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COLLEGE *of*
CHARLESTON

DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Welcome to the Department of Political Science!

This handbook is designed to provide basic information about the political science major, advice on course selection and schedule planning, guidance on how to get the most out of your educational experience and insight on careers and post-graduate options.

Students describe political science as the ultimate liberal arts major because of its compatibility with a variety of interests and related areas of study. As a political science major, you have the flexibility to choose a concentration within the major, double major or add an interdisciplinary minor to your degree. Doing so will help keep you engaged and bring more focus to your future goals.

Our graduates are currently enjoying successful careers in law, government, international affairs, campaign politics, policy and non-profit organizations as well as in business and the private sector. The department regularly sponsors career panels, information sessions about graduate school and law school, and hosts a variety of events around an annual theme each year.

While at the College, we hope you will take advantage of the many resources and opportunities available to you. Our faculty is eager to see you excel in the classroom and beyond.

If we can help at any point along the way, please don't hesitate to contact us. Our main office is open daily from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The telephone number is 843.953.5724

We occupy two buildings on campus:
114 Wentworth Street, where you will find our main office, our Department Chair and Associate Chair, some faculty offices and faculty mailboxes
AND 26 Coming Street (additional faculty offices)

Visit us online at: <http://polisci.cofc.edu>

The Department of Political Science – An Overview

The Department of Political Science is made up of 19 full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty, all with terminal degrees in their field. We are supported by several visiting professors and adjuncts, many of whom are professionals in the community.

Our faculty are committed to providing undergraduates a challenging major in political science that emphasizes knowledge as well as the progressive development of skills essential to the practice of public citizenship and vital to any individual career choice. Our pedagogy facilitates students' ability to communicate effectively, write and think analytically, conduct independent research, work in a diverse environment, engage in the interplay of ideas, and participate in public life.

Mission Statement: The Department of Political Science is committed to the rigorous study of politics, power, and place, expanding opportunities for learning and service, career preparation and civic participation locally and globally.

Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge: Students are able to identify and explain theories, institutions and processes related to power, place and politics

Skills: Students are able to critically analyze texts, communicate effectively, critically assess the views of others, defend their own views and apply appropriate methodological and theoretical approaches

Engagement: Students demonstrate a habit of engagement with the world and an understanding of the value of civic participation locally, nationally and globally

Requirements for the Major

To earn a bachelor of arts in political science you must have at least 36 credit hours in POLI courses – 15 of which must be at the 300-level or above. Core requirements, which prepare you for advanced study, include:

- POLI 101 – American Government (3)
- POLI 103 – World Politics or POLI 104 – World Regional Geography (3)
- POLI 150 – Introduction to Political Thought (3)
- POLI 205 – Doing Research in Politics (3)
- POLI 405 – Capstone Seminar (3)

It is recommended that you complete the core courses before you venture into the three subfields where 3 credit hours per subfield is required. The subfields include:

- American Politics and Process
- Global Politics and Spaces
- Politics of Ideas

A list of courses within each subfield can be found in the [undergraduate catalog](#)¹. Within each subfield are courses at the 200- and 300-level. The distinction between the two levels is not an indication of the amount of work required in the course but rather the depth of the subject matter. Courses at the 200-level are approached from a broad perspective, whereas 300-level courses focus on issues in greater depth and may include a research requirement.

Your final 12 credit hours can come from any of the courses in the subfields or any of the following courses:

- POLI 102 – Contemporary Political Issues (3)
- POLI 119 – Special Topics in Politics (3)
- POLI 203 – Criminal Justice (3)
- POLI 206 or GEOG 206 – Doing Research in Politics: Intro to Qualitative Research (3)
- *POLI 400 – Tutorial (3)
- *POLI 401 – Reading and Independent Study in Political Science (1-3)
- *POLI 402 – Field Internship (3)
- *POLI 499 – Bachelor’s Essay (6)

***Opportunities for Independent Research**

POLI 400 – Tutorials offer an opportunity for one-on-one instruction with a faculty member in a content area of mutual interest. This course is available to juniors and seniors only. You must discuss with your professor and seek Department Chair approval prior to enrollment.

POLI 401 – Independent study courses offer a way to design an independent reading/research project in consultation with a faculty member. The amount of reading/research proposed will determine the credit awarded (1-3). A maximum of 6 credit hours* may be applied toward the major. You must discuss with your professor and seek Department Chair approval prior to enrollment.

POLI 402 – Field internships are an excellent way to gain practical experience and test the waters in a field you are interested in pursuing. Eligibility requirements for this course include: junior or senior standing; successful completion of 18 semester hours in political science coursework, including POLI 205; a major GPA of at least 2.8 and an overall GPA of 2.5 minimum. A minimum of 140 hours at the internship placement plus participation in the internship course is required in order to earn 3 credits; a maximum of 6 credits* may be applied toward the major. Contact our [administrative coordinator](#)² for more details.

Non-credit bearing internships are also highly encouraged.

POLI 499 – The Bachelor's Essay is a 6-credit, independent research and writing project completed during your senior year under the close supervision of a faculty advisor. It is your responsibility to seek an advisor who will assist you with the design and supervise your project. You are required to present your research at the annual William V. Moore Student Research Conference in the spring semester. A project proposal must be submitted in writing and approved by the Department Chair prior to enrollment.

**No more than six credit hours of independent study (POLI 401) and/or internships (POLI 402) and/or experiential courses (i.e. POLI 119, 266, 379) can be applied toward the major.*

Experiential Learning

The department offers credit-bearing courses that allow you to take the knowledge and skills you are developing in class and use them in the real world. Our field internship course, as previously discussed, provides support as you gain professional experience. Other courses culminate with student delegates attending sessions in Model African Union (AU), Mock Trial, Model U.N. and Organization of American States (OAS).

POLI 119—Special Topics: Advanced Mock Trial

The goal of the mock trial class is to provide an opportunity for you to enhance communication and critical-thinking skills, and gain knowledge about the judicial system, through preparing for a mock trial based on the annual case problem submitted by the American Mock Trial Association (“AMTA”). Students who qualify may be selected as mock trial team members to compete in the annual AMTA tournament in the spring semester (location varies). Course offered in the fall semester only.

POLI 266—Special Topics in International Diplomacy

As a member of the College delegation you will prepare your role during the first part of the semester and then head to Washington, D.C. to role play with other colleges and universities. This experience will help you learn about international diplomacy, negotiation and policy-making. Selection by a faculty sponsor and a minimum overall GPA of 2.5 will allow you to enroll in AU or OAS when this course is offered in the spring semester.

POLI 379—Special Topics: Model United Nations

This course is designed for those interested in learning about the work of international organizations and presents a simulation of the meeting of the United Nations (UN). It focuses on the problems and goals of the UN and helps students understand the foundations of international diplomacy, learn about global issues, and develop debate and negotiation skills. You will engage in a campus-wide Model UN with other CofC students and travel to Atlanta for Southern Regional Model UN (SRMUN). Selection by a faculty sponsor and a minimum GPA of 2.5 will allow you to enroll when this course is offered in the fall semester.

Study Abroad Opportunities

The College of Charleston's Center for International Education (CIE) offers a broad range of opportunities for full-year, semester-length or summer programs of study in countries around the world! Political science majors find great value in an international experience and can do so without losing time toward your degree. Explore your options at [CIE](#).

Declaring Your Major, Major Concentration or Minor

Declaring a major is instrumental to your success and will help you plan the most efficient path toward your degree. All students must declare no later than the second semester of sophomore year, but we urge you to do it sooner, when possible. The earlier you declare, the sooner you will start receiving our weekly newsletter, invitations to lectures/events, and be assigned a faculty advisor to support you as you navigate the College.

The department offers two optional concentrations for the political science major: [Public Policy \(PLCY\)](#)³ and Politics, [Philosophy and Law \(PPLW\)](#)⁴. Though not required, these concentrations allow you to pursue a more focused course of study. The PLCY concentration helps you develop a policy focus and prepares you for careers or graduate programs in public policy and public administration. The PPLW concentration is great for those interested in studying philosophy and the law and provides excellent preparation for law school.

In addition to our major and the optional concentrations, we offer two minors in the department: [political science](#)⁵ and [geography](#)⁶, and there are many more to be found throughout the College.

An interdisciplinary minor happens almost innately if you follow your passion when choosing coursework to satisfy your [General Education Requirements](#)⁷, and if you pursue your minor(s) with intention, it can have a profound effect on your

future goals. Some popular minors pursued by political science majors include:

African American Studies
African Studies
Communication
Crime, Law and Society
Data Science
Economics
English
Environmental and Sustainability Studies
European Studies
Geography
Global Trade
History
International Studies
Middle Eastern and Islamic World Studies
Philosophy
Psychology
Sociology
Southern Studies
Urban Studies
Women's and Gender Studies

Discover the specific [requirements](#)⁸ of these or identify other minors that interest you and chart your unique course toward success.

To declare your major, optional concentrations and/or minors, sign into [MyCharleston](#)*. Click on 1) Academic Services and 2) Program of Study Management (POSM) and follow the instructions.

****MyCharleston is found on the header of the College of Charleston website: <http://cofc.edu/> and is your gateway to all academic information and services.***

Academic Advising

Once you declare your major, we will assign a faculty member to serve as your academic advisor; if you have a preference, please let us know.

The department will place an academic hold on your account every semester, which will prevent you from registering until you meet with your advisor – that’s how important we feel it is to your success! Although you can request guidance at any point throughout the year, faculty specifically set aside a two-week period prior to registration to give advice and answer questions that will help you plan your courses and achieve your educational goals.

An advising meeting is an excellent time to discuss: adding a second major or minor to your program of study; pursuing independent research, study abroad or internship opportunities; career or post-graduate plans; basically anything that can help you navigate and make the most of your college experience.

You will be notified of the advising period via the department’s Advising Newsletter, in our weekly email updates and in your political science classes. Faculty advisors typically send out an email to alert you that it’s time to make an appointment, but it is ultimately your responsibility to contact them and make the necessary arrangements. If you have forgotten who your academic advisor is, go to [MyCharleston](#) and choose the Academic Services tab – your advisor’s name and email address are listed in the lower left corner.

Registration times are determined by the number of credit hours earned (not including the current semester), so be aware of emails from the registrar’s office regarding your “registration entry times” so you maximize the chances of getting into the classes you want.

Please note: SNAP, Honors College students, seniors and athletes will likely need to be advised in advance of our two-week advising period and should plan accordingly.

Beyond the Classroom

To stimulate intellectual curiosity and civic engagement, the department adopts a theme each year and organizes lectures, discussion panels, films, and a mandatory Convocation of Majors event to introduce you to new ideas and ways of engaging with the world.

We also encourage you to get involved with the many [extra-curricular activities/clubs](#)⁹ connected to your interest in political science or pursue something [totally unrelated](#)¹⁰ that will simply bring you joy! As a Cougar, you are automatically a member of the [Student Government Association](#)¹¹, so use your voice and take an active role in improving student life at the College.

Our alumni have shared with us how valuable these experiences have been for them and often come to campus to enlighten others. Our Career Café series, held multiple times per year, is an excellent time for you to engage with working professionals who sat in the very seats that you are occupying now. Each series typically has a primary focus (private sector, public sector, law school or graduate school), but it's the questions you come with to the luncheon that steer the conversation and help you narrow your focus regarding post-graduate plans. Join us and see for yourself! Look for an invitation soon—lunch is on us!

We guarantee that if you take advantage of the many opportunities beyond the classroom, you'll grow in ways you have yet to imagine!

Career and Post-Graduate Options

Majoring in political science can qualify you for many different careers in the private and public sector including careers in business, law, consulting, state, local, and federal government, journalism, communications, international organizations, finance, political campaigns, interest groups, community service, non-government organizations (NGO's) and pre-college and college teaching. A degree in political science also provides

preparation for participating in community organizations, electoral politics, or interest group movements on behalf of specific policies. Graduates often pursue options like the [Peace Corps](#)¹², [Teach for America](#)¹³, [Food Corps](#)¹⁴ or [Critical Language Scholarship Program](#)¹⁵ before seeking employment.

Surveys of the nation's top employers consistently report that the most successful job candidates are individuals who possess critical thinking and effective communication skills, are comfortable using technology, have the ability to make sound judgments, and can work productively with others in a group. The department's shared teaching philosophy is to teach content through skill development. The assignments you will encounter in your classes will work to progressively develop these skills while introducing you to the scholarship and issues relevant to the discipline.

Deciding what to do with your degree can be daunting, so start to investigate the possibilities early. You might want to begin by perusing *Careers and the Study of Political Science*, published by the American Political Science Association (a copy is available in the main office or you can order your own copy [here](#)¹⁶). You should also plan to make use of the [Career Center](#)¹⁷ before and after graduation. They have extensive resources and services available to help with all aspects of career planning and job searches.

Additional Resources

If you are considering post-graduate study in political science or a related discipline, feel free to connect with one of our graduate school advisors for guidance:

[Dr. LaTasha Chaffin](#)¹⁸ or [Dr. Matthew Nowlin](#)¹⁹

In addition to graduate programs offered at other institutions, you may wish to consider one of our programs:

[Master of Environmental Studies](#)²⁰ (MES)

[Master of Public Administration](#)²¹ (MPA)

If law school is calling you, the College has it's very own pre-law advisor, Dr. Richard Nunan, in the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Nunan has a wealth of information for you to consider on his [website](#)²² and is ready to assist you if you choose to forge ahead with your plans.

Our best resource, of course, is our [faculty](#)²³. They are dedicated to teaching and committed to your success. Get to know them and seek their counsel on things both large and small; you'll be glad you did!

Hyperlinks:

- 1: http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1507
- 2: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/contact/index.php>
- 3: http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=2004
- 4: http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1508
- 5: http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1545
- 6: http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1572
- 7: <http://registrar.cofc.edu/general-edu/>
- 8: <http://cofc.edu/academics/majorsandminors/>
- 9: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/student-ops/extracurricular.php>
- 10: <http://cofc.edu/campuslife/clubsandorganizations/>
- 11: <http://sga.cofc.edu/>
- 12: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/>
- 13: <https://www.teachforamerica.org/>
- 14: <https://foodcorps.org/>
- 15: <http://www.clscholarship.org/>
- 16: <https://www.apsanet.org/books>
- 17: <http://careercenter.cofc.edu/>
- 18: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/about/faculty-staff-listing/chaffin-latasha.php>
- 19: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/about/faculty-staff-listing/nowlin-matthew.php>
- 20: <http://mes.cofc.edu/>
- 21: <http://puba.cofc.edu/>
- 22: <http://prelawadv.cofc.edu/>
- 23: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/about/faculty-staff-listing/index.php>