

What Can I Do With a Degree In Political Science?

THE STUDY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political Science is concerned with how societies are organized and governed, with how competing ideas about what is best for a society are articulated and resolved, and how decisions in one part of the world affect the other parts. Political Science provides an opportunity not just to understand how societies actually work, but also some idea of how to make them better. Students may want to major in Political Science in order to prepare themselves for a wide range of careers in law, government, journalism, business, or interest group advocacy. A degree in Political Science offers not just the knowledge and background needed for these occupations, but the skills as well.

(Source www.sfu.ca/polysci/department/polisci.html)

WHAT SKILLS HAVE YOU DEVELOPED WITH YOUR DEGREE?

While the academic knowledge you acquire through your BA may be directly applicable to some careers, the general skills you gain with an Arts degree are the most valuable to employers. These skills are not limited to course work, and may be gained through paid and/or volunteer work both on and off campus. The knowledge and skills gained through work experience, volunteering and extra-curricular activities are relevant to future work.

Communication Skills

The ability to communicate ideas clearly and efficiently in a variety of mediums (written, oral, visually and electronically).

Information Management

Locate, gather, and organize information using appropriate technology and information systems.

Use research skills to access, analyze, and apply knowledge.

Problem Solving

Use critical thinking skills to evaluate and solve problems.

Demonstrate the ability to be creative and innovative in identifying solutions.

Teamwork Skills

Able to work effectively within a group.

Demonstrates the ability to lead or support the group while monitoring the success of a project and identifying ways to improve it.

Personal Management Skills

Able to work effectively and independently under deadlines.

Plan, design, and carry out projects from start to finish, with well-defined objectives and outcomes.

WHERE CAN YOU GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Career Services is your one-stop shop for more information. Through our workshops, one on one career and work search advising, and groups, you'll have access to information, resources and career and peer educators to help you no matter what stage of planning you are in, from exploring your interests to practicing for an interview, we can help.

For the self-directed, our on-line and print self-help resources covering topics from career exploration to researching careers to conducting a targeted work search are easily accessible. Check us out!

Visit the CSI—our blog with articles, job postings, employers and events on campus, and tips from the Career Services staff!

SFU CAREER SERVICES

Simon Fraser University
Burnaby Campus, MBC 0300

Come to the Maggie Benston Centre and go down to the lowest level. You will find us there Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm. Check out our blog for the latest articles, tips and news!

Phone: 778-782-3106
E-mail: career_services@sfu.ca
Website: www.sfu.ca/career.html
Blog: www.sfu.ca/career/csi.html

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A POLITICAL SCIENCE DEGREE?

What are some of your Career Options?

The following is a non-exhaustive list of career options. Some of them may require further education than a B.A. in Political Science.

DIRECT Career Options: Majoring in Political Science will serve as a credential for the following career choices as the skills required are similar to the skills acquired throughout your Political Science major.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICER

Works on the policy and operational aspects of Canada's foreign policy interests, provides policy advice on foreign affairs and trade issues to government ministers, keeps the government informed about international strategic, political, economic and trade issues, advises on treaties and on matters of international law, promotes Canada's cultural relations program as well as environmental and human rights objectives. Works for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Researches and analyzes a diverse range of geopolitical issues on behalf of the government. Employed by intelligence services such as the Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS).

PARLIAMENTARY AID

Parliamentary aids work to keep politicians well informed and organized. They conduct research in current affairs, draft legislation, write speeches and press releases, and troubleshoot in the face of crises.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN WORKER

Assists in planning, fund raising, research, writing issue statements, and assessing voter attitudes. Works for candidates or interest groups during political election campaigns. Frequently leads to permanent positions with political organizations or officeholders.

POLICY ANALYST

Works for a variety of institutions, implementing and developing social policy. Duties include research and analysis of key policy issues and political liaising to groups outside the institution.

POLITICIAN

Serves the public as a duly elected representative, in process of achieving this goal, conducts campaigns. Responsibilities vary according to elective office. Usually tasks include working with colleagues and public to formulate legislation, make decisions, allocate budget, etc., in order to solve problems and benefit the community.

LESS DIRECT Career Options:

Knowledge of Political Science may be less pertinent to these positions and the degree alone in Political Science may not serve as a credential for employment.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Assists in the regulation of importing and exporting goods to and from Canada and in the prevention of smuggling, fraud, and cargo theft. Inspects baggage and cargo, imposes appropriate duties and taxes, and investigates violations of customs regulations.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Assists researchers in collecting and analyzing data, observing and interviewing people, surveying appropriate literature, and writing reports in order to advise or inform a client. Works for research and consulting firms.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

COORDINATOR

Creates, implements, and coordinates a service to a community. May involve fund raising for charity, overseeing a scholarship fund, operating a service oriented program or facility, etc. Employers include nonprofit corporations, social service agencies, and the public affairs sections of commercial businesses.

PUBLIC OPINION

INTERVIEWER

Responsible for completing interviews with the general public for public opinion polls. Conducts in person/ telephone interviews, establishes contacts for interviews, conducts interviews following the outline of questionnaires and surveys, records answers and organizes databases. Edits all information gathered for accuracy and presents it.

SURVEY ASSISTANT

Assists in the design of survey interviews and questionnaires, the interviewing of subjects, the management of interviewers, collection and analysis of data, and documentation and presentation of findings. Works for government agencies and private surveying and market research organizations.

INDIRECT Career Options: On the surface, the following career options may not appear to have much to do with the study of Political Science. Yet the primary skills required in these careers are significantly related with some of the skills a Political Science major acquires.

MARKET RESEARCH

ASSISTANT

Undertakes the preliminary research for a market study, gathering data concerning competing products, organizing existing sales records, etc. Also assists in writing final project reports. Works for market research firms, advertising agencies, manufacturers, and retailers.