College of Arts & Sciences

Political Science

Overview
Government affects many aspects of our lives, from our economic activities, to our community-building efforts and intercultural relations. Important issues like social welfare policy, human rights, war and diplomacy are central to political science. Political science majors learn about the impact of government in all these areas, and have substantial freedom to design their course study to meet individual goals and interests.

Professional options
Careers
The average starting salary for recent K-State political science graduates was $44,111, higher than the average starting salary for other social science, natural science or humanities majors. The Chronicle of Higher Education reports that political science graduates were among the highest in job satisfaction.

Many of our students find positions in the business community. Others pursue graduate degrees in political science, public administration and law. Our graduates are employed in areas including:

- Market research
- Corporate public relations
- Nonprofit/charitable enterprise
- Employee management
- Lobbying for businesses and nonprofits
- Law
- Journalism
- Small business ownership
- Local and state officials
- Federal government officials
- Campaign and congressional staff

New careers are developing in a number of rapidly growing fields, including:

- Risk analysis of foreign governments
- Political consulting
- Careers in research institutions, including nonprofit foundations
- Security analysis for terrorist and other threats facing the U.S. and other countries

An undergraduate degree in political science prepares you for graduate study in the discipline, but is also a foundation for a wide variety of other graduate and professional studies. Many political scientists go into academic careers, and most U.S. higher education employ political scientists as faculty and administrators.

Job experience
Students wanting practical experience in politics or government service may earn up to six undergraduate credits for an internship program. Interns have worked on election campaigns, on the staffs of elected officials and with branches of government at all levels. Students may make arrangements to earn up to six hours of credit at American University in Washington, D.C. This experience is often combined with the internship. Undergraduates can gain further experience by applying for scholarships to work with professors on research projects, take part in Model U.N. or present at professional conferences.

Academics
Degree options
Undergraduate level
The program is flexible, allowing students to specialize in a particular subfield if desired. Subfields include American government, comparative government, international relations and political thought. The department has a wide range of electives to complement each subfield, including undergraduate courses in public administration, human rights, political Islam, constitutional law and African politics.

Secondary majors and minors are available for students in various fields of interest. Specialized curricula are available in women’s studies, international studies, pre-law, labor and environmental sciences. A number of students use the double major or dual degree provisions of the university to graduate with majors in two departments or colleges.

Concurrent degree
The concurrent degree allows students to maximize their potential while reducing their time in the classroom. With careful academic planning, students may earn both a bachelor’s degree and a Master of Public Administration in less than six years. Students minimize both time and resources as nine credit hours are counted toward both degrees.

Master of Public Administration (MPA)
The M.P.A. is a professional degree that prepares students for a broad range of careers in the public and nonprofit sectors at the local, state, national and international levels. Students learn the various required skills in a series of core and elective courses. Additionally, students are able to acquire greater exposure to such areas as public finance, planning, security studies or state and local government. Students also gain valuable practical experience through full-time internships. The M.P.A. program is accredited by NASPAA and in recent years has enjoyed 92 percent graduate job placement.

Master of Arts in political science
The M.A. program meets the educational and professional needs of students who are:

- Seeking to improve their lifetime earning power
- Enhancing their credentials for business and journalistic careers
- Gaining further expertise as high school teachers
- Pursuing a career teaching community college
- Preparing for a doctorate or other advanced degree

The degree requirements are structured to provide students with a mature grasp of politics, a respect for intellectual integrity and an ability to communicate effectively. Graduate work in political science is offered in American government and politics, comparative government and politics, international relations and political thought.
Master of Arts in security studies
This is an interdisciplinary professional degree providing a broad, analytical framework for understanding international security issues. Course work concentrates on issues of strategy, politics, economics and society from both historical and social science perspectives. Although this is a professional M.A., its focus is on issues complementing those emphasized in the military’s professional training.

Doctor of Philosophy in security studies
This is an interdisciplinary program intended to prepare students for careers in research, teaching and international affairs through a broad exploration of issues relating to international security. Many students will already have an M.A. in security studies, but this is not required. Students with other relevant master’s degrees may apply to the doctoral program directly.

Faculty
Our faculty are an important strength of our department. Many of our professors have won undergraduate and graduate teaching and advising awards. We consider our availability to students to be a high priority. All of our classes are taught by professors, not graduate teaching assistants. Our faculty are the authors of numerous books and articles which have made an impact on the scholarly world at the national and international level.

Financial assistance
Scholarships
In the 2016-2017 academic year, the department awarded nearly $18,000 in scholarship funds to undergraduate students.

The department awards 13 undergraduate scholarships each year. For more information on applying for scholarships, email polsci@k-state.edu. A political science advisor can also help you find universitywide scholarships and give you information on internships, work-study and other forms of financial aid.

K-State has been one of the most successful universities in the prestigious Truman Scholarship competition. Two-thirds of K-State’s Truman scholars have been political science majors. Our students also have been successful in international scholarship competitions for the Rhodes, Fulbright and Rotary scholarships.

For more information about political science, contact:
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Post-Graduation Statistics
k-state.edu/postgrad-stats
ksdegreestats.org