

# An Ideal Liberal Arts Major Political Science

Advocate/Organizer Ambassador Archivist Association/Nonprofit/Interest Group Manager  
Banking, Political Risk Manager Budget Analyst Campaign Worker CIA Agent City Housing  
Administrator City Planner/Manager Civilian Consultant, Department of Defense Commu  
Relations Director Congressional Committee Staff Member Congressional Office Staff  
Member Congressional Research Service Consultant Corporate Legislative Issues Manage  
Corp. Manager, Environmental/Regulatory Affrs. Corporate Planning/Public Affairs Manager  
Corporate Social Policy County Council Member County Economic Development Officer  
County Treasurer Dept. of Health and Human Services Department of Veteran's Affairs  
Employee Development Director Diplomat Editor Education Policy Analyst Educator/  
Teacher Environmental Policy Analyst Events Planner FBI Agent Federal Agency Employee  
Financial Services Foreign Affairs Specialist Foreign Service Officer Foundation Employee  
Fundraiser General Accounting Office Evaluator Government Relations Manager Grassroo  
Organizer Historian Human Resources Specialist Human Rights Officer Import Export  
Manager Information Technology Officer Intelligence Specialist International Business  
Analyst International Research Specialist Journalist Juvenile Justice Specialist Labor  
Relations Specialist Labor Union Official Lawyer Legal Investigator Legislative Director/  
Analyst Lobbyist Media Specialist Mediator Nonprofit Employee Interest Group Public Po  
Analyst Paralegal Parole/Probation Officer Peace Corps Police Officer/Administrator Polic  
Analyst/Development/Researcher Political Action Committee Political Consultant Politica  
Correspondent Political Director Politician Pollster Professor Public Affairs Specialist Publ  
Interest/Consumer Advocate Public Policy Analyst Public Relations Researcher Social Sec  
Administration Social Services Advocate Social Worker Special Interest Group Director Sta  
Agency Employee State Governor's Office Staff Member State Legislator Strategic Planni  
Consultant Teacher, Overseas School for Military and Diplomatic Children Trade Policy An  
Treasury Department Employee U.S. Embassy or United Nations University Administrator  
Urban Policy Planner White House Advisor Women's Policy Analyst Federal or State Agen

**apsa**  
the american  
political science association

# Consider Political Science!

## Majoring in Political Science

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN American politics? International affairs? Critical issues such as public policy, globalization, terrorism, the environment, civil rights, political development, foreign policy? Theories concerning the ideal government and how power and resources are allocated in society? Do you want to study these subjects and pursue a career based on your interests? If so, you should select political science as a major. Political science is the study of governments, public policies and political behavior. Political science uses both humanistic perspectives and scientific skills to examine the United States and all countries and regions of the world.

As a political science major, you will hone the writing, communications, analytical and computer skills that are critical to a liberal arts education. This kind of education will prepare you to think critically and independently, with tolerance for others and concern for current affairs. Today, students can reasonably expect to change jobs more than once and even to have more than one career. An undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences is excellent preparation for the flexibility in employment that you are likely to encounter.

Majoring in political science can qualify you for many different careers in private for-profit and nonprofit organizations, as well as public sector organizations. Graduates will be able to pursue careers in business, law, consulting, state, local, and federal government, journalism and communications, international organization, finance, polling and campaign management, community service and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and pre-college and college teaching.

Political science training also provides valuable preparation for participating in community organizations, electoral politics, movements on behalf of specific policies, and for seeking elective or administrative positions in government. While many of these are voluntary activities, participation in them develops skills and creates opportunities for career success.

"The connection between political science and the work I do here is the practical application of participation, helping young people participate, whether it's in organizing at their high school, organizing at their college, or organizing...in their neighborhood."

Kate Coyer,  
Projects Director, Rock the Vote

"First class training in political science, that's been the basis of my career, and all the experiences have simply added and reinforced and strengthened that training."

Donna Shalala  
President, University of Miami  
Former Secretary, Department of Health & Human Services

# political science: an ideal

## Majoring in Political Science

Political science, the study of civics and government, is fundamental to understanding your rights and responsibilities as a citizen as well as international politics and law. Most secondary schools require courses in civics and government. In addition, political issues of the United States and other countries are discussed in other courses such as history and social science. If political issues interest you, you can pursue them in virtually every college and university in the United States.



Undergraduate study of politics usually consists of courses on American politics, comparative political systems, international relations, political theory, and methodology. These courses will introduce you to political concepts, political behavior, policy issues and structures of government within societies and among nations. In doing so, these courses will also provide you with valuable analytical and communication skills.

To pursue the study of politics further, you can take advanced undergraduate courses about specific institutions, policies, and aspects of political life in the United States, other nations or internationally. Political science majors select courses that interest and prepare them for either (a) professional or graduate education, (e.g. law school, business school, or graduate studies in political science or related fields of public policy, public administration, and international relations); or (b) careers that can be entered with a B.A. degree (e.g. ranging from serving as a legislative assistant to serving as an aid worker in Mozambique).

## High School Students

Tips for choosing to study political science in college:

- Talk to your high school guidance counselor and teachers about your interests.
- Visit university and college websites to review the political science or government department pages for descriptions of faculty and courses and requirements of the major. Examine catalogues of the college(s) you are interested in to confirm that they offer courses in political science, government, and politics.
- Examine the directories of college and university political science faculty offered by APSA.
- Consider taking a community college course in political science. Most B.A. programs give students credit towards their B.A. degree for successfully completion of community college courses.

- Take an Advanced Placement course in government.

- Student and parents who seek more information about employment opportunities in political science, should review career information APSA's [www.apsanet.org/jobs](http://www.apsanet.org/jobs), and order APSA's career publications highlighted in this brochure.

## Undergraduate Students

Tips for choosing the political science major:

- Consult with your undergraduate advisor and political science department advisor about pursuing the major.
- Review information on objectives and requirements for the major. Many departments now offer specialized "tracks" or "concentrations" within political science, such as pre-law, public administration, international relations, in addition to area studies focusing on specific countries or regions.
- To broaden your training, consider programs to study or work abroad. Or consider a double major with related social science and humanities disciplines, or an interdisciplinary field, such as environmental studies, health policy, urban politics, race and ethnicity, women's studies, etc. Computer science and statistics provide useful complements to the political science major with their emphasis on technical and quantitative theories.
- Consider an internship or service learning. Your campus may provide opportunities for education through internships or service learning in local, state, and federal government agencies, political parties, campaign organizations, and other national or community-based non-governmental organizations. An internship can enhance your undergraduate education by helping you develop skills and knowledge to participate in public life as a career, volunteer and as a citizen and offering insight into practical processes of politics and government, as well as training and contacts that can be helpful in career planning and future employment.



# liberal arts major

## Continuing Your Education Beyond a BA

### Law School

A considerable proportion of undergraduate political science majors go on to law school. Many political science departments and most colleges and universities have a pre-law advisor to assist students with considering and applying to law school. For information on specific law schools, consult directories at your college or university library or career office. You may also contact the American Bar Association ([www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org)) or the Law School Admission Council ([www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)) for further information. The National Association for Law Placement ([www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org)) also provides information about careers and career planning.



### Masters Degree

If you are interested in political science graduate study but do not wish to pursue a career in research or college teaching, there are Masters degree programs in political science, many of which are specialized professional programs in public administration, public policy analysis, international relations, and political campaign management. To learn about these programs:

- Consult with your advisor and political science faculty, especially faculty who specialize in the field or policy area(s) and governing institution(s) that interest you.
- Visit their websites of departments and institutions whose programs interest you for full details on graduate faculty, course descriptions, and application procedures.
- Tap into relevant web resources listed in this brochure.

### Ph.D. Degree

If you would like to continue to study political science beyond the B.A. or M.A., and are considering a career as a political scientist:

- Discuss your interest with your advisor and political science professors. Ask for guidance about graduate study and about the work of political scientists. You do not need an M.A. to enter a Ph.D. program.
- The American Political Science Association publishes a brochure to help you—*Earning a Ph.D. in Political Science*, and information for graduate students at [www.apsanet.org/gradstudent](http://www.apsanet.org/gradstudent).
- Visit the websites of departments and institutions whose programs interest you for information on graduate faculty, course descriptions, and application procedures. You can find websites for most departments at [www.phds.org](http://www.phds.org). Be sure to inquire about funding for Ph.D. students, including fellowships and research and teaching assistantships.

## Career Sectors for Political Science

### Business

Many political science majors go on to careers in business; undergraduate political science training offers a good preparation for graduate programs in business. Students who have focused on international relations or country/area studies may find opportunities in international business and trade. If you are interested in attending business school:

- Discuss your interest with an advisor or college career counselor.
- Review the appropriate guides and catalogues to identify graduate business programs. Contact the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business ([www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu)) for more information.
- If you have a business school at your own institution, speak with the admissions director about graduate business programs.

### Public Administration, Public Affairs, International Affairs

While careers in public affairs can be pursued with a bachelor's degree in political science, there are graduate programs that offer specialized professional training for careers in public affairs and public service. Graduate programs in public administration, public policy, and political campaign management provide training for management positions in governmental agencies, professional and interest group organizations, governmental relations divisions of corporations, for-profit consulting and marketing agencies, and the expanding sector of NGOs.

For more information on careers in public administration, contact the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration ([www.naspa.org](http://www.naspa.org)), and check with the American Society for Public Administration ([www.aspanet.org](http://www.aspanet.org)). If you have a particular interest in international affairs, contact the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs ([www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org)).

### Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

If you are thinking about a career in public service, consider non-profit, non-governmental organizations and associations. There are NGOs at all levels of government and geographical areas from the local to the global arena, and for virtually all public issues and policy areas, from neighborhood housing and environmental renewal to food banks and youth development to national policy areas such as health, education, civil rights, and criminal justice, to global issue areas of economic and democratic development, human rights, trade, and the environment. NGOs offer opportunities for political science graduates at all degree levels. Consult the Online Career Resources section of this brochure for more information.

## Academic Research and Teaching

With a Ph.D. in political science, you will have gained key methodological skills that will prepare you for a career as a college or university professor conducting cutting-edge research in a variety of political science areas including American politics, comparative politics, political theory, international relations, research methods, and other sub-fields. Political scientists who work at colleges and universities often split their time between research, teaching, and service-orientated duties such as committee or advising responsibilities. Research conducted by political scientists appears in a variety of academic journals and textbooks. They often present their research findings at academic conferences like the American Political Science

Association Annual Meeting. For an up-to-date listing of academic positions available in the political science discipline, visit [www.apsanet.org/ejobs](http://www.apsanet.org/ejobs).

## Journalism

If you are interested in a career in print or broadcast journalism, political science training can give you the substantive and analytical background you need. Typically political science courses place heavy emphasis on developing fluid and clear writing and speaking skills. The journalism field can be entered with a bachelor's degree or after completing a graduate program in journalism. To find out more about this career, contact the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications ([www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org)) or the Broadcast Education Association ([www.beaweb.org](http://www.beaweb.org)).

## Online Career Resources

### Career Opportunities in Political Science

The following select websites vary in terms of offerings. Most include career information and job postings in different types of organizations, and can be used to search for jobs by job type and location. Several sites also allow you to post resumes and learn more about fields of interest. This is only a selection of websites that can help you explore career opportunities in political science.

### General Job Search Engines

[www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)    [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)  
[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)    [www.employmentguide.com](http://www.employmentguide.com)

### Careers in Government

U.S. Office of Personnel Management ([www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov))  
U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security ([www.dhs.gov/careers](http://www.dhs.gov/careers))  
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency ([www.cia.gov/careers/index.html](http://www.cia.gov/careers/index.html))  
Student jobs with the Federal Government ([www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads](http://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads))  
Congressional Research Service ([www.loc.gov/crsinfo/](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/))  
American Society for Public Administration ([www.aspanet.org](http://www.aspanet.org))  
Partnerships for Public Service ([www.ourpublicservice.org](http://www.ourpublicservice.org))  
Int'l City/County Management Association ([jobs.icma.org](http://jobs.icma.org))  
National League of Cities ([www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org))  
National Association of Counties ([www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org))  
Careers in public service ([www.publicservicecareers.org](http://www.publicservicecareers.org))

### Careers in Law

Law School Admissions Council ([www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org))  
American Bar Association ([www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org))  
National Association for Law Placement ([www.nalpl.org](http://www.nalpl.org))

### Careers in Business

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business ([www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu))

### Careers in Journalism/Communications

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication ([www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org))  
Broadcast Education Association ([www.beaweb.org](http://www.beaweb.org))  
JournalismJobs.com ([www.journalismjobs.com](http://www.journalismjobs.com))  
NewsLink ([www.newslink.org](http://www.newslink.org))

### Careers in Academic Research and Teaching

APSA eJobs ([http://www.apsanet.org/jobs\\_search.asp](http://www.apsanet.org/jobs_search.asp))  
Academic 360 ([academic360.com](http://academic360.com))  
The Chronicle of Higher Education ([www.chronicle.com/jobs](http://www.chronicle.com/jobs))  
HigherEdJobs.com ([www.higheredjobs.com](http://www.higheredjobs.com))  
H-Net Job Guide ([www.h-net.org/jobs/](http://www.h-net.org/jobs/))  
Teaching positions in the U.S. ([www.nationjob.com/education](http://www.nationjob.com/education))  
Teaching jobs overseas ([joyjobs.com](http://joyjobs.com))  
National Council of Social Studies ([www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org))  
Teach for America ([www.teachforamerica.org/](http://www.teachforamerica.org/))

### Careers in Non Profit Organizations

Americorps ([www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org))  
American Society for Association Executives ([www.asaenet.org](http://www.asaenet.org))  
The Carter Center ([www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org))  
The Chronicle of Philanthropy ([www.philanthropy.com/jobs](http://www.philanthropy.com/jobs))  
Idealist.org ([www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org))  
National Endowment for Democracy ([www.ned.org](http://www.ned.org))  
Nonprofit Career Network ([www.nonprofitcareer.com](http://www.nonprofitcareer.com))  
NonprofitJobs ([www.nonprofitjobs.org](http://www.nonprofitjobs.org))  
Peace Corp ([www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm](http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm))  
The Riley Guide to Nonprofits, Foundations, and Think Tanks ([www.rileyguide.com/nonprof.html](http://www.rileyguide.com/nonprof.html))  
United Nations ([www.jobs.un.org](http://www.jobs.un.org))  
The World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org))

## Hitting the Job Market with an BA

A bachelor's degree in political science can lead to employment in business, government, journalism, NGOs, interest groups and professional associations. These jobs utilize the analytical skills, administrative competence and communication abilities of political science majors. To prepare to seek employment:

- Consult your professors and college placement counselors. Seek advice about opportunities and how your own skills and achievements can best be used. It is never too early to contact your college placement office and determine how to identify and prepare yourself to apply for jobs that interest you. Many universities and colleges offer online advice and information about on-campus recruiting by companies.
- Pursue direct contacts for jobs that interest you by talking with people in these jobs and asking for their suggestions.

- Contact corporations, local, state, and federal employment agencies, newspapers, professional associations to explore job opportunities. See the Online Career Resources section for additional resources.



- Prepare a resume. Emphasize broad analytical and communicative skills, as well as substantive knowledge gained from political science courses. Highlight internship and job experiences. Have an advisor critique your resume. Make sure you have no grammatical or spelling errors as prospective employers will take such mistakes as signs of sloppiness or inability.
- Send your resume to organizations that interest you and work with your college placement office to schedule interviews with businesses and government agencies recruiting on your campus.
- While in college, seek an internship with a business or organization that interests you. Many internships lead to permanent jobs.

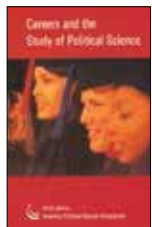
## Careers in Political Science

Advocate/Organizer  
Ambassador  
Archivist  
Association/Nonprofit/Interest Manager or Staffer  
Banking, Political Risk Manager  
Budget Analyst  
Campaign Worker  
CIA Agent  
City Housing Administrator  
City Planner/Manager  
Civilian Consultant, Department of Defense  
Community Relations Director  
Congressional Committee Staff Member  
Congressional Office Staff Member  
Congressional Research Service  
Consultant  
Corporate Legislative Issues Manager  
Corporate Planning/Public Affairs Manager  
Corporate Social Policy  
County or City Council Member  
County Economic Development Officer  
County Treasurer  
Development Director  
Editor  
Education Policy Analyst  
Educator/Teacher  
Environmental Policy Analyst

Events Planner  
FBI Agent  
Federal or State Agency Employee  
Financial Services  
Foreign Affairs Specialist  
Foreign Service Officer or U.N. Diplomat  
Foundation Employee  
Fundraiser  
General Accounting Office Evaluator  
Government Relations Manager  
Grassroots Organizer  
Historian  
Human Resources Specialist  
Human Rights Officer  
Import Export Manager  
Information Technology Officer  
Intelligence Specialist or Analyst  
International Business Analyst  
International Research Specialist  
Journalist  
Juvenile Justice Specialist  
Labor Relations Specialist  
Legal Investigator  
Legislative Director/Analyst  
Lobbyist  
Media Specialist  
Mediator

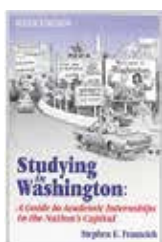
Nonprofit Employee  
Interest Group Public Policy Analyst  
Paralegal  
Parole/Probation Officer  
Peace Corps Worker  
Police Officer/Administrator  
Policy Analyst/Development/Researcher  
Political Action Committee  
Political Consultant  
Political Correspondent  
Political Director  
Politician  
Pollster  
Professor  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Public Interest/Consumer Advocate  
Public Policy Analyst  
Public Relations  
Researcher  
Social Services Advocate  
State Governor's Office Staff Member  
Strategic Planning Consultant  
Trade Policy Analyst  
University Administrator  
Urban Policy Planner  
White House Advisor

## Political Science Career Publications from APSA



### **Careers and the Study of Political Science: A Guide for Undergraduates**

This guide to careers in political science includes more details about the career sectors mentioned in this brochure and advice about how to prepare yourself for these unique career possibilities.



### **Studying in Washington: A Guide to Academic Internships in the Nation's Capital**

A guide to the academically rewarding internships in Washington, D.C.



### **Career Encounters®: Political Science**

A 28-minute video on careers in political science that features interview segments with political science graduates.



### **Earning a Ph.D. in Political Science**

For students interested in advanced graduate study in political science

**Order online:** For more information and to order these materials, visit [www.apsanet.org/publications](http://www.apsanet.org/publications).

## **About the American Political Science Association**

Founded in 1903, the American Political Science Association is the leading professional organization for the study of political science and serves more than 15,000 members in over 80 countries. On behalf of its members who are scholars, students, teachers, researchers, and workers in the public and private sectors, APSA fosters support for political science research and teaching, facilitates employment, promotes equity and diversity in the profession, furthers professional ethics, sponsors awards for scholarly excellence, and develops teaching materials. APSA welcomes student members.



American Political Science Association  
1527 New Hampshire Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-1206  
e: [apsa@apsanet.org](mailto:apsa@apsanet.org) w: [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)