

RU Interested in...

POLITICAL SCIENCE

AT A GLANCE...

Department at RU:	Political Science
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College at RU:	College of Arts and Sciences
Degree Type:	Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science

AREA OF STUDY

Political science majors study within the fields of American government, international relations, comparative government (the study of political institutions and practices in other areas of the world), political philosophy, and public administration.

Politics comes from the Greek word *polis*, which can be translated as city or community. Political science examines how human beings organize themselves in their search for the good life, or a life fit for a free human being caught between the demands of necessity and those of justice or righteousness. As such, political science is related to the larger enterprise of a liberal education that examines what it means to be a human being.

QUESTIONS STUDENTS OFTEN ASK

What can I do with a degree in Political Science?

Some of our majors go to law school or do graduate work in a variety of areas including public administration, international relations, public arts management, political science, and many other fields. We have students who work in local, state, and national politics. We also have students who go to work in their uncle's business or start their own. Some majors decide to pursue a teaching career. Political science teaches you to read well, write well,

and think well. We believe these skills will serve you well in whatever career you choose or whatever career chooses you.

What sorts of students enjoy political science?

We are looking for students who like to think and to confront ideas in original texts instead of watered-down textbooks. We like students who like politics, but who see it as more than merely a struggle for power. We like students who are civil, but like to express ideas and aren't afraid to disagree. We like students who don't mind occasionally being thought of as a little weird because they get caught talking about Plato at a party.

What are political science classes and professors like?

Political science classes are smaller than most and we are committed as a department to keeping them that way. All of our classes, including introductory ones, are taught by full-time, permanent faculty members who care about teaching political science in an undergraduate liberal arts environment and who pursue professional activities that support and enhance their classroom teaching. We place great emphasis on our "foundation" classes in political science: POSC 110 *Introduction to Politics*, POSC 120 *Introduction to American Government*, POSC 130 *Introduction to Comparative Government*, and POSC 140 *Introduction to International Relations*. Our major consists of 33 hours; these courses form the core along with POSC 290 *Seminar in Political Science*. This class is limited to 15 students, all majors and minors, and works on developing writing

and critical thinking skills by focusing on a particular topic in political science. Students are also asked in this seminar to begin a dialogue about the meaning and value of a college education.

My major interests lie elsewhere. Why should I consider a minor in political science?

Because our minor consists of 18 hours of classes that can be shaped to suit your interests and fit with your major. Political science minors take at least two of our basic 100-level classes in the major subfields areas of the discipline, the 290 seminar, and at least two upper level courses for which they have the prerequisite. A political science minor should help make you a better reader, writer, and thinker. You will read some great books that should form a part of any solid liberal education. A political science minor will also teach you about the possibilities and limits of politics and that will help prepare you for life and for the responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

What kinds of books will I read in Political Science?

Good ones. Real ones. Books by Plato, Thucydides, Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Dostoevsky, Melville, even Ray Bradbury, to name a few. Of course, you can read a variety of contemporary political scientists, historians, economists, sociologists, and novelists who write about the United States, Canada, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. You can read books about war and peace, foreign and defense policy, international law, American constitutional law, state and local government, Congress and the Presidency, public opinion and voting, and the character and quirks of public organizations and bureaucracies.

Are there concentrations available within the major?

The department offers concentrations in four areas: American government, comparative politics/international relations, political philosophy, and public administration. These concentrations involve more course work and other requirements and are designed to prepare students for graduate work in a specific area.

What courses outside the major does the Department of Political Science encourage its majors to consider?

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This is a hard question and a specific answer depends on a student's interests, talents, and career ambitions. The department encourages students to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts which means that a student has completed 12 hours of a foreign language. We encourage our students to take courses in literature, history, philosophy, religion, and economics. College students should seek out courses that help them acquire important skills, but they should also be seekers of truth and beauty.

Are there internships available in political science?

Many political sciences majors arrange their own internships in local, state, and national governmental offices. Some work on political campaigns and some work for advocacy groups trying to influence public policy or public perceptions. We can provide help for students with such ambitions. One of the department's faculty members is our internship coordinator, collecting information on opportunities and supervising a process whereby students can obtain academic credit for their internship experiences.

Where can I obtain more information about the field of Political Science?

- RU Department of Political Science
- RU Career Services Center
- RU McConnell Library
- RU Center for Counseling and Student Development
- RU Advising Centers

**For an application to Radford University
Contact the RU Admissions Office**

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Radford University Office of Admissions
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Phone: (540) 831-5371 or (800) 890-4265

Fax: (540) 831-5038

Homepage: www.radford.edu/Admissions.html

Email: ruadmiss@radford.edu