



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Political Science

Syllabus

Political Science I

Course Code:	SVGA10
Course Title:	Political Science I <i>Statsvetenskap I</i>
Credits:	30
Degree Level:	Undergraduate level
Progressive Specialisation:	First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements (G1N)

Major Field of Study:
SKA (Political Science)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2019-03-05, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2019 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

General admission requirements

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- give an account of significant historical and contemporary political theories, and
- give an account of significant ideologies.

Competence and skills

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- apply political theories on concrete sets of problems, and

- apply ideological perspectives on concrete sets of problems.

Judgement and approach

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- contrast and assess historical and contemporary political and theoretical arguments, and
- contrast and assess ideological positions.

Module 2, Political institutions

Knowledge and understanding

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- explain the institutional arrangements of different political systems, both in terms of function and in terms of structure,

Competence and skills

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- apply central political science concepts to events, processes, and institutions in different political systems,

Judgement and approach

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- examine and critically assess the possible effects of institutional changes on different political systems.

Module 3, Political participation

Knowledge and understanding

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- give an account of and discuss different models of democracy,
- give an account of and discuss political participation in a broad sense, with a focus on social movements and individual resistance,
- give an account of and discuss consequences of marketisation for political participation,

Competence and skills

- identify and characterise different types of political participation on the basis of scholarly sources,
- develop an independent line reasoning with support from scholarly sources,

Judgement and approach

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- analyse and reflect upon the relationship between different types of political participation and the institutional arena, and
- compare different perspectives on the study of political participation in terms of both methodological and normative perspectives.

Module 4, International politics

Knowledge and understanding

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- give an account of central concepts and theories used in studies of international politics,
- give an account of central themes, developments, and trends in studies of international politics,

Competence and skills

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- apply concepts and theories on concrete problems in international politics,

Judgement and approach

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- contrast and assess the explanatory potential of different theories in the study of international politics.

Content

Political Science is the scholarly study of politics. Political Science focuses primarily on power and power relations in different forms and contexts, from state operations to social movements, and from local policy to international relations.

The main purpose of Political Science I is to examine the concept of politics in different ways. The first module treats politics in terms of theory and ideology (political ideas); the second module focuses on politics in an institutional perspective (politics in relation to the institutional frameworks that we have created, such as the parliament, the government, municipalities, and the administration); the third module examines politics as it emerges among people in a broad sense (political participation); and the course ends with the fourth module which studies politics in interstate and supranational contexts (international politics).

Political Science I comprises four modules covering different political science perspectives and research areas. The course contains the following modules:

Module 1: Political Ideas

This course gives an introduction to political thinking in a historical perspective, from antiquity to our time. Influential theories of the state, freedom, justice, gender, and cultural diversity are analysed and contrasted, alongside political ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, socialism, feminism, and environmentalism. The aim of the course is that students acquire basic knowledge and understanding of the development of political ideas in the Western world, and develop competence and skills in analysing and contrasting political and theoretical arguments and ideological positions. The methodology component includes basic practice in such analysis.

Module 2: Political Institutions

The course starts out from a concept of politics related to the various functions of political institutions in different forms of governance. There is a focus on the constitutional structure of institutions and related processes at the local, regional, and national levels, primarily in Sweden but also in comparison to other countries. Fundamental political science concepts are introduced, discussed, and compared to promote understanding of the significance, function, and structure of political institutions in different political systems, where means of governance and control, the institutions of state agencies, and political parties are highlighted as central components. The methodological course elements include elementary practice in political analysis, for example policy analysis and comparative analysis.

Module 3: Political Participation

The module takes a broad conception of politics as its point of departure and include studies of other forms and aspects of politics than the purely institutional. The political forms are treated both from factual and normative perspectives, as well as the appearance of these forms and the values that can be ascribed to them. Political aspects are used in order to perceive and understand politics from various perspectives, such as participation, deliberation, gender, governance, and power. The methodological components include basic training in political analysis, such as political behavior and discursive approaches.

Module 4: International Politics

The module gives an introduction to central concepts and theories in the study of international politics.

Specific themes covered in the course include the growth and development of the modern international system; conflict and collaboration in a theoretical perspective; the position of international rights in an international system without a central authority; the structure and role of international organisations; international political economy and globalisation in a development perspective; regionalism and the EU; and tendencies of change in contemporary international politics in terms of power. The methodological components include basic training in analysis of issues related to international politics and Swedish foreign policy and security policy using relevant theories and concepts.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Module 1

Assessment is based on an individual written take-home exam and two written group assignments presented in a seminar.

Module 2

Assessment is based on a written exam and a written group assignment presented in a seminar.

Module 3

Assessment is based on an individual written take-home exam, an individual written assignment, and a written group assignment presented in a seminar.

Module 4

Assessment is based on an individual written take-home exam and two written group assignments presented in a seminar.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to special pedagogical support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

Grades

One of the grades Fail (U), Pass (G), or Distinction (VG) is awarded in the examination of the course.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course Certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor and Master levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.

The course is required for the Political Science Programme (Politices kandidat).

For information about courses which cannot be included in the same degree programme as SVGA10, please contact the course coordinator.

