POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

On this page:

- Applying to the Major
- Major Requirements
- International Security Option
- Political Economy Option
- Certificate in Advanced Political Studies and Research
- Graduation

APPLYING TO THE MAJOR

MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- Three political science introductory courses (POL S 101, 201, 202, 203, 204 or 205 or approved equivalent). Students may apply when they have completed at least two intro courses and are enrolled and attending the third course. If more than one course is in progress, consult with a Political Science adviser about when you are eligible to apply for the major.
- Minimum grades of 2.0 in each political science introductory course used towards admission.
- Minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA.

Students who are already in a major and are likely to have satisfactory progress issues may have additional application requirements and should meet with a Pol S adviser.

TO APPLY TO THE MAJOR:

Complete the online Political Science Major Application, due by the 2nd Sunday of each quarter. When the application system for each quarter is live, click on the link to access the application.

- Autumn 2018 Application: Open until Sunday, October 14
- Winter 2019 Application: December 1 to January 20
- Spring 2019 Application: March 1 to April 14
- Summer 2019 Application: June 1 to July 7

Political Science is a minimum requirement major. Applicants will be notified by email about completing admission to the major soon after the application due date has passed. Please make sure that your UW email address is being correctly forwarded and check your email filters if you have not heard from us by the 5th week of the quarter.

TO COMPLETE ENTRY TO THE MAJOR:

- Required: Attend a New Majors Information Session, held in Autumn, Winter and Spring quarters from Week 4 to Week 6 (orientation sessions for summer quarter are TBA). Sign-up information will be emailed to all admitted students. After attending the session, students will be added to the major and will have registration priority for courses restricted to Pol S majors.
- Recommended: After the information session, make an appointment to meet with a Political Science adviser to review remaining requirements for your degree and discuss your goals for your study of political science and your education at UW.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete at least 50 credits, 15 introductory plus 35 upper-level credits, with minimum grades of 2.0 in each course used to fulfill major requirements.
INTRODUCTORY REQUIREMENT: 3 COURSES (15 CREDITS)

Complete three introductory courses, chosen from the following options:
- Pol S 101, Introduction to Politics (not currently offered at UW)
- Pol S 201, Introduction to Political Theory
- Pol S 202, Introduction to American Politics
- Pol S 203, Introduction to International Relations
- Pol S 204, Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Pol S 205, Political Science as a Social Science

MAJOR DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT: 3 COURSES (15 CREDITS)

Complete one course numbered Pol S 210 and above chosen from three of the following four fields
A. Political Theory
B. Comparative Government and Politics
C. International Relations
D. American Government and Politics

MAJOR ELECTIVE REQUIREMENT: 4 COURSES (20 CREDITS)

Complete four additional courses numbered Pol S 210 and above to bring total credits to 50. No field restrictions. Independent studies and internships (e.g., Pol S 488, 489, 496, 498, 499) do not count toward the major. 5 credits of Pol S 497 will count toward the major.

Click here for our handout about the major, including resources and programs for political science majors, a worksheet with requirements for the major and the options, and a list of courses and how they count for the Field Distribution requirement.

MINIMUM MAJOR G.P.A. FOR GRADUATION

In order to graduate, students need a minimum cumulative major GPA of at least 2.25. If your cumulative political science GPA has dropped below 2.25, consult with a Political Science adviser.

TRANSFER CREDIT

If you attended a Washington State community college, see the Transfer Equivalency Guide to see how courses will transfer to UW. The Office of Admissions evaluates and awards transfer credit according to UW transfer policies. See a Political Science adviser if you have questions about how Admissions has evaluated your coursework taken at other schools.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY OPTION

The study of international security focuses on the relationship between politics and security, and specifically on the causes of war and the use and control of force: threats, promises, and the tactics, techniques, and ethics of violence. It teaches the theories and the historical context for understanding contemporary security issues.

The International Security Option is for students interested in an in-depth study of international security. It is not an official major or minor or track but an optional program of study. Students who elect to follow this option must satisfy both the 50 credits required for the general Political Science Major and the additional credits for the option requirements. Up to 25 credits may overlap between the Pol S major and the option.

No more than 20 credits can be used to satisfy both the option and the requirements for any other major. Courses that are not in Pol S (courses offered by departments other than Pol S) fulfill only elective coursework towards the option, not major requirements.

Apply for the option when you have completed at least 6 courses or when you apply to graduate. Students who complete the international security option will receive the notation Political Science: International Security on their UW transcript.

Subscribe to the International Security Listserv

Download the requirements and courses lists for the International Security Option:
POLITICAL ECONOMY OPTION

The study of political economy concentrates on the relationship between politics and economics. It involves the application of economic theory to the analysis of non market behavior and examination of the interplay between governmental and economic institutions. It teaches the use of theoretical tools for analyzing contemporary problems.

The Political Economy Option is for students interested in an in-depth study of political economy. It is not an official major or minor or track but an optional program of study. Students who elect to follow this option must satisfy both the 50 credits required for the general Political Science Major and the additional credits for the option requirements. Up to 25 credits may overlap between the Pol S major and the option.

No more than 20 credits can be used to satisfy both the option and the requirements for any other major. Courses that are not in Pol S (courses offered by departments other than Pol S) fulfill only elective coursework towards the option, not major requirements.

Apply for the option when you have completed at least 6 courses or when you apply to graduate. Students who complete the political economy option will receive the notation Political Science: Political Economy on their UW transcript.

Download the requirements and courses lists from the Political Economy Option: Political Economy Option (PDF)

CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED POLITICAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The Political Science Department offers a Certificate in Advanced Political Studies and Research to qualified undergraduates who are declared majors. The certificate provides the challenging, focused study needed to pursue graduate and professional degrees in political science and related fields of study such as law, public administration, international affairs, business administration, and public policy. Successful post-baccalaureate study in political science and related fields is built on the ability to combine critical inquiry with the concise, organized expression of ideas, both orally and in writing. Similarly, leadership positions in most professional fields rely on research skills, effective communication, and the ability to create consensus and motivate effective discussion for purposes of analysis, planning, and problem-solving.

To qualify for the certificate, students must:

1. Complete two 400-level Pol S seminars and achieve a minimum grade of 3.0 in each.
2. Submit a research paper (minimum of 10 pages) for one of those seminars.
3. Submit a proposal about your research and present at the Annual UW Undergraduate Research Symposium.

The Political Science Advising Office will post a quarterly list of courses that may count as 400-level seminars for this Certificate. The list will also indicate which seminars include the required research paper. No course substitutions will be allowed.

Students receive a certificate of completion from the Political Science Department. Although certificate information is not posted on student transcripts, students who complete the certificate may include it on their resumes or vitaes.

See the Advanced Political Studies and Research Certificate handout (PDF) for more information. When you have completed the Certificate, submit the application to Political Science Advising.

HOW TO APPLY FOR GRADUATION

To apply to graduate, make an appointment with a Political Science adviser. Your adviser will provide graduation application paperwork at your appointment. You do not need to bring any additional materials. If you initiate any major, option or minor changes after you apply to graduate, notify your adviser. They will determine if additional paperwork needs to be submitted.

GRADUATION APPLICATION DEADLINES
For **Graduating Senior Priority** (GSP), apply to graduate two quarters before the quarter in which you expect to graduate (for example, apply in autumn to graduate in spring). GSP allows students to register on the first day of Registration Period I for their final two quarters. See the [Academic Calendar](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/political-science-major) for GSP application deadlines.

The final deadline to apply for graduation is the third week of the quarter in which you expect to graduate.

**MINORS**

When you meet with your adviser to apply for graduation, mention if you intend to complete a minor. If you are not already declared in that minor, your adviser will take care of that paperwork. If you are completing an interdisciplinary minor (Global Health, Diversity, Human Rights, etc.) you will need to see the adviser for that minor to complete your graduation application.

If you declared a minor that you do not intend to complete, your adviser will need to submit paperwork to drop you from the minor. Your degree will not be granted if minor requirements are not fulfilled.

**DOUBLE MAJORS AND DOUBLE DEGREES**

If you are pursuing a double major or double degree, apply to graduate with each department.

**CHANGING YOUR GRADUATION DATE**

If you would like to change your graduation quarter, contact [Political Science Advising](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/political-science-major).

**GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE CONVOCATION**

The Political Science Convocation takes place during final exam week and celebrates students who graduated in summer, autumn and winter and who applied to graduate in the upcoming spring and summer. For information about the upcoming convocation, see the month of June on the [Political Science Events Calendar](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/political-science-major).

**UW COMMENCEMENT**

Students who graduated in summer, autumn, winter or applied to graduate in spring may participate in the UW Commencement. Students who graduate in the upcoming summer may participate if they apply for graduation by the third Friday of spring quarter. See the [Commencement](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/political-science-major) website for information.

NOTE: Participating in graduation ceremonies does not mean that you have graduated. Degrees are conferred only when all graduation requirements have been fulfilled.

**DEGREE POSTING AND RECEIVING YOUR DIPLOMA**

Your transcript is the official document that confirms you earned your degree. Your degree will be posted to your transcript within four weeks of the end of your final quarter. If you did not restrict release of directory information, employers can use the [UW Degree Verification](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/political-science-major) website to verify conferral of your degree.

Your diploma will be mailed approximately three months after your final quarter at UW. For more information, see the [Graduation, Commencement and Diplomas](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/political-science-major) website.