

# Major Possibilities: Political Science



## Career Services

Southwestern University  
Prothro Center, Ste. 140  
512.863.1346  
[career.services@southwestern.edu](mailto:career.services@southwestern.edu)  
[www.southwestern.edu/careers](http://www.southwestern.edu/careers)



## 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 can 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 public affairs internship. These internships give invaluable experience and are widely available both locally and nation-wide.

## Political Science major synopsis

The goal of the Political Science major is to interpret the past, explain the present 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. Statistics and an academic internship are recommended for all majors. Political Science may also be selected as a disciplinary major as part of the International Studies program (see catalog for more details).

## 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 four-year college degree, three 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, a Master's degree or PhD is necessary.

## Sample job titles

### Government, Service and Education

Actuary  
Advocate  
Analyst  
Bill Analyst  
Campaign Worker  
Campaign Consultant  
Canvasser  
Caseworker  
CityYear Volunteer  
Community Organizer  
Congressional Aide  
Consultant  
Court Administrator  
Election Officer  
FBI/CIA Agent

Foreign Service Officer  
Intelligence Specialist  
International Relations Specialist  
Labor Organizer  
Law Enforcement Officer  
Lawyer  
Legal Investigator  
Legislative Analyst  
Librarian  
Lobbyist  
Management Analyst  
Municipal Service  
Paralegal  
Peace Corps  
Policy Analyst  
Politician  
Pollster

Program Coordinator  
Public Administrator  
Public Defender  
Public Relations  
Researcher  
Social Services Worker  
Teacher  
Underwriter  
VISTA

### Arts, Media and Entertainment

Consultant  
Foreign Correspondent  
Journalist  
Media Analyst  
Media Production Manager

Media Researcher  
Press Secretary  
Public Opinion Interviewer  
Reporter  
Writer

### Industry and Commerce

Administrator  
Data Analyst  
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)  
Bobby Bones Show – 96.7 (Austin, TX)  
Brookings Institution for Public Policy  
Center for Strategic and International Studies  
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)  
Children’s Defense Fund (Washington, DC)  
Congressman Joe Barton (Washington, DC)  
Council for Opportunity in Education (Washington, DC)  
Department of State (Washington, DC)  
FBI Academy (Quantico, VA)  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Human Rights Watch (Los Angeles, CA)

Merrill Lynch (Houston, TX)  
Military & Security Program, Washington Institute for Near East Policy (Kirkland, WA)  
National Democratic Institute (Washington, DC)  
Office of State Rep Joaquin Castro (Austin, TX)  
OK State Treasurer’s Office (Oklahoma City, OK)  
OpenPlans (New York, NY)  
Southwestern University – University Relations (Georgetown, TX)  
Texas Chemical Council (Austin, TX)  
Williamson County Attorney’s Office (Georgetown, TX)  
World Affairs Council of America (Washington, DC)

## **Sample full-time employers of SU grads**

Administrative Assistant (Rep. Joe Strauss)  
Admission Recruiter (Southwestern University)  
AmeriCorps VISTA (Communities in Schools/American Youth Works)  
Assistant Director of the Annual Fund (CA Lutheran University)  
Bill Analyst (Texas Senate Research Center)  
Bill Analyst (Texas State Senate)  
Campaign Consultant (Tyson Organization)  
Campaign Staffer (Sekula Gibbs)  
Cancer Information Specialist (ACS)  
Canvasser (Democratic Party of Georgia)  
Caseworker (CPS)  
Community Organizer (Direct Action Research Training)  
Confidential Assistant to the Controller (White House)  
Corps Member (City Year)  
Data Analyst (Dell Children’s Hospital)  
Development Associate (Bryan’s House)  
Drilling Fluids Engineer (MI SWACO)  
English Language Teacher (JET Program)  
Implementation Specialist (Verso Technologies)  
Legal Assistant (Burk Law Firm, Law Office of Sandra Ritz, et.al.)  
Legal Analyst/Research (Remedial Construction Services, LP)  
Legislative Aide (Texas House of Representatives)

Legislative Correspondent (Congressman Kenny Marchant)  
Marketing Analytics and Research Analyst (Costco)  
Membership Coordinator (McNay Art Museum)  
Mentor/Tutor (Communities in Schools of Central Texas)  
Office Assistant (Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee)  
Outreach Worker (Austin Travis County Integral Care)  
Political Campus Organizer (Iowa PIRG)  
Project Manager (Olive Design)  
Program Coordinator (Congressman Pete Sessions)  
Program Coordinator (Tarrant Literacy Coalition)  
Real Estate Agent (Spaces Real Estate Services)  
Regional Planner (Central TX Council of Government)  
Regional Political Director (U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison)  
Research Analyst (PODER)  
Research Assistant (American Enterprise Institute)  
Sales Consultant (Toyota of Dallas)  
Science Teacher (Uplift Education via Teach for America)  
Special Operations (National Hispanic Institute)  
Teacher (Teach for America)  
Underwriting Assistant (State Farm Midwest Regional Office)  
Web Marketing Developer (High Steppin Productions)  
Writer (Self-Employed)

## **Professional associations**

American Judicature Society: [www.ajs.org](http://www.ajs.org)  
American Political Science Association: [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)  
International Association for Political Science Students: [www.iapss.org](http://www.iapss.org)  
International Political Science Association: <https://www.ipsa.org/>  
International Peace Research Association: <http://iprafoundation.org/>  
International Social Science Council: <http://www.worldsocialscience.org/>  
International Studies Association: [www.isanet.org](http://www.isanet.org)  
Western Political Science Association: [www.wpsa.research.pdx.edu](http://www.wpsa.research.pdx.edu)

## **Additional Web resources**

Careers with Non-Profits: [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)  
Career Builder: Jobs in Political Science: [www.careerbuilder.com/jobs/keyword/political%20science](http://www.careerbuilder.com/jobs/keyword/political%20science)  
Federal Jobs Net: [www.federaljobs.net](http://www.federaljobs.net)  
Federal Government’s Official Jobs List: [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)  
Occupation Outlook Handbook: [www.bls.gov/ooh/Life-Physical-and-Social-Science/Political-scientists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Life-Physical-and-Social-Science/Political-scientists.htm)  
Political Resources: [www.politicalresources.net](http://www.politicalresources.net)  
Political Science Links: [www.upslinks.net](http://www.upslinks.net)  
Political Science Quarterly: [www.psgonline.org](http://www.psgonline.org)  
Public Service Careers: [www.publicservicecareers.org](http://www.publicservicecareers.org)  
Southwestern University Political Science Department: [www.southwestern.edu/departments/politicalscience](http://www.southwestern.edu/departments/politicalscience)

## **Career Services’ print resources**

An Insider’s Guide to Political Jobs in Washington  
Becoming an Urban Planner  
Careers for Legal Eagles and Other Law and Order Types  
Career Opportunities in Politics, Government, and Activism  
Career Opportunities in Law and the Legal Industry  
Career Opportunities in the Armed Forces  
Careers in Law  
Careers in Nonprofit and Government Agencies  
Everything Guide to Being a Paralegal  
Everything Guide to Government Jobs

From Law Student to Lawyer: A Career Manual  
Getting a Job in Politics, and Keeping It  
Great Jobs for Political Science Majors  
How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job  
Inside a U.S. Embassy  
Official Guide to Legal Specialties  
One L  
Opportunities in Overseas Careers  
VAULT Guide to International Careers  
VAULT Guide to Capitol Hill Careers