

Political Science BA

Overview

The **Bachelor of Arts in Political Science**, offered by the Department of Political Science, enables students to learn about the theory and practice of politics across four established subfields:

- American politics (including the local, state, and federal levels),
- comparative (foreign) governments,
- international relations, and
- political theory.

Students develop strong proficiency in analytical, research and writing skills, with a particular emphasis on methodological rigor. They learn how to develop sophisticated arguments, conduct critical research on a variety of topics, and communicate their work through oral presentations and scholarly papers. Finally, they gain civic awareness about their role as citizens and thinkers in an increasingly complex political world.

Political Science graduates pursue a wide range of careers. Many work in government offices, political campaigns, civic organizations, public institutions and international agencies. A degree in Political Science is also excellent preparation for graduate school, with law school, public policy and international affairs being the most popular choices. Many also work in the private sector, such as consulting, business and the media. To support career planning, the department offers its own 1-credit career development seminar (POLS 1002) and advising from professional development and internship advisor, Sean Murphy (seanmurphy@temple.edu).

The department offers many opportunities for students to further their learning outside the classroom. Many students undertake internships linked to academic study, including public service opportunities. The Experiential Learning Program offers internships combined with academic seminars. The department also works closely with several student organizations, including the Political Science Society and Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honors society.

Course Sequencing for Political Science Majors

Students must take

- Four introductory courses in American politics (POLS 1101), foreign governments (POLS 1201), international politics (POLS 1301), and political philosophy (POLS 1401).
- A writing preparation course (POLS 2597/POLS 2997)
- A four-course research methods-capstone course sequence (POLS 2503, POLS 3501-3599, POLS 4896/POLS 4996)
- Three upper-level electives (numbered 2000-4999)

Courses should be sequenced so that students take the introductory course in a field before taking upper-level courses in the field. When possible, students should complete the introductory courses and the writing preparation course (POLS 2597/POLS 2997) by the end of their second year. These courses are offered each semester. Topics for the writing preparation course vary each semester and will be posted online before registration begins. Following these introductory courses, students can move on to the electives at the upper level (numbered 2000-4999), of which three are required.

Additionally, students should pay particular attention to the order in which they take the four-course research methods-capstone sequence (which is taken concurrent with the electives). The first course in this sequence is POLS 2503 Research Methods: Thinking Like a Political Scientist, a research design course that teaches students how to conduct empirical research, an essential skill for successfully completing the upper-level courses. Research Methods lays the foundation for the two required research preparation courses (numbered 3501 through 3599). These research-intensive courses focus on an advanced topic, like other upper-level courses, but they also place an emphasis on sharpening the research skills. The capstone seminar, generally taken in the Fall or Spring of the senior year, serves as the culminating experience of the Political Science major. Topics for research preparation and capstone courses change each semester and often address recent political events and dilemmas. Course descriptions for these courses will be posted online.

Campus Locations: Main, Japan

Program Code: LA-POLS-BA

Distinction in Major

Distinction in Major recognizes highly motivated Political Science students who accept opportunities to demonstrate their interests and skills by undertaking additional research-oriented classes or in-depth Political Science oriented internships.

Students earn Distinction in Major by holding a GPA in the major of at least 3.8 at graduation and by completing at least one additional course at the 3000 level in Political Science, such as an additional research preparation course, an additional capstone, a graduate seminar, or by enrolling in a

Political Science internship (POLS 4185) for 3 or more credits. Entry to capstone and graduate courses requires permission by the Political Science Advisor, Nick Catsis (ncatsis@temple.edu). When applying for permission, students should note their interest in receiving distinction.

Students who have questions about their eligibility are encouraged to contact Undergraduate Chair, Alexandra Guisinger (alexandra.guisinger@temple.edu).

Accelerated Bachelor of Arts / Master of Arts in Political Science (+1) Program

High-achieving undergraduates can apply for the +1 BA/MA accelerated degree program in Political Science, which enables them to obtain their BA and MA in Political Science in five years rather than the usual six. Students begin taking graduate courses in their last three undergraduate semesters, and then spend their fifth year completing all remaining MA requirements. Eligible students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5, both overall and in Political Science and have passed POLS 2503 Research Methods: Thinking Like a Political Scientist by the time they begin graduate coursework. Interested students should contact the Graduate chair at the end of their sophomore year or start of their junior year. Applications will be accepted until October 15th of their junior year. For more information, please contact the Graduate Chair.

Accelerated Bachelor of Arts in Political Science / Master of Public Policy (4+1) Program

The Department of Political Science and the Master of Public Policy (MPP) program offer an accelerated track that enables students to attain their BA in Political Science and an MPP in five years, instead of the customary six. Students apply to the program during their third or fourth year of undergraduate study and begin taking graduate coursework upon entry. The GRE is not necessary, but students must maintain an overall undergraduate GPA of at least 3.5. For more information, please contact the MPP Associate Director, Kasey Trapp (kasey.trapp@temple.edu).

Funding and Support

- Students may apply for financial support to cover research-related activities, such as visits to archives, travel to present a scholarly paper, etc., through the Creative Arts, Research and Scholarship (CARAS) Program and Political Science Grants for undergraduate conference travel.
- Funding is also available through the Diamond Research Scholars Program and the Liberal Arts Undergraduate Research Awards (LAURAs).
- Students are also encouraged to submit their completed research papers to the Library Prize for Undergraduate Research and the Temple University Symposium for Undergraduate Research and Creativity.
- The department is committed to supporting student success through internships and presenting research. Students can work with the department's internship advisor, Sean Murphy, to identify and apply for internships. The Political Science faculty advisor, Nick Catsis, identifies and supports students applying for national academic summer programs and fellowships such as Ralph Bunche Summer Program, the Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) program, and Fulbright Fellowship program. The department also funds students traveling to present undergraduate research, such as with the annual conference of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honors society.

The Political Economy Certificate Program

The Department of Political Science and the Department of Economics offer an interdisciplinary program leading to a Certificate in Political Economy. The program focuses on the interaction between government and the economy and is ideal preparation for students planning careers in either the public or private sector. It also provides an excellent foundation for graduate studies in law, the social sciences, and public administration. The program is open to all matriculated students in the university. Contact Alexandra Guisinger (alexandra.guisinger@temple.edu) or Roselyn Hsueh (rhsueh@temple.edu) for specific details and requirements.

Pre-Law Studies

Paul Crowe,
Philosophy Department
pcrowe@temple.edu

Beth Lawson
CLA Academic Advising
elizabeth.lawson@temple.edu

Political Science is one of the most popular majors for pre-law students. Pre-law students should develop skills in communicating ideas, sharpen their analytical abilities and ability to think logically, and acquire in-depth understanding of at least one liberal arts field (such as Political Science). Students interested in law school can read these requirements at CLA Pre-Law, and for more information contact Paul Crowe (pcrowe@temple.edu) in the Philosophy department or Beth Lawson (elizabeth.lawson@temple.edu) in CLA Advising.

Internships

The department encourages students to obtain internships linked to academic study. Students may replace up to two upper-level electives (equivalent to 6 credit hours) from qualifying internships undertaken with external organizations and programs, as approved by the Internship Coordinator Sean Murphy (seanmurphy@temple.edu).

Public Service Opportunities through the Public Service Cooperative

Temple University's faculty, students and alumni have a long tradition of public service. For internships related to public service, the department offers several credit-bearing opportunities at the local, state and federal levels. Interested students should complete the program application and contact Internship Coordinator Sean Murphy (seanmurphy@temple.edu).

The City Hall Experience

The City Hall Internship Experience allows undergraduate students the opportunity to work in Philadelphia City Hall for 10-12 hours each week while earning the equivalent of a 3-credit internship. In addition to receiving credits for internship, students will participate in a 1-credit class for one hour each week to discuss Philadelphia, its policy initiatives, and the ins and outs of city government.

The Washington Semester

The Washington Semester allows Temple students to gain valuable career experience in the nation's capital, while remaining full-time students. If accepted into the program, students register for three courses in the College of Liberal Arts (two for 3 credits each, and one for 9 credits) for a 15-credit semester in the fall or spring. (Summer programs are also available for 12 credits.) Temple University serves as liaison to The Washington Center (TWC), a well-established and well-regarded internship semester program in Washington, D.C., through which Temple students receive internships and take classes. Interested students should contact Internship Coordinator Sean Murphy (seanmurphy@temple.edu).

Study Abroad

Many Political Science majors have taken advantage of Temple's study abroad programs, which provide the life-changing experience of scholarship at overseas institutions, immersion in foreign cultures and learning new languages. The Office of Education Abroad and Overseas Campuses has information on a variety of programs. The most popular destinations include the Temple campuses in Tokyo and Rome, as well as programs in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Spain. Study abroad destinations include over 80 countries located on every continent. For questions regarding eligibility and program equivalency, please contact Undergraduate Advisor Nick Catsis (ncatsis@temple.edu).

Student Organizations

The department hosts two main organizations that represent the breadth and depth of its students. The faculty advisor is Alexandra Guisinger (alexandra.guisinger@temple.edu).

Political Science Society

The Political Science Society is the organization for all Political Science majors and minors at Temple University. The purpose of the association is to represent the opinions and interests of undergraduate majors within the Political Science Department. The association sponsors activities including career forums, lectures, student and faculty mixers, law and graduate forums, seminars on popular topics, and trips to locales like New York City and Washington, DC.

Pi Sigma Alpha

Pi Sigma Alpha is the national honorary society for political science students. Temple's chapter was founded in 1965, and since then has inducted over a thousand students. Eligible students are offered membership prior to their junior or senior year. Membership is lifetime. Students who join have opportunities to attend special research conferences, apply for internship and graduate funding, and publish their work in research journals.

Contact Information

Main Campus

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Temple Japan Campus

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Learn more about the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

These requirements are for students who matriculated in academic year 2025-2026. Students who matriculated prior to fall 2025 should refer to the Archives to view the requirements for their Bulletin year.

Summary of Degree Requirements

University Requirements

- MATH 0701 (4 s.h.) and/or ENG 0701 (4 s.h.), if required by placement testing.
- All Temple students must take a minimum of two writing-intensive courses as part of the major. The specific courses required for this major are POLS 2597 Writing Preparation Seminar and POLS 4896 Capstone Seminar in Political Science.
- Students must complete requirements of the General Education (GenEd) Program. See the General Education section of the *Undergraduate Bulletin* for more details.

College of Liberal Arts Requirements

- Completion of a minimum of 123 credits, including:
 - 90 credits in CLA/CST courses;
 - 45 credits of which must be at the upper level (numbered 2000-4999).
 - For **Social Science majors**, 6 upper level credits (numbered 2000-4999) must be taken in Humanities Subject Areas: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Greek (Ancient), Greek and Roman Classics, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Philosophy, Religion, Russian, and Spanish in the College of Liberal Arts, Art History in the Tyler School of Art and Architecture, or any department in the College of Science and Technology.
- A minimum GPA of 2.0, cumulatively, in CLA/CST coursework, and in the major.
- **Professional Development Requirement**
 - All students in the College of Liberal Arts are required to take a 1 credit seminar in professional development. CLA 1002 Professional Development for Liberal Arts Majors is the appropriate course option for this major. Other courses that fulfill this requirement may be found on the CLA College Requirements page. Only one course in this category may count towards graduation.
- Only courses in which a student receives a grade of at least C- can satisfy GenEd, major, minor, or CLA Foreign Language and Global Studies requirements.
- **Foreign Language/Global Studies Requirements**
 - All students must complete or test out of the first and second levels of a foreign language - these courses are numbered 1001 and 1002;
 - All students must complete at least one course from the GenEd Global/World Society category; and
 - All Bachelor of Arts students must complete one of the following options:
 - Third semester of a foreign language;
 - Demonstrated proficiency beyond the third semester in a foreign language (placement exam or certification from the language department);
 - Take one Global Studies course from the list on the CLA College Requirements page;
 - Study Abroad at an approved program; or
 - Take a second General Education Global/World Society course.
- **Notes on Foreign Language Study**
 - The third level of language is numbered 1003 in French, Spanish, and Portuguese and numbered 2001 in all other foreign language subjects.

- Students are strongly encouraged to take the third level of a foreign language as it is the minimum required for election to the prestigious honor society *Phi Beta Kappa*. (Taking the course does not guarantee admission but not taking it guarantees exclusion.)
- See the College of Liberal Arts Policies section of this *Bulletin* for more information on the Foreign Language Placement, Regression in Coursework, and guidelines for students' other experiences with language.

General Electives are typically one-third of a student's program of study and can be focused on a second major, a minor, or towards some other personal enrichment or professional goals. See an academic advisor for assistance in developing an academic plan for these courses.

Major Requirements - 12 Courses in Political Science (36 credits)

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
POLS 1101	The American Political System	3
POLS 1201	Foreign Governments and Politics	3
POLS 1301	International Politics	3
POLS 1401	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
POLS 2503	Research Methods: Thinking Like a Political Scientist (New Title: Research Methods)	3
POLS 2597 or POLS 2997	Writing Preparation Seminar Honors Writing Preparation Seminar	3
Electives		
Select 2 Research Preparatory courses numbered 3501-3599		6
Select 3 upper-level Political Science courses numbered 2000-4999 ¹		9
Capstone		
POLS 4896 or POLS 4996	Capstone Seminar in Political Science ² Senior Honors Capstone Seminar	3
Total Credit Hours		36

¹ Upper level courses that are part of a substitution agreement in place of specifically required courses will not also count as upper level electives (e.g. students who took POLS 2496 prior to Fall 2025 may not use that course towards both the Theory requirement and an upper level elective).

² POLS 4896 (or POLS 4996) is the capstone course for the major and should be taken in the senior year after the completion of POLS 1101, POLS 1201, POLS 1301, POLS 1401, POLS 2503, POLS 2597, two Research Preparatory courses (numbered 3501-3599), and three additional Political Science courses (numbered 2000-4999).

Not all courses are offered every semester. Please check the Class Schedule for actual course offerings each semester.

Suggested Academic Plan

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

Suggested Plan for New Students Starting in the 2025-2026 Academic Year

Year 1		
Fall		Credit Hours
ENG 0802 or ENG 0812 or ENG 0902	Analytical Reading and Writing [GW] or Analytical Reading and Writing: ESL [GW] or Honors Analytical Reading and Writing [GW]	4
GenEd Quantitative Literacy Course [GQ]		4
Foreign Language 1001 - first level		4
GenEd Breadth Course		3
Credit Hours		15
Spring		
IH 0851 or IH 0951	Intellectual Heritage I: The Good Life [GY] or Honors Intellectual Heritage I: The Good Life [GY]	3
Foreign Language 1002 - second level		4
GenEd Breadth Course		3
POLS 1101	The American Political System	3

POLS 1201	Foreign Governments and Politics	3
Credit Hours		16
Year 2		
Fall		
IH 0852 or IH 0952	Intellectual Heritage II: The Common Good [GZ] or Honors Intellectual Heritage II: The Common Good [GZ]	3
GenEd Breadth Course		3
GenEd Breadth Course		3
POLS 1301	International Politics	3
One 0800-4999 Elective in Any School or College		2
Select one of the following:		3
Foreign Language - third level		
GenEd Global/World Society Course		
Internationally Focused Course From Approved List		
Credit Hours		17
Spring		
GenEd Breadth Course		3
GenEd Breadth Course		3
GenEd Breadth Course		3
One 2000+ Political Science Course		3
POLS 1401	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
CLA 1002	Professional Development for Liberal Arts Majors	1
Credit Hours		16
Year 3		
Fall		
POLS 2503	Research Methods: Thinking Like a Political Scientist	3
POLS 2597 or POLS 2997	Writing Preparation Seminar [WI] or Honors Writing Preparation Seminar [WI]	3
One 2000+ Political Science Course		3
CLA/CST 2000+ Course		3
CLA/CST 2000+ Humanities/CST Course		3
Credit Hours		15
Spring		
CLA/CST 2000+ Humanities Course		3
Political Science 3501-3599 Research Preparatory Course		3
One 2000+ Political Science Course		3
CLA/CST 2000+ Course		3
CLA/CST 0800-4999 Elective		3
Credit Hours		15
Year 4		
Fall		
Political Science 3501-3599 Research Preparatory Course		3
CLA/CST 2000+ Course		3
CLA/CST 0800-4999 Elective		2
CLA/CST 0800-4999 Elective		3
CLA/CST 0800-4999 Elective		3
Credit Hours		14
Spring		
POLS 4896 or POLS 4996	Capstone Seminar in Political Science [WI] or Senior Honors Capstone Seminar [WI]	3
CLA/CST 2000+ Course		3
CLA/CST 2000+ Course		3

CLA/CST 0800-4999 Elective	3
One 0800-4999 Elective in Any School or College	3
Credit Hours	15
Total Credit Hours	123

Accelerated Programs

Students may opt to pursue an accelerated +1 program, enabling them to complete both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in less time than the traditional route.

The following accelerated programs may be of interest to students in the Political Science BA:

College of Liberal Arts

- Political Science MA
- Public Policy MPP

College of Education and Human Development

- Secondary Education MEd with Social Studies Education concentration