

Political Science

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Political science studies patterns of power and influence through an examination of governments, political behavior, and public policies, both in the United States and around the world. More specific topics analyzed include elections, globalization, political development, law, civil rights and liberties, the environment, public opinion, political institutions, and foreign policy. The discipline examines political theories, both past and present, that inform political discussion and decision-making.

Political science majors interpret political events, evaluate theories of politics, and analyze public policies by gathering and weighing evidence. They do so through the mastery of appropriate empirical research tools and the development of advanced skills in critical thinking, including the ability to dissect scholarly texts. By engaging in these activities, students learn the fundamentals of scholarship, develop a concept of what it means to be a citizen of a representative democracy, and hone the communications and analytical skills at the heart of a liberal education.

Political science prepares students for a broad range of careers in the public, non-profit, and private sectors directly upon graduation or after further study in graduate or law school. The political science major prepares students for careers in law, electoral politics, community or non-governmental organizations, governmental or international agencies, advocacy or lobbying, and public affairs.

Requirements for the Major

The political science major must take three introductory courses: POL 110/American Government, POL 130/International Relations, and POL 150/Comparative Politics; POL 200/Political Analysis; POL 390/Tutorial in Political Science; POL 498/Seminar in Political Science; one course in political theory; and five courses of political science electives, for a total of 12 course units in the core major. Five courses in political science must be at the 300 or 400 level. In addition, political science majors must take STA 115/Statistics I, ECO 101/Principles of Microeconomics, and ECO 102/Principles of Macroeconomics; these three correlate courses may be used to satisfy the liberal learning requirements in mathematics and social sciences.

Transfer students are required to take half of the 12 course units in the political science core at TCNJ. Once they are enrolled at TCNJ, majors may not take core POL courses at a two-year institution. Students who have taken the AP exams for American Government and Politics or for Comparative Politics will receive credit toward the major by earning a score of 4 or 5. Students should be careful not to repeat AP courses or courses taken elsewhere here at TCNJ because they cannot be credited twice.

American Politics Courses: POL 110, POL 207, POL 215, POL 300, POL 305, POL 311, POL 315, POL 316, POL 318, POL 320, POL 321, POL 323, POL 324, POL 328

Comparative Politics Courses: POL 150, POL 250, POL 350, POL 352, POL 353, POL 357, POL 358, POL 361, POL 362

International Politics Courses: POL 130, POL 330, POL 333, POL 335, POL 337, POL 345, POL 355, POL 380

Political Theory Courses: POL 275, POL 365, POL 372

The following courses are pre-approved substitutes for the designated POL course: PHL 240 for POL 275 and ECO 231 or SOC 302 for POL 200. Certain of these other courses may have prerequisites controlled by their home department. Students may take STA 215 instead of STA 115. STA 215 is normally required for majors housed in the School of Business (including Economics) and the School of Science.

Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Standards

Every major program at the College has set standards for allowing students to remain in that program, to transfer within the College from one program to another, and to graduate from a program. For political science:

- Transfer into the program from another program within the College is based upon the following performance standards in a “foundation course”: Earning the grade of C or higher in POL 110/American Government or POL 130/International Relations.
- Retention in the program is based on the following performance standards in two “critical content courses”: Earning the grade of C or higher in either POL 110/American Government or POL 130/International Relations *and* earning a grade of C or higher in POL 200/Political Analysis.
- Students must make consistent progress in the major. Any student not registered for major classes for two consecutive semesters will be dismissed from the major and moved to “undesignated transitional status,” unless the student has completed all major requirements or there are extenuating circumstances. Additionally, students who fail to complete POL 200 with a minimum grade of C or better or fail to pass POL 390 and POL 498 after their second attempt in the course will be dismissed from the major unless (1) the student applies to retake the course following the Department’s Course Repeat Policy and (2) the Department allows the student to take the course for a third time.
- Graduation requires a GPA of 2.0 in courses for the program.

Requirements for the Political Science Minor

Political science minor requirements are POL 110/American Government or POL 130/International Relations, one course in comparative politics, one course in international politics, one course in political theory, and one political science option, for a total of five course units. Three course units for the minor must be at the 300 or 400 level.

Also see requirements for the Public Policy Analysis and Management Minor; the International and Area Studies Minor; and the Law, Politics, and Philosophy Minor.

Departmental Honors

Departmental Honors in Political Science is a flexible program of study culminating in enrollment in POL 496/Honors Thesis in Political Science and the completion of an honors thesis during the senior year. The purpose is to challenge the highly motivated Political Science major, enrich the student's major program, and recognize extraordinary academic achievement.

Eligibility: Departmental Honors is open to Political Science majors who have...

1. Completed 20 credit hours (5 units) in coursework in Political Science, including no less than 12 hours (3 units) at The College;
2. Maintained an overall GPA of at least 3.5 at The College;
3. Maintained a GPA of at least 3.5 in Political Science courses at The College;
4. Successfully completed POL 390/Junior Tutorial.

Final selection requires the approval of an Honors Thesis Advisor and the Political Science faculty. The number of students accepted is limited; the Department will select a small number of students each year based on the thesis application, past coursework, and perceived likelihood of the student successfully completing the thesis. A strong performance in the Junior Tutorial will factor into the evaluation of the department's honors theses applications.

Application Process: All junior political science majors will be notified about the option to pursue Department Honors in Political Science during their POL 390/Junior Tutorial course and/or by email from the Chair. Applications from eligible students are due by August 1st for projects beginning in the fall semester and January 1st if beginning in the spring semester. Applications must describe the proposed thesis topic and research design and include a preliminary bibliography and project timeline. The application should also describe which path the student plans on following to fulfill the Honors requirements (see "Program Options" below). The application must identify an Honors Thesis Advisor and two Department faculty members to serve as readers. These three faculty members form the student's Honors Thesis Committee. It is expected that the student will work with their proposed Honors Thesis Advisor to prepare the application.

Review and Retention: Students must complete POL 496/Honors Thesis in Political Science with a grade of "B" or better and must complete POL 498 or POL 398 with a grade of "B" or better. Students must also maintain at least a 3.5 average in their Political Science courses and overall coursework at the College to earn Departmental Honors in Political Science. Final determination of Department Honors, if the above criteria are met, will be made by majority vote of the students' Honors Thesis Committee.

Program Options: Students may choose among three possible paths to complete Department Honors:

1. The student may enroll in POL 496 after POL 498/Senior Seminar, with the intent of significantly expanding upon the seminar paper. This is the preferred model.
2. The student may complete POL 398/Independent Study in Political Science in the Fall Semester and POL 496 in the Spring Semester.
3. POL 496 may be taken concurrently with POL 498/Senior Seminar, in which case

the thesis shall be significantly longer and more rigorous than the standard seminar paper.

Option 1 is regarded as the norm; Options 2 and 3 are available to provide flexibility for students seeking to complete Department Honors. Students should clearly state which option they are using in their honors thesis application. If Option 1 is not chosen, the student should clearly describe in her/his application why the chosen option is preferred over Option 1.

Certification: Upon completion of the program, written certification will be presented to the student and communicated to the Registrar for inclusion on the student's transcript.

Political Science Major

First Year

FSP First Seminar	1 course unit
HSS 99/ Orientation to Humanities and Social Sciences	0 course units
POL 110/American Government*	1 course unit
POL 130/International Relations	
<i>or</i>	
POL 150/Comparative Politics	1 course unit
Quantitative Reasoning including STA 115	2 course units
WRI 102/Academic Writing (if not exempted)**	1 course unit
Foreign Language (if not exempted) **	2 course units

*Students who have taken a course in American politics or government prior to TCNJ should take POL 150, POL 230, or POL 250 instead.

**It is recommended that students exempted from these courses take other liberal learning courses. Note: Arabic 151 and 152, Chinese 151 and 152, Japanese 151 and 152, and Russian 151 and 152; are intensive courses and carry two course units of credit each. Students should take this into account when planning a normal four-course semester.

Sophomore Year

POL 200/Political Analysis	1 course unit
POL 130/International Relations	
<i>or</i>	
POL 150/Comparative Politics	1 course unit
POL Electives	1 course units
Liberal Learning courses (including foreign language, if needed, and economics)	2-3 course units
Electives	2-3 course units

Junior Year

POL 390/Tutorial in Political Science	1 course unit
POL Electives	3 course units
Liberal Learning courses	1-2 course units
Electives	2-4 course units

Senior Year

POL 498/Seminar in Political Science	1 course unit
POL Electives	2 course units

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Electives

4-5 course units