



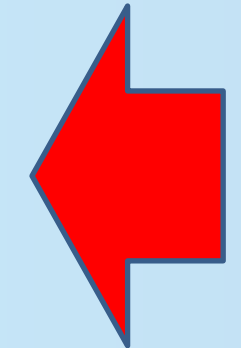
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Undergraduate Research in the US: Results from a Sample of 200 Political Science Degrees

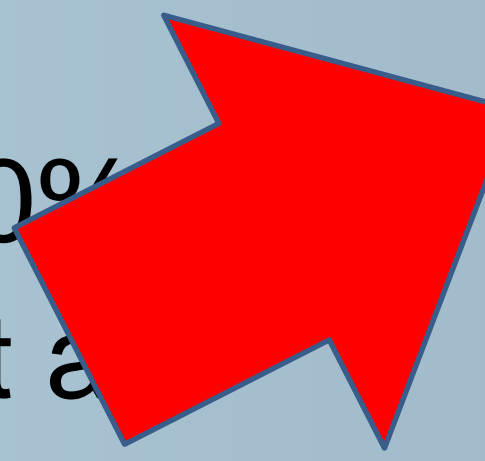
Political Science Degrees in the US

The Political Science Curriculum

- “The Wahlke Report” was part of a study commissioned on 12 different subjects by what is now the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU).
- The overall study criticized the unstructured curricula found throughout colleges and universities (AAC 1991) and called for an integrated and sequential set of courses rather than a randomly sequenced jumble of choices.
- In particular, the report recommended:
 - a common introductory course
 - a methods course taken early
 - a senior seminar or capstone course at the end



- The US has no national benchmarks for bachelor’s degrees. It uses seven regional accreditation agencies that have no ties to government and largely stay out of any academic judgements.
- The 1991 APSA report, popularly dubbed the “Wahlke Report”, was the last official report on undergraduate education by the discipline.
- Few departments meet its recommendations.
- A sample of 200 universities found that only 30% of departments require any methods training at all.
- Only 1% of all political science degrees in the sample required a research project or thesis.
- No great differences appear across types of degree/universities offering named political science degrees for methods requirements.
- However, a large gap appears between more research oriented universities and others in requirements for undergraduate research.
- Research universities, which typically have larger staff and better funding, are much less likely to require a project or dissertation than other universities.



% of Degree in Subject	25%
% of Degree in Subject Compulsory	5-10%
% Degrees Requiring Methods	30%*
% of Degrees Requiring Research Project	17%*

* Data from Parker, Jonathan. 2010. “Undergraduate Research Methods Training in Political Science: A Comparative Perspective.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 43:1, pp. 121-125.

The Survey Sample

Highest Degree Awarded	%Listed in the APSA Directory	%in the Sample
B.A. Combined Programs	21%	19%
B.A. Social Science	17	19
B.A. Political Science	40	41
M.A. Political Science	12	14
Ph.D. Political Science	10	8
Overall	100%	100%
N =	1,268	195*

* From a random sample of 200 political science programmes listed in the APSA directory. 5 programmes had no political science degree.

Undergraduate Research and Training, By Type of Degree

Type of Degree Program	%Requiring Any Methods	%Requiring Quant. Methods	%Requiring Research Methods	%Requiring Research Project or Thesis
B.A. Combined Programs	16%	13%	16%	16%
B.A. Social Science	50	12	44	28
B.A. Political Science	31	26	27	21
M.A. Political Science	27	4	7	0
Ph.D. Political Science	25	25	13 la	6
Overall	28	20	24	17

