

# Political Science

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## Contact Information

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## Departmental Goals and Objectives

The State of Illinois has one of the nation's more interesting political cultures. Located in Springfield, the hub of Illinois political activity, UIS is able to provide a laboratory for the study of government and politics, enriched with internship opportunities for practical experience.

UIS students get a rigorous academic program in a highly engaged Political Science, where practical politics brings theoretical studies to life. Political Science at UIS emphasizes the practical importance of theory and the academic importance of practice. Opportunities for experiential learning are available through a legislative internship program for undergraduate majors and through internships and assistantships for graduates. By focusing electives in particular areas of interest, students are able to develop research skills and acquire broad academic backgrounds reflecting the rich political resources readily available in the capital city.

Students are encouraged to participate in special activities related to their course of study. The Political Science Department is directly involved in Model Illinois Government and, with faculty and students in International and Global Studies, in Model United Nations. Students and faculty in Political Science also regularly attend and present their work at public forums and conferences.

The B.A. program can be taken fully on-campus or fully online, and on-campus students may use a blended approach of mixing on-campus and online course work.

## Honors in Political Science

Students with at least 15 completed hours in Political Science courses with a minimum 3.50 GPA in those courses may apply for participation in the department's honors program. To graduate with Honors in Political Science, students must successfully complete an independent research project in PSC 486. Students in the department's honors program are also able to take a graduate-level course in Political Science as an elective.

Please be aware any graduate-level course counted toward credit in a student's undergraduate degree cannot later be counted toward a graduate degree.

## The Bachelor's Degree

A major in Political Science provides students with a systematic knowledge of political life, helping them evaluate public issues and make decisions through a balanced program of study in which

philosophical, empirical, and policy concerns complement one another. The Political Science curriculum offers a flexible course of study that provides a solid foundation for a career in law, politics, public service, research, or teaching. The department is strong in the study of American national and state politics, politics and law, political philosophy, comparative and international politics, and political behavior. Individual faculty have special competencies in such topics as public opinion, elections and election reform, voting behavior, legislative politics, state politics and policy, human rights, women's rights, sexuality and politics, globalization, critical theory, international political economy, and American foreign policy. Faculty are also active in the UIS Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies and participate in several internship programs sponsored by UIS.

## Advising

Entering students are assigned to an undergraduate college advisor when they declare Political Science as their major field of study. They will also be assigned a faculty advisor. After their first semester, when students are acquainted with the faculty and are more knowledgeable about the department and the campus, they may wish to select a specific faculty advisor. The course of study for the B.A. is planned jointly with the college advisor, so students should consult with their advisor before each registration and from time-to-time during the semester.

## Communication Skills

Both the study and the practice of politics require that students/citizens speak, write, and read well. These skills are also critical for successful careers in government, law, and business.

Following is a list of required courses. Students who believe that they have had a comparable course at their four-year or community colleges may submit a Student Petition to department to waive the course requirements. Students may submit a Student Petition to count a maximum of four courses as transfer credit toward the PSC major. Students are encouraged to take the foundation courses, including PSC 451, before taking other 400-level courses.

## Engagement Experience/ECCE

Political Science students are required to complete a minimum of 10 semester hours of Engaged Citizenship Common Experience (ECCE) requirements in the areas of U.S. Communities, Engagement Experience, and ECCE Speaker Series.

In political science, all majors must complete six hours of Engagement Experience – an internship program which emphasizes improvement of the student's ability to learn from experience, career assessment, relationships between theory and practice, and realistic appreciation of public affairs. The PSC department requires that students use six hours of ECCE credit toward the Engagement Experience. Students fulfill this requirement by enrolling in IPL 300 for six credit hours.

Students must also take a three hour U. S. Communities Course as a part of completing ECCE requirements.

If a student can justify a different distribution of the 10-hour requirement, they may claim an exception to the rule by petitioning the Political Science department.

## Grading Policy

The Political Science department has no grading policy different than the University's undergraduate requirements.

## Program Learning Outcomes

The B.A. in Political Science is a liberal arts degree. Thus, the program seeks to foster and enhance the basic skills of critical thinking, effective writing, and articulate speech that are necessary for lifelong learning. The learning outcomes include:

1. Ability to describe, analyze, and explain the terms and concepts necessary for understanding and discussing political phenomena, the purposes and functioning of public institutions, policy-making processes, and political behavior.
2. Enhanced awareness of politics from an international and comparative perspective.
3. Ability to research and employ valid and reliable analytical techniques to explain political phenomena.
4. Ability to integrate academic knowledge with real-world application.

## Requirements

### Core Courses

PSC/LES 201	Introduction to the American Political System	3
PSC 206	Introduction to International Relations	3
PSC 325	Political Philosophy	3
PSC 371	ECCE: Comparative Politics	3
PSC 451	Empirical Political Analysis	3
PSC 485	Closing Seminar	2
or PSC 486	Honors Closing Seminar	

### Political Science electives <sup>1</sup>

Must be at the 300- and 400-level. 15

**Total Hours** 32

<sup>1</sup> Core courses may not be used to fulfill the electives requirement.

Students should consult with academic advisors in the major for specific guidance regarding completion of general education requirements. Students seeking a double major in Political Science and Legal Studies may count cross-listed courses with a Legal Studies (LES) prefix as electives in Political Science and may count cross-listed courses with a Political Science (PSC) prefix as electives in Legal Studies.

## Minors

- Political Science Minor

## Online

Online BA in Political Science students are able to complete all of their course work 100% online, and are able to complete their internship where they reside.

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## Accelerated B.A./M.A. Program

This special curriculum is designed for undergraduates who know early on that they would like to complete a Political Science Master's Degree. It is an academic program that makes it possible for a major in political science to complete the B.A. and M.A. degrees in a shortened time period when undertaking full-time study.

Students in the B.A./M.A. curriculum must satisfy all the requirements for the B.A. in political science. Upon graduation with the B.A. degree, students are evaluated for admission to continue on in the M.A. phase of the curriculum. Students in the B.A./M.A. program still need to apply to the Political Science Master's Degree program through UIS Admissions.

The requirements for the M.A. phase of the B.A./M.A. curriculum are the same as those for the M.A. program, except that up to 12 elective credits taken during the B.A. phase can be waived from the M.A. requirements. With those reductions, 28 credit hours are required to complete the M.A. degree (12 core hours + 16 elective hours)

The Accelerated B.A./M.A. program is available to both on-campus and online students.