member resulting in significant oral and written work. See On-Campus Learning Opportunities for more information. PREQ: Junior or Senior standing. Special permission required. Offered for variable course credit from 0.25-1.00.

PSCI 464 Teaching/Learning Participation

An individualized study that includes sharing in the instructional process for a particular political science course under the supervision of the faculty member teaching the course. Open only to certain highly qualified juniors and seniors by invitation. See On-Campus Learning Opportunities for more information.

PSCI 480 Internship

See program faculty for more details.

PSCI 490 Independent Study

Student-driven independent work to produce a high quality body of work such as paper, report, art project, etc. See On-Campus Learning Opportunities for more information. PREQ: Junior or Senior standing. Special permission required. Offered in variable course credit from 0.25-1.00.

PSCI 491 Honors Thesis in Political Science

Extensive independent study in the major in a topic of special interest culminating in a bachelor's thesis with oral examination by thesis committee resulting in a bachelor's degree with Honors upon completion. See Departmental Honors Program for more information. Completed in last three semesters before graduation. Offered for variable course credit from 1.00-2.00.

PSCI 492 Independent Study Off-Campus/NSOC

Student-driven independent study in a topic related to the major completed at an off-campus site. See Off-Campus Learning Opportunities for more information. PREQ: Junior or Senior standing. Special permission required. Offered in variable course credit from 0.25-1.00.