

Department of Political Science
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Political Science prepares students for active citizenship, for careers in public affairs, and for advanced study in the social sciences and law by training them to become astute observers of political behavior in their own country and around the world.

Political Science

Political science is the study of politics and government. It is an exciting field because of its complexity, its diversity, and above all, its relevance to the modern world. Political scientists attempt to describe and explain the wide range of political systems using the most modern and powerful analytical techniques.

Political science cannot be studied in isolation from other disciplines. Many different and constantly changing influences ñ historical, geographical, economic, sociological, psychological, philosophical, and cultural ñ determine the form and continually affect the functioning of political systems.

An education in political science exposes students to the issues of public policy over which people struggle and disagree not only in the United States, but in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Students learn about the latest research findings on city government and urban development, parties and elections, the legislative and judicial systems, international organizations, and other aspects of the governmental process. Students acquire a better understanding of the way public affairs are conducted and a more practical knowledge of how citizens, elected representatives, judges, and administrators approach the decisions they are called upon to make.

The Department

The Department of Political Science is a unit within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Michigan was one of the first schools in the country to organize a department devoted entirely to the study of politics. Today the department has some 40 members and has gained national recognition for the achievements of both its [faculty](#) and students. Michigan's Political Science Department was ranked within the top two departments in the nation in a [study](#) concluded in 1998. The department takes pride in its members' accomplishments as teachers, writers, and consultants or advisers to public officials.

The Department of Political Science offers an [undergraduate concentration program](#) which may be used as partial fulfillment for the College's requirement for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Students at the graduate level may pursue work leading to the [Master of Arts degree or the Ph.D.](#) through the [Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies](#). The Department also offers an undergraduate academic minor in political science. The requirements for the minor include: 1. Two introductory Political Science courses in different fields 2. Five upper-level Political Science courses in the two introductory fields 3. Courses outside the Political Science department may not count toward the academic minor

Careers in Political Science

Political science seeks to prepare the student to be an active participant in politics, a worker in government and public administration, or for the equally significant role of informed, understanding citizen.

There are some careers for which extensive training in political science can be most useful. This is true especially for those planning careers in higher education, the legal profession, state and local government, urban planning, the federal bureaucracy, journalism, or in any of the organizations that seek to monitor the political processes or to influence the content of public policy. Students who concentrate in political science traditionally have pursued careers in business, law, teaching, journalism, or government.

Political science courses will enhance the student's grasp of the swiftly moving events of our century. The skills developed in writing critical essays and research reports, evaluating the arguments of numerous writers, and representing one's own point of view in classroom discussion will prepare the student for all careers which require clear thinking, well documented analysis, and forceful expression.

The Concentration Program

Students planning to concentrate in political science should take two courses chosen from different subfields. First- and second-year students choose from among Political Science [101](#) (Introduction to Political Theory), [111](#) (Introduction to American Politics), [140](#) (Introduction to Comparative Politics), and [160](#) (Introduction to World Politics). Juniors and seniors choose from Political Science [301 or 302 \(Political Theory\)](#), [310](#) (American Policy Process), [311](#) (American Political Process), [336](#) or [349](#) (Comparative Politics) or [360](#) or [370](#) (World Politics), [390 \(Methods\)](#)

Law courses, with the exception of 345, are counted in the American politics subfield.

Freshman-level introductory courses usually meet twice a week for small seminars that discuss the material from the lectures and the assigned readings. Here, as in several other courses, there are special seminars for the student in the [College Honors Program](#).

After taking the introductory courses, the student completes the concentration by electing a program, in consultation with a concentration advisor, which meets the following minimum requirements:

1. The program must include at least 24 credits of work (usually eight courses), at the junior-senior level in political science. Since the department offers more than 50 advanced courses for undergraduates, the student obviously will have many possible alternatives from which to choose. The program chosen might concentrate on American politics, or it might focus on the problems of the United Nations and other international agencies; it might lead to a study of the behavior of voters, public opinion polling, and political campaigns; or it might be organized around a study of a certain region, such as Africa, Western Europe, or Asia. All these decisions will be made as the student's interests develop, with the advice of advisors and teachers.
2. Political Science concentrators are expected to acquire an appreciation of the diverse styles of political inquiry by electing at least one course in four of the following subfields: political theory, American government and politics, comparative government and politics, world politics, and methodology. Normally, this requirement is satisfied by the prerequisites to concentration and additional upper-level courses in two subfields.
3. The program must include at least six credits of work at the advanced level outside the Department of Political Science in subjects related to the student's interests. These [cognate courses](#) must be chosen with the approval of the student's academic advisor. The object of this requirement is to ensure that every undergraduate is exposed to the special point of view and approach of closely related academic disciplines. By taking courses, for example, in international trade or in the economic problems of developing countries, students of world politics will broaden their perspectives and gain a better understanding of the political relationships between the United States and Latin America or the Middle East. Students interested in voting behavior would benefit directly from courses in social psychology. The typical political science student at Michigan elects a number of courses which qualify as cognates, so this requirement is not difficult to meet.
4. [24 hours of credit must include at least two 400-level courses or one 400-level course and one advanced writing course.](#)

Most advanced courses meet three times each week for a combination of lectures by the instructor and general class discussion. The courses vary in size. The core courses and several other popular lecture

courses include more than 100 students, but undergraduate seminars, which are usually taken during the senior year, have an average of 10 or 15 students and allow for a considerable exchange of ideas among the members of the class and emphasize student reports and discussion of research topics. Students have an opportunity to pursue special interests outside formal classes by electing directed study or internship courses. Students can fulfill the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts' upper-level writing requirement by electing a writing course in political science.

The Honors Program

In addition to the standard concentration, the department offers a special Honors concentration program. Students apply for admission during the junior year. Normally, a candidate for an Honors concentration must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.5 (B plus) in political science courses. After students are accepted into the Honors program, they become eligible to attend special seminars. The junior Honors seminar stimulates the students to develop interests in some area of political science. During the senior year, an Honors student writes a major research paper under the direction of a member of the faculty. To receive the Honors degree the student must successfully complete the paper and defend it at an oral examination at the end of the senior year.

The Political Science Minor

Students planning to minor in political science must first take two introductory classes, choosing from Political Science 101(Theory)/111(American)/140(Comparative)/160(World). They must then take at least five courses chosen from these two fields.

Graduate Study

In addition to its undergraduate program, the Department of Political Science offers graduate work leading to the [Doctor of Philosophy degree](#). The department has strong programs in almost every area of political science. The University of Michigan is headquarters for the [Inter-University Consortium for the Political and Social Research](#), which offers courses each summer on research design and methods and the techniques of data processing.

For those interested in entering government, the [Gerald R Ford School of Public Policy](#), which is closely linked to the Department of Political Science, offers a special program leading to the degree of Master of Public Policy. Political science concentrators may pursue an [accelerated program of study](#) leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and the [Master's degree in Public Policy Studies](#) that enables them to complete the requirements for both degrees within a five year period (instead of the more normal six). Detailed information about the accelerated A.B./M.P.P. program can be obtained from the director of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, Lorch Hall.

Special Opportunities

At Michigan, undergraduates are an important part of the department. The department encourages its students to take advantage of special opportunities and to become involved in a wide range of activities. The [Undergraduate Political Science Association](#) provides undergraduates with both a valuable resource and a voice within the department. The association elects representatives who sit on departmental committees concerned with such matters as education policy, proposed changes, and the quality of undergraduate education. The association and the department co-sponsor a series of seminars and lectures on subjects like careers, internship opportunities, or discussions with prominent political figures. It operates an active counseling service which maintains files on political science courses, including course descriptions, requirements, reading lists, student evaluations, and examinations. The counseling service also provides current information about graduate schools, law schools, and summer internships.

Pi Sigma Alpha is the national honorary fraternity in political science. Students who maintain a 3.5 average in political science course work can apply for membership during their junior or senior year.

Sigma Iota Rho is the national honorary society for international relations. Students who have superior record of achievement in international relations courses including language, culture, and social studies courses, especially world politics may apply for membership as early as the second term of their sophomore year.

The [Michigan Journal of Political Science](#), a scholarly journal edited and published by students, provides a forum in which undergraduates and graduates can publish superior academic papers.

UM Model United Nations (UMMUN) is a student-run organization that provides an innovative educational activity for high school students from around the country. Each year, the organization holds a Model United Nations conference on the Ann Arbor campus, at which participants assume the roles of UN delegates for formal and informal debate of pressing international concerns.

The **William Jennings Bryan Prize in Political Science** is awarded to that member of the graduating class who has shown the greatest promise in political science. The prize consists of books, valued at approximately \$250, to be chosen by the recipient.

The ***Edwin F. Conely Scholarship in Government*** is awarded to a first year graduate student who has received an A.B. degree in political science from the University of Michigan.

Undergraduate Courses in [Political Science](#) (Division 450)

Political Science [Undergraduate Homepage](#)

[Political Science Undergraduate Handbook](#)



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Last Updated 14-Aug-01 7:57 am EDT