

## Honors Opportunities in Political Science

In addition to its regular, enlightening classroom experience, the School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS) has numerous opportunities to explore for Barrett Honors College students majoring in political science. Although many of these opportunities are available to all political science majors, they may be especially appealing to our honors students. These activities include internships in Arizona and Washington, D.C.; working on research and teaching with faculty members in SPGS; taking graduate seminars in our 4+1 accelerated master's degree program; scholarships; student organizations; and classes taken for Honors credit. At the end of this document, we provide some guidance for the capstone of the experience: the successful completion of an honors thesis in political science.

### ***For the Latest...***

...follow SPGS on social media! Although the information in this document is current as of this writing, many new internship options, distinguished speakers and visiting politicians, career panels with alumni, and other opportunities become available during each semester. Political science majors are strongly encouraged to follow us on [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#).

### ***Classes Available for Honors Credit in Political Science***

Many political science classes are available for Honors credit. While SPGS occasionally offers classes that are limited to honors students only, the more common path to honors credit is for students enrolled in a "regular" class taught by a full-time faculty member (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or full-time Lecturer) to simply ask their professor whether they can take the class for honors credit. For a list of our faculty, please see [here](#) and click on names to learn more about their subject-matter expertise. (It is always a good idea, before registering for classes, to consult the bio pages of faculty members who are teaching classes of interest.)

Students should ask their professors about the possibility of honors credit during the first week of class. (Feel free to email them prior to the start of the semester, to see whether they ordinarily consider honors-contract proposals.) Then meet with the instructor during office hours, during the first couple of weeks of class, to jointly agree upon a plan for the special project or enhanced work the student will undertake to fulfill the contract. Many of our faculty offer honors credit options for their courses every semester. For more information on Barrett's enrichment contracts, including a discussion of the procedures required to get a contract approved, please see [here](#).

### ***Internship Programs***

Honors students might also be interested in adding an experiential component to their learning about politics by pursuing internships either locally or in Washington, D.C. SPGS offers numerous opportunities for excellent students to engage in paid and unpaid internships in policy, government, law, media, and other related fields. Internships are a valuable opportunity for students to learn about the political process first hand and to explore potential career opportunities. Students seeking course credit for their own individually-arranged internship usually register for POS 484; more information regarding that option is available [here](#). Many such internship opportunities are posted on a special [Facebook page](#).

There are currently three other, more structured internship opportunities. Two of these include a coursework component supervised by ASU faculty and administered by SPGS, while the third is an intense, full-time paid internship for a semester:

1. The Capital Scholars Program enables qualifying students to have a summer internship in Washington, DC, with a government or policy focus, while earning 6 upper-division credits. In past years, Capital Scholars have interned in government offices, nonprofit and advocacy organizations, lobbying firms, media outlets, and beyond. Housing is arranged for the participants; students live with other Sun Devils while experiencing the nation's capital. Scholarships may be available for students with unmet financial need. Details are [here](#).

2. The McCain Institute Policy Design Studio and Internship Program involves spending a full semester in Washington, earning 12 credits while interning at a governmental or nongovernmental organization. The focus of the program is on foreign policy, and students meet for a weekly seminar at the McCain Institute for International Leadership taught by a former U.S. Ambassador. Details are [here](#).

Both the Capital Scholars and McCain Institute programs include organized visits to government agencies and historic sites in Washington, as well as networking opportunities. Each program has a competitive application process.

3. Turning the focus to the Grand Canyon State, the Arizona Legislative and Government Internship Program is a competitive, university-wide program that provides an opportunity to intern full-time at a state agency, or with the state legislature, Governor's office, or state Supreme Court, while receiving a tuition and fee waiver and a monetary stipend. This program operates each spring semester and carries 12 credit hours; the competitive application process occurs during the fall semester. Details and application forms are [here](#).

### ***Diplomat in Residence***

For many years, SPGS was privileged to serve as the host of a career diplomat, an employee of the U.S. State Department, who was assigned to help students from ASU and other universities in the Southwest to prepare for possible careers in the Foreign Service. Although the State Department recently moved the regional Diplomat in Residence (DIR) to the University of New Mexico, this individual is still very much available to consult with ASU students, either remotely or at special information sessions held on campus each semester. Students interested in government service in diplomacy and international affairs are encouraged to reach out individually to the Diplomat in Residence by [email](#), or attend an info session in person. Ms. [Gisela Grant](#), a Senior Coordinator at SPGS, can also help you get in contact with the DIR. Upcoming information sessions are typically announced on our social-media pages.

### ***Junior Fellows Program***

Have you ever wondered what your professors do when they are not in class or diligently grading your work? While students have some idea that professors engage in research, they rarely get to see that research take place, let alone participate in it. Because of all the talent among our undergraduate students, SPGS devised a program to offer them an opportunity to participate in research (or teaching) and to expose students to the possibility of pursuing an academic career. In this program, students pair up with a faculty member in the School to work on research projects, and also meet every other week with the other Junior Fellows in a seminar taught by a faculty member. During the seminar, professors

from the School as well as a variety of other distinguished visitors, alumni, and speakers discuss the research process as well as graduate and professional opportunities relevant to excellent students.

Students must meet the selection criteria (majors or minors of junior or senior standing, with at least a 3.3 overall GPA and/or 3.5 in political science classes), and must be nominated into the program by faculty members. If you are interested in participating, let your professors know. To find out more, please see [here](#).

### ***The 4+1 Accelerated M.A. Program***

The joint 4+1 M.A. is an accelerated degree program designed to enable highly qualified undergraduate majors in Political Science or Global Studies to earn both a Bachelor of Arts/Science degree and a Master of Arts in Political Science degree in five years. Students accepted into the 4+1 program apply 3 credits of 400-level coursework and 6 credits of 500-level coursework as “shared” courses, allowing the student to complete both degrees more quickly.

These degrees are designed to meet the needs of students pursuing careers in a variety of areas. Students completing the 4+1 program are well-positioned for application into a PhD or law program, or enter the work force in a variety of fields. Admission to the program is highly competitive. More information is [here](#).

### ***Pi Sigma Alpha***

Pi Sigma Alpha is a national honor society that recognizes scholarship and excellence for students in political science. It prepares students for intellectual and professional leadership in the political arena through individual and collaborative exchanges with peers, faculty, and the community. This student organization brings together students and SPGS faculty for both formal and informal occasions: lectures, career workshops, and social get-togethers. More information is [here](#).

### ***The Senior Honors Thesis***

The honors thesis is the culmination of an honors student’s undergraduate education in political science. Completing the thesis successfully and on-time is a tremendously rewarding experience, but also requires careful planning, preparation, and time management. Don’t wait until your senior year to begin thinking about the thesis!

Barrett Honors College now requires all students to complete a thesis-preparation workshop. [This link from Barrett](#) provides more information on the thesis requirement, procedures, and deadlines; click on “Getting Started” for information about thesis-prep workshops.

Political science majors who write their thesis in SPGS ordinarily sign up for 3 credits of POS 492 (Honors Directed Study) as a first-semester senior, and 3 credits of POS 493 (Honors Thesis) as a second-semester senior. Although Barrett allows students to undertake their thesis in departments and programs that are not their “home” major, students who desire POS credit for the thesis must have a thesis director who is a SPGS faculty member. The second reader of the thesis may be another SPGS faculty member, but might also be an individual from another ASU department or School who has expertise in the subject matter of the thesis – or potentially an expert from outside the university. If

your thesis director is from another School or department, you will need to sign up for the 492/493 courses in that department.

### ***Writing Your Thesis – a Timeline***

**Junior Year – First Semester:** This is a good time to think about what classes you have enjoyed and which faculty members you might like to work with on your thesis. You should be thinking about general topics in political science that you would like to learn more about, or intellectual problems that have intrigued you in your courses. At this point, you do not need to know your specific research question, but you should work toward a general topic (e.g., legislative elections in Arizona, Latin American politics, immigration policy, democratic deliberation, civil wars in multi-ethnic societies, etc.). And you should identify faculty members who work in these areas.

Some students want to write about a personal interest of theirs. Although we encourage you to pursue a topic you are passionate about, we suggest avoiding topics about which you have had no relevant coursework or training, or topics where our faculty lacks expertise. The thesis is probably not the right occasion to explore a wholly unfamiliar topic just because it is suddenly in the news or sounds like it might be interesting.

**Junior Year – Second Semester:** During this semester, you should plan to meet with faculty members who are potential thesis directors. (You may sometimes hear this person referred to as a “thesis advisor” – same thing.) You should also meet with the one of the Honors Faculty Advisors in Political Science (currently Professors Paul Lewis and Avital Simhony) to talk about developing your potential research topic and finding an appropriate thesis director to match with your interests. You can also email professors directly to set up a meeting. In this way, you could even start working on some of the preliminary research for your project over the summer between your Junior and Senior year – for example, collecting data, doing interviews, visiting archives, or reading primary texts. Getting things started as a junior also helps ensure that you can work with your first-choice professor. By the Fall semester, some professors may have already agreed to work on a number of theses and may not have the time to take on another one. We strongly recommend getting a thesis director by the end of your junior year. Barrett Honors College now lists a “priority prospectus due date,” offering students the possibility of applying for some extra money toward their Thesis Fund if they submit their thesis prospectus early on (more on that below).

This is also a good time to look over theses from prior years. Barrett Honors College has a repository of completed theses from recent years. This will give you some idea about what a thesis looks like and how other students in political science have approached their project. In addition, if you have a friend or classmate interested in the same topic, keep in mind that Barrett allows students to propose jointly-written theses. For these, pairs or small teams of students each apply their particular skills to a thesis project that will likely be somewhat more involved or multifaceted than a “solo” thesis.

**Senior Year – First Semester:** During the first semester of your senior year, you will register for POS 492. To obtain an override for this “class,” you will need to obtain the permission of one of the Political Science Honors Faculty Advisors (currently Professors Paul Lewis and Avital Simhony). He or she will want to know which thesis director you are working with before you will be allowed to enroll in the course. By mid-September, Barrett Honors College requires that you also submit your thesis prospectus. That document requires the signatures of the first reader (your thesis director) and the second reader.

Your research topic, by this point, should be narrowed down to a much more specific research *question*, one that can be investigated and answered within the next six months. In other words, rather than saying “My research topic is X,” you should be able to say “The question that my thesis will answer is X.” (There might, in fact, be a number of subsidiary questions, each of which could be investigated in specific chapters of your thesis. However, the whole project should have one coherent theme.)

You should be meeting with your thesis director on a regular basis and updating your second reader with your progress. The bulk of the actual research (if not the writing) should occur this semester. If you need to travel, pay for data or documents, or otherwise expend resources on your research, note that Barrett allows students to apply for thesis funding (currently up to \$750, plus \$100 if the priority prospectus deadline was met). See [here](#) for information.

**Senior Year – Second Semester:** In general, your writing of the thesis should be underway as this semester begins, given that Barrett calls for the thesis oral defense to be held approximately mid-way through this semester (e.g., in mid-March for those graduating in May). Although this scheduling may seem early, it allows for the revisions, edits, and additions to the text that thesis committees very often require before the thesis receives final approval. The need to begin writing by the beginning of this semester means that the bulk of your actual research (data collection, interviewing, archival research, or what have you) should have taken place during the prior semester.

### **Scholarships**

Each year SPGS awards numerous scholarships. Eligibility for most of these is limited to political science or (in some cases) global studies majors. Applications for these scholarships are typically due in late January, and the awards are announced later in the Spring semester. These funds are for the *following* school year, meaning that you should apply for these scholarships during your sophomore and/or junior years to defray tuition costs for the subsequent academic year. Below is a list of the current scholarships, which range in amount from approximately \$500 to \$2,800. Each of the scholarships has a somewhat distinct focus, often specified by their donor, and some have special eligibility requirements or application procedures. Some take financial need into account; others don't. We encourage you to read the full descriptions and learn about the application process [here](#).

- *Calvin M. Holman Political Science Scholarship*
- *Craig and Barbara Barrett Political Science Scholarship*
- *Getsinger Family Capital Scholars Scholarship*
- *Kenneth C. Behringer Undergraduate Research Scholarship*
- *Dean's Circle Scholarship*
- *Herman R. Frazier Political Science Scholarship*
- *Ross R. Rice Award*
- *Sarah Anne McNeil Memorial Scholarship*
- *Zachary J. Marco Capital Scholars Scholarship*
- *Norma F. Schuessler Scholarship*
- *SPGS Director's Scholarship*
- *William D. Kavan Scholarship*

- *Undergraduate Travel Support* (to defray costs for majors presenting the results of their research at national or regional professional conferences or participating in a workshop out of state)