

American Government

Department of Political Science, College of Arts & Sciences



Program of Study

The department offers a major in Political Science with an American Government option. Students choosing this option study major U.S. institutions such as Congress and the Presidency; the political role of citizens as voters and activists; and the contributions of parties, interest groups and the media. The program prepares the students for many positions in local, state, and federal government as political campaign professionals or with interest groups. The option offers more structure in an area of specialization, but the number of hours required for the major remains 36 semester hours (SH). The department also offers minors in Political Science, Public Administration, and International Relations.

Faculty

Courses are taught by faculty holding doctoral degrees from universities across the U.S., including Harvard University; Georgetown University; Northern Illinois University; Hamline University; and the Universities of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Florida at Gainesville, Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Texas at Austin, and Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Our faculty members come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide range of academic specialties.

While most faculty are involved in active research, our primary mission is that of teaching and mentoring, and we take this mission seriously. All Political Science courses taken by our majors are taught by faculty members rather than by graduate students or teaching assistants. Most courses enroll fewer than 40 students.

Scholarships

There are four departmental scholarships available to our majors. The Marcy & Lulu Bodine Scholarship is awarded each year to an outstanding incoming freshman major. This scholarship is renewable for up to three additional years. The Charles Leonard, Don Marshall, and Clarence Neff Scholarships are awarded annually to deserving freshmen and transfer students. Detailed information on scholarships is available from the department office at (309) 298-1055, Western's Scholarship office at (309) 298-2001, or on the Web at wiu.edu/Scholarship.

Honors in Political Science

To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must have an ACT composite score of at least 28 OR have a 26 or 27 composite ACT and be in the top 15% of their graduating class OR have an ACT composite score of at least 24 and be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class. A comparable SAT score is acceptable. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 SH or more. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members.

Student Activities

Political Science majors and minors are encouraged to join the Associated Students of Political Science, which fosters student involvement in department affairs. There is also a chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honorary society, on campus.

Special Opportunities

The department is a member of the Western Survey Research Center. The center administers sample surveys for both the University and the local community as well as statewide. Survey research is an integral component of a number of courses in the department and offers a set of marketable skills that are much in demand in the private and public sectors.

The department strongly recommends that all majors supplement their classroom education with the practical, hands-on experience of an internship. Students can receive up to 6 SH of course credit that can be applied to the major. The department also has established a scholarship fund to subsidize these internships. In recent years, our students have served internships in the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of State, and the Illinois legislature as well as in many governmental agencies at the local, state, and national levels.

After College

The levels of government—local, state, and federal—employ approximately one-sixth of the labor force in the U.S. The Political Science major prepares students for many governmental positions, including administrative officer, budget analyst, city manager, city planner, environmental management specialist, and criminal investigator. In addition, the Political Science major provides preparation for persons seeking positions with interest groups that represent diverse issues before the government.

The Political Science major is a typical component in preparation for the law school career path. Our graduates have been admitted to all of the law schools in Illinois and to many law schools throughout the country, including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Georgetown.

Political science is an integral part of the curriculum of high schools, colleges, and universities. Many of our graduates are teaching at the secondary level, while others, after completing graduate degrees, teach in colleges and universities.

For students interested in careers in international and comparative politics and business, opportunities are expanding as countries become increasingly interdependent. Our graduates have been successful in securing positions with the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense, international organizations, and multinational corporations.

For More Information

Contact Dr. Keith Boeckelman, Chair, Department of Political Science, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390, or e-mail him at KA-Boeckelman@wiu.edu.

Campus Visits

The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM, and individual appointments can be made on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Campus tours are conducted at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisers, faculty, or a financial aid adviser may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10:00 AM, and a campus tour is conducted at 11:00 AM. You may schedule your visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting "Visit Campus." You may also schedule a visit, tour, or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by e-mailing admissions@wiu.edu.



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