B.A. Degree

Minimum Requirements for Degree: 120 credits

The Department of Political Science offers a B.A. degree as well as minors in law and society, environmental politics and political science. Graduate-level courses in political science are available through the northern studies concentration in environmental politics and policy. Doctoral study in political science is available through the interdisciplinary studies program of the Graduate School.

The study of political science provides education for citizenship in a changing nation and world. Political science provides a sound preparation in the social sciences. As the study of power, political science explains who gets what, when, where and how. It examines the struggles over claims to authority that shape our lives and our world. As the study of values, it examines why citizens obey or rebel, the nature of just societies, and the ways individuals reconcile personal liberty with political authority. As the science of political behavior, it analyzes the actions of interest groups, political parties and public officials. Politics is an omnipresent force, not only in governments but in families, social organizations, schools and decision-making bodies of all types — from student councils to international institutions. A solid understanding of local, national and international politics will benefit any student throughout his or her career.

Courses are offered in the traditional fields of international and comparative politics, American government, political theory, public policy and public law. The department also offers classes in environmental policy and politics, Native American studies, the politics of science and women’s studies. In addition to course offerings and faculty expertise, the department presents real world opportunities for political science students to apply their learning. Those include numerous internship and scholarship opportunities in Alaska and the rest of the United States. Students can participate in model United Nations simulations, join the political science honor society Pi Sigma Alpha, aid faculty as research assistants and take part in numerous other department projects such as bringing speakers to campus or hosting roundtables on important issues. Graduate students may also serve as teaching assistants.

The political science B.A. has led students to graduate work in the social sciences; employment in the media and public relations; teaching at high school and university levels; and careers in business corporations and non-profits at the state and national levels. Political science provides a broad understanding of the formation, application and change of the law, as well as research techniques and standards of argumentation essential to legal practice. The study of political science also prepares students for work in various fields of government. Alaska offers job prospects for political science graduates as managers in state and local governments and as legislators and legislative staff members. Graduates are also qualified to work outside of Alaska in numerous public and private sector jobs.