

Department of Political Science

Statement of Learning Objectives

The Political Science Major at Pacific Lutheran University is designed to educate and train its students in the discipline's four constituent subdivisions of American Government, Comparative Government, International Relations/Issues, and Political Theory. Upon successful completion of the Major, students will have the requisite command of political institutions and processes, methodological and ideological perspectives, and historical context necessary to analyze complex issues, events, trends, and policies in the domestic and international arena.

The Major integrates the acquisition of factual knowledge and analytical skills from the 100 level through to the 400 level courses. However, for the purposes of clarity, the content and learning objectives are detailed separately here.

Content Learning Objectives

100-200 Level

- Identify and define the four constituent subdivisions of the discipline of Political Science as it is taught at Pacific Lutheran University.
- Explain the contending methodological approaches to the systematic study of politics.
- Survey in detail the basic institutions, processes, foundational principles, and political culture that are essential to the understanding of the American system of government.

300 Level

- Study and evaluate the central thinkers in the history of political thought, from classical to modern times, in order to elucidate their ideas on core questions of political theory such as freedom, obligation, justice, and equality.
- Compare and contrast political institutions, electoral systems, parties, and ideologies across a broad range of regional areas.
- Identify the institutions, structures, movements, and ideas that form the background of contemporary political issues.

400 Level (Summative Program Objective)

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge of one of the discipline's four constituent sub-fields, in evidentiary support of a theoretically viable thesis.

Skill Acquisition Objectives

100-200 Level

- Select information from original and secondary sources that is relevant to a specific topic in the field of Political Science.
- Employ contrasting methodologies and ideologies in the analysis of a selected issue, policy or event.
- Achieve elementary theoretical competence in the analysis of the principal contours of contemporary world affairs.

300 Level

- Demonstrate accuracy and thoroughness in research.
- Develop lucid and concise reporting skills.
- Organize selected information conceptually.
- Arrive at and defend conclusions derived from theoretical analysis and supported by relevant empirical evidence.

400 Level (Summative Program Objectives)

- Produce an in-depth position paper employing theoretical conceptualizations and a broad range of original and secondary sources, and leading to a coherent, cogent and authoritative argument.
- Apply acquired intellectual skills experientially in a service, internship, or work setting.
- Demonstrate leadership and initiative in a class and/or community setting.