

Political Science Major

Program Requirements

- **Total units required:** 30

Students who major in political science are required to complete 30 graded units (10 courses) in political science with a C or better, distributed as follows:

Required Courses

Substantive Introductory Courses

6 graded units must come from two 100-level introductory courses. (**Note:** Students scoring a 4 or 5 on the AP US Government and Politics exam and/or the AP Comparative Government and Politics exam may place out of the associated introductory course and replace it with a 300- or 400-level course in a related subfield.)

Methodology Course

3 graded units must come from either Pol Sci 263 Data Science for Politics or Pol Sci 363 Quantitative Political Methodology. All majors are urged to complete this requirement during their sophomore year. (**Note:** Some statistics courses offered in other departments will allow students to opt out of this class, but those credits will not count toward their political science major. See the department website for more information.)

Elective Courses

Distribution Requirement

Students must complete at least one 3-unit course at the 200-, 300-, or 400-level in three of the following subfields: American politics, comparative politics, international politics, political methodology, or political theory.

Upper-Level Requirement

18 graded units must come from any six 300- or 400-level courses, including at least one 400-level capstone course (see below).

Other Courses

A student's remaining graded units may be earned by any political science course or independent study. However, credits given for writing a senior thesis (detailed in the Senior Thesis section below) do not count toward the major. In addition, a student may complete an internship for Political Science credit.

Capstone

All majors must complete at least one 400-level class, home-based in political science, as a capstone experience. Students writing a senior thesis satisfy this requirement by completing Pol Sci 495 Research Design and Methods.

Limitations

No more than 6 units from the following may count toward the major: internship, directed reading, directed research, or teaching practicum.

No more than 6 units from the following may count toward the major: study abroad, summer school, the School of Continuing & Professional Studies, or transfer credit.

Additional Information

Specializations

Political science majors may specialize in a subfield of political science by taking (as part of their distribution requirement) three courses with the same subfield distribution in any one of the five subfields (American politics, comparative politics, international politics, political methodology, or political theory). Students may earn specializations in up to two subfields. The successful completion of a subfield specialization will be listed on the student's transcript.

Senior Thesis

The department encourages students to pursue independent research by working toward a senior thesis. Students admitted to this program work closely with a faculty advisor for a full calendar year, beginning at the end of their junior year. Students writing a senior thesis receive 6 units of credit for two semesters of work by enrolling in Pol Sci 415 Senior Thesis Research. However, this credit does not count toward the completion of the political science major. Although there is no grade point average requirement for writing a senior thesis, an application is required. For more information, contact the department office. All majors may apply.

To qualify to write a senior thesis, students must do the following:

- Complete the methodology course requirement by the fall of their junior year (all majors are strongly urged to complete this requirement during their sophomore year).
- Complete Pol Sci 495 Research Design and Methods prior to their senior year.
- Complete a subfield specialization (detailed in the Specializations section above) by the end of the fall of their senior year in the subfield appropriate for their senior thesis. At least two thirds of the specialization must be completed by the end of their junior year.
- Apply during their junior year for admission into the program.

Senior Honors

To graduate with Latin Honors, students must successfully complete a senior thesis project and meet a GPA requirement set by the College of Arts & Sciences.

Phone: 314-935-5810
Email: polisci@wustl.edu
Website: <http://polisci.wustl.edu>