**When should I come in for advising for my political science major?**

[The following response should only be taken as general and informal advice.  Your own specific situation may of course vary.  When any university or department rule is mentioned, please refer to official published university and department regulations to ensure you are in compliance with the complete and current policy.]

Advising is highly suggested for students who wish to file for graduation.  While you can review your own progress toward graduation on MyCSULB, you should meet with a departmental undergraduate advisor to verify that the courses you have taken and those you propose to take fulfill the requirements for the political science major.  Students who plan to graduate at the end of the spring semester or during the summer must usually file their request to graduate with the university by the preceding October 15.  Those who plan to graduate at the end of the fall semester must usually file the request by the preceding March 1.   Check the [enrollment services website section on graduation](http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/graduation/bachelors/grad_filing_process.html) for current deadlines and the application that you use to file to graduate.

In between these times, advising is not currently required for most students.  However, students are welcome to come in for advising for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- to help assess progress toward meeting your political science major requirements
- upon transfer into CSULB from a community college or other institution
- for discussion of career or academic paths after graduation, etc. (see additional FAQs below)

If you need advising for general education requirements, you should go see an advisor at the College of Liberal Arts CLA-ATLAS office.  Go to the CLA-ATLAS website for basic information as well as instructions as to how to make an appointment.

**What should I do before I come to a meeting with a  political science advisor?**

You should log into MyCSULB to reacquaint yourself with the courses you have taken so far toward your political science requirements, making note of any questions you may have.  You should also look over and update any worksheets or information sheets that you may have received at an earlier advising appointment.  Bring these completed materials and any questions that you may have with you to the meeting to make the most of your time with an advisor.

**What is the practicum requirement?**

Effective fall 2007, all majors in the department must include as part of their coursework three units of a practicum.  A practicum is a course which requires you to apply what you have been learning in your classes to the real-world in significant ways.  In political science, this can be achieved by taking one of the following courses:

- POSC 378:  Politics and Practice of the UN
- POSC 401:  Women in Political Theory  (beginning Fall 2009)
- POSC 417:  Legal Practices: Moot Court
- POSC 418:  Legal/Judicial Internship
- POSC 447:  Public Service Internship I
- POSC 448:  Public Service Internship II
- POSC 450:  Comparative Political Movements
- POSC 496:  Washington Center Internship
- POSC 498:  Practicum in Politics

These courses vary in terms of the procedures to be enrolled or accepted into the course as well as the duties they require of students.  For example, for POSC 378, it is suggested that students take international politics courses to best prepare themselves.  Similarly, for POSC 417 and 418, students are encouraged to take public law and speech communications courses and must apply to be accepted into each program.  For POSC 447/448, students should read the information on internships on the department website and meet with the internship advisor to discuss the terms of receiving course credit for internships.   Other practicum options may also have suggested coursework or application requirements.  Please check with an advisor or the faculty member in charge of the course for more information.  The department website and the schedule of classes have current faculty information available for you.

**Where can I get information about registration deadlines, general education courses, how to use MyCSULB, and graduation procedures?**

Enrollment services has set up [a one-stop website](http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/) that includes all of this information and more. You can also go to the College of Liberal Arts Advising’s [website](http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/cla/advising/) to review a great deal of information or make an appointment to talk to someone in person.

**When I look at my degree progress on MyCSULB, many of my political science courses don’t seem to be counting toward my major requirements.  Why is this happening?**

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MyCSULB always correctly places your general education courses into your degree progress report.  However, because there is a great deal of flexibility in the political science major, MyCSULB does not always “know” where to assign all of your various courses that you take to complete your major requirements.  In most cases, only the courses that are required of all political science majors– POSC 100 and POSC 300– will be placed correctly into your degree progress report. In order for your other POSC courses to be categorized correctly into the major, you must declare your concentration within the major.  When you are ready to do so, contact the main department office or come in to see an advisor and we will let the university know what your concentration is.  Once this is done, you should see the courses move up to be slotted into the appropriate categories.

Even if you have not declared your concentration, you are still making progress toward completing the major. If you scroll down to the very bottom of your degree progress report, you should see a list of these additional POSC courses that have yet to be assigned.  Because of this issue, if you have not declared your concentration yet, you should be sure to keep track of your progress on your own using one of the major requirement worksheets available in the department office.  This will help to ensure that you take the classes that you need.  And of course, come in to see an advisor if you have additional questions.

**When and how should I file to graduate?**

It is the responsibility of each student to apply to graduate. Information about how you file to graduate can be found [here](http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/graduation/bachelors/grad_filing_process.html). As a brief overview of the process: Students are allowed to file once they have earned 90 units. The deadline for filing to graduate comes early so you should plan ahead. For example, if you are planning to graduate in the Spring semester, you need to file to graduate by October 15 of the previous year. You will still be allowed to graduate if you submit your application to graduate after this deadline, but you will face a late filing fee. You are also charged a fee if you need to change your graduation date after you submit your application to graduate so you will want to make sure that you are making progress toward your degree. If you have questions, please feel free to contact your departmental advisor.

**What can you do with a political science degree?  What types of careers have alumni of the department gone on to do after they graduate?**

Graduates with political science degrees are often highly valued by employers because of their detailed knowledge of the political system and its various political actors as well as their analytical and writing skills.

Some of the top careers for political science students include:

- Public service at the local, state or national level
- Working for a non-profit, advocacy, activist, or interest group
- Public policy research and analysis
- Work in political campaigns, election polling, and journalism
- Teaching at the K-12 level
- The legal profession

View our alumni page to hear from successful graduates and get a sense of the careers our former students have gone on to pursue!

**Where can I find information about job possibilities once I graduate?**

The department has started a resource library with some great books for you to borrow.  Please go to the main department office to see which titles are currently available for checkout.



**I am curious about graduate school in political science.  What options  are there for me to pursue?  What should I be doing to increase my chances of acceptance?**

Students have several options to continue their education after they receive their bachelor of arts degree in political science, including masters and doctoral degrees in political science, as well as professional degrees in specialized areas such as international relations.

Students who are interested in pursuing such options must of course work hard to ensure that they do very well in their courses to build a strong undergraduate academic record.  But there are a great deal of additional factors to consider when deciding whether or how to apply.

Check out the offerings at the department resource library or keep an eye out for workshops held occasionally in the department or at the university.

The CSULB Career Development Center holds a series of workshops on the graduate school admissions process including how to write a personal statement for one’s application.  See their [website](http://careers.csulb.edu/majors_and_careers/applying_to_graduate_school.htm) for a full list of workshops and general information about the application process to pursue a graduate degree.