

Master of Arts in Political Science



The Department of Political Science at Western Illinois University offers an intensive program of study and guided research to qualified applicants holding a bachelor's degree. The department curriculum is designed to provide graduate students with a broad and solid foundation in political science, suitable for building careers in teaching, government service, politics, community development and continued study at the doctoral level.

Admission Requirements

The criteria for admission into the graduate program in Political Science at WIU are as follows:

- A minimum undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 or a GPA of 3.0 for the last two years of undergraduate work
- Submission of a writing sample in English of at least several pages in length such as a short essay, a research paper or a statement outlining academic or career goals
- At least three letters of recommendation, two of which must be academic references
- A substantial number of Political Science courses at the undergraduate level—Students who do not meet this requirement must successfully complete undergraduate deficiency courses with a grade of “B” or better.

Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts (MA) degree in Political Science may be earned in any one of the following three areas of specialization: (1) American Government, (2) Comparative Politics and International Relations or (3) Public Administration and Public Policy.

The MA degree in Political Science requires the satisfactory completion of 30 semester hours (SH) of graduate coursework, including 12 SH of core courses. Students also take electives in their area of specialization and complete degree requirements by writing and defending a thesis or by defending two seminar papers. Students admitted to the program must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA to graduate.

Career Opportunities

The graduate program in Political Science provides educational and career opportunities in at least four broad fields: (1) government employment, (2) legal training, (3) teaching and (4) international relations.

Government Employment

Roughly one-sixth of the labor force in the United States works for the government, either at the local, state or federal levels. The Political Science graduate program can prepare students for many governmental positions, including administrative officer, budget analyst, city manager, city planner, environmental management specialist and criminal investigator. In addition, the MA degree in Political Science provides preparation for persons seeking positions with interest groups that represent diverse issues before the government.

Careers in Law

A degree in Political Science is a typical career path component in preparation for law school. Many Political Science undergraduate and graduate students attend law school upon completion of their degrees. Students in law schools have long ranked Political Science, as a curriculum, as the most popular major.

Careers in Teaching

Political science is an integral part of the curriculum of high schools, colleges and universities. Moreover, in most states, courses in American government and civics are mandated in all public and private schools within their respective jurisdictions. It is not surprising many of our graduates are teaching at the secondary

Program Location:

Macomb, Quad Cities, Online

Contact Information

Questions about the program:

Department of Political Science
(309) 298-1055
G-Baldi@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/PoliticalScience

General admission questions:

School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad

Higher Values in Higher Education

Academic Excellence
Educational Opportunity
Personal Growth
Social Responsibility



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level, while others, after completing graduate degrees, teach in colleges and universities.

Careers in International Relations

For students interested in careers in international and comparative politics and business, opportunities are expanding as countries become increasingly interdependent. Our graduates have been successful in securing positions with the U.S. State Department, the Department of Defense, international organizations and multinational corporations.

Faculty Expertise

The 12 graduate faculty of the Political Science department are experts in a variety of fields and have doctorates from some of the finest universities in the world. Several have received awards recognizing their excellent teaching, research and service to the University. Many members of the faculty have experience working in the political world in addition to their academic credentials and research. Faculty work closely with graduate students in small classes and when advising graduate research projects and theses.



Graduate Assistantships

All graduate students are eligible to apply for graduate assistantships, which are awarded through a competitive, merit-based process. Assistantships provide a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend for the academic year. Graduate assistants are assigned to work with faculty members on a variety of tasks, including research assistance, classroom assistance or grading. Some students may have the opportunity to tutor undergraduates.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status.

Integrated Baccalaureate and Master's Degree

WIU undergraduate Political Science majors with strong academic records are eligible for the integrated B.A./M.A. This program allows students to take up to three graduate level courses for dual credit for their bachelor's and master's degrees during their senior year. The M.A. program can usually be completed in an additional calendar year, allowing students to complete both degrees in a five-year time frame. Prospective students for the integrated degree program should apply by the end of their junior year.



"When it comes to quality education, access to professors, and opportunities across the board, the Western Illinois University Department of Political Science is second to none. From day one of the program, I worked with the graduate advisor to create a learning program that fit my goals. Throughout my time in the graduate program, I was afforded academic opportunities I believe to be rare as a graduate student. These opportunities helped me to become marketable to organizations and institutions after I completed my degree, which was a central consideration in choosing a master's program. The faculty I worked with during my time in the program helped me to develop an in-depth understanding of requirements that come with publishing research, as well as a wealth of courses that broadened the scope of my academic understanding. Not only was I able to earn a quality degree at WIU, I was able to cultivate great friendships with my cohorts and the faculty alike."

— Stephen A. Taylor, MA, 2015