

Political Science

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The academic discipline of political science introduces students to critical thinking about the intellectual origins, defense, and critique of government, politics, and society in the United States and throughout the world. Political science classes focus on fundamental questions of governance: How should state and society be organized? How do the values of civil society and economy influence political thinking? Who should exercise political power and who should not? What constitutes justice?

The Department of Political Science offers the following degree programs:

- Political Science, BA
- Political Science Minor
- Public Affairs, MA

Program Objectives

The Department of Political Science offers the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, the Minor in Political Science, and the Master of Arts in Public Affairs (public policy). Faculty members and students engage in empirical research and ethical critique of current events and competing explanations of those events with regard to government, politics, and society. They take into account politically relevant conceptual elements and practices embedded in or struggling against the intellectual foundations and elaborate edifices of diverse political arrangements and causes. Faculty members profess certain acumen in the discipline within which they teach and do research and thus have accumulated more accurate and sophisticated explanations and discoveries into the human condition, particularly as they relate to living socially and making decisions collectively.

Major in Political Science

- Political Science, BA (<http://catalog.uah.edu/undergrad/colleges-departments/arts-humanities-social-sciences/political-science/political-science-ba>)

Minors in Political Science

- Political Science (<http://catalog.uah.edu/undergrad/colleges-departments/arts-humanities-social-sciences/political-science/political-science-minor>)

PSC 101 - INTRO TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
 Semester Hours: 3

What motivates individuals and groups to act politically? This course introduces students to political structures, decision-making, and public policy in the U.S. The role of history in the development of current institutional structures and current political developments will be considered.

PSC 102 - INTRO TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
 Semester Hours: 3

In this class we explore ways to compare countries and political systems. We study a wide variety of countries for a better understanding of political dynamics around the world. This includes countries at various stages of industrialization and democratization, in different regions of the globe.

PSC 103 - INTRO TO STATE & LOCAL GOVT
 Semester Hours: 3

Surveys the principles, forms, functions, and processes of state and local governments in the context of the American federal system, with specific emphasis on the political environment. Students will better understand the major functions of -and the issues facing- state and local governments.

PSC 260 - INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
 Semester Hours: 3

Examination of the basic factors underlying the conduct of international relations, focusing on conflict and changes taking place due to globalization. This course also seeks to stimulate intellectual curiosity, enhance critical thinking, and improve oral and writing skills.

PSC 300 - INTRO SOCIAL SCIENCE STATISTIC
 Semester Hours: 3

This course covers basic statistical concepts, techniques, and the language of statistics; simple statistical modeling correlation and regression analysis; and nonlinear models and categorical models. Students will apply appropriate methods to analyze real world problems.

PSC 302 - THE AMERICAN CONGRESS

Semester Hours: 3

Studies the organization and role of the Congress, its leadership, internal processes, and relationships with other parts of the political system. The goal is to understand why Congress looks and acts the way it does, whose interests are represented, and how and why policies emerge as they do.

Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 304 - AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

Semester Hours: 3

Examination of the institution of the American presidency, its power, and the forces that shape it. Focus on developing students' ability to think conceptually and critically about the presidency, the president's role in the the political system, and American politics in general. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 309 - POLI PARTIES/INTEREST GR

Semester Hours: 3

A survey of major linkages between citizens and government, this course studies the formation, organization, activities, and impacts of political parties and interest groups - and factors affecting them. Students will think critically about these institutions and their roles in the American system. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 330 - CLASSI POLITI PHILOSOPHY

Semester Hours: 3

Careful analysis of the roots of political inquiry in selected works of ancient and medieval political philosophers. Major themes include the search for a just social order, the proper relationship between the citizen and the state, and other fundamental concepts of western political institutions. Prerequisite: PSC 101 or PHL 101 or PHL 102 or PHL 202 or permission of instructor.

PSC 332 - MODERN POLITICAL PHILOSO

Semester Hours: 3

Critical examination of the philosophical foundations for modern politics that emerged from the 15th through the 19th century in western Europe. Major themes and theorists include the concepts of individual rights, property, representation, majority rule, limited government, and revolution. Prerequisite: PSC 101 or PHL 101 or PHL 102 or PHL 202 or permission of instructor.

PSC 334 - AMER POLITICAL THOUGHT

Semester Hours: 3

In-depth study of theorists, concepts and forces that have shaped American political values from the founding of the republic to the present. Major themes include the relationship between liberty and equality, rights and democracy, and industrialization and the public good. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 399 - CURRENT AFFAIRS

Semester Hour: 1

An examination of current national and international issues. Focus is on developing critical reading, listening, and writing skills. The course may be repeated up to three times.

PSC 420 - FEDERALISM & INTERGOV RELATION

Semester Hours: 3

Designed to help students navigate complex relationships among the 90,000+ government in the U.S., this course examines the framework of federalism and the tools available to governments to influence public policy outcomes. Students will investigate the impacts of these relationships on policy. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 436 - POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Semester Hours: 3

Critical examination of the philosophical foundations and political ethics of contemporary political ideologies. Among the major ideologies studied will be relevant examples of conservatism, liberalism, Marxism, Nazism, and religion, such as liberation theology and Islamism. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 438 - CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Semester Hours: 3

Systematic study of recent and current thinking on issues and problems of politics, social theory, and ethics with special attention to the philosophical dimension of these issues and problems.

PSC 440 - REGIONAL STUDIES

Semester Hours: 3

This class compares and examines the politics of Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, or Africa, depending on the term. We focus on select countries of themes within each region as part of our study of political structures, history, and culture, for a deeper understanding of each area. Prerequisites: PSC 101 and PSC 102.

PSC 451 - LAW, COURTS, & PUBLIC POLICY

Semester Hours: 3

Examines the role of the courts in the making of public policy in the United States, with an emphasis on the use of the courts by interest groups seeking to achieve specific policy goals. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 452 - AMER CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Semester Hours: 3

Examination of the structure of the federal government and its powers through an analysis of leading cases from the Supreme Court. Topics include federalism, separation of powers, and the proper role and decision-making process of the Supreme Court. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 454 - CIVIL LIBERTIES

Semester Hours: 3

Examines the relationship between the government and individuals in American society through an analysis of Supreme Court cases. The focus is on contemporary questions about the rights of individuals and appropriate limits to freedom of action set by government. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 462 - DECISION-MAKING FORGN & SEC PLY

Semester Hours: 3

An examination of the history, culture, policies, and structures shaping the development of U.S. foreign and national security policies. Special attention will be placed on the roles of Congress, National Security Council, Defense Department, State Department, and the intelligence community. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 464 - AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Semester Hours: 3

An examination of the substance of contemporary U.S. foreign policies and the goals the country seeks to achieve around the world. Students will attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of those policies and examine why it is often difficult for the country to achieve its goals. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 466 - NATIONAL SECURITY STRGY & PLY

Semester Hours: 3

An examination of current U.S. national security strategy and policy. The course will review current strategy and policy documents, examine specific responses to the variety of threats facing the United States, and evaluate whether those policies are effective at achieving their goals. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 470 - ISSUES IN SECURITY POLICY

Semester Hours: 3

Examination of select security-related policy issues. The content of this course will vary during different terms, and students may take the course multiple times so long as the content differs. Prerequisite: PSC 101.

PSC 480 - ADVANCED TOPICS IN PSC

Semester Hours: 3

Select topics in local, state, national and world politics. This course may be repeated for credit as long as content of the course has changed.

PSC 484 - SENIOR SEMINAR

Semester Hours: 3

This class engages students in an advanced examination of the subfields of political science that are offered by the department. The course may be repeated with different faculty for up to 6 hours of credit. Prerequisites: PSC 101 and PSC 102.

PSC 495 - INTERNSHIP IN GOVERNMENT

Semester Hours: 1-6

Students may receive academic credit for an internship with a local, state, or federal governmental agency, or with political, legal, or public policy related organizations. Prerequisite: Instructor Permission.

PSC 498 - DIRECTED READINGS & RESEARCH

Semester Hours: 3

Supervised in-depth readings and/or individual research in an area of specialized interest to both student and instructor. Open to all students who have completed 15 semester hours in Political Science and have permission of the instructor.