

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE PRE-LAW OPTION**

North Dakota State University offers students a special program of pre-law advisement. Emphasis is placed on the development of scholarly skills and insights, rather than the mastery of a prescribed subject. Thus, the pre-law student may elect the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree, selecting a major or minor of special personal interest. A pre-law emphasis is offered for the political science major.

### **The Program**

No particular course of study serves as a prerequisite for admission to law school. Present-day law students have undergraduate degrees in political science, English, business, natural science, history, linguistics and a host of other disciplines. However, some broad general recommendations about college preparation for law school may be useful.

The main guide to undergraduate study should be your own interests and talents. Successful study and practice of law can be based on any of a large number of college backgrounds; therefore, the pre-law student should feel free to study in depth what interests him or her most and to enjoy the stimulation of undergraduate education. Political science is one of the fields of concentration most frequently chosen by those who plan to enter law school, and the department offers a pre-law emphasis for those who major in the discipline.

### **Goals Of The Pre-Law Program**

As undergraduate courses are chosen, certain goals should be kept in mind. First, a lawyer must be able to communicate effectively in oral and written expression. In a real sense, words are the tools of the lawyer's trade. Training for communication skills obviously must include mastery of the English language. But, above all, a lawyer must be able to write well. Any course in a discipline in which a student knows that he or she will be required to commit ideas or research to writing, submit the writing to rigorous criticism by a faculty member, and then rewrite to meet the criticism, is a course that will help prepare the student for law school.

Second, the prospective law student needs a fair range of critical understanding of human institutions and values. Here, political science, economics, philosophy, sociology and history are useful. It also should be noted that undergraduate law courses should not be taken for the purpose of learning the law, and certainly are not essential for law school admission. Such courses may be helpful, however, in providing an understanding of the place of law in society and in providing a better basis by which to estimate one's interest in law school.

Third, the prospective law student must develop creative critical thinking. A lawyer must be able to reason closely from given premises and propositions to tenable conclusions. The analysis of a legal problem almost always involves more than a persuasive policy-oriented essay. The ability to do this type of close reasoning may be sought in courses in mathematics, physical sciences, logic and advanced political and economic theory, among others.

Political science graduates have attended many different law schools, including University of Minnesota, University of North Dakota, University of Nebraska, Duke, Northwestern, Baylor, Cornell and George Washington University.

### **Pre-Law Club**

The Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science works closely with the Pre-Law Club, a student organization. The Pre-Law Club is designed to provide students with information about law schools, entrance examinations and career opportunities in the field of law.

### **The Faculty**

Jeffrey Bumgarner, Professor and Department Head, Ph.D.  
2000, University of Minnesota  
Thomas Ambrosio, Professor, Ph.D.,  
2000, University of Virginia  
Nicholas Bauroth, Associate Professor, Ph.D.,  
2003, Loyola University  
Kjersten Nelson, Associate Professor, Ph.D.  
2009, University of Minnesota  
Daniel Pemstein, Assistant Professor, Ph.D.  
2010, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

<b>Sample Curriculum</b>	
<b>Credits</b>	<b>General Education Requirements</b>
	Communication
3	COMM 110 - Fundamentals of Public Speaking
3	ENGL 110 - College Composition I
3	ENGL 120 - College Composition II
3	Upper Division Writing
	Quantitative Reasoning
3	STAT 330 - Introductory Statistics
10	Science & Technology
6	Humanities & Fine Arts
	Social & Behavioral Sciences
3	POLS 110 - Introduction to Political Science or POLS 115 - American Government
3	Social and Behavioral Sciences Elective
2	Wellness
-	Cultural Diversity
-	Global Perspective
<b>39</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Credits</b>	<b>College/Department Requirements</b>
3	Humanities Elective(s)
3	Social Science Elective
3	Fine Arts Elective(s)
<b>9</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Credits</b>	<b>Pre-Law Emphasis Requirements</b>
3	POLS - 100 or 200 level course
3	POLS 220 - International Politics or POLS 225 - Comparative Politics
3	POLS 240 - Political Ideologies
3	POLS 230 - Judicial Process
4	POLS 325 - Applied Research Methods or CJ 325 - Applied Research Methods
3	POLS 430 - Constitutional Law-Civil Liberties
3	POLS 431 - Constitutional Law-Criminal Justice
3	POLS 444 - International Law or POLS 446 - International Criminal Law
3	POLS 489 - Senior Seminar
9	400-Level Political Science Electives
6	Communication Electives
5-6	Law Related Electives
13	Electives
<b>61-62</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>122</b>	<b>Minimum Degree Credits to Graduate</b>

Students must have a qualifying minor or meet the foreign language requirement.

Suggested Electives for pre-law emphasis:

BUSN 431, 432 - Business Law I, II  
 COMM 214 - Persuasive Speaking *or*  
 COMM 308 - Business and Professional Speaking  
 ENGL 320 - Business and Professional Writing  
 ENGL 358 - Intermediate Composition

For more details on the pre-law emphasis for political science majors, contact an advisor in the department.

This sample curriculum is not intended to serve as a curriculum guide for current students, but rather an example of course offerings for prospective students. For the curriculum requirements in effect at the time of entrance into a program, consult with an academic advisor or with the Office of Registration and Records.

<https://bulletin.ndsu.edu/undergraduate/programs/>

### Transferring Credits

View NDSU equivalencies of transfer courses at:

[www.ndsu.edu/transfer/equivalencies](http://www.ndsu.edu/transfer/equivalencies)

### For Further Information

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