

# POLITICAL SCIENCE

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[www.mcla.edu/posc](http://www.mcla.edu/posc) (<http://www.mcla.edu/posc/>)

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## Political Science Major

The Department of History & Political Science offers a four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in political science. Majors will develop knowledge of U.S. and comparative politics, international relations, and the policy process, as well as develop skills to prepare for graduate school and careers in law, government, non-governmental organizations, political and public policy research, advocacy, business, journalism, and education. Additionally, students have the opportunity to tailor their coursework, advising, and internships to their career goals by completing an optional pre-law or international affairs major concentration.

Students graduating with a major in Political Science will be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding in each of the following areas of political science: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and research methods;
- Demonstrate proficiency in identifying, locating, and evaluating scholarly political science and policy analysis resources and in using them responsibly to formulate effective arguments;
- Demonstrate the capacity to conduct original research using one or more methodologies in political science (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, etc.);
- Demonstrate competence in presenting research and analysis via written and oral communication;
- Demonstrate the application of skills and knowledge from the Political Science program in program-relevant internships

## Political Science Programs

- Political Science - International Affairs Concentration, B.A. (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/political-science/political-science--international-affairs-concentration-ba/>)
- Political Science - Pre-Law Concentration, B.A. (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/political-science/political-science--pre-law-concentration-ba/>)
- Political Science Minor (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/political-science/political-science-minor/>)
- Political Science, B.A. (<https://catalog.mcla.edu/undergraduate/academic-programs-study/political-science/political-science-ba/>)

## Political Science Courses

### POSC 110 Introduction to Political Science Major Seminar 1 cr

Prepares new history and political science majors to make the most of their college years academically, professionally, and personally. Students will learn about the norms and expectations of history and political science majors and how to thrive in the classes that are offered by each. Explores the career prospects most often available to majors in history and political science and discusses the skills and knowledge necessary to take advantage of these professional opportunities.

**Prerequisite:** Political Science Major

### POSC 201 United States Government 3 cr

Introduces the major institutions of national and state government and the discipline of political science. Through interdisciplinary study, students will develop an understanding of political behavior and the public policy processes in the United States.

**Attributes:** Core Self & Society (CSS), Environmental Studies (ENVI)

### POSC 202 Comparative Government 3 cr

Provides a comparative introduction to common political problems and the discipline of political science. Through an interdisciplinary study of various nation-states, students will develop an understanding of political behavior, political institutions, and public policy processes.

**Attributes:** Core Self & Society (CSS), Environmental Studies (ENVI)

### POSC 210 Political Science Research and Methods 4 cr

Provides students with an understanding of various theoretical approaches to the study of politics as well as developing skills in social science quantitative and qualitative research methods. Required Laboratory.

### POSC 215 Topics in Political Science 3 cr

Engages current issues in U.S. and/or global political science through an examination of important cases, an exploration of the relevant political science research, and the development of policy-oriented responses.

The specific substantive focus of the course will vary from year to year, depending on the most recent political issues and the instructor offering the course.

### POSC 300 Politics & the News Media 3 cr

Examines politics in America with an eye to the role and responsibility of the news media in, and the relationship of the press to, politics. Analyzes the print and electronic media and current political campaigns, as well as how politics and the news media have been portrayed in film.

**Prerequisite:** Junior/senior status or POSC 210

### POSC 302 Campaigns and Elections 3 cr

Focuses on theories surrounding American campaigns and elections for presidential and congressional elections. In this course, we will analyze how the structures of the American political system have changed over time and how/why candidates run, win, and lose office. Further, we will explore the role American voters play in the political process and how their attitudes, opinions, and ideologies influence candidate choice and voting behavior.

**Prerequisite:** Junior/senior status or POSC 210

### POSC 302H Honors: Campaigns and Elections 3 cr

Focuses on theories surrounding American campaigns and elections for presidential and congressional elections. In this course, we will analyze how the structures of the American political system have changed over time and how/why candidates run, win, and lose office. Further, we will explore the role American voters play in the political process and how their attitudes, opinions, and ideologies influence candidate choice and voting behavior.

**Prerequisite:** Junior/senior status or POSC 210

**Attributes:** Honors Program (HONR)

### POSC 304 Constitutional Law 3 cr

Analyzes constitutional law with special emphasis on civil liberties and civil rights. Legal issues will be examined in the light of relevant social and political conditions.

**Prerequisite:** Junior/senior status or POSC 210

**Attributes:** Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ)

<b>POSC 307 State and Local Politics</b> 3 cr Focuses on structure, policy-making decisions, and functions in state and local government, especially in North Adams and the Berkshires. Utilizes the comparative method to examine the similarities and differences between state and local governments across the US. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210	<b>POSC 333 The Politics of War and Conflict</b> 3 cr Explores issues in war and peace within countries and in the international system. Uses political science theories and recent cases to analyze the origins, evolution and resolution of various forms of conflict, including civil war, terrorism, and revolution. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210 <b>Attributes:</b> Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ)
<b>POSC 308 Women and Politics</b> 3 cr Analyzes how the structure and rules of the American political system influence how women participate in politics. Specifically, the course focuses on women politicians by looking at theories of ambition, stereotypes, and partisanship, amongst others, that impact a woman's decision to run for office and then win election. These topics are presented in a comparative nature by gender and party and across all levels of government. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210 <b>Attributes:</b> Women Gender Sexuality Studies (WMST)	<b>POSC 340 Inequality and Social Policy</b> 3 cr Examines various forms of inequality, how they intersect, and the social policies and programs designed to address them. Emphasis on socioeconomic and racial inequalities in the United States, exploring how economic, historical, and political contexts shape both social 'problems' and social policy. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Any Self and Society course <b>Attributes:</b> Child & Family Studies Minor (C&FS), Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ), Women Gender Sexuality Studies (WMST)
<b>POSC 313 American Political Institutions</b> 3 cr Surveys the three branches of the national government in the United States: Congress, the Presidency, and the Supreme Court. Using a variety of theoretical models, this course seeks to explain how the structure of these institutions affects behavior of actors in the institutions, outcomes as a result of those behaviors, and the practical process of policy formulation. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status and POSC 201 or POSC 201 and POSC 210	<b>POSC 343 Political Economy</b> 3 cr Analyzes the intersection of politics and economics both domestically and internationally in order to understand the accumulation and distribution of power and wealth. Uses theories from both political science and economics to explore issues such as taxation, redistribution, poverty, trade, finance, and immigration. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210
<b>POSC 315 Topics in United States Political Science</b> 3 cr Focuses on aspects of issues and topics in political science that are at least mainly geared towards understanding the United States case and the corresponding academic research. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking, writing skills, and engagement with the political science literature. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210 <b>Repeatable:</b> Unlimited Credits	<b>POSC 345 Model United Nations</b> 3 cr Focuses on the structure of the international system and also prepares students for one or more university-level Model United Nations conferences. Students will learn about the history, mandate and organizational structure of the United Nations and related organizations. They will also practice public speaking, memo writing, parliamentary procedure and other skills necessary to excel in MUN conferences. This course may be repeated once. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210 <b>Repeatable:</b> Maximum of 6 credits
<b>POSC 316 Topics in Global Political Science</b> 3 cr Focuses on aspects of issues and topics in political science that involve extensive analysis of international relations or comparative politics and the corresponding academic research. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking, writing skills, and engagement with the political science literature. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210 <b>Repeatable:</b> Unlimited Credits	<b>POSC 401 Seminar in Political Science</b> 3 cr Explores in depth a particular problem, concept, or theme in political science using advanced research methods. Possible topics include: The American Presidency; Global Development; The American Political Tradition; Political Psychology. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status and one POSC course <b>Repeatable:</b> Unlimited Credits
<b>POSC 323 Political Psychology</b> 3 cr Focuses on why people think, act, and reason the way they do in the realm of politics. Are they acting this way with or without consciousness? The class largely focuses on individual-level political decision-making but we also examine group behavior and choice. By the end of this course, students will have a clear understanding in how political behavior and information processing impacts personal decision-making, politicians, researchers, and the media. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210	<b>POSC 405 Race and Ethnic Politics</b> 3 cr Focuses on the political similarities and differences between African Americans/blacks, Latinos/Hispanics, American Indians, and Asian Americans. We will take a specific look at topics of intersectional identity, inter-minority group relations, and racial resentment. The course covers the political challenges each of these groups face, racial demographics across and within the states, voting behavior, and how race plays a role in elections, policymaking, and policy effects. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status and at least one POSC course
<b>POSC 330 Latin American Politics and Society</b> 3 cr Provides an introduction to recent Latin American political history. The course especially looks at developments and debates in three areas: the evolution and quality of democracy; socioeconomic models, policies and outcomes; and, U.S. - Latin American relations. In examining these topics and others, attention is split between examining the relevant academic research and exploring country case studies and current events. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status or POSC 210 <b>Attributes:</b> Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ)	<b>POSC 415 US Foreign Policy</b> 3 cr Focuses on the destabilizing forces, complex challenges, and exciting opportunities of the international system and their relation to the US and its foreign policy. How does the US determine when and how to act in international affairs? This course will familiarize students with the institutions and actors that shape US foreign policy, the major theories that explain these processes and outcomes, and significant cases where US foreign policy played an important role. <b>Prerequisite:</b> Junior/senior status and at least one POSC course

**POSC 420 Global Development 3 cr**

Focuses initially on the large socioeconomic inequality between countries across the globe. Does this gap have more to do with exploitation by foreign powers, the quality of domestic governance, or a country's environment and geography? What can be done about global poverty and inequality? This course will provide students a variety of tools for examining competing answers to these questions while improving their knowledge of the politics, economics, and cultures of less-developed countries.

**Prerequisite:** Junior/senior status and at least one POSC course

**Attributes:** Cross-Cultural and Social Justice (CCSJ)

**POSC 450 Career Readiness Workshop 1 cr**

Provides senior students majoring in Political Science with an opportunity and framework to reflect on their past work in the major and the wider liberal arts as well as look forward to opportunities and challenges after graduation. Students will work with the instructor, career service professionals, and alumni to understand career and graduate school possibilities and prepare strategies for success.

**Prerequisite:** POSC Major, senior status

**POSC 500 Independent Study 1-3 cr**

Open to juniors and seniors who desire to read widely in a given area or to study a specific topic in depth. Written reports and frequent conferences with the advisor are required.

**Prerequisite:** Department approval

**Repeatable:** Maximum of 12 credits

**POSC 510 Teaching Assistant in Political Science 3 cr**

Offers highly qualified majors or minors in political science an opportunity to assist an instructor in the conduct of a course. The student may be held responsible for conducting classes, review sessions, consulting on course materials, etc.

**Prerequisite:** Department approval

**Repeatable:** Maximum of 6 credits

**POSC 540 Internship in Political Science 1-15 cr**

In consultation with a political science professor, students may apply for and earn internship credit by interning with elected officials or at local or town governments, state governments, national governments. Students may also intern for election campaigns, non-governmental organizations, law offices, interest groups, or other placements approved by the department. Internships are evaluated by a combination of site coordinator evaluations, student reports, and a debriefing memo.

**Prerequisite:** Department approval

**Repeatable:** Maximum of 15 credits