Nebraska Wesleyan University

Political Science

Catalog

2024-2025

About the Program

The choice of a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree is available to political science majors. If a student has a second major, the degree choice may be determined by the other major.

Department Learning Outcomes
Majors will be able to:

1. Demonstrate factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) about US and international politics.
2. Analyze fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories of politics.
3. Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
4. Apply political science content and methodology to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions.
5. Develop skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing.

Capitol Hill Internship Program

Nebraska Wesleyan University's Capitol Hill Internship Program (CHIP) offers students the experience of living, interning, and studying in the heart of Washington, D.C. The public-affairs focused program provides students of any major with a total Washington experience through an academically rigorous program with a focus on experiential learning. In addition to interning in either government or non-governmental offices, students will discover the role of government in fields including law, the media, health care, and the arts and sciences. Challenging seminars and courses that are tailored to enrich students' internship experiences are an integral part of the internship program.

Applicants must have a 3.00 GPA, be a junior or senior [or second semester sophomore with special consideration], and have taken POLSC 1010 United States Government and Politics or its equivalent.

Courses offered in the fall and spring semesters are:

- IDS 4700 The Washington Experience (CHIP)
- IDS 4710 The Internship Seminar (CHIP)
- POLSC 2900 Selected Topics-various topics when approved

Contact the Department Chair for more information.

Majors, Minors & Degrees

Majors

1. Political Science (B.A., B.S.)

Minors

1. International Policy
2. Political Science

Courses

POLSC 1010 United States Government and Politics

4 hours

This course introduces students to government and politics in the United States. Drawing upon historical documents, political science research, and contemporary examples, this course examines the context, processes, institutions, and outcomes of the U.S. political system. Through the development of social science and critical analysis skills, students will be introduced to concepts and theories central to studying political science and understanding the contemporary political environment.

Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Scientific Investigations: Natural Science Laboratory
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread
Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Scientific Investigations: Social Science

POLSC 1010FYW United States Government and Politics

4 hours

This course introduces students to government and politics in the United States. Drawing upon historical documents, political science research, and contemporary examples, this course examines the context, processes, institutions, and outcomes of the U.S. political system. Through the development of social science, critical analysis, and effective writing skills, students will be introduced to concepts and theories central to studying political science and understanding the contemporary political environment and politics in the United States.

Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Scientific Investigations: Social Science
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread
Archway Curriculum: First-Year Curriculum: First-Year Writing

POLSC 1100 Introduction to International Politics

4 hours

This course provides an introduction to the concepts, theories and methods of international politics. It highlights the similarities and differences between political systems, as well the nature of relations between these political systems. By examining political violence, democratization, security, trade, and development, this class will equip students to analyze current problems and experiences.

Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Scientific Investigations: Social Science
Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Going Global Thread

POLSC 1900 Selected Topics

1-4 hours

A topical course designed to investigate relevant subject matter not included in any standard courses. The title and the content will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty. This course may be offered to meet a requirement for a major only by approval of the department chair.

POLSC 1950 Independent Study

1 hour

This is a research course. The student initially meets with the department chair to select a study topic and review research methods. At this time the student will be assigned a faculty resource person to guide his or her work and assist in an advisory capacity. A copy of the student's work is filed in the archives for the department. Independent Study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 1960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

POLSC 1970 Internship

1-8 hours

This course allows students to participate at a meaningful level in an internship with a public official, political figure, public agency, campaign or interest group and to use that experience as the basis for an academic paper.
Pass/Fail only.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 2000 Introduction to Political Science Statistics

4 hours

This course introduces students to the statistical techniques commonly used to answer questions concerning the political world. This course teaches students how to construct and describe data, examine relationships between variables, and build and evaluate statistical models. In addition, students will learn to apply these statistical techniques to draw conclusions about the political world and make policy decisions. Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to the datasets, software, and techniques most commonly employed in the quantitative analysis of politics and policy.

(Normally offered each spring semester.)

POLSC 2030 Elections

4 hours

This course will be an examination of elections in the United States, particularly focusing on the elections of presidents, members of congress, political behavior, campaigns, and gender in elections. You will learn how behavior is influenced by campaigns, what leads people to vote the way that they do, the role the media plays in influencing elections, and what part gender plays in how elections are decided. Some attention will be given to campaign finance and law related to elections. Recent elections will receive a good deal of attention, along with key elections of the past where lessons may be learned from their outcomes.

Prerequisite(s): POLSC 1010/POLSC 1010FYW United States Government and Politics

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread

POLSC 2090 Introduction to Public Policy

4 hours

This course examines the development and implementation of public policy. We will consider the actors, institutions, and rules that create and influence the policy making process and the consequences these choices produce. There are many puzzles this course attempts to address, including why some laws pass and others fail, why some policy ideas move more quickly than others, and why some strategies for causing policy change are successful. We will learn methods for evaluating public policy and the ways citizens can work within, and outside of, government to affect change.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Power Thread

POLSC 2100 Social Policy

4 hours

This course will analyze the regulations, laws, and rules that impact the lives of people in the community. Students will examine issues that are related to social and civic life including education, health care, crime, and employment. They will utilize local, state and national case studies for understanding and analysis.

Prerequisite: POLSC 1010 United States Government and Politics or POLSC 1010FYW United States Government and Politics.

Archway Curriculum: Justice Thread

POLSC 2110 Making Social Change: Political Activism and Grassroots Organizing

2 or 4 hours

This class will give students first-hand experience making social and political change. Our goal is to understand how ordinary citizens work for social, economic, and political justice within their communities. Students will work with a grassroots organization to experience the way in which mobilization and change in Lincoln occurs. When the course is offered for 2 credits, the focus will be on the strategy of grassroots organizing and how that is manifested in the students' experiential learning projects. When the course is offered for 4 credits, there will be an additional focus on theories grassroots organizing and on the tactics employed by influential political activists in the United States and globally.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Experiential Learning: Exploratory
Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Justice Thread

POLSC 2120 Democratic Dilemmas and Experiments

2 hours

This course explores the dilemmas and experiments associated with democracy. What does it mean for a political community to be democratic? What are the limitations and promises of democracy, and what prompts movements towards or away from democracy? How is democracy being updated and experimented with? This comparative politics course asks you to do the work of delivering on the ideal of democracy through theoretical and empirical analysis of democracy over place and time.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Chaos Thread

POLSC 2200 Race and Politics

4 hours

This course introduces students to the intricate relationship between race, ethnicity, and American politics. Through the analysis of pivotal historical events, legislation, social movements, and policy debates, students will gain a deeper understanding of the key challenges and opportunities associated with race and politics in the United States. This course aims to equip students with the knowledge and tools to participate in meaningful discussions on racial equality, social justice, and the future of American democracy.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Diversity Instructive: U.S.
Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread
Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – U.S.

POLSC 2210 Immigration

4 hours

This class explores the questions that arise when people cross borders, structured by conversations of citizenship. Who is considered to be a member of a particular country? Under what circumstances should we prohibit people from crossing a border? Should certain groups of people be afforded different types of rights? How should a country incorporate or assimilate immigrants into the nation? To explore these questions, this class examines how the United States has responded to these ethical, political, economic and social debates over citizenship. Specifically, we will study historical and contemporary motivations driving skilled, undocumented, asylum, refugee, and guest work immigration; if and how the US has regulated and enforced borders; the historical and normative evolution of patterns of assimilation, integration, and exclusion; regulation over pathways to citizenship; current political debates about immigration and how immigration matters in our local communities.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Diversity Instructive: U.S.
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Identity Thread

POLSC 2300 Introduction to Political Science

2 hours

This class provides students who are interested in the political science major or minor an in-depth examination of the major discussions, methods, and themes that form the core of political science education.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive

POLSC 2350 Judicial Politics

4 hours

In this course students will examine the organization, functioning, and impact of courts in the United States. Attention will be paid to the role of lawyers in the judicial system, trial and appellate court procedures, selection of judges, and the relationship of courts to other elements of the U.S. political system. Topics will include the nature of law, the role of juries, plea bargaining, alternative conflict resolution, court workload, and proposals for reform.
(Normally offered alternate years.)

Archway Curriculum: Justice Thread

POLSC 2400 Congress

4 hours

Congress is established in the U.S. Constitution as the chief legislative body, responsible for making national laws and serving as a check on the executive and judicial branches. In this course, we examine the development of the Congress, the rules and procedures by which laws are made, and the policies it produces. We also explore how members of Congress are elected and factors influencing their behavior once in office.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread

POLSC 2450 State Politics and Policy

4 hours

State governments in the United States play an essential and often overlooked role in the lives of their citizens. Among many other public policy areas, state decisions affect the quality of education provided to children, the criminal laws established and enforced, the operation of elections, and the strength of local economies. This course takes a comparative approach, examining the institutions, procedures, politicians, citizens, and public policies of states in the U.S. We utilize this information to investigate how the collective experiences of the several states can inform governance and policy.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Experiential Learning: Exploratory
Archway Curriculum: Justice Thread

POLSC 2460 Media and Politics

4 hours

This course examines the impact of the contemporary mass media on politics in the United States, focusing most directly on the effect of news gathering and reporting practices on political processes and institutions, and on the responses of political actors to those journalistic norms. Questions about the nature of democracy in a media society will arise and be addressed over the course of the semester.
Prerequisite(s): POLSC 1010 United States Government and Politics or POLSC 1010FYW United States Government and Politics.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Power Thread

POLSC 2500 Constitutional Law

4 hours

This course introduces students to the U.S. Constitution and the legal decisions that have shaped our understanding of the document and its effect on society. Students will examine the history and evolution of the U.S. Constitution, theories of constitutional interpretation, key cases that have shaped our understanding of the document, and the major controversies the Supreme Court has addressed. The course aims to develop students' ability to read case law, analyze constitutional issues, and gain an informed perspective on the nature and limitations of constitutional decision-making.

Archway Curriculum: Justice Thread

POLSC 2610 Politics of Europe

4 hours

This course will examine the current state of politics in Europe. In particular, the course will focus on European integration and expansion, and questions of ethnicity and nationalism. The course will also examine European social policy.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Diversity Instructive: Global

POLSC 2620 Latin American Politics

4 hours

As of 2015, every country in Latin America, with the exception of Cuba, is considered to be an electoral democracy. Many, however, have had limited success addressing poverty, inequality, crime, corruption, and discrimination. Recent indigenous, environmental, and education protests have further evidenced citizens' discontent with the quality of democratic governance. In this class, we will explore the factors that support and challenge the quality of democracy in Latin America. We will focus specifically on the similarities and differences in political, economic and social development, immigration trends, drug trafficking, indigenous protest, and environmental degradation between Latin American countries.

POLSC 2630 Foreign Policy

4 hours

How do countries project power abroad and interact with other states within the international community? This course will explore how the United States and other countries think about foreign policy, what actors are involved, and the strategies used in the international arena. Historical case studies will be used to highlight different aspects of foreign policy and stress the intricacies of the international arena. The course also seeks to connect the concepts and theories to current foreign policy issues facing the international community today.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Power Thread

POLSC 2640 Terrorism and Political Violence

4 hours

This course provides an introduction to the topics of terrorism and political violence. Understanding why political violence occurs, how it is used, the different forms it takes, what its effects are, and how it can be countered proves crucial to understanding the dilemmas faced by many states and non-state actors. We will cover topics such as terrorism, extremism, radicalization, and state and non-state violence. Through these topics, this course seeks to provide students with a better understanding of the uses and differing manifestations of terrorism and political violence.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Chaos Thread

POLSC 2650 War And Peace

4 hours

Why do people use violence to pursue political goals? Additionally, once conflict has ended, what keeps actors from simply taking up arms again should they feel dissatisfied with the new status quo? This course will explore these broad questions by investigating the determinants and dynamics of conflict and post-conflict peace. The first part of the course will explore the theoretical explanations for why people and states resort to violence. This will be followed by an investigation into non-state actors and fighting within the state. The course will then end with a section on how violence ends and what influences post-conflict peace.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Going Global Thread

POLSC 2700 Women and Power

4 hours

This course examines the participation of women in society and politics, and their ability to influence the policy decisions related to the issues of concern to them. The course will take a cross-national perspective, although primary emphasis will be women in

Middle Eastern and South Asian societies.
Cross listed with GEND 2700.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Diversity Instructive: Global
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Gender and Sexuality Thread

POLSC 2710 Global Politics and the United Nations

2 hours

This course provides students with an understanding of the role, impact, and significance of the United Nations within the larger context of international organizations and global power relationships. After discussing the history and structure of the United Nations, students will analyze the challenges and opportunities that the United Nations faces in the 21st century, focusing on the principal substantive issues before the organization: war, terrorism, arms control, human rights, international refugees, and development. May be repeated one time when taken for a different topic.
Prerequisite(s): POLSC 1100 Introduction to International Politics.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Going Global Thread

POLSC 2720 Global Environmental Politics

4 hours

This seminar provides an introduction to global environmental politics. Many of the environmental problems of the twenty first century, from climate change to food insecurity to protection of biological diversity and endangered species, are global in nature, and addressing them requires international cooperation. The first part of the course provides the analytical foundation for evaluating environmental problems. The second part of the semester will apply these
analytic and policy tools to an evaluation of actors and solutions. We will look at the state and non-state actors, such as transnational social movements, civil society, NGOs and IOs, businesses and multinational corporations, and
nation-states.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Humans in the Natural Environment Thread

POLSC 2900 Selected Topics

3 hours

A topical course designed to investigate relevant subject matter not included in any of the standard courses. The title, content, and credit will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty.

POLSC 2950 Independent Study

1-12 hours

This is a research course. The student initially meets with the department chair to select a study topic and review research methods. At this time the student will be assigned a faculty resource person to guide his or her work and assist in an advisory capacity. A copy of the student's work is filed in the archives for the department. Independent Study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 2960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

POLSC 2970 Internship

1-8 hours

This course allows students to participate at a meaningful level in an internship with a public official, political figure, public agency, campaign or interest group and to use that experience as the basis for an academic paper.
Pass/Fail only.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 3010 Research Methods: Qualitative Research

2 hours

This course teaches the basics of research in political science, including questions of design and measurement. Students will also learn different qualitative research designs such a focus groups, interviews, case studies, and field work.
Corequisite(s): POLSC 2000 Introduction to Political Science Statistics and POLSC 3020 Research Methods: Quantitative Research.
Prerequisite(s): Political Science major or department chair approval.

POLSC 3020 Research Methods: Quantitative Research

2 hours

This course introduces quantitative research methodology and ways in which to design and implement quantitative and mixed methods research projects.

Corequisite(s): POLSC 2000 Introduction to Political Science Statistics and POLSC 3010 Research Methods: Qualitative Research.

Prerequisite(s): POLSC 2300 Introduction to Political Science and declared Political Science major or department chair approval.

POLSC 3150 Democratization

4 hours

The Arab Spring and the problematic transitions to democracy throughout North Africa and the Middle East have presented renewed questions about what a democracy is. This topic is unique in political science because there are more questions than answers: experts aren't sure what facilitates democratic transitions, how transitions are completed and sustained, and what makes a country most likely to consolidate their democracy. Thus, this is an exciting and important area to study. In this course, we will explore each of these debates, tracing the lifespans of democracies and attempting to understand the political, cultural, and economic factors that make them most likely to survive and thrive. We will contrast these with unsuccessful transitions to democracy and analyze the conditions under which countries backslide or become undemocratic.
Prerequisite(s): POLSC 1100 Introduction to International Politics and junior standing.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive

POLSC 3300 Public Opinion

4 hours

In democracies, the attitudes and beliefs of the public are expected to influence government policy and action. The formation and expression of public opinions, therefore, is central to understanding democratic governance. This course examines public opinion in contemporary America. We will discuss how attitudes can be conceptualized and measured, how they form, how Americans evaluate key public policies, and the influence these attitudes have on government operation.

Pre-requisite(s): POLSC 1010 United States Government and Politics or POLSC 1010FYW United States Government and Politics.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread

POLSC 3700 International Law and Organization

3 hours

In this course the sources, content, and impact of international law will be examined in detail. Special attention will be given to some of the modern substantive areas of international law such as human rights, international economic relations, and the international environment. This course is also designed to familiarize the student with the rise and role of public international organizations since 1945.
Prerequisite(s): Junior standing or permission of the instructor.

POLSC 3710 Human Rights

4 hours

This course explores the emergence and evolution of the contemporary human rights regime, in international, regional, and national legal conventions. First, it will study the theoretical foundations of the idea of human rights in a variety of global contexts, current conceptualizations of human rights, the legacies of these adoptions in both western and non-western traditions, and the meaning and relevance of human rights for contemporary debates. Then, it will consider the shape and significance of the contemporary human rights regimes, critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of current human rights regimes, and explore the future of human rights regimes in global politics. As a Writing Instructive course, students will engage with these conversations in a semester-long research project, through which they use two cases to critically analyze human rights.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Going Global Thread

POLSC 3750 International Security

3 hours

In this course the student will examine the theoretical body of literature on international security. We will consider traditional topics in international security, such as the role of conventional and nuclear weapons, arms control, the impact of alliances and collective security agreements, and the stability of bipolar vs. multipolar international systems. We will also broaden our definition of security politics to include environmental degradation, ethnic conflicts, and even organized crime.
Prerequisite(s): Junior standing or permission of the instructor.

POLSC 3800 Global Revolution and Rebellion

4 hours

This class will explore the various ways that people protest again their governments. The first part of the class will examine the theory behind citizen-led uprisings: how do people decide to rebel? How do they mobilize? What is a collective action theory? What is the public sphere? We will end this section with a consideration of the revolutions of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe. The second part of the course will examine various types of revolutionary activity, both violent and non-violent. What are mechanisms of change? How does the strategy of change relate to the demands of the protestors? The final part of the class will study how revolutions end. When do the people get their way? What does a 'successful' revolution look like?

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Chaos Thread

POLSC 3900 Selected Topics

1-5 hours

A course designed to treat subject matter not covered in other departmental courses or to provide advanced study of subject matter introduced in other courses. The title, content, and credit hours will be determined by current mutual interests of faculty and students.

POLSC 3910 Directed Readings

1-6 hours

An opportunity for students, under the supervision of a faculty member, to pursue literature not covered in other coursework.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 3930 Student Instructor Experience

1-4 hours

Students in this course will assist one of the department's faculty in teaching a course. The faculty member and the student will write a learning contract at the beginning of the term describing the responsibilities of the student (e.g., grading, taking attendance, tutoring, facilitating class activities) and establishing the criteria for evaluation of the student's performance. For each hour of academic credit, the student will be expected to devote 3-4 hours a week to assisting with the teaching. May be repeated for credit. P/F Only.
Prerequisite(s): Approval of the instructor.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Experiential Learning: Intensive

POLSC 3950 Independent Study

1-12 hours

An opportunity for individual students to engage in advanced field or library research. A formal paper reviewing the research, suitable for placement in the college or departmental library, is required. Independent Study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Approval of the department chair.

POLSC 3960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

This course is designed to allow students to pursue interests in political science or government beyond the extent possible in POLSC 3950 Independent Study. Open only to qualified students with approval. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Approval of the department chair.

POLSC 3970 Internship

1-8 hours

This course allows students to participate at a meaningful level in an internship with a public official, political figure, public agency, campaign or interest group and to use that experience as the basis for an academic paper.
Pass/Fail only.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 4900 Selected Topics

1-4 hours

A topical course designed to investigate relevant subject matter not included in any standard courses. The title and the content will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty. This course may be offered to meet a requirement for a major only by approval of the department chair.

POLSC 4910 Directed Readings

1-6 hours

An opportunity for students, under the supervision of a faculty member, to pursue literature not covered in other coursework.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the Department Chair.

POLSC 4950 Independent Study

1-4 hours

This is a research course. The student initially meets with the department chair to select a study topic and review research methods. At this time the student will be assigned a faculty resource person to guide his or her work and assist in an advisory capacity. A copy of the student's work is filed in the archives for the department. Independent Study may not duplicate courses

described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Senior standing or permission of the department chair.

POLSC 4960 Special Projects

1-8 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

POLSC 4970 Internship

1-8 hours

This course allows students to participate at a meaningful level in an internship with a public official, political figure, public agency, campaign or interest group and to use that experience as the basis for an academic paper.
Pass/Fail only.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

POLSC 4990A Senior Seminar

2 hours

A research seminar in which students conducting their research to satisfy the senior comprehensive requirement meet regularly to make formal presentations on part of their research projects and to share insight progress and problems encountered in their project. This course consists of completing a major original research project and to write the capstone thesis.

Prerequisite(s): Senior standing and permission of the department chair.

(Normally offered each spring semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive

POLSC 4990B Senior Seminar

2 hours

A research seminar in which students conducting their research to satisfy the senior comprehensive requirement meet regularly to make formal presentations on part of their research projects and to share insight progress and problems encountered in their project. This course consists of completing the professional development and presentation activities related to the major research project from POLSC-4990A.

Prerequisite(s): Senior standing and permission of the department chair.

(Normally offered each spring semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive