

Political Science Advising Handbook

Welcome. We are pleased you have chosen political science as your major. This handbook is an effort to compile important information for political science majors in one place. A lot of the information is in the form of links to university websites, so it is probably most useful to use this online so you can follow the links. A pdf version of this handbook is available http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/POLS%20Advising%20Handbook-3_2015.pdf . You can also find all of this information at the political science department webpage under the “Advising” link.

For a list of current political science department faculty click [here](#). You can find basic information such as office number, phone number, office hours, and a short description of the interests and qualifications of each faculty member.

The purpose of academic advising is to provide guidance about your academic career. It is your responsibility to seek out advising and take advantage of its potential to enhance your UVM experience. Your academic advisor can help you achieve your academic goals, especially as they relate to political science. There are many additional support services on campus that may be better equipped to help you with many other issues—look for those services in Part 4 at the end of this handbook.

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Part 1. Top Questions Political Science Majors Ask

- 1) **How do I declare or change a major or minor?**
Start here for procedures and forms:
http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/?Page=forms/mjrmnr_main.html
- 2) **What is the official policy for things like attendance, dropping a class, academic probation and so on?**

See the College of Arts and Sciences webpage on academic policies:
http://www.uvm.edu/cas/academic_policies_and_information

3) Who is my advisor?

- a) When you declare a major in political science, you will be assigned an academic advisor in the department. You can find out who your advisor is on your MyUVM page <https://myuvm.uvm.edu/>.
- b) You may change your advisor by contacting Ms. Tank-Day in the political science department office or by email Carol.Tank-Day@uvm.edu. If you are choosing a new advisor, you should consider finding someone who is approachable, organized, and teaches classes in your field of interest. To find which professors teach classes in your field of interest, look through the faculty list http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=faculty_list.html&SM=facultysubmenu.html
- c) If your advisor is on leave, you may want to request to be assigned to a different advisor.

4) What is the best way to get in touch with my advisor?

- a) Every professor in the department holds regular office hours, when they are available to meet with students. These hours are posted on faculty office doors, and on the department webpage http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=faculty_list.html&SM=facultysubmenu.html. It is a good idea to make an appointment even if you are going to regularly scheduled office hours (in case a lot of students all show up at the same time).
- b) If you are unable to meet with your advisor during regularly scheduled office hours, you may set up an appointment at some other time. Emailing your advisor is usually the best way to set up an appointment.

5) How should I prepare for a meeting with my advisor?

- a) Read this handbook before meeting with your advisor.
- b) Print the political science major checklist and fill out the courses you have taken towards the major. (link to checklist here) Bring it to your advising meeting.
- c) Go to MyUVM <https://myuvm.uvm.edu>, print your academic transcript and bring it to your advising meeting as a reference. Seniors should also bring their Graduation Status Notice, and juniors should bring their Junior Checksheet.
- d) Print and review your CATS Report.
 - i) CATS (Curriculum Audit Tracking System) is UVM's degree audit system that produces automated, individualized reports to help students track their progress toward completing their degrees. The CATS report, used by students and advisors, identifies both completed and outstanding requirements and provides a current list of courses that can be taken to satisfy them. For a description of how to run a report go here: http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/?Page=registration/r_CATSreports.html

6) What should I do if I receive an academic warning letter?

- a) UVM faculty may send warning letters to students enrolled in their classes who are in danger of failing the course. If you receive a warning letter, you should contact your advisor and discuss your options. If it is not possible for you to significantly improve your grade, your advisor may recommend that you withdraw from the course. Or, you

may be able to develop a plan to improve your performance. Your advisor can discuss these options with you.

7) Can I walk at graduation even if I have not finished all my requirements?

Eligibility to walk is described here:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cmncmnt/?Page=commencementwalk.html>

8) Who do I ask for letters of recommendation?

a) The best person to write a letter of recommendation for you is someone who is familiar with your work and can thus speak to your academic strengths and weaknesses. Ideally, this will be a professor who has worked with you in one or more small or medium-sized classes, or as an RA or TA. We recognize that this is not always possible, especially for first and second year students. If you are enjoying a course, regardless of the size or level of the course, and think you may want to ask the professor for a recommendation later on, you may want to go to the professor's office hours to discuss the course and your long term interests.

b) When asking for a letter of recommendation:

i) Give the professor plenty of lead time (at least 4 weeks). Some faculty like to discuss the program or job you are applying for, so plan to meet with the professor.

ii) Remind the professor which courses you took with them and which semester you took the course. You may also want to remind the professor about any papers or special projects you did for the course.

iii) For study abroad and graduate school applications, give the professor a copy of your application essay and academic transcript to help her tailor the letter to your interests. For jobs, give the professor a copy of your cover letter and resume.

iv) If a letter needs to be sent in the mail, provide the professor with stamped addressed envelopes (unless the recommendation needs to be sent in official letterhead envelopes)

v) Make sure ALL of the forms you give to the professor are filled out and signed.

vi) Be aware that most faculty members do not send students copies of their recommendations letters. If asked to waive your rights to see a copy of the letter, you should always waive your rights. A confidential letter will be seen as more honest and therefore more powerful. Many people will not take seriously a letter that is not confidential. If you have doubts about the quality of a letter a faculty member may write for you, you should find another recommender.

vii) Career Services has an excellent page on recommendation letters, including information about Interfolio, a paid service that will manage recommendations for you and send them out at your request (most suitable for job letters):

<http://www.uvm.edu/~career/?Page=recommendationfaq.html>

Part 2. Requirements for the Political Science Major

- 1) All political science majors must fulfill the University degree requirements
<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/degreerequirements/>
- 2) All political science majors must fulfill the College of Arts and Sciences degree requirements
<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/artsandsciences/#requirementstext>
- 3) See the Political Science major checklist for the major requirements
http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=Major_Worksheet_3.html
- 4) Major and minor requirements are also listed in the University Catalogue
<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/artsandsciences/politicalscience/politicalscienceba/>
- 5) **How should I plan my major?**
 - a) You should begin the major with one of the four introductory core courses. These core courses reflect the four major subfields of political science. Students can start with any of the core courses. It probably makes sense to start with the course that is most interesting to you. Majors must take all four of the introductory core courses.
 - b) Students should aim to finish all four core courses before the end of their sophomore year. Advanced students may finish all four in one year.
 - c) The core courses are
 - i) POLS21 American Political System, which analyzes the institutions, processes, and problems of the U.S. government.
 - ii) POLS41 Introduction to Political Theory, which examines the basic problems in political philosophy, such as morality and law; punishment; freedom; equality; obligation and disobedience.
 - iii) POLS51 Introduction to International Relations, which examines the basic theoretical concepts in international relations and introduces the student to systemic, domestic, and individual levels of analysis for assessing foreign policy decisions.
 - iv) POLS71 Comparative Political Systems, which compares the domestic politics of countries across the globe.
 - d) Intermediate level courses (100-level) require sophomore standing and the introductory course in the relevant subfield as a prerequisite. You may take 100 level courses before you have finished all of the introductory courses.
 - e) You can tell which subfield a course belongs to by its course number. Courses in the 20s and 30s are U.S. Politics. Courses in the 40s are Political Theory. Courses in the 50s are International Relations. Courses in the 60s and 70s are Comparative Politics. Courses in the 90s are special topics courses. You will have to check with the instructor to find out the subfield of special topics courses.
 - f) 200 level seminars are only open to students with junior or senior standing. These courses require a lot of reading and research, so choose a seminar in a topic that is interesting to you.
 - g) What is the skills requirement?
 - i) All students who matriculated in the fall of 2013 or later must complete a political science skills requirement.
 - ii) The purpose of this requirement is to help you develop skills that will enhance your political science degree and help you in your career. You must fulfill ONE of the five skills requirements, but we recommend completing as many of them as possible.
 - iii) You should pick the skill that best fits your interests. For example, students interested in political economy should do the economics requirement. Students interested in international relations or comparative politics should do the language requirement. Students interested in political theory should do the philosophy requirement. All students could benefit from the statistics and geography requirements.

6) Which math class should I take?

- a) If you are good at math, take as much statistics as you can stand. Statistics is a very useful skill for social scientists.
 - i) Consider a minor in economics with a focus on statistics. EC 011, E 012, MATH 19, EC170, EC171, EC172, EC200 (Econometrics) – this is the best class for learning how to use statistics for social science OR
 - ii) Take MATH 19 or MATH 21 and then STAT 141 (Basic Statistical Methods) OR
 - iii) Take STAT 51 and SOC100/POLS181
 - iv) Any of these paths will also meet the political science skill requirement.
- b) For students who have “math fear”:
 - i) Take MATH 17 (Applications of Finite Math), because it deals with probability, statistics, voting systems, apportionment problems, and other topics useful to any citizen, and certainly any POLS major. OR
 - ii) Take STAT 51 (Probability with Statistics) OR
 - iii) You may take PHIL 013 (Introduction to Logic) to meet the math requirement, but be advised that this is a demanding, equation-based course, and not an especially easy path.

7) Every student must choose a minor or a double major.

See the University Catalogue for a list of all majors and minors at UVM.

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/majors/>

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/minors/>

8) How should I choose electives?

In addition to finishing all major, minor and general requirements, you may take a lot of electives. These can be any courses you choose, but consider:

- a) A course in a subject completely different from anything you have ever studied.
- b) A course about which you know nothing but sounds really interesting (for example: SOC 121 (Sociology of Disaster), ENGS 040 (Topics in Science Fiction and Fantasy), FOR 113 (Introduction to Wildlife Tracking), HDFS 065 (Human Relationships and Sexuality), THE 010 (Introduction to Acting))
- c) Courses on subjects you think any well-educated adult should know about (for example: REL 020 (Intro to Comparative Religions), GEOG 050 (World Regional Geography), GEOG 040 (Weather, Climate, and Landscapes))
- d) Courses to pick up important skills that may help you get a job.
 - i) Some important skills include foreign languages, statistics, computer skills (CS 008 (Intro to Web Site Development)), and accounting (BSAD 60 or BSAD 65). [Note: the accounting courses require a major/minor in one of several fields. It is worth asking for an override if you have taken the prerequisites: (MATH 19 or higher and ECON 011)]
- e) Take advantage of courses in PEAC or others such as EDPE 023 (American Red Cross Emergency Responder).

9) All courses offered at UVM are listed and described in the University Catalogue

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/>

10) All courses offered during a given semester are listed on the registrar’s webpage. Select “Schedule of Courses SOC” for the current semester <http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/> .

Part 3. Other Opportunities for Students in Political Science

- **First year programs** (TAP, ISSP, IHP, IEEP)
 - http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=first_year_programs.html
- **Political Science Honors**
 - http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=honors_programs.html
- **Pre-Law Advising**
 - http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=preLaw_information.html&SM=resources_submenu.html
- **Internships**
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=internships.html>
- **Independent Study**
 - http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=independentStudy_information.html
- **Study Abroad and off-campus programs** – see Office of International Education
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/oie/studyabroad>
- **Sophomore admission to the Honors College.** Any current first year student with at least a 3.4 GPA at the end of the fall semester is eligible to apply for sophomore admission to the Honors College..
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/honorscollege>
- **Funding for undergraduate research.** UVM has a number of funding sources to support undergraduate research. Each of these sources is competitive. See the webpage of the Office of Undergraduate Research for more information <http://www.uvm.edu/ugresearch/?Page=funding.html> . Funding opportunities include:
 - Political Science Departmental Research Assistants. Each year between 3 and 5 paid research assistantships are available for students to work on faculty research projects. Positions are listed by faculty through the Student Employment Office. <http://www.uvm.edu/~stdfinsv/stemploy/>
 - The APLE Program: APLE provides students in the College of Arts and Sciences with opportunities to do research with faculty members, and to get hands-on experience in internships. Summer funding can be up to \$3,000 and academic year funding can be up to \$500. http://www.uvm.edu/cas/aple_funding
 - Ronald Suiter Award: Open to undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences at UVM to defray costs of attending conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. Provides up to \$1000 stipends each year. http://www.uvm.edu/cas/travel_funding_ronald_suiter_prize
- **Careers in political science**
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/~polisci/?Page=Jobs.html&SM=discovermenu.html>
 - <http://www.apsanet.org/CAREERS/Careers-In-Political-Science>
- **Extracurricular activities**
 - Political Science Club <https://thelynx.collegiatelink.net/organization/polsclub>
 - Each year the political science department sponsors a number of public lectures by notable speakers. Take advantage of these opportunities.

Part 4. Where to Look for Help beyond the Political Science Department

UVM has many knowledgeable and caring professionals whose job is to help you. Don't be afraid to visit them!

- **The University of Vermont Catalogue** lists all information about degree requirements, course offerings, academic policies, and almost everything you need to know.
 - <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/>
- **The Registrar's Office** provides information on transferring credits, course schedules, final exam schedules, transcripts, and a lot of other important information.
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/>
 - 360 Waterman Building
 - Phone (802) 656-2045, Fax (802) 656-8230
 - Email registrar@uvm.edu
- **Transfer Affairs** is the office that deals with transfer credit from other universities including AP and study abroad.
 - http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/?Page=transferringcredit/t_transfermain.html&SM=t_menu.html
- **College of Arts and Sciences Student Services** can help you to resolve complicated registration and advising issues.
 - http://www.uvm.edu/cas/student_services
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/cas/advising>
 - 438 College Street
 - Phone (802) 656-3344, Fax (802) 656-4529
 - Email: cas@uvm.edu
- **Career + Experience Hub** can help you plan for internships and careers.
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmhub/>
- **Center for Academic Success** <https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess>
- **Student Accessibility Services** provides accommodations to students with documented disabilities.
 - https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student_accessibility_services
 - A-170 [Living Learning Center](#)
 - Phone: 802-656-7753, FAX: 802-656-0739
 - Email: access@uvm.edu
 - Instant Messenger: UVMaccess
- **Tutoring Center** provides free tutoring to all undergraduate students.
 - https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/tutoring_center
 - 244 Commons, Living/Learning Center
 - Phone: (802) 656-4075
 - Email: tutoring@uvm.edu
- **TRIO Student Support Services** serves first-generation college students (students who do not have a parent who has graduated from a four year university or college), students who have a documented disability, and students whose family income falls within U.S. Department of Education guidelines
 - https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/trio_student_support_services
 - 244 Commons, Living Learning Center
 - Phone: (802) 656-4075
 - Email: SSS@uvm.edu
- **The Writing Center** provides writing tutors and other writing support.
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/wid/writingcenter/>
 - Bailey/Howe Library, Room 105 (past the main stair case and across from the reference desk.)
- **Student Health Services**
 - <https://www.uvm.edu/health/SHS>

- **Counseling and Psychiatry Services**
 - <https://www.uvm.edu/health/CAPS>
- **The Women's Center** provides a campus victim's advocate.
 - <http://www.uvm.edu/~women/>
- **Residential Life** can help with problems related to housing.
 - <https://reslife.uvm.edu/>

Political Science Major Worksheet

Thirty credits in Political Science *and completion of the additional skill requirement:*

Note: Department of Political Science internships do not count toward the 30 credits required for the political science major or otherwise fulfill any of the requirements for the major

A. All four core courses (twelve credits):

POLS 021 POLS 041 POLS 051 POLS 071

B. At least fifteen credits at the 100- or 200-level in political science subject to the following restrictions:

1. Three credits must be at the 200-level.

POLS _____

2. At least one 100- or 200-level course in three of the four subfields (American politics; political theory; international relations; comparative politics).

American (20s & 30s)

International Relations (50s)

Political Thought (40s)

Comparative (60s & 70s)

3. Twelve of the fifteen credits, including the three credits at the 200-level, must be in UVM political science courses (excluding study abroad, transfer credit, readings and research).

C. Three additional credits in political science at any level (can include transfer credit).

POLS _____

D. At least fifteen of the thirty credits used to satisfy this major must be taken at the University of Vermont.

E. Skill requirement. Complete coursework in ONE of five areas, as described below (This requirement applies only to students who matriculated at UVM in the Fall 2013 semester or later):

1. Statistics and Methodology

STAT 051 and

SOC 100/POLS 181 (Fundamentals of Social Research) or one other statistics course above the 051 level (SOC 100/POLS 181 may be reused for requirements within the major).

2. Foreign Language

one additional course in foreign language above the current distribution requirement of the College of Art and Sciences. The language must be same used to meet the CAS distribution requirement.

3. Geography

GEOG 081 (Geotechniques) and

GEOG 184 (Geography Info: Concepts and Applications).

4. Political Economy

EC 011 (Macro) and

EC 012 (Micro).

5. Philosophy

PHIL 013 (Logic) and

any other course in Philosophy

Political Science Minor Worksheet

Eighteen credits in Political Science, including at least six credits from the core courses (POLS 021, POLS 041, POLS 051, POLS 071), and at least nine credits at the level of 100 or above. Of the nine credits at the 100-level students must complete at least six credits in UVM Political Science courses (excluding study abroad, transfer credit, readings and research). **Internships will not count toward the eighteen hours required for the minor.** At least nine of the eighteen credits used to satisfy this minor must be taken at the University of Vermont.

- A. At least two courses (six hours) from:
 POLS 21 POLS 41 POLS 51 POLS 71

- B. At least nine hours at the 100 level or above:
 POLS 100 level or above _____

- C. POLS 100 level or above _____
 POLS 100 level or above _____

- D. Three hours at any level:
 POLS _____