Learning Objectives

USC’s Political Science undergraduate program offers a systematic study of political institutions and processes. Our students are exposed to normative and empirical political theories, acquire training in analytical thinking and research methods, and become familiar with the diversity of political systems, peoples, cultures, and nationalities. Our program prepares students for careers in government, law, administration, research, public policy, consulting, and related professions.

The Department of Political Science (POSC) has identified the following learning objectives for each student who graduates with a Bachelors of Arts (B.A.) in Political Science:

- Substantive knowledge of the core concepts in Political Science and a general knowledge of our four (4) main subfields: American Politics; Comparative Politics; Law and Public Policy; and Political Theory
- An understanding of normative political theories and empirical political theories
- Basic competence in qualitative and quantitative research methods
- A familiarity with diversity, which includes (among other things) race, ethnicity, gender and immigrant status as well as cultures and nationalities other than their own
- The development of critical thinking and a refined set of skills in analytical thinking, problem-solving, persuasiveness, and academic writing
- Ability to conceive, research and write a major research paper through an upper division course or, for our best students, through our honors sequences (for freshmen and sophomores: POSC 190; for juniors or seniors, POSC 391 and 392)
• Learning and practicing the methods and processes of individual research and group research
• Familiarity with practical politics and personal experience through internships and various forms of civic engagement
• Competence and knowledge to speak about politics in small groups and in larger venues
• A three-semester competence in a foreign language