

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).

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.

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.

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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.