

# Political Science Undergraduate Student Handbook

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## Why Study Political Science? The Discipline

The Political Science Bachelor of Arts degree program emphasizes research and teaching that links theory with real-world issues and action through politics, public policy, and administration. With a degree from our department, you will be prepared to develop innovative approaches to current and emerging local, national, and global challenges. The B.A. in political science offers you five different areas of study, from American politics and policy to international relations. Amid this wide diversity of interests and approaches lies a common concern with anything "political"—issues, institutions, behavior, power, and public goods. Political scientists also share a common interest: the public arena of human society, the uses of power and persuasion, and the ideas that shape social and political movements and governing institutions. The political science B.A. will teach you how to think and communicate about politics. You will learn how to evaluate evidence and arguments, and understand political dynamics in the U.S. and across the globe. You will be able to contextualize events and processes, setting them in historical and comparative perspective.

As a political science major, you will learn the philosophical and practical underpinnings of democracy and other forms of governance. You will study the causes and consequences of authoritarian and revolutionary political regimes. Your classes will lead you to grapple with how constitutional orders, political party and electoral systems, government bureaucracies, judiciaries, militaries, and other institutions of governance affect political outcomes. You will learn how and why the powerful and powerless attempt to design and use political systems to advance their interests, whether at the individual, group, or state/interstate level.

The major prepares you for careers that demand thought, analysis, reading, writing, and speaking about complex organizational and public matters. You will be able to write a policy analysis memo, propose communication strategies, understand and evaluate a Supreme Court decision, understand and explain the impacts of government policies on public and private domains, and see how the private and the public are entwined in all modern societies. You will be able to understand the likely impact of the interests and ideologies at play in intergroup/interagency/interstate negotiations in which you, and the entity for whom you work or that you lead, might be involved. These skills and knowledge will enable you to go on to be a leader in any of a number of fields: political campaigns and lobbying, law, a host of governmental and non-governmental organizations, academia, the media, business, the military, political parties, and social and political movements.

Political science grapples with some of the most profound questions of human interaction. What justifies systems of government? Why should anyone obey authority? How did some attain power and wealth and not others? Can we develop sustainable environmental policies? Why do people and nations go to war? What conditions facilitate peace and toleration? We hope you join us in the effort to answer such questions, and we look forward to helping you succeed in reaching your career goals.

## The Department of Political Science: An Overview

The Department of Political Science recognizes and embraces its distinctive roles, as defined by not only the liberal arts tradition of the College of Liberal Arts in which it is located, but also by the land-grant origins of the University of Nevada, Reno. At the heart of the department's mission is the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Undergraduate education is a historic strength in the department. Our program affords you an unmatched opportunity to:

- develop an understanding of political institutions and behavior
- question the ends and principles of political life
- understand the role of human agency within the nexus of a society's political institutions and processes and its impact on local and global outcomes.

We recognize that most University of Nevada, Reno political science undergraduates will not pursue professional careers in academia or government. Therefore, we develop our program to be versatile by providing our students with various specializations while completing their degree. Throughout the program, students build numerous professional skills such as writing communications, public relations, and data analysis that are critical to employment in public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

The department offers its undergraduate curriculum together with its commitment to graduate education, public service, and research. We are committed to the idea that research and teaching benefit each other, that students benefit most by being linked to faculty at the cutting edge of research and public service, and that they learn as much from committed fellow students as from faculty.

### Our Faculty

The Political Science Department faculty have a strong dedication to teaching and are active researchers. Faculty have won various teaching awards, and have published books and articles that have appeared in major political science and social science academic journals. Faculty edit or serve on the editorial boards of major professional journals of the discipline. They have received various national and international fellowships, and have been visiting scholars at a wide range of universities and institutes around the world. They have given guest lectures in numerous venues, including the U.S. military academies, major universities, and government agencies.

In the pages that follow, you will find more information on the B.A. in political science. If you have questions about this information or just want to talk about the major, please feel free to contact the Office of the Department of Political Science. If you are interested in the B.A. in International Affairs or in any of our minors (Latin American Studies, Asian Studies, Renewable Energy), please contact us as well. We are located at the Thompson Building, Room 221, and at <https://www.unr.edu/political-science>.

For further information regarding faculty areas of research and teaching, please visit: <https://www.unr.edu/political-science/people>.

## The Curriculum

The undergraduate political science curriculum at the University of Nevada, Reno is divided into five subfields:

### American Politics

The American politics subfield focuses on the political behavior of the public U.S. political institutions, and how they interact. Topics include public opinion, voting, campaigns and elections, political psychology, political identity, Congress, the presidency and bureaucracy, the courts, the media, state and local governments, and interest groups.

### Comparative Politics

Comparative Politics seeks to understand and explain socio-political, economic and historical outcomes through comparisons of socio-political, economic and cultural entities and forces between and within countries. Comparativists study political institutions, political organizations, political behavior across state and sub-state venues with a goal of understanding the how and why of politics in a variety of contexts.

### International Relations

The International Relations field covers interactions, cooperation, and conflict among states and between states and non-state actors. Topics of study include theories of international relations, conflict, foreign policy, national and international security, international law and organizations, global environmental policy, human rights, human security, and international political economy.

### Political Theory

The Political Theory area includes political philosophy and its history, contemporary political ideologies, democratic theory, and political ethics.

### Public Administration and Policy

This field includes topics such as foundations of public service, public human resource management, organizational theory and behavior, public budgeting, public policy process, policy analysis, policy implementation, and a variety of substantive topics such as environmental policy, and energy politics and policy, etc.

Within each area there are four categories of courses:

1. The 100-level courses are open without any prerequisite to all students. They are intended to provide an overview of the different subfields of the discipline without assuming previous knowledge on the part of the student.

2. The 200-level courses focus on specific topics. Some previous knowledge may be required. Therefore, students should usually take one of the introductory courses before enrolling in 200-level courses.
3. The 300-level courses focus on specific topics in more depth. They provide an opportunity for intensive analysis of specific issues and problems in political science. Students should enroll in these courses only after taking at least one 200-level course in the relevant subfield.
4. The 400-level classes are recommended for juniors and seniors only. These courses vary in scope and content and usually have prerequisites.

### Planning a Coherent Program of Study

The best course of study combines planning with flexibility. It is usually a mistake to select courses each semester on a purely ad hoc basis without giving any thought to the coherence of a program. On the other hand, no one should try to plan ahead so completely that the ability to accommodate new interests disappears. Plans and goals can be revised periodically. Be sure to meet regularly with an [Academic Adviser](#) to stay on track for graduation and to find out how to incorporate new interests into your program of study.

### Major requirements

All students must complete a minimum of 30 credits for the major with at least one class in each of the five fields (American, Comparative, Political Theory, International Relations, Public Administration and Policy). A total of 18 of the credits must be in courses numbered 300 or above. A maximum of 6 credits of internship courses may be used to fulfill the 30-credit requirements. Some of the upper-division courses require PSC 210, PSC 211, or PSC 231, and may have Core Objective prerequisites. Details on the major and courses are in Appendix A at the end of this handbook. The form to declare political science as a minor can be obtained in the main office, Thompson Building, Room 221, or [online](#). One of our advisers will be glad to assist you.

**Suggested Work in Related Disciplines.** You are encouraged to take courses in related fields such as anthropology, Basque studies, criminal justice, economics, gender/race and identity, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, among others. A political science major can also benefit from a business or English minor and/or a minor offered by the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Please consult with the political science academic advisers for further information regarding course sequences, and major/minor combinations.

### Minor Requirements

The department offers a minor in political science, for which the requirements are: a minimum of seven (7) courses in Political Science, which satisfy one of the four variation of minors (general political science, foreign affairs, public administration and public policy, American government). Please see the Appendix to this handbook for details. The form to declare political science as a minor can be obtained in the main office, Thompson Building, Room 221, or online at [Admissions and Records](#): <https://www.unr.edu/admissions/records/services/forms>. One of our advisers will be glad to assist you.

## BA/MA and BA/MPA programs

You might be able to get your BA and a Master's degree in Political Science, or your BA and a Master's in Public Administration and Policy, in a total of five years (or possibly fewer depending on credits you are able to bring in with you), rather than the usual six. The accelerated degree program allows undergraduate students to take graduate level courses and apply them to their undergraduate program and their graduate program if they go onto graduate school. It also allows federal financial aid to count the graduate level classes towards the undergraduate program and therefore will pay for the graduate level courses.

To apply, students in the accelerated program must go through two separate steps:

First, you must apply to take graduate level classes as an undergraduate. Here you must use the [accelerated form](#) which is on Graduate School's [forms page](#). You must have completed at least 75 credits toward the bachelor's degree with a 3.0 UNR GPA, typically during the spring of the junior year. It is best to apply one month in advance of the opening of course registration (by October 1 for the following spring semester and by March 1 for the following fall semester). As part of the admission process, students must select a faculty advisor for their program.

Second, you must apply to the Graduate School for formal admission to the graduate program of interest (MA or MPA) once you are ready to complete bachelor's degree--that is, in senior status.

Completing the accelerated form does not guarantee admission to the graduate program and is not the application for admission to the graduate program.

Please consult one of our academic advisers no later than your Junior year to learn more about this option. See also <https://www.unr.edu/degrees/political-science/accelerated-programs>.

## Academic Advising

Upon notification of your declaration as a major in political science, you should make an advising appointment with the undergraduate adviser. Your adviser is a valuable resource. He or she can help you plan a coherent and satisfying curriculum and can provide you with information on course offerings and opportunities within the department. Meeting with your adviser also ensures progress toward fulfilling both university graduation requirements and departmental major requirements.

## Internships

A great way to get applied experience in politics, policy and public administration, and to put what you have learned into action is through an internship. The Political Science department offers three types of internships. Please [check our web page](#), as well as the content below:

- Public Service Internship
- Congressional Internship

- Nevada Legislative Internship

### Public Service Internship

The public service internship program offers interested and qualified students the opportunity to earn 3-6 credits while serving as an intern in one of various public, nonprofit, or approved private organizations in the community. While serving as an intern, students gain invaluable experience in and exposure to the day-to-day working environment of a host organization. Opportunities exist at both the domestic and international policy levels. In addition, internship positions are available in various state-level campaign offices.

Although a few internships provide modest stipends or salaries, and some provide per diem expenses, most are voluntary. The student typically works in his/her assigned or selected organization for from six to twelve hours per week depending on the number of credits a student wishes to earn. Students must contact the faculty member with whom s/he is working at the end of each month. A final evaluation of the student's internship experience is due when the internship is completed. Interested students should contact Dr. John Marini, [jmarini@unr.edu](mailto:jmarini@unr.edu), for more information.

### Congressional Internship

Students can earn 3-6 units of political science credit, while obtaining practical experience in the legislative process, by serving as an intern in a U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives office in Washington, D.C. Students must obtain internship through the congressional office, not the Department of Political Science. Prerequisite: 9 political science credits, including PSC 304, or examination. Interested students should contact Dr. John Marini, [jmarini@unr.edu](mailto:jmarini@unr.edu), for more information.

### Nevada Legislative Internship

In these internships, students gain firsthand experience in the inner workings of Nevada government with the state legislature (when in session) and earn 3-6 university credits. The duration of internship is from mid-January until the end of the semester during the legislative session. This internship is available to juniors and seniors. Interested students should make sure they have completed PSC 304 or PSC 308 by fall of the academic year. A GPA of 3.0 is preferred. Applications will be available in the preceding fall at the Department of Political Science. Please contact the department for further information.

### Pi Sigma Alpha

The Delta Xi Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha recognizes eligible juniors and seniors who have demonstrated academic excellence in political science. The chapter cooperates with the Department of Political Science in promoting valuable extracurricular activities related to public affairs. Membership in the University of Nevada, Reno chapter of this national honor society is open to all students who have:

- 1) completed at least three political science courses, one of which must be at the 100-level or above;
- 2) achieved a minimum GPA of 3.3 overall, and a minimum GPA of 3.5 in political science courses;
- 3) rank in the top one-quarter of the relevant class.

One-time membership dues are used to fund chapter activities and the national office, and to provide each member with a distinctive certificate attesting to his or her membership in the society. The faculty adviser to Pi Sigma Alpha is Dr. Ian M. Hartshorn.

For more information, see Pi Sigma Alpha's national website at: [www.pisigmaalpha.org/](http://www.pisigmaalpha.org/)

## MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Interested in international politics and affairs? Have you ever wondered how countries negotiate in formal settings? How do they persuade other countries to go along with their proposals? How much informal politicking goes on behind the formal presentations and votes? How effective are they at ameliorating critical problems such as famines and civil war? Find out and learn by participating in the Model United Nations, and by taking our IAFF 300 Model United Nations

course. Students in the Model UN course have the option of participating in the regional Model UN conference that takes place annually in late spring in San Francisco. Thanks to the generosity of the Judy Nowland & Harry M. Chase, Jr. Scholarship Endowment, the Department of Political Science has adequate funding to pay students' travel expenditures.

For more information, please contact Dr. Nicholas Seltzer, [nseltzer@unr.edu](mailto:nseltzer@unr.edu).

## Scholarships

The generosity of alumni and other donors allows the Department of Political Science to offer several scholarships to political science and international affairs students. The Adam Gregory Thomas Legislative Internship Scholarship Endowment supports student participation in the Nevada State Legislature internship program. The Senator William J. Raggio Free Enterprise Scholarship Endowment and others subsidize students' academic expenses. Additional grants and scholarships are also available with awards ranging from about \$500-\$4,500.

Don't overlook these opportunities! Read below for further information.



## New Student Scholarships

Your application to the University of Nevada, Reno is also your scholarship application. No further applications are required. Applications received by February 1 are given priority consideration.

## Continuing Student Scholarships

If you are a continuing student, to be considered for scholarships and awards, you must complete the Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarship (GUS) Application in your MyNEVADA account between October 1 and February 1 annually by going to Student Center, Supplemental Forms, Scholarship Application. The GUS application is available until May 31 but scholarship application preference is given to those who complete by February 1. The GUS application is required to be eligible for scholarships/awards offered by OISS and many other University departments.

## Career Opportunities

Like all the disciplines in the liberal arts, a degree in political science is not a vocational or professional degree that is intended to provide training for one specific career. Nevertheless, an undergraduate major in political science is appropriate and valuable preparation for a wide variety of careers. Any professional whose work involves the public domain would benefit from the knowledge gained and the critical skills developed as a political science major.

Political science majors follow varied paths after graduation. Majoring in political science can qualify you for many different careers in private, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations, as well as the public sector. Graduates can pursue careers in a variety of fields, including but not limited to:

- law
- consulting
- research
- business and finance
- state, local, and federal government
- elected office and campaign management
- journalism, media, and communications
- community service
- advocacy
- non-governmental and non-profit organizations
- teaching
- medicine

Don't forget UNR's Career Studio for helpful resources on job searches, internships, resume writing, interview coaching, and other things that can help you with your career planning and job search. Faculty in the department are always glad to talk to students about career options—including post-graduate

programs—as well. For those of you interested in Law or Medicine, please talk to one of our advisers early on in your time at UNR, and also get in touch with the [Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center](#) at UNR, [www.unr.edu/academic-advising/center](http://www.unr.edu/academic-advising/center).

## APPENDIX A: Major requirements

All students must complete a minimum of 30 credits for the major with at least one class in each of the five fields (American, Comparative, Political Theory, International Relations, Public Policy and Administration). A total of 18 of the credits must be in courses numbered 300 or above. A maximum of 6 credits of internship courses may be used to fulfill the 30-credit requirements. Some of the upper-division courses require PSC 210, PSC 211, or PSC 231, and may have Core Objective prerequisites. Courses marked with an asterisk (\*) below may be used in either area where they are listed, but not both.

Note that not all classes are offered every semester. These lists are subject to change; please consult the course catalog each semester for an updated list of courses offered in each of the five fields.

1. PSC 101 - American Politics: Process and Behavior (3 credits)
2. American Government
  - a. PSC 208 - Survey of State and Local Government
  - b. PSC 255 - The American Women's Movement
  - c. PSC 304 - The Legislative Process
  - d. PSC 305 - The American Presidency
  - e. PSC 332 - The Judicial Process\*
  - f. PSC 341 - Elements of Public Administration\*
  - g. PSC 353 - Identity Politics in the United States\*
  - h. PSC 354 - Politics and Women\*
  - i. PSC 401A - Urban Politics\*
  - j. PSC 401E - Politics of Nevada
  - k. PSC 401F - Public Opinion and Political Behavior
  - l. PSC 401G - Political Campaigns and Elections
  - m. PSC 401H - American Political Parties and Electoral Behavior
  - n. PSC 401L - Citizen Participation, Pressure Groups, and Political Movements
  - o. PSC 401M - Intergovernmental Relations\*
  - p. PSC 401Z - Special Topics in American Government
  - q. PSC 403H - The Supreme Court and Public Policy\*
  - r. PSC 411 - Constitutional Law: Separation of Powers and Federalism
  - s. PSC 490B - Internship: Legislative
  - t. PSC 490G - Internship: Congressional
3. Public Administration and Public Policy
  - a. PSC 210 - American Public Policy
  - b. PSC 320 - Policy Analysis
  - c. PSC 332 - The Judicial Process\*
  - d. PSC 341 - Elements of Public Administration\*

- e. PSC 353 - Identity Politics in the United States\*
- f. PSC 354 - Politics and Women\*
- g. PSC 401A - Urban Politics\*
- h. PSC 401M - Intergovernmental Relations\*
- i. PSC 401Q - Generational Politics and Policy
- j. PSC 403A - Natural Resource Policy
- k. PSC 403B - Energy and Resource Policy
- l. PSC 403C - Environmental Policy
- m. PSC 403D - Global Environmental Policy\*
- n. PSC 403E - Environmental Law
- o. PSC 403G - Law and Water Resource Policy
- p. PSC 403H - The Supreme Court and Public Policy\*
- q. PSC 403K - Problems in American Public Policy
- r. PSC 403M - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Policy
- s. PSC 403Z - Special Topics in Public Policy and Administration
- t. PSC 404A - Public Financial Administration
- u. PSC 404B - Public Personnel Administration
- v. PSC 404C - The Politics of Administration
- w. PSC 404D - Comparative Public Administration\*
- x. PSC 404E - Theories of Public Administration
- y. PSC 404F - Administrative Law
- z. PSC 405P - Global Political Economy\*
- aa. PSC 490F - Internship: Public Service

#### 4. Political Theory

- a. PSC 227 - Intro to Political Philosophy
- b. PSC 323 - History of Political Thought I
- c. PSC 324 - History of Political Thought II
- d. PSC 400F - Politics and Film
- e. PSC 403J - Political Ethics and Corruption
- f. PSC 409A - Political Philosophy
- g. PSC 409B - Philosophy of Political Science
- h. PSC 409C - American Political Thought
- i. PSC 409D - Contemporary Political Thought
- j. PSC 409G - Politics and Literature in the 20th Century
- k. PSC 409K - Jurisprudence
- l. PSC 409Z - Special Topics in Political Theory

## 5. Comparative Politics

- a. PSC 211 - Comparative Government and Politics
- b. PSC 404D - Comparative Public Administration\*
- c. PSC 405E - Foreign Policies of Major Powers
- d. PSC 407A - Political Systems of Western Europe
- e. PSC 407B - Political Systems of East Asia
- f. PSC 407C - Political Systems of Russia and East-Central Europe
- g. PSC 407D - Political Systems of the Middle East and North Africa
- h. PSC 407E - Political Systems of Latin America
- i. PSC 407F - Political Systems of China
- j. PSC 407H - Politics and Problems in Developed Areas
- k. PSC 407I - Politics and Problems in Developing Areas
- l. PSC 407J - Nationalism
- m. PSC 407L - Basque Diaspora Studies
- n. PSC 407P - The Middle East and World Affairs\*
- o. PSC 407Q - Political Violence and Terrorism\*
- p. PSC 407S - Comparative Political Economy\*
- q. PSC 407T - Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
- r. PSC 407Z - Special Topics in Comparative Politics

## 6. International Relations

- a. PSC 231 - World Politics
- b. PSC 336 - International Community
- c. PSC 403A - Natural Resource Policy\*
- d. PSC 403D - Global Environmental Policy\*
- e. PSC 405A - International Law
- f. PSC 405D - American Foreign Policy
- g. PSC 405E - Foreign Policies of Major Powers
- h. PSC 405F - Problems of World Politics
- i. PSC 405G - International Conflict
- j. PSC 405H - International Human Rights
- k. PSC 405I - Holocaust and Genocide
- l. PSC 405P - Global Political Economy\*
- m. PSC 405Z - Special Topics in International Relations and Foreign Policy
- n. PSC 407P - The Middle East and World Affairs\*
- o. PSC 407S - Comparative Political Economy\*
- p. PSC 407W - Terrorism
- q. PSC 407X - Suicide Terrorism
- r. PSC 407Y - Democratization and Authoritarianism

## APPENDIX B: Minor Requirements

For the minor in Political Science, a student must take a minimum of seven (7) courses in political science, which satisfy one of the four variation of minors (General Political Science, Foreign Affairs, Public Administration and Public Policy, American Government). The minor areas and courses are listed below.

### Minor Interest Subject (General Political Science)—21 Credits

1. PSC 101 - American Politics: Process and Behavior
2. Three courses (9 credits) from the following:
  - PSC 210 - American Public Policy
  - PSC 211 - Comparative Government and Politics
  - PSC 231 - World Politics
  - PSC 341 - Elements of Public Administration
3. Three additional upper-division political science or international affairs courses

### Minor Interest Subject (Foreign Affairs)—21 Credits

1. PSC 101 - American Politics: Process and Behavior
2. PSC 211 - Comparative Government and Politics
3. PSC 231 - World Politics
4. Please view our course catalog online through MyNEVADA and select four upper-division courses (3 credits each), including but not limited to the following two lists of courses:

#### *Comparative politics\**

- Select any PSC 407 or PSC 408 courses (Student may look through class catalog to find courses with designated number PSC 407 or PSC 408)

#### *International relations\**

- PSC 336 - International Community
- PSC 403D - Global Environmental Policy
- IAFF 300 - Model United Nations
- IAFF 350 - Internship (1-6 credits)
- Select any PSC 405 courses (Student may look through class catalog to find courses with designated number PSC 405)

**\*NOTE: Students must take at least one course from each of the above lists.**

**Minor Interest Subject (Public Administration and Public Policy) — 21 credits**

1. PSC 101 - American Politics: Process and Behavior
2. PSC 210 - American Public Policy
3. PSC 341 - Elements of Public Administration
4. 12 additional credits selected from the following but not limited to:
  - PSC 354 - Politics and Women
  - PSC 401A - Urban Politics
  - PSC 401M - Intergovernmental Relations
  - PSC 403B - Energy Politics and Policy
  - PSC 403C - Environmental Policy
  - PSC 403E - Environmental Law
  - PSC 403G - Land and Water Resource Policy
  - PSC 403H - The Supreme Court and Public Policy
  - PSC 403J- Ethics and Corruption
  - PSC 403K - Problems in American Public Policy
  - PSC 403M- Climate Change
  - PSC 404B - Public Personnel Administration
  - PSC 404E - Theories of Public Administration
  - PSC 404F - Administrative Law
  - PSC 405P - International Political Economy
  - PSC 490F - Public Service Internship (1-6 credits)

**Minor Interest Subject (American Government) — 21 credits**

1. PSC 101 - American Politics: Process and Behavior
2. PSC 304 - The Legislative Process
3. PSC 305 - The American Presidency
4. PSC 332 - The Judicial Process
5. 9 additional credits selected from the following but not limited to:
  - PSC 208 - Survey of State and Local Government
  - PSC 353 - Identity Politics in the United States
  - PSC 354 - Politics and Women
  - PSC 401A - Urban Politics
  - PSC 401F - Public Opinion and Political Behavior
  - PSC 401H - American Political Parties and Electoral Behavior
  - PSC 401L - Citizen Participation, Pressure Groups, and Political Movements
  - PSC 401M - Intergovernmental Relations
  - PSC 401Q - General Politics and Policy
  - PSC 403H - The Supreme Court and Public Policy
  - PSC 403J - Political Ethics and Political Corruption
  - PSC 411G - Constitutional Law: Separation of Powers and Federalism
  - PSC 490B - Legislative Internship (1-6 credits)
  - PSC 490G - Congressional Internship (1-6 credits)