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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, guidance on how to get the most out of your educational experience and insight on careers and post-graduate options.

Political science is 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 enjoy 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.

As a political science major, 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 offices are located on Liberty Street, 2nd floor of the J.C. Long Building. Our normal hours are M-F from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Due to COVID-19, we do not allow walk-ins. Please call the office for an appointment (843.953.5724).

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

## The Department of Political Science – An Overview

The Department of Political Science is made up of 21 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 working professionals in Charleston.

Our faculty provide undergraduates a challenging major that emphasizes knowledge as well as the development of skills essential to the practice of public citizenship and vital to any individual career choice. Our students 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 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 all the core requirements except POLI 405 before you venture into the three subfields. POLI 405 (or PPLW400 for those pursuing the PPLW concentration) should be completed within your last 9 credit hours.

### The subfields are:

American Politics and Process

Global Politics and Spaces

Politics of Ideas

*\*3 credit hours per subfield are required\**

A list of courses within each subfield can be found in the [undergraduate catalog](#)<sup>1</sup>. 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:

DCSP 395, GEOG 101, GEOG 206, POLI 102 , POLI 103, POLI 104, POLI 119, POLI 203, POLI 206 , POLI 400, POLI 401, POLI 402, POLI 423, POLI 450, POLI 499A, POLI 499B

## Opportunities for Independent Research

DCSP 395 – An internship designed to provide the student with the opportunity to explore issues about the role of the arts in a democracy through experiential learning, by working in an arts, cultural or political organization in Washington, D.C.

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.

*Repeatable for up to 6 credit hours.*

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.

*Repeatable for up to 6 credit hours.*

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<sup>2</sup> for more details.

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.

## **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.

### **POLI 261 – Model UN (Fall)**

Model UN is a simulation of the meeting of main governing bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, Security Council, and various committees. This course will focus on the issues and goals of the UN. Students prepare for the Southern Regional Model UN in Atlanta.

*Prerequisites: Minimum 2.500 cumulative GPA; permission of instructor. Repeatable for up to 6 credit hours.*

### **POLI 267 – Model African Union (Spring)**

This course investigates the history, structure and operation of the African Union (AU), a regional organization comprised of 55 member states. It culminates in a trip to Washington, D.C., where students participate in the national Model AU and simulate how different African states pursue their particular national/regime interests.

*Prerequisites: Minimum 2.500 cumulative GPA; permission of instructor.*

### **POLI 268 – Model Organization of American States (Spring)**

This course investigates the history, structure and operation of the Organization of American States (OAS). It culminates in a trip to Washington, D.C., where students participate in the national Model OAS and simulate how different states in the Americas pursue their particular national/regime interests.

*Prerequisites: Minimum 2.500 cumulative GPA; permission of instructor.*

***No more than six credit hours from POLI 261, POLI 267, and POLI 268 can be applied toward the major.***

## 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, and some of these trips are led by our own faculty! Political science majors find great value in an international experience and can do so while still advancing their coursework. Explore your options at [CIE](#).

## Declaring Your Major, Concentration or Minor

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)<sup>3</sup> and Politics, Philosophy and Law (PPLW)<sup>4</sup>. Though not required, these concentrations allow you to pursue a more focused course of study. The PLCY concentration helps you develop a policy emphasis 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<sup>5</sup> and geography<sup>6</sup>, and there are many more to be found throughout the College.

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
- Business Administration
- 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<sup>7</sup> of these minors or identify others 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 for a specific advisor, 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 advising 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 make the most of your college experience.

You will be notified of the advising period via the department’s Advising Newsletter, emailed to you approximately one month prior to registration. 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<sup>8</sup> connected to your interest in political science or pursue something totally unrelated<sup>9</sup> that will simply bring you joy! As a Cougar, you are automatically a member of the Student Government Association<sup>10</sup>, so use your voice and take an active role in improving student life at the College.

Our **mentorship program** pairs juniors and seniors with political science alumni who are interested in serving as mentors for the semester. Our mentors come from a variety of fields and students choose a mentor based on their own interest. A typical mentoring relationship begins with the student conducting an informational interview to find out all they can about the mentor's time at CofC and beyond. Then, the student decides the focus for subsequent meetings. Mentors often provide advice on securing an internship, planning for an interview, getting into a graduate program or law school, preparing a resume, etc.

If you take advantage of the many opportunities *beyond the classroom*, you'll grow in ways you could not possibly imagine!

## Career and Post-Graduate Options

Majoring in political science can lead to 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 Americorps<sup>11</sup>, the Peace Corps<sup>12</sup>, Teach for America<sup>13</sup>, Food Corps<sup>14</sup> or Critical Language Scholarship Program<sup>15</sup> 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<sup>16</sup>). You should also plan to make use of the Career Center<sup>17</sup> 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 our graduate school advisor, Dr. Matthew Nowlin<sup>18</sup>, for guidance.

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

Master of Environmental Studies<sup>19</sup> (MES)  
Master of Public Administration<sup>20</sup>(MPA)

## Pre-Law Advising:

Dr. Claire Wofford, a member of our faculty, is the Pre-Law Advisor for the College. Dr. Wofford has a law degree, in addition to a Ph.D. in political science, and has a wealth of information for you to consider on the pre-law website.<sup>21</sup> Feel free to email Dr. Wofford<sup>22</sup> if you'd like to make an appointment for pre-law advising.

**Our faculty<sup>23</sup> are dedicated to your success. Get to know them and seek their counsel on things both large and small; you'll be glad you did!**

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### Hyperlinks:

- 1: [http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1507](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](http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=2004)
- 4: [http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1508](http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1508)
- 5: [http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1545](http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1545)
- 6: [http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1572](http://catalog.cofc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=7&poid=1572)
- 7: <http://cofc.edu/academics/majorsandminors/>
- 8: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/student-ops/extracurricular.php>
- 9: <http://cofc.edu/campuslife/clubsandorganizations/>
- 10: <http://sga.cofc.edu/>
- 11: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps>
- 12: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/>
- 13: <https://www.teachforamerica.org/>
- 14: <https://foodcorps.org/>
- 15: <http://www.clscholarship.org/>
- 16: <https://apsanet.org/PUBLICATIONS/Books-Brochures>
- 17: <http://careercenter.cofc.edu/>
- 18: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/about/faculty-staff-listing/nowlin-matthew.php>
- 19: <http://mes.cofc.edu/>
- 20: <http://puba.cofc.edu/>
- 21: <http://prelawadv.cofc.edu/>
- 22: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/about/faculty-staff-listing/wofford-claire.php>
- 23: <http://polisci.cofc.edu/about/faculty-staff-listing/index.php>