

**Department of Political Science
Social Sciences Element**

**General Education Program
Pacific Lutheran University**

Framing Language and Program Goals

The student of politics seeks to understand and analyze how governments are organized and structured, how political processes are employed, and the relationship of both to societal purposes. Political activity embodies and reflects the full range of human values. Its study includes real world events while at the same time asking how well political systems work, what purposes they ought to serve, and what effects result from political activity. Political science encourages a critical analysis of government and politics in the belief that a knowledgeable, interested, and aware citizenry remains vital to a democratic society.

General Education Element Description

Investigating Human Behavior, Culture, and Institutions

The social sciences investigate individual and collective human behavior, and the history, development and variation of human culture and institutions. To assure wide exposure to a wide variety of social science concepts, theories, and methods, students must select at least two courses chosen from different disciplines.

Political Science: studies power relations, within and between societies and other units of human organization.

Political science shares with the other social sciences a common, empirically-based investigative process. As noted above, the discipline's human behavioral focus is on the institutions and processes of governance.

General Education Element Learning Outcomes

The department considers its 100 and 200 level courses as appropriate for the university's General Education social sciences requirement.

Skill Acquisition Objectives for 100 and 200 level courses include:
Student will:

- select information from original and secondary sources that is relevant to a specific topic in the field;
- employ contrasting methodologies, ideologies, and perspectives in the analysis of a selected issue, policy, or event; and,
- achieve basic theoretical competence in the analysis of the principal contours of contemporary world affairs.

Alignment to the ILOs

Critical Reflection: Political science inherently involves highly controversial issues given the fact that those requiring definitive decisions by institutions of governance, and using relevant political processes, always are characterized by deeply valued differences. Sometimes such differences cannot be contained within established political processes and violence results. Analyzing both politics – the use of peaceful political processes – and violence caused by deep political differences, requires the ability to critically reflect on the issues and processes involved by applying relevant conceptual frameworks.

Multiple Frameworks: Applying critical reflection to highly controversial issues requires the use of multiple frameworks since individuals, groups, and whole societies have varying interests and perceptions that are values-based.

Valuing: The ability to sort out one's own values provides the basis for being able to sort out those of others respectfully. Without this process, a fair assessment of the varying perceptions individuals, groups, and whole societies have about highly significant and controversial issues cannot occur.

Expression: The analyses required by the previous three ILO categories finds meaning in its being communicated to others in both oral and written forms.

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