To be adopted:

Proposed Changes to Political Science Major

**PRESENT:**

The major requirements for the B.A. degree in Political Science are as follows:

1. Lower-division requirements (four courses [at least 20 units]): one course from a, b, c, and d
2. Upper-division requirements (nine courses [at least 36 units])

**PROPOSED:**

[no change]

Students in the major must complete two of the four lower-division Political Science courses with a grade of “C” or better in order to take upper-division Political Science courses.

1. Lower-division requirements (four courses [at least 20 units]): one course from a, b, c, and d.

a) POSC 005 or POSC 005H or POSC 007
b) POSC 010 or POSC 010H

c) POSC 015 or POSC 017
d) POSC 020 or POSC 020H

2. Upper-division requirements (nine courses [at least 40 units])

a) One course from each of the following areas:

(1) U.S. Government and Politics:
POSC 100, POSC 101, POSC 108,
POSC 143, POSC 145, POSC 146,
POSC 148 or POSC 148H or POSC
148S, POSC 149, POSC 166, POSC
167, POSC 168, POSC 170, POSC
171, POSC 172/URST 172, POSC 173
or POSC 173S, POSC 180 or POSC
180S, POSC 181, POSC 182, POSC
183, POSC 186

(2) Comparative Government and Politics:
POSC 120, POSC 131, POSC 133,
POSC 151, POSC 152, POSC 153,
POSC 154, POSC 155, POSC 156, POSC 157, POSC 158/LNST 148, POSC 159, POSC 160, POSC 162/LNST 142, POSC 164 or POSC 164S

(3) International Relations and Foreign Policy:
POSC 123, POSC 124 or POSC 124S, POSC 125, POSC 126, POSC 127, POSC 128, POSC 129, POSC 130, POSC 135, POSC 147, POSC 150, POSC 169

(4) Political Theory:
POSC 110 or POSC 110S, POSC 111, POSC 112, POSC 113, POSC 115, POSC 116, POSC 117, POSC 119, POSC 122

b) Five additional courses in Political Science course work (Not more than 2 courses from the 190 series and POSC 142L nd POSC 142M are allowed toward the nine-course upper-division requirement.)

A course in statistics is strongly recommended.

[no change]

JUSTIFICATION:

The political science department is proposing that students in the major would have to pass two lower-division political science courses with a grade of “C” or higher before moving on to any upper-division courses. This would apply to majors only. Any two lower-division courses would suffice. We felt that a 2 course requirement is a good compromise between 1 or say 3 - 4. We could consider stiffening the requirements to 3 or 4 lower-division courses (as other social science disciplines do) after seeing the results of this policy.

Information: Last quarter 234 students failed to get a grade of “C” or higher in lower-division courses. They represented 20% of all those enrolled in lower-division courses. We would expect some decline in enrollment in upper division courses in the future, as the new requirement takes effect. But of course, some % of students will improve their performance, so we don't expect any dramatic declines. (This quarter 27% of the students enrolled in upper division courses are non-majors).

We would not anticipate a large increase in enrollments in the lower-division courses because no
one would be grandfathered into this system. It would just pertain to incoming Freshman once
the catalog change has been made.

We would increase the course/unit requirements for the Political Science Major. Currently we
are at the low end in the College, with 13 courses and 56 units (lower and upper combined). That
compares, for example, with 18/77 in psychology and 16/64 in economics. For upper division,
currently the catalog says, 9 courses at least 36 units. With the increase in unit value of many
upper division courses (from 4 units to 5) students could conceivably take 9 or 10 courses and
achieve 40 units. So our proposal is to change the language in the catalog to read that for the
upper division requirements for the Political Science major students would take "at least 9
courses for at least 40 units." Thus the total unit requirement for the Political Science Major
would increase from 56 to 60 units (20 units for lower-division requirements remains the same).

We believe both of these changes are necessary in order to achieve some attrition from what has
become a bulky major (927 at last count, with 40 part-timers). By weeding out some of the
weaker students, we hope to reduce class sizes and improve the overall quality of the Political
Science students in our classrooms, something we are sure everyone desires.

In areas (1) U.S. Government, (2) Comparative Government, (3) International Relations, and (4)
Theory, the underlined courses are approved courses that need to be added into the respective
areas.

Shaun Bowler
Professor
Chair, Political Science Department

APPROVALS:

Approved by the faculty of the Department of Political Science on: 2/2/2011
Approved by the Executive Committee of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences on: 4/6/11
Approved by the Committee on Educational Policy: 4/27/11