

Major Possibilities: Political Science



Summary

- Political Science is deeply grounded in the liberal arts tradition, drawing upon anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, psychology, statistics and sociology to study politics and endeavor to illuminate the various political, social and cultural arrangements of people's lives.
- About 41 % of people working in social science work for governments.
- The educational attainment of social scientists is among the highest of all occupations. Most positions require a master's or PhD.
- Students may use the Political Science major as good preparation for politics, law school and public administration.
- Students interested in political science should talk to a professor about participating in a government internship. These internships give invaluable experience and are prevalent both locally and nation-wide.

Political Science major synopsis

The goal of the Political Science major is to interpret the past(s), explain the present(s) and even dare to predict the future(s). To this end, political scientists study power, authority, conflict, economic relationships, culture, laws, policy, values, ethics, justice, equality, rights, legitimacy and representation, to name only a few. Course offerings in Political Science are divided into four broad categories: American politics, political theory, comparative politics, and international relations. Two courses, American Politics and Comparative Politics, are requirements before further courses can be taken in Political Science. A wide variety of courses are offered, and course titles in international relations change frequently, so there is always a new area of the world to study and a fresh approach to it.

Sample occupational areas

Lawyer

Many students focusing on political science move on to become lawyers. Lawyers may specialize in a number of areas, such as bankruptcy, probate, international, elder, or environmental law. Most lawyers are in private practice, concentrating on criminal or civil law. Lawyers, also called attorneys, act as both advocates and advisors in our society. As advocates, they represent one of the parties in criminal and civil trials by presenting evidence and arguing in court to support their client. As advisors, lawyers counsel their clients about their legal rights and obligations and suggest particular courses of action in business and personal matters. Formal requirements to become a lawyer usually include a 4-year college degree, 3 years of law school, and passing a written bar examination; however, some requirements may vary by State.

Judge

Judges, magistrates, and other judicial workers apply the law and oversee the legal process in courts. Judges' duties vary according to the extent of their jurisdictions and powers. General trial court judges of the Federal and State court systems have jurisdiction over any case in their system. Federal and State appellate court judges, although few in number, have the power to overrule decisions made by trial court or administrative law judges. Many State court judges only hear certain types of cases. A variety of titles are assigned to these judges; among the most common are municipal court judge, county court judge, magistrate, and justice of the peace. A bachelor's degree and work experience are the minimum requirements for a judgeship or magistrate position, but most workers have law degrees, and some are elected.

Political Scientist

Political scientists study the origins of political systems and public policy. Studying topics such as public opinion, political decision making, ideology, and public policy, they analyze the structure and operation of governments, as well as various political entities. Depending on the topic, a political scientist might conduct a public-opinion survey, analyze election results or public documents, or interview public officials. To become a political scientist, advanced education is necessary.

Sample job titles

Government, Service and Education

Actuary
Advocate
Campaign Worker
Campaign Management
City Management
Campaign Consultant
Community Relations
Congressional Aide
Consumer Advocate
Court Administrator
Election Officer
Environmental Policy Analyst

FBI/CIA Agent
Foreign Service Officer
Intelligence Specialist
Inter-Government Relations
Labor Organizer
Law Enforcement Officer
Lawyer
Legal Assistant
Legal Investigator
Legislative Analyst
Lobbyist
Management Analyst
Paralegal
Peace Corps

Politician
Political Pollster
Public Administrator
Public Defender
Public Relations
Researcher
Social Services
Administrator/Worker
VISTA

Arts, Media and Entertainment

Consultant
Foreign Correspondent
Journalist

Media Analyst
Media Researcher
Press Secretary
Public Opinion Interviewer
Reporter
Writer

Industry and Commerce

Economic Risks Analyst
International Banking
International Business
International Exchanges
Loan Officer
Trade Specialist

Sample internship employers of SU students

Big Covey Exploration L.P. (Houston, TX)
Brookings Institution for Public Policy
CAPA (Southwestern University)
Center for Strategic and International Studies
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
Children's Defense Fund (Washington, DC)
Congressman Joe Barton (Washington, DC)
Department of State (Washington, DC)
FBI Academy (Quantico, VA)
House Ways and Means Committee

Human Rights Watch (Los Angeles, CA)
National Democratic Institute (Washington, DC)
Office of State Rep Joaquin Castro (Austin, TX)
OK State Treasurers Office (Oklahoma City, OK)
Pace University (New York, NY)
Securities & Exchange Commission Senator Kay Bailey
Texas State Capitol (Austin, TX)
The American University (Washington, DC)
Washington Semester (Washington, DC)

Sample full-time employers of SU grads

Background Investigator
Cancer Information Specialist (ACS)
Case Assistant (Kilpatrick Stockton)
Caseworker (CPS)
Confidential Assistant to the Controller (White House)
Development Associate (Bryan's House)
Drilling Fluids Engineer (MI SWACO)
Executive Assistant (U.S. Government)
Legislative Aide (Texas House of Representatives)

Paralegal
Political Campus Organizer (Iowa PIRG)
Program Coordinator (Cg. Pete Sessions)
Project Assistant
Regional Planner (Central TX Council of Government)
Research Coordinator (Lehman Brothers)
Sales Consultant (Toyota of Dallas)
Sales Representative (UniFirst)
Web Marketing Developer

Professional associations

American Judicature Society: www.ajs.org
American Political Science Association: www.apsanet.org
International Association for Political Science Students: www.iapss.org
International Political Science Association: www.ipsa.ca
International Peace Research Association: <http://soc.kuleuven.be/iieb/ipraweb/index>
International Social Science Council: www.unesco.org/ngo/issc
International Studies Association: www.isanet.org
Pi Sigma Alpha: National Political Science Honor Society: www.apsanet.org

Additional Web resources

Careers with Non-Profits: www.idealists.org
Federal Jobs Net: www.federaljobs.net
Government Job Search: www.federaljobsearch.com
Political Resources: www.politicalresources.net
Political Science Links: upslinks.net
Political Science Quarterly: www.psqonline.org
Public Service Careers: www.publicservicecareers.org
USA Jobs (Official job site of the US Federal Government): www.usajobs.gov

Career Services' print resources

Alternative Careers in Secret Operations
Barron's Guide to Law Enforcement Careers
Book of U.S. Government Jobs
Careers for Legal Eagles and Other Law
Careers in Focus Law
Careers in Government
Careers in Law
Career Opportunities in Law & the Legal Industry
Everything Guide to Government Jobs
Federal Jobs in Law Enforcement
Federal Jobs the Ultimate Guide

From Law Student to Lawyer: A Career Manual
Government Job Finder
Great Jobs for Political Science Majors
Guide to Homeland Security Careers
Inside the U.S. Embassy
The Official Guide to Legal Specialties
Policy Passages: Career Options for Policy Wonks
Serving the Armed Forces and the Nation
VAULT Guide to Capitol Hill Careers
Working in Law and Justice