

# POLITICAL SCIENCE and GOVERNMENT

What can I do with this major?

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT

Public Policy  
Urban Planning  
City or Town Management  
Legislative, Executive, or Judicial Services  
Program Administration  
General Services  
Community Affairs  
Social Services  
Law Enforcement

Counties  
Cities  
Municipalities  
Townships  
School districts  
Departments of state government  
Legislative agencies  
Court systems  
School districts

Research your local and/or state government.  
Employment opportunities in local government tend to follow population trends in terms of availability of positions. Check statistics on growing communities to find the most opportunities. Be prepared to relocate.  
Develop a network of contacts through referrals and informational interviews.  
Conduct research, e.g. education, homelessness, etc. that could be useful to your community.  
Get involved in civic organizations and events.  
Complete an internship in a government agency.  
Participate in local or national election campaigns.  
Familiarize self with government application process.  
Considering earning a graduate degree in public administration (MPA) or public policy (MPP).

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### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Public Policy  
Research  
Intelligence  
Foreign Service  
Law Enforcement  
General Services  
Legislative, Executive, or Judicial Services  
Program Administration

There are over 170 federal departments and agencies. See <http://gogovernment.org/>

Take courses or minor in applicable interest area(s).  
Seek leadership roles in relevant campus organizations such as model United Nations, student government, and cross-cultural organizations.  
Write for campus publications focused on national and international affairs.  
Develop skills in computers, statistics, and data analysis.  
Acquire foreign language competency and travel experience for international positions.  
There are a large number of specialized agencies within the federal government. Do extensive research in order to find the area that best fits your interests.  
Become familiar with the government application process. Utilize applicable websites and seek assistance from your college career center.

**AREAS**

**EMPLOYERS**

**STRATEGIES**

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUED**

Obtain an internship in a federal agency or department.  
Participate in national campaigns.  
Conduct informational interviews with government employees.  
Build a strong personal network.

**LAW**

*See also What Can I Do With This Major in Law?*

Prosecution  
Defense  
Contractual  
Corporate  
Nonprofit or Public Interest  
Government  
Mediation  
Law Assistance  
Lobbying  
Other Specialties

Law firms  
Federal, state, and local government  
Private practice  
Corporations  
Special interest groups  
Universities and colleges  
Legal aid societies  
Nonprofit and public interest organizations, e.g.  
    ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Legal  
    Services Corporation  
Legal clinics  
Other private legal services

Develop strong research skills and attention to detail.  
Participate in debate teams to hone communication skills.  
Choose courses or a minor to specialize in a particular area of law, e.g. a minor in business for a career in corporate law.  
Gain practical experience through an internship, part-time job or summer work in a law firm.  
Shadow an attorney to learn more about the field and various specialties.  
Get involved in pre-law organizations.  
Plan to attend law school and earn a law degree (JD). Maintain a high GPA and secure strong faculty recommendations. Prepare for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test).  
Obtain specialized certification for paralegal positions.

**POLITICS**

Elected or Appointed Leadership  
Campaign Management  
Staff Administration  
Special Interest Advocacy  
Political Advising  
Lobbying  
Public Policy  
Public Relations  
Community Organizing  
Government Relations

Legislative, executive, or judicial officials  
National, state, or local government  
Political action committees  
Political parties  
Campaigns: national, state, or local  
Industrial, educational, and public interest groups  
Lobbying organizations  
Large business firms  
Polling and consulting firms  
Advocacy organizations

Volunteer for national, state, or local campaigns.  
Be prepared to begin a political career as a volunteer before moving to paid positions.  
Many elected public officials begin careers in other fields (law, medicine, business) before campaigning for office.  
Gain experience through internships with government agencies, lobbying firms, or legislatures.  
Obtain leadership roles in campus organizations.  
Become involved in campus political groups, student government, publications, or community service projects.  
Take courses in statistics, economics, public policy, or other specific interest areas.

**AREAS**

**EMPLOYERS**

**STRATEGIES**

**POLITICS CONTINUED**

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

*See also What Can I Do With This Major in Global Studies?*

Governance  
Policy Making and Analysis  
Public Sector Reform  
Poverty-Reduction Strategy  
Ethics and Anti-Corruption  
Human Rights  
Public Law  
Organization and Management Development  
Resource Development  
Public-Private Partnerships  
Media/Communication Policy and Practice

Intergovernmental agencies, e.g. World Bank, United Nations, etc.  
National governments  
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)  
Non-profit agencies  
Religious organizations  
Foundations  
Policy and research organizations  
Private businesses  
Contracting and consulting firms  
Research institutes  
Defense contractors  
Federal government including:  
Department of State  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
National Security Council

Get involved with a political party/group and develop a personal network. The ability to build networks, coalitions and alliances with other associations is highly valued.  
Develop excellent public relations, interpersonal, and communication skills.

Earn a double major or minor in order to gain additional skills or knowledge, e.g. Africana studies, Asian studies, business, psychology.  
Spend time studying or working abroad. Make and maintain contacts in foreign countries.  
Seek cultural experiences on campus and get involved with the international student population.  
Obtain internships or volunteer to gain experience in areas of interest.  
Participate in overseas mission trips or spend a Semester at Sea.  
Research the history and culture of interest areas.  
Become proficient in at least one foreign language.  
Learn about international travel regulations and take steps towards obtaining work or study visas for various locations.  
Earn a relevant graduate degree in international affairs, foreign policy, or other speciality areas.  
Consider entering the Peace Corps.

**BUSINESS**

Sales  
Human Resources  
Management  
Public Relations  
Market Research  
Customer Service  
Marketing  
Advertising  
Product Design  
Real Estate

Product and service organizations  
Retail stores  
Hotels  
Restaurants  
Manufacturers  
Insurance companies  
Print and electronic media  
Consulting firms  
Other business corporations  
Financial institutions  
Real estate companies  
Property management firms

Develop strong analytical, verbal, writing, and leadership skills.  
Earn a minor/double major in business or supplement curriculum with business courses.  
Gain relevant experience in an area of interest through internships or other employment.  
Obtain leadership roles in campus organizations.  
Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills.  
Hone computer skills and learn software packages such as databases, spreadsheets and presentations.  
Become knowledgeable about corporate social responsibility.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### **NONPROFIT**

Administration  
Management  
Public Relations  
Fund Raising/Development  
Policy Analysis  
Research  
Grant Writing  
Direct Service  
Advocacy  
Volunteer Coordination

Local and national nonprofit agencies  
Foundations  
Charitable organizations  
Trade or professional associations  
Special interest groups  
Labor unions  
Libraries  
Museums  
Historic sites/historical societies  
Research organizations and think tanks  
Educational institutions

Gain practical experience by volunteering or completing an internship with a nonprofit organization of interest.  
Earn a minor or supplement curriculum with courses in business, psychology, or social work.  
Obtain leadership roles in relevant campus and community organizations.  
Develop strong communication and research skills.  
Learn grant writing skills.  
Demonstrate knowledge and experience in a specialty area, e.g. public health, environment, urban issues.  
Research organizations' values to find a good for you. It is critical that you are knowledgeable and committed to the work you're going to do.  
Investigate term of service or service corps positions as a way to gain entry into the field, e.g. AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, VISTA.  
Consider earning a graduate degree for more job opportunities and advancement.

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### **MEDIA**

Editing  
Reporting  
Circulation  
Sales  
Publishing  
Electronic Media  
Public Relations  
News Programming  
Production

Newspapers: national, local, or trade  
Wire services  
Magazines  
Internet sites  
Large corporations  
Political parties  
Political action committees  
Professional publications/associations  
Labor unions  
Academic journals  
Broadcast media companies including television, radio, and the movie industry  
Major networks  
Public, cable, and private television stations  
National, state, or regional radio networks  
Independent radio syndications  
Video production companies  
Government agencies

Obtain an internship or work experience with a newspaper, magazine, radio station, or television station.  
Become proficient in desktop publishing and photography.  
Develop a professional network and become aware of various social medias.  
Learn HTML and other computer programs to prepare for online work.  
Develop excellent verbal and written communication skills through communications courses or other writing intensive coursework.  
Join the college newspaper, yearbook, or other publication staff.  
Become a student member of professional associations.  
Create a portfolio of published writing samples.

**AREAS**

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**MEDIA CONTINUED**

Obtain experience in and knowledge of a specialty area of interest. Experience in government is usually required for specialized reporting positions.

Develop professional image for television or other visual media positions.

Volunteer to announce local or campus sporting events.

Become involved in drama e.g., direct, act, or work with technical crew.

**EDUCATION**

Elementary  
Middle  
Secondary  
Administration  
Higher Education:  
    Teaching  
    Research  
    Administration  
    Student Affairs  
    Information/Library Services

K-12 schools, public and private  
Boards of education  
Four-year colleges and universities  
Two-year and community colleges  
Technical schools  
Medical and professional schools

Complete a teacher preparation program to teach in the public school system.

Obtain teaching certificate/license for desired subject area and/or grade level. Requirements for certification/licensure vary by state. Seek multiple certifications to increase employability.

Private schools may not require certification or licensure but may prefer candidates with graduate degrees in subject areas.

Seek experiences with youth through summer jobs at camps or other community organizations.

A doctoral degree is required to teach and research at four-year institutions or to enter the highest levels of university administration. A master's or Ph.D. degree is required to teach at two-year schools.

Earn a master's degree in student personnel, student development, counseling, or library/information sciences for student affairs and librarian positions.

Gain related experience on campus through student leadership opportunities such as Peer Mentors, Resident Assistants, or Orientation Leaders.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- An undergraduate degree in political science is good preparation for graduate or professional study in areas such as political science, public administration, foreign policy, law, business, and more. Carefully research programs in order to choose specializations or concentrations of interest.
- Maintain a high grade point average to ensure admission into a graduate or law program and/or a position within the government.
- Expect keen competition for federal positions. Prepare yourself with a strong academic background and good experience. Many government jobs have strict guidelines and want to carefully match candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job description. Research this first and seek the classes and experiences that will best prepare you.
- Explore application to Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) and the Outstanding Scholar Program for federal positions.
- Develop strong leadership skills; run for office in clubs and organizations in school or community. Volunteer to organize or lead an event or project.
- Join related social and/or professional organizations.
- Build a strong personal network through informal contacts.
- Consider military experience and training as an entryway into government jobs and public service. The Peace Corps is also a good way to enter a career in government.