

# Legal Studies/Political Science Advisement FAQ

## What is the relation between Political Science and Legal Studies?

The Political Science Department offers two majors and two minors. It offers a major in Political Science and a major in Legal Studies, and it offers minors in both of those programs as well.

## Should I major in Legal Studies or Political Science?

You can go to law school with either major (or with many other majors); and you can go on to graduate work in Political Science (or other fields) with either major.

So which one should you choose? If you major in Political Science and concentrate in pre-law or if you major in Legal Studies, many of the courses will be the same. The difference in the programs will be in the non-overlap courses. In *both* programs you will take American Government (POL 1200), Political Theory (POL 2110, 2120, or 3110), Research Methods (POL 2020), American Judicial System (POL 2260), Con Law: Judicial Process (POL 3240), and Con Law: Civil Liberties (POL 3250), and Seminar (POL 4800). Where the difference lies is that in Legal Studies your *other* courses will include 4 law-related or law-skills-related courses outside of Political Science as well as two additional Political Science courses relevant to international legal process and contemporary legal problems. In Political Science, on the other hand, your *other* courses will include Comparative Politics (POL 2300), International Relations (POL 2400), and three other Political Science electives. (And, of course, there's nothing that prevents a Legal Studies major from taking additional Political Science courses as free electives or that prevents a Political Science major from taking law-related courses outside Political Science as free electives.)

In addition to thinking about your first choice career path (for example, going to law school), you should consider your second choice as well. If you don't go to law school, is your second choice still likely to be in the law area? Then Legal Studies is perhaps a better fit for you. Is your second choice state and local government, or area studies? Then perhaps Political Science is the better fit.

If you are interested in social studies teaching certification, then you must major in Political Science, History, or Geography. Legal Studies is not a permissible major for social studies students.

## What are the options for double-majoring or majoring in one of these programs and minoring in the other?

### *Double Majoring in Political Science and Legal Studies*

You are allowed to double-count up to half the courses that satisfy two different majors, so if you are interested in double majoring in Political Science and Legal Studies, each

individually is a 36 credit (12 course) major, but you can complete the two majors with as few as 54 credits (18 courses).

### *Majoring in Political Science and Minor in Legal Studies*

If you are a Political Science major and wish to minor in Legal Studies, you may double-count up to half the minor credits -- 3 courses.

### *Majoring in Legal Studies and Minor in Political Science*

If you are a Legal Studies major and wish to minor in Political Science, you may double-count up to half the minor credits -- 3 courses.

### **If I am currently listed as a Political Science major, how can I switch my major to Legal Studies? How do I add a minor?**

You can change your major only if you have completed at least 12 credits of coursework at William Paterson University and have a 2.0 GPA. You apply to change your major through WPCConnect:

1. Go to WPCConnect: <http://wpconnect.wpunj.edu/>
2. Select the "Self Service" Tab
3. Under Self Service Quick Links-Registration, on the top center of the page, select "Declare/Change of Major Request Form"
4. Fill out the form

Your application will then be electronically submitted to the Political Science Department chairperson for approval (which is more or less automatic). You will be notified, via email, of the chairperson's decision and may be assigned a new advisor.

To declare a minor, you need to fill out a form at the Career Development and Advisement Center, Student Center Room 301.