



Political Science Major - Education Abroad Advising Guide

Political Science Department

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Why study Political Science abroad?

- Invest in your future and add value to your degree
- Improve your chances of getting a job and expand career options
- Earn credits towards your degree
- Become more independent and self-confident
- Gain intercultural communication skills and expand your problem-solving skills
- Stand out to employers and prepare you to work in an increasingly diverse world
- Gain new perspective on your field
- Improve your language skills
- Develop a global network of faculty, students, friends, and locals

When is the best time to study abroad?

Political Science students should consider studying abroad upon completing their general education curriculum and before their final senior semester, e.g., between late sophomore and senior standing. Students are generally discouraged from studying abroad in their final semester, namely because it can often complicate the graduation application/confirmation process and limit our ability to assist students through unexpected circumstances or schedule changes, but it is not necessarily opposed. We ask students who do wish to complete their final semester abroad to meet with Nathan Bickett, Undergraduate Advising and Student Services Coordinator, and sometimes the Department Chair well in advance to double and triple check their requirements, as well as to develop a communication plan for the purposes of navigating unexpected or unwanted circumstances.

Because Political Science is flexible with applying abroad equivalencies to our major concentrations (generally as POLI 391 courses), and only require students to complete 33 credits in Political Science to fulfill the major curriculum, any time within the said time range is appropriate, and encouraged!

What courses should I take abroad?

Students must complete POLI 490 (the Political Science Senior Seminar) at VCU. We strongly encourage students to explore completing their Foreign Language requirement in an abroad program (again, after completing the Humanities and Sciences Gen. Ed. curriculum, which requires students to complete FRLG through the 102 level, where as we require collateral FRLG completion or proficiency through the 202, second intermediate level.) Students often explore both summer and full-semester exchanges to complete this requirement.

How can I afford to study abroad?

Studying abroad does not have to be expensive! VCU offers a variety of program options to fit most students' budgets and the Education Abroad office assists students with identifying and applying for funding. Consider the following:

- **Use what you already have!** Most financial aid and scholarships that you already receive can be used toward study abroad. Other sources of funding may also help: pre-paid tuition plans, veteran's benefits, etc.

- **Scholarships:** There are VCU scholarships to study abroad as well as nationally competitive scholarships. Begin your search on our site and at StudyAbroadFunding.org and DiversityAbroad.com
- **Program length:** Per day expenses are often less expensive on semester programs than on summer programs and airfare may cost the same regardless of the length of your stay
- **Program type:** Programs with more structure that include group activities or excursions may be more expensive than exchange programs which include tuition, room, and board.
- **Cost of living:** If you're looking to save money on studying abroad, avoid destinations with a high cost of living like capital cities and popular tourist destinations.
- **What's included?** When considering the cost of a program, determine what the program fee includes...and what it doesn't. Some are almost all-inclusive and will cover the cost of a cell phone, insurance, group excursions and welcome/farewell receptions whereas other programs cover only the basics.

Notable Funding Opportunities for Political Science Majors

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship: For US undergraduates with Pell Grants; for programs at least 28 days in length; diversity of student and destination is a priority; scholarships up to \$5,000 available; additional \$3,000 available to study critical need languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Turkish, Indic, Korean, Russian, etc.

Boren Awards for International Study: For US undergraduates to study in areas critical to US interests including Africa, Asia, Central & Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East; scholarships up to \$20,000; preference is given to study less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Swahili.

Phi Kappa Phi: For undergraduates with at least a cumulative GPA of at least 3.75

Fund for Education Abroad: General scholarships up to \$10,000 for US undergraduates planning to spend a minimum of 30 days abroad; Hilary Echo Douglas scholarship for study in Vietnam; Rainbow Scholarship for LGBTQI students

What are my next steps?

1. **Attend a First Advising Session.** These group advising sessions are held Monday-Friday at 12:30 in the Education Abroad office.
2. **Investigate Programs.** Explore global.vcu.edu/programs and talk to advisors and past participants for guidance
3. **Inform your academic advisor** of your interest in studying abroad
4. **Explore the approved course database** to view [pre-approved courses](#); talk with your academic advisor for approval on other courses
5. **Explore your funding options.** Speak with a [Financial Aid counselor](#), investigate and apply for scholarships

Featured Education Abroad Programs

The following are a list of programs recommended for Political Science majors. The sections below are organized by program type and include many different program models including group and individual programs, study abroad, service-learning abroad, research abroad, and internship abroad programs. While these are featured programs for Political Science majors, students are by no means limited to these opportunities. For all available programs, please visit global.vcu.edu/programs or contact an Education Abroad advisor.

GEO Short-Term Programs

VCU faculty members recruit VCU students for short-term programs during the summer, spring break and winter intersession. Participants earn VCU credit. New programs are created every year, and most are open to students from any major. See our [website](#) for the most current list of faculty-led programs.

Direct-Enroll at Sant'Anna Institute

The Global Education Office and the Sant'Anna Institute are pleased to offer VCU students a new summer study abroad program in Sorrento, Italy. The program offers an exceptional opportunity to take classes in a wide range of academic disciplines, all taught in English

or Italian, while living in historic Sorrento, Italy. Sant'Anna's academic building overlooks the picturesque Bay of Naples on Italy's Amalfi Coast, allowing to experience the unique culture and customs of southern Italy in a walkable, cosmopolitan setting.

Departmental and Partnership Exchanges

VCU's relationship with the universities below allows students to study at the institutions for a semester or an academic year while paying standard tuition and fees to VCU. Other expenses – such as room, board, airfare, insurance and spending money – are the responsibility of the student.

ENGLAND: University of the West of England

Semester or year exchange

The University of the West of England (UWE) is a VCU International Partnership University which allows students to study in Bristol, England for a semester or a year. UWE offers Politics and International Relations and other courses.

AUSTRALIA: Curtin University

Semester or year exchange

Located in Perth, Western Australia, Curtin University is a large public university that offers a wide variety of courses, including Australian Political and Health Systems, Indigenous Australian Political Contexts, and International Political Economy.

International Student Exchange Program (ISEP)

Choose from over 300 universities around the world offering summer, semester and year-long programs. Apply to up to 10 institutions on a single application. ISEP offers two types of placements: ISEP-Exchange (program fee based on VCU's in-state tuition, room and board) and ISEP-Direct (program fee based on host university's tuition, room and board). For best chance of exchange placement, apply by August 15 for spring programs and January 15 for fall/full-year programs.

ISEP institutions offering Political Science courses taught in English:

AUSTRALIA: La Trobe University – Bendigo

AUSTRALIA: La Trobe University – Melbourne

AUSTRALIA: Macquarie University

AUSTRALIA: RMIT University

AUSTRALIA: University of Canberra

AUSTRALIA: University of Southern Queensland – Toowoomba

AUSTRALIA: University of Western Sydney

BELGIUM: Vesalius College

BOTSWANA: University of Botswana

BULGARIA: American University in Bulgaria

CANADA: Brock University

CANADA: Laurentian University

CANADA: University of Regina

CHINA: Sichuan University

CHINA: Southwest University

CHINA: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

CZECH REPUBLIC: Masaryk University

DENMARK: Aalborg University

ESTONIA: University of Tartu

FIJI: University of the South Pacific

FINLAND: Abo Akademi University

FINLAND: Abo Akademi University – Vasa Campus

FINLAND: University of Helsinki

FINLAND: University of Jyväskylä

FINLAND: University of Tampere

FINLAND: University of Turku

FRANCE: Universite de Lille III (Charles de Gaulle)

GHANA: University of Ghana

HUNGARY: University of Debrecen

INDIA: University of Hyderabad

JAPAN: Nanzan University

JAPAN: Rikkyo University

JAPAN: Ritsumeikan University

JAPAN: Tokyo International University

KOREA: Ajou University

KOREA: Ewha Womans University

KOREA: Keimyung University

KOREA: Korea University

KOREA: Yonsei University

LATVIA: University of Latvia

LITHUANIA: Vilnius University

MALTA: University of Malta

MEXICO: Tecnologico de Monterrey (ITESM)

MOROCCO: Al Akhawayn

NETHERLANDS: Leiden University

NETHERLANDS: Radboud University Nijmegen

NEW ZEALAND: Massey University

POLAND: Wroclaw University

PUERTO RICO: University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez

PUERTO RICO: University of Puerto Rico – Rio Piedras

SOUTH AFRICA: University of Johannesburg

SWEDEN: Karlstad University

SWEDEN: Linnaeus University – Vaxjo

SWEDEN: Lulea University of Technology

SWEDEN: Sodertorns hogskola (Southern Stockholm)

THAILAND: Thammasat University

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: American University of Sharjah

UNITED KINGDOM: Plymouth University
UNITED KINGDOM: Ulster University
UNITED KINGDOM: University of Bradford

UNITED KINGDOM: University of Central Lancashire
UNITED KINGDOM: University of East London
UNITED KINGDOM: University of Sunderland

Affiliate and Alternative Programs

The following programs are sponsored by 1) study abroad organizations/providers, 2) other US institutions, or 3) foreign universities who accept visiting international students. There are many other programs available aside from the ones listed below.

ARGENTINA: [Universidad de Belgrano](#) (available through [API](#))

Terms: Fall, Spring, Academic Year

Courses include: Political and Social Change, U.S. Latin America Relations

COSTA RICA: [Veritas University](#) (available through [CEA](#))

Terms: Fall, Spring

Courses include: Human Rights in Latin America, Costa Rican Tradition: Peace and Democracy, Costa Rican Environmental Policy: A History of Policy, Politics, and Action, and International Relations in Latin America

GHANA: [University of Cape Coast](#) (available through [CIS](#))

Terms: Fall, Spring

Courses include: Governance and Democracy in Traditional African Societies, Pan-Africanism and Nationalist Movements in Africa, African Political Thought, and others.

IRELAND: [CAPA Global Seminar: International Human Rights](#)

Term: Summer

NETHERLANDS: [The Hague University of Applied Sciences](#) (available through [USAC](#))

Terms: Fall, Spring

Courses include: Contemporary European Politics, European Public Policy, International Relations, The Political Dimension of Europe, and others

SOUTH KOREA: [Yonsei](#) and [Kookmin University](#) (available through [USAC](#))

Terms: Fall, Spring

SPAIN: [Universidad de Granada](#) (available through [ISA](#))

Terms: Fall, Spring

Courses include: Social and Demographic Changes in Spain, The Arab World and the West: Past and Future, and The Political Systems in Spain and the European Union