

POLITICAL SCIENCE, BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

The Department of Political Science offers a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science as well as elective courses in political science for program majors and non-majors.

The political science curriculum has two central objectives. It offers the student a broad liberal arts education along with a comprehensive understanding of the nature and the functioning of the political process and government. It also provides a sound foundation for graduate study in political science, public administration and nonprofit management, or for careers that require knowledge of governance and the political process, such as law.

Student learning outcomes

Upon completing this program, students will know how to do the following:

Political science core outcomes

- Assumptions, methods and analytical tools
Demonstrate knowledge of the assumptions, methods and analytical tools of the discipline of political science
- Current political and policy issues
Demonstrate knowledge of current political and policy issues
- Theory and principles of four subfields
Demonstrate an understanding of basic theory and conceptual principles of political science in the four subfields of American government, political theory, international relations and comparative politics
- Advanced understanding of one subfield
Demonstrate an advanced understanding of current theoretical and empirical study in one subfield
- Expository and analytic writing
Demonstrate skill in expository and analytic writing in the political science discipline
- Political behavior
Demonstrate knowledge of the ways in which individuals, national governmental organizations, political movements and parties, nation-states, and intergovernmental institutions work to achieve their political objectives

Public policy and administration concentration-specific outcome

- Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the constitutional, ethical, economic and political dilemmas of designing and implementing public policy that achieves governmental and societal goals

Honors in political science

Political science majors can earn honors in political science. Students earn honors status when they complete POLI 490 with an A grade and graduate with an overall 3.0 GPA and a 3.3 GPA in political science.

Special requirements

To graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, students must complete 45 upper-level credits (including upper-level course work in the major) and maintain a cumulative and major GPA of 2.0. Students may count a maximum of six internship and three independent study credits toward the major. Students may also apply three credits from courses in other departments toward the major with prior approval from the department chair.

Degree requirements for Political Science, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) with a concentration in public policy and administration

Course	Title	Hours
General education (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-study/general-education-curriculum/)		
Select 30 credits of general education courses in consultation with an adviser.		30
Major requirements		
• Major core requirements		
POLI 107	Political Theory	3
POLI 109	Comparative Politics	3
POLI 320 Play course	Research Methods in Political Science video for Research Methods in Political Science	3
POLI 490	Senior Seminar	3
• Additional major requirements		
POLI 310 or POLI 331	Public Policy or Public Administration	3
• Concentration requirements		
Select courses from list below.		9
• Major electives		
POLI electives		6
Ancillary requirements		
HUMS 202	Choices in a Consumer Society	1
POLI 103	U.S. Government and Politics (satisfies general education BOK for social/behavioral sciences and AOI for diversities in the human experience)	3
POLI/INTL 105	International Relations (satisfies general education BOK for social/behavioral sciences and AOI for global perspectives)	3
Experiential fine arts ¹		1-3
Foreign language through the 102 level (by course or placement)		0-6
Open electives		
Select any course.		50-58
Total Hours		120

¹

Course offered by the School of the Arts

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

Concentration electives

Course	Title	Hours
Select three electives from the following list: 9		
POLI 309	Bureaucratic Politics	
POLI/ENVS 311	Politics of the Environment	
POLI 321	Urban Politics	
POLI 322	State and Local Government and Politics	
POLI 323	Virginia Government and Politics	
POLI 330	Lobbying	
POLI 331	Public Administration	
POLI 332	Administrative Law	
POLI 370	Foundations of Nonprofit Management	
POLI 372	Ethics, Law and Governance	
POLI 374	Financial Management for Nonprofits	
POLI 375	Fund Development and Grant Writing	

What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

Freshman year

Course	Title	Hours
Fall semester		
POLI 103	U.S. Government and Politics (satisfies general education BOK for social/behavioral sciences and AOI for diversities in the human experience)	3
UNIV 101	Introduction to the University	1
UNIV 111	Introduction to Focused Inquiry: Play course	3
Investigation and Communication (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)		
Introduction to Focused Inquiry: Investigation and Communication		
Experiential fine arts		1-3
Foreign language 101		3
General education course (select quantitative foundations)		3

Term Hours: 14-16

Spring semester

HUMS 202	Choices in a Consumer Society	1
POLI/INTL 105	International Relations (satisfies general education BOK for social/behavioral sciences and AOI for global perspectives)	3
UNIV 112	Focused Inquiry II (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)	3
Play course video for Focused Inquiry II		
Foreign language 102		3
General education course (select AOI for scientific and logical reasoning)		3

Open electives	3
Term Hours:	16

Sophomore year

Fall semester

POLI 107	Political Theory	3
POLI 109	Comparative Politics	3
UNIV 200	Advanced Focused Inquiry: Literacies, Research and Communication (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)	3
General education course		3
Open electives		3

Term Hours: 15

Spring semester

POLI 310	Public Policy or Public Administration	3
or POLI 331		
POLI 320	Play Research Methods in Political Science course video for Research Methods in Political Science	3
General education course (select BOK to complete breadth of knowledge requirement)		3
Open electives		6

Term Hours: 15

Junior year

Fall semester

Concentration elective	3
Open electives	9
POLI electives	3

Term Hours: 15

Spring semester

Concentration elective	3
General education course (select BOK to complete breadth of knowledge requirement)	3
Open electives	9

Term Hours: 15

Senior year

Fall semester

POLI 490	Senior Seminar	3
Concentration elective	3	
Open electives	9	

Term Hours: 15

Spring semester

Open electives	12
POLI electives	3

Term Hours: 15

Total Hours: 120-122

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

Accelerated B.A. and M.P.A.

The accelerated B.A. and M.P.A. program allows qualified students to earn both the B.A. in Political Science and the Master of Public Administration in a minimum of five years by completing approved graduate courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. Students in the program may count up to 12 hours of graduate courses toward both the B.A. and M.P.A. degrees. Thus, the two degrees may be earned with a minimum of 144 credits rather than the 156 credits necessary if the two degrees are pursued separately. Students who do not have at least one year of professional-level experience in the public sector or in a nonprofit agency are required to earn three additional hours of credit in a public service practicum/internship. In this case, the two degrees may be earned with a minimum of 147 credits rather than the 159 credits necessary if the two degrees are pursued separately.

Students holding these degrees will demonstrate knowledge about the assumptions, methods and analytical tools of the discipline of political science and current political and policy issues; and they will be prepared, professional public managers, public officials and citizens who are able to meet the challenges of public service in both government and nonprofit sectors and serve the profession and local, state, federal and international communities.

Entrance to the accelerated program

Interested undergraduate students should consult with their adviser as early as possible to receive specific information about the accelerated program, determine academic eligibility and submit (no later than two semesters prior to graduating with a baccalaureate degree, that is, before the end of the spring semester of their junior year) an Accelerated Program Declaration Form to be approved by the graduate program director. Limited spaces may be available in the accelerated program. Academically qualified students may not receive approval if capacity has been reached.

Minimum qualifications for entrance to this accelerated program include completion of 90 undergraduate credit hours including a minimum of nine credit hours in political science courses; an overall GPA of 3.0; and a GPA of 3.3 in political science course work. Successful applicants would enter the program in the fall semester of their senior year. Students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirements may submit GRE scores to receive further consideration.

Once enrolled in the accelerated program, students must meet the standards of performance applicable to graduate students as described in the "Satisfactory academic progress (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/satisfactory-academic-progress/>)" section of the Graduate Bulletin, including maintaining a 3.0 GPA. Guidance to students admitted to the accelerated program is provided by both the undergraduate political science adviser and the faculty adviser to the graduate program.

Admission to the graduate program

Entrance to the accelerated program enables the student to take the approved shared courses that will apply to the undergraduate and graduate degrees. However, entry into an accelerated program via an approved Accelerated Program Declaration Form does not constitute application or admission into the graduate program. Admission to the graduate program requires a separate step that occurs through a formal application to the master's program, which is submitted through Graduate Admissions no later than a semester prior to graduation with the baccalaureate degree, that is, before the end of the fall semester

of the senior year. In order to continue pursuing the master's degree after the baccalaureate degree is conferred, accelerated students must follow the admission to graduate study requirements outlined in the VCU Bulletin.

Degree requirements

The Bachelor of Arts in Political Science degree will be awarded upon completion of a minimum of 120 credits and the satisfactory completion of all undergraduate degree requirements as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

A maximum of 12 graduate credits may be taken prior to completion of the baccalaureate degree. These graduate credits may be used to satisfy required major electives or open elective credits for the undergraduate degree. These courses are shared credits with the graduate program, meaning that they will be applied to both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements.

The graduate public administration courses that may be taken as an undergraduate, once a student is admitted to the program, are:

Course	Title	Hours
PADM 601	Introduction to Public Service and Administration	3
PADM 602	Critical and Creative Thinking for Public Managers	3
PADM 607	Public Human Resource Management	3
PADM 609	Financial Management in Government	3
PADM/GVPA/CRJS/URSP 623	Applied Research Methods	3
Select one of the following:		3
PADM 624	Empirical Analysis for Evidence-Based Governance	
Or a PADM elective course (elective requirement for the M.P.A. and elective for the undergraduate major)		
PADM 650	Principles of Nonprofit Management	3

Recommended course sequence/plan of study

What follows is the recommended plan of study for students interested in the accelerated program beginning in the fall of the junior year prior to admission to the accelerated program in the senior year.

Course	Title	Hours
Junior year		
Fall semester		
POLI elective		3
Approved H&S General Education elective		3-4
Open electives		9
Term Hours:		15-16
Spring semester		
POLI 490	Senior Seminar	3
POLI elective		3
Approved H&S General Education elective		3-4
Open electives		6
Term Hours:		15-16
Senior year		
Fall semester		

PADM 601	Introduction to Public Service and Administration (may count for both undergraduate and graduate credits in accelerated program)	3
PADM 602	Critical and Creative Thinking for Public Managers (may count for both undergraduate and graduate credits in accelerated program)	3
POLI elective		3
Open electives		6
Term Hours:		15
Spring semester		
PADM 607	Public Human Resource Management (may count for both undergraduate and graduate credits in accelerated program)	3
PADM 623	Applied Research Methods (may count for both undergraduate and graduate credits in accelerated program)	3
POLI elective		3
Open electives		6
Term Hours:		15
Fifth year		
Fall semester		
PADM 609	Financial Management in Government	3
PADM 624	Empirical Analysis for Evidence-Based Governance	3
PADM 625	Policy Insights: Assessing Public Policies	3
500- to 600-level PADM, CRJS, GVPA, HSEP or URSP elective		3
Term Hours:		12
Spring semester		
GVPA 693	Internship	0-3
PADM 627	Workshop in Policy Analysis	3
PADM 689	Capstone: Bridging Theory and Practice	3
500- to 600-level PADM, CRJS, GVPA, HSEP or URSP electives		6
Term Hours:		12-15