

UNT Dallas Degree Program Template

What is a degree in Political Science?

The political science major at UNT Dallas offers traditional and innovative approaches to preparing graduates for work, further study and participation in government, law and communications. The program blends the study of government and human political behavior in a major that is designed to be interdisciplinary, using insights from sociology, psychology, economics and the management sciences in addition to providing foundational knowledge about political theory, political institutions and international affairs.

Political science has a deeper relevance to modern life: students will acquire knowledge at the macro level about how the world is structured and works, but students will also cultivate and understanding of how politics functions in the workplace, neighborhoods and small groups. Political science majors will become discerning consumers of political messages and understand the importance of political context in communication.

Why study at UNT Dallas

Political science is a new program at UNT Dallas and one of the most popular majors on U.S. college campuses. According to the CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) Freshman Survey, political science was the sixth most popular undergraduate field in 2013, chosen by 2.5 percent of incoming freshmen. This is the same percentage that chose computer science as a major. Political science was a more popular choice than marketing, journalism/communications and criminal justice.

The UNT Dallas Political Science program is designed to provide great flexibility for students while providing a sound foundation for post-graduate employment or study. Students are expected to take advantage of suitable courses in history, sociology, criminal justice, psychology and management in order to satisfy their intellectual interests and prepare for works in diverse fields. We are also developing networks that will aid students in finding internships to provide suitable foundational experiences.

UNT Dallas also offers students opportunities to prepare for graduate studies in Dallas. The university has a law school in downtown Dallas and houses a graduate program in public administration on its South Dallas campus.

There is an additional noneconomic motive for becoming a political science major at UNT Dallas: the encouragement of a civic culture of political participation. The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas has identified troubling trends in civic participation in Texas. Using US Census data, the institute found that In 2010, Texas ranked 51st in voter turnout, 42nd in voter registration, 49th in the number of citizens who contact public officials and 44th in the number of people who discuss politics a few times a week or more.

Texans also ranked low in rates of civic involvement are also relatively low, with Texas ranking 43rd in donating, 42nd in volunteering and 37th in group membership. Income, education, age, race/ethnicity and citizenship status correlate with civic involvement. The political science major at UNT Dallas encourages interested students to engage with the policy issues of the city, the state and the nation, providing in-depth knowledge of the processes and institutions that enable participation.

How likely am I to get a job after graduation?

The value of an undergraduate political science degree in the job market is considerable.

Political science majors find jobs in:

- Federal, state and local government.
- Political campaigns.
- Public affairs communications.;
- Lobbying for interest groups, non-governmental organizations and corporations.
- Law.
- Journalism.

A political science major is also good preparation for professional degree programs in:

- Law (JD)
- Public Administration (MPA)
- Policy-based programs in business, health and education (MBA, MPH etc.).
- Journalism (MJ).

A bachelor's degree in political science can lead to careers in federal, state and local governments; law; business; international organizations; and nonprofit association and organization management. Political science baccalaureate graduates are often employed as parole/probation officers; legal investigators and assistants; public affairs specialists, polling and surveying research; legal assistants and researchers; and social service managers. A political science major also relates to educational opportunities currently offered at the University of North Texas Dallas. UNT Dallas offers an undergraduate certificate in conflict resolution, and graduate programs in criminal justice and public leadership.

The Texas Workforce Commission forecasts the following increases in Dallas County over the years 2012-2022 in jobs which are appropriate to a political science undergraduate degree:

Social and Community Service Managers	14.8%
Survey Researchers	14.3%
Social Science Research Assistants	18.2%
Legal Assistants and Paralegals	29.3%
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	18.6%
Public Relations Specialists	21%
Correctional Officers (and Jailers)	16.2%

For those going on to graduate school or law school where the undergraduate degree serves as a point of entry, the Texas Workforce Commission gives the following Dallas County figures for the 2012-2022 period:

Urban and Regional Planners	21.4%
Post-secondary Political Science teachers	7.6%
Lawyers	20%
Arbitrators, Mediators, and Conciliators	25%

Jobs with the title of political scientist generally require an advanced degree, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) estimates employment of political scientists is expected to increase by 21 percent between 2012 and 2022. As of May 2012, the average annual salary of a federally employed political scientist was \$114,320, higher than the average annual wage of \$104,600 for political scientists employed across all industries.

What are my career options?

Typical jobs for program graduates would include entry level staff positions with government agencies, constituency representatives for elected state and federal officials, journalism and public relations positions with public affairs and communications departments in corporations, interest groups, advocacy groups and non-governmental organizations. Over time, graduates could expect to move into lobbyist positions or become political public relations or campaign consultants. Some graduates may also run for elected public office.

What kinds of companies or industries are hiring?

Local, state and federal government agencies are almost always hiring. During election years, opportunities to staff campaigns are frequent. Communication jobs in the media are currently difficult to find, but literacy in the electronic media is opening new opportunities for graduates. Private and public corporations and firms frequently hire political science graduates.

Who can I contact for more information?

For additional information, please contact:

Dr. Walt Borges

Assistant Professor of Political Science

Department of Social Sciences
University of North Texas at Dallas
7400 University Hills Blvd.
Dallas TX 75241

Office phone: 972-338-1552

email: walter.borges@untDallas.edu

Success Strategies

Successful political science graduates are often curious about the world, the nation and their community, but they understand that the behaviors they learn about are also present in large corporations, small firms, non-government organizations and even on small committees. The ability to see the perspectives of other individuals, groups and cultures often correlates to success in fields that require sensitivity, breadth and an appreciation of diversity in understanding and communicating ideas.

Online Resources

Information about the profession can be obtained by visiting the website of the American Political Science Association. <http://www.apsanet.org/>

Professional Resources

Virtually all government agencies at the local, state and federal level have websites that list job and professional opportunities. Professional associations in law (the American Bar Association, the State Bar of Texas), journalism (Society of Professional Journalists), and public administration (the American Society for Public Administration, the National Association of Counties) also can provide resources for prospective political science graduates.