



CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Major Possibilities: Political Science

Quick Facts

- 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 48% 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 consider participating in a local or national public affairs internship. Internships help shape professional identities, develop 21st century career-readiness skills, and make meaning of the academic experience.

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

Advocate
Analyst
Bill Analyst
Campaign Worker
Campaign Consultant
Canvasser
Caseworker
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
Paralegal
Policy Analyst

Politician Pollster
Public Administrator
Public Defender
Researcher
Social Services Worker
Teacher

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

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

Sample Internship Employers of SU Students

Association of the United States Navy (Alexandria, VA)
American Gateways (Austin, TX)
Battleground Texas (Georgetown, TX)
Brookings Institute for Public Policy
Center for International Policy (Washington, DC)
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
Children's Defense Fund (Washington, DC)
Committee on Education and Labor (Washington, DC)
Congressional Research Service (Washington, DC)
Congressman Pete Sessions (Washington, DC)
Council for Opportunity in Education (Washington, DC)
Council on Hemispheric Affairs (Washington, DC)
Democratic National Committee (Washington, DC)
Georgetown ISD (Georgetown, TX)
Glasshouse Policy (Austin, TX)
Department of State (Washington, DC)
Emmis Austin Radio (Austin, TX)
Equality Texas (Austin, TX)

FBI (Quantico, VA)
Heritage Foundation (Washington DC)
Human Rights Watch (Los Angeles, CA)
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Houston, TX)
Merrill Lynch (Houston, TX)
Military & Security Program, Washington Institute for Near East
Policy (Kirkland, WA)
National Democratic Institute (Washington, DC)
Office of the Attorney General, Child Support Division (Austin, TX)
Office of State Representative Joaquin Castro (Austin, TX)
Oklahoma State Treasurer's Office (Oklahoma City, OK)
Public Citizen (Austin, TX)
San Antonio Current (San Antonio, TX)
Texas Chemical Council (Austin, TX)
Texas Public Policy Foundation (Austin, TX)
USA-Asia Institute (Washington, DC)
Williamson County Attorney's Office (Georgetown, TX)
World Affairs Council of America (Washington, DC)

Sample Full-Time Employers of SU Grads

AmeriCorps VISTA (American Youth Works)
Bill Analyst (Texas Senate Research Center, Texas State Senate)
Business Developer (Mitrstech)
Campaign Consultant (Tyson Organization)
Campaign Staffer (Sekula Gibbs)
Cancer Information Specialist (American Cancer Society)
Canvasser (Democratic Party of Georgia)
Caseworker (CPS)
Community Organizer (Direct Action Research Training)
Confidential Assistant to the Controller (White House)
Copy Editor (Texas Legislative Council)
Corps Member (City Year)
Data Analyst (Dell Children's Hospital)
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)
Marketing Analytics and Research Analyst (Costco) Outreach
Worker (Austin Travis County Integral Care)
Political Campus Organizer (Iowa PIRG)
Program Advisor (The Fund of American Studies)
Program Coordinator (Congressman Pete Sessions)
Regional Planner (Central TX Council of Government)
Regional Political Director (US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison)
Research Analyst (PODER)
Research Assistant (American Enterprise Institute)
Social Media Specialist (Raconteur Media Company)
Teacher (Teach for America)
Technical Writer (Insight Global)

Professional Associations

American Judicature Society

American Political Science Association

International Association for Political Science Students

International Political Science Association

International Peace Research Association Foundation

International Social Science Council

International Studies Association

Western Political Science Association