Other Requirements: Majors are required to take at least three courses at the 3000-level or higher; at least one class must be at the 4000-level.

Requirements for a Minor in Political Science (20 credits)

Two courses selected from the following (8):

- PSC 2310. American Politics (4)
- PSC/GBS 2510. Comparing Foreign Political Systems (4)
- PSC 2710. International Relations (4)

12 credits of political science courses outside of the classes taken to meet the requirement listed above.

Course Descriptions

PSC 1010. Contemporary Issues and Politics. This course surveys many of the most pressing issues being explored by contemporary political scientists. Why are some communities plagued by violence while others live in peace? Why do mass poverty and war still exist on a global scale? Why do countries that have no intention of using weapons of mass destruction still seek to possess them? How are democratic values and behaviors first established in a society, and how are they passed on to future generations? Students will examine these and other central questions in political science as they learn how the systematic study of political ideas, institutions and behaviors offers unique insights into many of humanity’s most profound social and political challenges. Four credits.

PSC 1011. Enduring Issues in Political Thought. This course examines how various political theorists and philosophers have attempted to answer the most fundamental and enduring of political questions. Students will analyze numerous contentious topics from multiple perspectives including questions such as whether there is ever justification for war, what are the civic obligations of citizens and government and how should democracies incorporate peoples of different backgrounds. Four credits.

PSC 2019. Political Science Research Methods. In recent decades, empirical research in the social sciences has transformed our understanding of domestic and international politics. Yet, how can we be confident that researchers are presenting valid results rather than just reproducing their biased preferences? This course addresses this question by surveying the primary techniques that political scientists use to describe and explain individual, group, and mass political behaviors. Course topics will include the ethical conduct of research, proper project design, hypothesis development and testing, and the reporting of results. The methodologies investigated will include practices such as interviewing and observation, focus groups, survey research, content analysis and various types of statistical analysis. Students will gain hands-on research experience in exercises and small projects. This course is restricted to students majoring in political science or international relations. Four credits.

PSC 2055/IDS 2255. Survey Research Center Practicum. An interdisciplinary introduction to survey research methodology that provides students with hands-on experience conducting phone-based surveys as an interviewer in High Point University’s Survey Research Center. Students will receive training in research ethics and interviewing skills, as well as obtain experience designing, collecting, and analyzing surveys. One or two credits. Can be repeated for one credit, up to 3 semesters.

PSC 2310. American Politics. This course surveys the origins, institutions, and culture of the US political system. What kind of democracy did the nation’s founders intend to build? How and why has American democracy changed over time? How can everyday people influence government? Do the media and pop culture help or hinder good governance? How well do the nation’s political institutions serve the common good? Do state and local governments advance or inhibit policy innovation? Students will explore these and other enduring questions in order to reach to their own conclusions about the health and direction of American democracy in the 21st Century. Four credits.

PSC 2398. Politics and Power Inside DC. This course takes students behind closed doors in the nation’s capital where many of America’s most important political decisions are made. The class begins on the High Point University campus with an exploration of case studies and eyewitness accounts of politics and policymaking. Seminars will expose students to a diverse array of insider and practical analyses of political elite and institutional behavior. Over a period of two weeks outside of the University’s normal academic calendar, the course will shift locations to Washington, D.C. In Washington, students will interact with elected officials, lobbyists and other powerbrokers, while also exploring many of the nation’s most noteworthy political landmarks and centers of power. Participation is mandatory in the off-campus component of this course. Four credits.

PSC/GBS 2510. Comparing Foreign Political Systems. Using country case studies selected from Asia,
Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Middle-East, this course compares the structure of political power across many of the world’s most influential nations. Students will investigate why different types of governments vary in their capacity to develop modern economies, limit political violence, protect excluded groups and respond to their citizens’ needs. While the primary focus is on governmental institutions and political behavior, the course covers multiple cultural perspectives on the role and optimal structure of government, and it surveys the basic geography, history and the circumstances of everyday life in numerous foreign settings. Four credits. [GS]

PSC 2710. International Relations. This course explores how global and domestic politics interact to shape foreign policy behaviors, strategic alliances and interactions among nations. Students will investigate why countries choose to cooperate or engage one another in conflict, how globalization and the changing fortunes of the world’s most powerful nations are reshaping the roles and power of international institutions and whether nations are likely to work together to solve the most pressing international problems of our day. Four credits. [S]

PSC 3310. American Political Institutions. This course offers an in-depth analysis into the three principal institutions of the US political system: the Congress, the presidency and the courts. The class will examine how political parties and interest groups affect these institutions in terms of public confidence, elections and policy outcomes. The goal of the course is to develop an advanced understanding as to how all of these institutions intertwine while attempting to function within the Constitutional framework of the United States. Four credits.

PSC/WGS 3311. Women and Politics. This course considers the theoretical foundations of women’s role in society and examines the scope and nature of the difference that women make in politics. It examines the changing role of women in American politics—as citizens, voters, candidates and elected officials—from the 1800s to the present. Finally, it evaluates the ways that legislation and litigation have altered the political and legal rights of women in modern society. Four credits.

PSC 3317: Pop Culture, Media, and Politics. The course explores how popular culture impacts political actors, attitudes, and outcomes through mediums such as film, magazines, television shows, and the internet. It will also analyze how mainstream and alternative news coverage has impacted American politics, seeking to understand how the impact of popular culture has changed over time and the extent to which it enhances or detracts from the quality of American democracy. Four credits.

PSC 3320. The Constitution, Civil Liberties, and the Courts. This course provides an in-depth analysis of the legal foundations of our nation. Students will analyze how and why the meaning and scope of civil liberties have evolved over time. The course considers the Constitutional framework within which federal judges operate, dozens of pivotal Supreme Court cases and the main factors behind judicial decision-making. Course topics will include numerous enduring questions—such as what limits should be placed on freedom of speech or governmental involvement with religion—while also engaging contemporary issues and Constitutional questions. Four credits.

PSC 3330. Public Opinion. This course introduces students to the origins and effects of political attitudes as well as the methods that political scientists use to measure them. Students will learn about the impact of historic events, media and elite rhetoric on public attitudes as well as how political figures react to public opinion in order
to make their own decisions. The course will also draw on the resources of the university’s survey research center to illustrate important concepts in writing and fielding public opinion surveys. While US political attitudes are the primary focus of the course, students will also learn about differences in public opinion across several countries. Students will gain hands-on experience analyzing and presenting the results of polls from political campaigns as well as policy areas such as education, health care and international affairs. Four credits.

PSC 3332. Campaigns and Elections. This course is a practical introduction to US elections that takes students behind the scenes of historic and on-going political campaigns. Students will learn about the challenges of running for public office, including how professional politicians build and manage campaign organizations, develop messages and strategies and promote their candidacies using television and new media. The course will expose students to the internal workings of ongoing local, state and federal campaigns through visits by candidates and political operatives, opportunities to work on actual campaigns and exercises in which they will employ campaign techniques and tactics. Four credits.

PSC/GBS 3510. Latin American Politics. This seminar compares the sociopolitical histories, governance systems and policy priorities of numerous Latin American societies. Through in-depth case country studies, including a close look at regional powers Brazil and Mexico, students will investigate issues of considerable relevance throughout Latin America and beyond. Such questions include: why is poverty so widespread despite the region’s rich natural resources, why have military rule and revolution found such widespread public support, how have US security and economic preferences impacted regional politics and what can be done to strengthen the rule of law and democracy? Four credits. [GS]

PSC 3511. Ethnic Politics. This course considers different perspectives on ethnicity and its political salience in the modern world. It explores how and why ethnicity can become a source of political mobilization, competition, and violence. Finally, it examines ways for avoiding and overcoming political tensions in ethnically divided societies and promoting reconciliation after violence. Four credits.

PSC 3512. Democracy, Development, and Conflict. This course considers challenges to state sovereignty in the 21st century. It examines different theoretical perspectives on why some states succeed in establishing thriving democracies, market economies, and civil societies, while others fail to break out of poverty, violence, and/or authoritarianism. To answer this question, the course will focus on classic readings and contemporary research on issues of democratic and authoritarian state formation, the problem of state failure, national identity and political culture, poverty and economic development, political violence, and globalization. Four credits.

PSC/HST/GBS 3701. The United States and the Middle East since 1945. This course is a diplomatic, political and economic history of American involvement in the Middle East and Europe since World War II. The course presents different interpretations of the role the United States has played in the region. Prerequisite: One 1000 or 2000 level history course or permission of the instructor. Four credits. [GS]
PSC 4099. Senior Seminar. This seminar is a capstone course to the political science and international relations majors. Working closely with one or more faculty mentors, students will complete and publicly present a substantial original research project on an approved topic of their choice. Students will also compile a professional portfolio designed to help them transition with success to professional employment or graduate school. Prerequisites: This course is open to INR and PSC majors only; senior standing is required except by instructor approval. Four credits.

PSC 4320. Judicial Politics. This course is an in-depth exploration of the American judiciary as a political institution. To this end, it will consider the structure, functions and activities of American courts. The seminar will also examine how courts interact with their publics, other courts and other political institutions. Finally, it will investigate how courts act as policymakers as well as the consequences of these actions for American democracy. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and PSC 2019, or permission of the instructor. Four credits.

PSC 4710. International Conflict and Security. This seminar provides an in-depth analysis of why interstate war, civil conflict, genocide and terrorism continue despite our growing capacity to address other sources of human suffering. The course will explore how international regimes, globalization, advances in military technology and evolving human rights norms are reshaping the causes and methods of warfare. Students will evaluate a wide range of strategies to reduce inter-and intra-state violence. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and PSC 2019, or permission of the instructor. Four credits.

PSC 4720. US Foreign Policy. This course investigates how the US government interacts with the world. Topics addressed in the class include: Who are the most powerful political actors in shaping the content and priorities of foreign policy? Why do we sometimes pursue relationships with foreign actors that some Americans view to be immoral? How do interest groups, the media, and public opinion affect the way the US interacts with other countries? Why do US priorities and relations with other countries vary so much across different world regions? Students will have numerous hands-on opportunities to explore these questions and others as they apply course concepts to realistic policy-making scenarios. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and PSC 2019, or permission of the instructor. Four credits.

PSC 2881, 3881, 4881. Special Topics. Variable credit. May be repeated.

PSC 4444. Independent Study. Individual study and research under the guidance of a member of the department. One to four credits each semester.

PSC 4810-4815. Student Internship. Variable credit. Credit-bearing internships are arranged through the Office of Career and Internship Services.