



Carleton
University

Department of
Political Science

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

www.carleton.ca/polisci

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Advising Support for Political Science Student

There are many different sources of information and support that are available to you as you plan your academic program. They can help you to make choices about the courses you take, find the appropriate academic and wellness supports, explore career opportunities, and clarify policies and procedures. This program handbook is a reference to key sources and supports at Carleton. This guide is not a substitute for personal contact between yourself and the departmental academic adviser, with whom you should meet at least once each academic year.

Department Advisors

The most important resource at your disposal is the Department of Political Science [Undergraduate Advisor](#). The advisor can help to guide you in planning your program, including setting goals and selecting courses, to ensure you are able to successfully meet your degree requirements for graduation. The Department also has a faculty Supervisor of Undergraduate Studies, whom you can also consult if you have questions or are seeking advice about your program. Students are strongly advised to meet with the Advisor or Supervisor at least once each academic year to make sure you're on track to complete your studies according to your plan.

The departmental adviser can help you with:

- Reviewing your program, program elements, and/or course selection
- Course overrides for registration in restricted courses
- Course equivalences and substitutions
- Information on internships and placements
- General academic and career questions
- Opportunities for graduate studies

Political Science
Undergraduate Advising
Office

Ms. Sarah Landry
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University Advisors

The [Academic Advising Centre's \(AAC\)](#) primary focus is to support undergraduate and special students in achieving academic success. The AAC offers advising sessions for students who are experiencing academic difficulty, need assistance understanding their [academic audit](#), want to ensure they are fulfilling their degree program's academic requirements or have been placed on Academic Warning (AW). Students can use the [drop-in advising service](#) to speak with an academic advisor.

International Student Advisors

The [International Student Services Office \(ISSO\)](#) offers services and programs that contribute to positive international experiences for all Carleton students. They are dedicated to helping international and exchange students adjust to life in Canada and get the most out of their student experience.

The ISSO also supports and encourages Carleton students in gaining international exposure both locally and abroad through volunteer opportunities, international internships and co-op, and participation in exchange or study abroad programs. The ISSO also hosts regular events and workshops to keep you informed and connected in making the transition to Carleton and planning international exchange opportunities.

Students can [contact the ISSO](#) for inquiries about international exchange and internships, information about UHIP, or a range of other questions.

Navigating the Program

Majors In Political Science

You may have applied directly to Political Science as your Major when you were admitted to Carleton, or you may add the Political Science Major or switch into it from another program at Carleton. The Political Science Major is designed to give you a broad introduction to the study of politics and an opportunity to add depth in a subfield or concentration of particular interest to you. Carleton offers three different [Political Science majors](#).

BA Honours

In this 20-credit program, students study and debate politics in Canada and abroad, international relations, as well as political theory and methodology. In addition to introductory courses, specialized seminars with limited enrolment allow students to focus on specific topics or issues, such as electoral trends, new forms of political activism, or international conflicts. Students **have the option of** completing an Honours Research Essay [1.0 credit] in their final year.

Students in the BA Honours program must complete at least 10.0 credits in Political Science, plus an additional 10.0 credits in electives, for a total of 20.0 credits to graduate. Note that most courses offered in the Political Science program are worth 0.5 credits, so the honours program normally takes about 4 years to complete.

Honours students must also demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English or successfully complete at least 1.0 credit in language courses at Carleton (see more below).

BA

This program provides foundational knowledge of politics in Canada and internationally, as well as in political theory or methodology. The program teaches you to probe a variety of sources for information, to make critical assessments of your findings, and to present them orally or in writing. Note that this program is not normally sufficient to continue to a graduate degree.

Students in the BA program must complete at least 7.0 credits in Political Science, plus an additional 8.0 credits in electives, for a total of 15.0 credits to graduate. This normally takes about 3 years of full-time study.

BA Combined Honours

This program allows students to combine the BA Honours Program in Political Science with another discipline, such as Law, Economics, or English. For a full list of combined honours options, consult the [Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Students will study the same aspects of political science as those in the BA Honours, but they will become experts in two disciplines, rather than one. Students take 7.5 credits in Political Science, the required number in the second major, and additional free electives to make a total of 20.0 credits to graduate.

Your **Major** is recorded on your transcript and BA diploma when you graduate. Your major specifies the course credits you are required to take in a specific discipline and defines the focus of your undergraduate program. The credits you take in your major are used to calculate your Major CGPA.

In addition to your Major in Political Science, you may add up to two additional elements to your program: **minors** and **concentrations**. Each of these are explained in other sections of this handbook.

Concentrations In Political Science

A concentration is a **program element** that is formally recognized on your diploma when you graduate. You may select a concentration to develop expertise, knowledge and/or practice in one of three areas of political science listed below.

A concentration offers a ‘road map’ – a group of courses that are thematically related – from which you select 4.0 political science credits. These credits may also count toward requirements for a political science major or as free electives, so they are not ‘extra’ or on top of the credits normally required for the BA Honours program. Students normally select a concentration at the end of first year, prior to selecting their second-year courses. A concentration may also be added later, but students should consult the Undergraduate Advisor before doing so.

More information and answers to **frequently asked questions** about concentrations are found on the [Political Science Concentrations](#) webpage. For the complete list of requirements and courses for each concentration, please consult the current [Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

This concentration encompasses the study of Canadian politics, from its institutional framework to important themes and questions in Canadian political life, as well as an applied exploration of the political process, including policy analysis and public administration and management.

In addition to examining federal and provincial institutions, including Parliament, the public service, political parties, elections, the federation and the courts, courses in this concentration address both longstanding and emerging questions around such topics as: the environment; migration; social policy; settler-colonial/Indigenous relations; Quebec/Canada relations; political economy; regionalism; and gender, race, and class politics.

International Relations and World Politics

This concentration focuses on issues in world politics across different geographical scales ranging from cities, provinces, and countries to questions of world order involving the Global North and the Global South. These issues include war and peace, reform and revolution, security and foreign and defence policy, trade and finance, poverty and development, democracy and authoritarianism, human rights and wrongs, struggles over gender, race, class, ethnicity, and Indigeneity, migration, climate change, and others.

Students may specialize in different topics such as: security & foreign policy; international political economy and development; human rights, migration & environment; regional politics in the global North or global South.

Power and Political Ideas

This concentration is designed to enable students to understand the way that political ideas – such as justice, equality, democracy, civic virtue, rights, oppression, and freedom – shape and are shaped by the real world where politics takes place, from legislatures, courts, and social movements to everyday political spaces such as households, schools and even universities. In so doing, students will gain insight into key political issues, such as racial injustice, colonialism, gender inequality Indigenous-settler relations and wealth inequality.

Emphasis is placed on understanding how political ideas shape and are shaped by the wider socio-political realm, and how this realm is constituted through multiple and intersecting relations of power.

*Note that the three concentrations listed here were new for the 2023/24 academic year. The eight concentrations that were offered in previous years have been discontinued since 2024/25. Students already enrolled in one of those may continue in them or switch to a new one. **Please consult the Undergraduate Advisor before making any changes.***

Elective Courses

In addition to Political Science courses, students are required to take additional courses to complete their degree. These are called **electives**, which you choose according to your interests. In selecting electives, keep in mind that you must also complete a **breadth requirement**, which is explained below. In addition, you may want to use some of your electives towards a Minor, or for a Concentration within your Major.

Electives

are credits that do not count toward your Political Science Major. Electives are taken in almost any subject or discipline that you are interested in. They enable you to tailor your studies to gain greater breadth in a variety of areas or pursue a specific area that complements your Major. For example, many Political Science students are interested in taking courses in Legal Studies, History, Communications, or Psychology. Others may want to become fluent in a second (or third) language or pursue their enthusiasm for Art History or Architecture!

Free Electives

are credit courses – including Political Science credits – that may be taken to make up the total number of elective credits you need for your program. Note that free electives in political science do not count toward your Major – but they do count toward your degree requirements.

The number of free elective credits you can take depends on your degree program. Students in the BA Honours program are required to take 10.0 elective credits, of which no more than 2.0 may be free electives. Students in the 15.0 credit BA program must take at least 8.0 elective credits, of which no more than 2.0 are free electives.

Breadth Requirement

Students in BA programs must also fulfil the [breadth requirement](#). This requirement ensures students take a breadth of elective courses and receive a well-rounded arts education. Students must complete 1.0 credit from each of **three of the four** Breadth Areas:

1. Culture and Communications
2. Humanities
3. Science, Engineering, and Design
4. Social Sciences

Political Science courses are included in the Social Sciences breadth area. Your elective courses should be selected to fulfil the remaining two breadth areas.

Minors

A **Minor** is a set of credits (usually 4.0 to 5.0) in a specific discipline other than your Major. You may add a Minor to your degree in a topic of your interest. A list of programs that offer Minors can be found on the [Admissions website](#). Students should consult the specific program for more details, including the number and types of courses that are necessary to meet the requirements. Credits you take to complete a Minor are included in your electives.

Language Requirement

BA Honours students in Political Science are required to demonstrate **proficiency** in a second language other than English. This is normally done by completing 1.0 credit in one language offered at Carleton, through the French Department, School of Linguistics and Language Studies or the College of Humanities. These credits are included in your electives and may also be used towards a minor in that language. For students in the Canadian concentration, French must be used to satisfy the language requirement.

If you already have second language skills and wish to be considered for an exemption from the language requirement, you may apply to the Undergraduate Advisor. More information about the language requirement and the application for exemption can be found on the Department of [Political Science Language Requirement webpage](#).

Experiential Learning Opportunities

Carleton University offers many different types of hands-on **experiential learning** opportunities for students to combine what you learn in the classroom with practical experiences, which can enhance your learning and build your employability skills for after graduation. Experiential learning can be classroom-based, such as simulations, case studies, and field trips, or it may be community-based or in workplace environment. It can also occur internationally or closer to home. Below are some of the community-based and workplace opportunities you can explore.

Undergraduate Research

Are you interested in acquiring or honing your research skills? There are several Undergraduate Research Opportunities to work on research projects, either independently or with a faculty supervision.

[PSCI 4908 – Honours Research Essay \[1.0 credit\]](#)

Honours Political Science majors in their final year may choose to do an individual research project. The expected output of the project is the Honours Research Essay, completed under the supervision of a faculty member. Students must be enrolled in the Honours program and have a CGPA of 9.00 to be eligible.

[Carleton University Research Opportunity \(CUROP\)](#)

CUROP is a summer undergraduate research internship program funded by the Faculty of Public Affairs. Successful applicants receive funding support to work fulltime in the summer term on a research project of their choosing, under supervision of a faculty member.

[IPAF 4900 – Research Mentorship](#)

The Faculty of Public Affairs offers a 0.5 credit course that enables students to gain research skills and experience by collaborating with a professor on their research project.

[Internship-Carleton University Research Experience for Undergraduate Students \(I-CUREUS\)](#)

Carleton's I-CUREUS program offers students an opportunity to gain hands-on research experience by working on a faculty-supervised research project. Students can sign up for one term or for both and complete up to 150 hours of paid research.

Co-operative Education

Co-op work terms enable you to integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of undergraduate studies in Political Science through real-world experience. Students may be placed in government, not-for-profit, private, or voluntary sector organizations.

Students in the [Political Science co-op program](#) normally alternate between study terms and paid, full-time work terms that are directly related to your program of study. The first co-op work term occurs after you have completed second year. Students typically take an additional year to complete the three required co-op work terms and fulfill the academic requirements of their program.

You can apply directly into the co-op program from high school or during your first year of study at Carleton. Co-op students must maintain an overall CGPA of 9.5 and full-time study throughout the program. The Co-op program is administered by [Carleton's Co-op Office](#).

Domestic & International Internships

Internships involve unpaid or volunteer work at a chosen organization. Internships usually include written assignments and allow you to earn credits toward your degree. Credit-based internship programs for Political Science students are described below.

PSCI 3906/07 Internship Ottawa Experience Placement

This is a one- or two-term paid/unpaid internship that students can do with an organization whose activities relate to politics. The internship is intended to be at least one full day per week, during a regular academic term.

Students will be given a list of possible host organizations and will be placed based on the organizations' acceptance.

The internship is open to students with third-year Honours standing, a declared major in Political Science, and a major CGPA of 9.0 or higher. For more information, check the [PSCI 3906/3907](#) webpage.

The Washington Centre Internship

This is a two-term program for undergraduate and graduate political science students to spend either the fall/winter or summer term in Washington, DC. Students spend 4.5 days per week in internships set up and monitored by The Washington Center and take a course from professionals in the field. In addition, there are events such as site visits, Congressional briefings and lectures by eminent international visitors which round out the experience.

Students must also take one of the following prerequisite courses PSCI 2200, PSCI 3200 or PSCI 3201. For more information about this program, check [The Washington Centre Internship](#) webpage.

GINS 3930/3931 International Internship

This is a one- or two-term, full-time summer internship that can help you gain real-world international experience, develop contacts in your field and build your resume to market yourself for future career opportunities. Political Science undergraduate students can work internationally for academic credit – GINS 3930 is half a credit for a 6-week internship, GINS 3931 is a full credit for a 12-week internship and are counted toward your elective requirements.

Students should have achieved second-year standing and a CGPA of 6.5 or higher to be eligible. For more information about the program and requirements, check out the [GINS 3930/3931 International Internship](#) webpage.

International Exchange: Study Abroad

An international exchange allows students to pursue study at one of Carleton's many partner universities around the world. Students pay tuition to Carleton while on exchange and can transfer credits toward their Carleton degree. You may go on exchange in the Fall, Winter, or Summer terms.

To do an exchange, you should have at least 2nd year standing, a CGPA of 7.0 or higher, and enough credits remaining in your degree to study full-time at the partner institution.

Carleton University also offers many other opportunities to gain international experience. These programs are administered by the [International Student Services Office](#) (ISSO). For more information, check out the [Political Science International Exchange website](#).

Credit Transfers

Students enrolled at Carleton may earn credit for courses taken at other recognized post-secondary institutions, in Canada and abroad, through International Exchange or with a Letter of Permission. Please consult with the Department Advisor for more details.

Degree Requirements and Regulations

Your Academic Audit

If you're not sure whether you need to take specific courses, check your **academic audit**. Your audit is your 'road map' to academic success. The audit can tell you:

- Your degree title and requirements
- Year-standing (first, second, third or fourth)
- Any elements – such as minors or concentrations – that you have added to your degree
- Courses that you have taken and those that you still need for each element
- Courses you are currently registered in
- Final grades you've earned in all your courses so far, and your Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)
- Your academic standing

You can view your audit any time by logging in to Carleton Central and following the 'my audit' link. If you need assistance reading your **audit**, you can get help at the Academic Advising Centre website, watch the [myAudit Video Demonstration](#), or you can contact the Political Science advisor.

Keep in mind that your audit is different from your **transcript**. Your audit is not an official document. To obtain an official or unofficial copy of your transcript, you can contact the Registrar's Office or [submit a request](#) online.

The Grading System

Your standing in a course is the letter grade you earned at the end of the course. To convert a letter grade to a grade point, you can consult the grading system table provided on the [Academic Advising CGPA](#) website.

Your Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is used to evaluate your academic performance. It's calculated to determine your standing Overall (this includes all courses counting towards your degree) and in your Major (this includes only courses required for Political Science), as well as minors, concentrations, and specializations.

To determine your CGPAs, you can check your audit. Your Overall CGPA is the top number in the SUMMARY section of your audit and your Major CGPA is the top number in the MAJOR REQUIREMENTS section of your audit.

For more information about CGPAs, including how to calculate them, and other grading-related questions, please consult the [Academic Advising CGPA](#) website.

Reduced Course Load

A **full-time student** is one who is registered in at least 1.5 credits per academic term, whereas a **full course load** is 2.5 credits in the fall or winter terms, and a total of 2.0 in the summer terms.

The maximum course load for full-time degree students is 5.0 credits over the fall and winter terms (or 6.0 with an 'overload'). Many students, for a variety of reasons, choose to take a **reduced course load**.

When deciding whether to take an overload or reduced course load, students are strongly encouraged to discuss their academic goals and commitments outside of class with your departmental Advisor. Academic Advising Centre also has a [Reduced Course Load](#) website which offers more information and some things to consider when deciding on your course load.

Academic Standing

The [Academic Continuation Evaluation](#) (ACE) is an end-of-term assessment of your academic status. The first assessment is made after you have completed at least 5.5 credits at Carleton, with subsequent evaluations at the end of each term. For most first-year students starting in September, this means your first ACE will be at the end of your second fall term (earlier if you take summer courses).

If you have met the minimum Overall CGPA required by the program, you will be granted a status of **Eligible to Continue** (EC), which means that you may continue your program with no restrictions or conditions.

A status of **Academic Warning** (AW) means that your Overall CGPA does not meet the academic standards of the program. You may continue in your degree program, but you must clear the Academic Warning by raising your GPA to achieve EC status. If you are unable to clear the Academic Warning, you may be asked to withdraw for a temporary period or be dismissed from the program.

The minimum CGPA requirements to be **Eligible to Continue** (EC) are:

	Less than 5.5 credits	Between 5.5 and 15.25 credits complete	15.5 or more credits complete	Graduation
Honours	n/a	Overall 4.00	Overall 5.00	Overall 5.00 Major 6.50
15-Credit	n/a	Overall 4.00	n/a	Overall 4.00 Major 4.00

For more information about Academic Continuation Evaluations, or to discuss your academic status, please consult the Academic Advising Service. If you are not sure about your ACE or would like some guidance on how you can clear a warning, you can also contact the Political Science Undergraduate Advisor.

The Department of Political Science has detailed program information and resources for students on its [Undergraduate website](#), including a list of [FAQs](#) that can guide you through your program.

Academic Regulations of the University

The complete official academic regulations of Carleton University are available in the current [Undergraduate Calendar](#) and in [archived calendars](#).

This is an important resource for all students, and you are encouraged to read it carefully.

Course Registration

Registering for your courses is done through Carleton Central. Before you start the registration process, plan out your course selections – find out which courses are available, which ones you want to take and have met the prerequisites for, and how they fit into your schedule. Your ability to register in a Political Science course will require that:

- Your **time-ticket** has opened according to the University schedule
- You have the necessary **year-standing** for the course
- You have completed the course prerequisites, as indicated in the course descriptions found in the Undergraduate Calendar
- There is space in the course you are attempting to register into

For general registration support, follow the [registration steps](#) outlined by the Registrar's Office. For Political Science specific questions, check out our [Registration Information](#) page.

Time Tickets & Year Standings

For Fall and Winter registration, you are assigned a ['time-ticket'](#) based on your year-standing.

Your **year-standing** is not based on how long you have been studying but rather on how many credits you have earned. Have a look at [this chart](#) to determine your year standing.

Once your time-ticket opens, it will remain active until the last day to register. But don't wait! Register as soon as your time ticket opens to have the best chance to get your preferred courses – some courses fill very quickly. Check out the [registration dates and deadlines for the 2023-2024 academic year](#).

Space in Courses That Are Full

Some PSCI courses have waitlists that will be activated when the course is full. If the course you want has a waitlist *and* you meet all the registration requirements and prerequisites for the course, you will have access to the wait list via [Carleton Central](#). If you receive a notification that space has become available for you, you will only have 24 hours to register in the course. At the end of that time, the next student on the list is notified and you will lose your spot. So, please check your email frequently each day in case a space becomes available. For courses that don't have waitlists, monitor Carleton Central frequently in case space becomes available.

Need help joining a wait list? Check out the following information and videos for more [waitlisting help](#).

Registration Override Requests

Students seeking permission to register in a course for which they lack the required year-standing or prerequisites may submit "Registration Override Request" from the "Add or Drop Classes" page in Carleton Central. Please note that submitting a request does *not* guarantee space in courses. You may only submit one request per course.

Please do not contact the departmental office or the instructor of the course for updates on the status of your request – an automatic response will be sent to your Carleton email with the status of your request within 2-3 business days.

All email correspondence to the Undergraduate Advising Office must come from your Carleton email account. Emails from non-Carleton accounts will not receive a reply. Please include your student ID number in your correspondence.

Still have questions? Check out [Carleton's Registration Override Request page](#).

Registration Assistance

If you need help completing your registration, visit the [Registration Support page](#) and contact the [Student Registration Assistance Team](#).

Academic Support and Development

Academic Services

The **Centre for Student Academic Success (CSAS)** can help you to hone your university skills through its writing services and consultations, one-on-one learning support sessions, and a wide range of workshops each term, such as:

- Academic integrity
- Academic reading
- Balancing work, school, and life
- Managing procrastination
- Test and exam preparation
- Time management

Explore the [CSAS website](#) for a full list of resources they offer. Learning support and resources to help you succeed in online courses are available at [Carleton Online](#), including getting started with Carleton's learning management system, Brightspace.

The **Paul Menton Centre (PMC)** provides academic support for students with disabilities, including workshops, notetaking, and arranging classroom accommodations. [MacOdrum Library](#) also offers a wide range of services and supports for students with disabilities.

If you're looking for [research support](#) or getting started with an assignment, **MacOdrum Library** has some invaluable self-serve resources, including subject guides and course guides for Political Science. You can also get [research help](#) by consulting with the Political Science subject specialist or chatting online with a librarian. The Library also offers study spaces, including [study rooms](#) you can book for 1-2 people up to one week in advance.

Carleton's [Current Students](#) portal is a great place to start familiarizing yourself with the wide range of academic resources and student support services offered by the University.

Career Services

It's never too soon to start thinking about your post-graduation plans, and [Career Services](#) is right there to support you with a wide range of programs, workshops, and opportunities. You can explore your career options based on your degree or program, learn more about future graduate studies, get job search support, and find out about opportunities to get practical experience and hone your skills. You can use the [Employability Framework](#) developed specifically for Carleton students to track your own skills and experiences as you progress through your studies.

Career Services also offers regular workshops, career fairs, and networking events throughout the year, and you can also meet or chat individually with a career counsellor.

You can access many of their services, including job postings, by logging into **mySuccess** through your [Carleton Central](#) account.

More Campus Supports for Students

There are many other offices on campus that support students and can help you cope with stress, or a crisis should it arise. We all work together and will often refer students to other offices as appropriate. Please note that all offices observe strict confidentiality.

- [Awards and Financial Aid](#)
- [Campus Safety Services](#)
- [Equity and Inclusive Communities](#)
- [Spirituality Centre](#)
- [Student Affairs](#)
- [Ombuds Services](#)

Your Health and Wellbeing

Carleton University offers a wide range of health and wellness programs and services for students, both on campus and online. A good place to start is by exploring some of the following resources:

Mental Health and Well-Being

Discover the tools and resources Carleton offers to help understand, manage, and improve your mental health and well-being while at university. The Wellness Services Navigator will guide you in finding the right ones for you.

Health and Counselling Services (HCS)

Medical services, counselling, and health promotion tools are available to all Carleton students through this campus service. HCS has a full team of physicians, registered nurses, and other health professionals who deliver outpatient care, and certified counsellors for confidential personal counselling.

All People, All Pathways

Carleton University has partnered with the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA) to offer weekly support meetings for students affected by substance use and addiction. *All People All Pathways* is a peer support group facilitated by individuals with lived or living experience with substance use and addiction. Find out more about joining the student group [here](#), as well as information on other support groups and resources that are available.

Empower Me

Carleton undergraduate students have access to additional support through Empower Me, a mental health and wellness service that seeks to contribute to a resilient student community by supporting existing on-campus and Studentcare mental health resources. Call **1-833-628-5589 (toll-free)**, available 24/7 from anywhere in Canada or the US.

Get Involved!

Department of Recreation and Athletics

Part of a balanced lifestyle includes incorporating some physical exercise into your day. The benefits of exercise for stress management are well documented. And a drop-in game of squash or yoga class can be a great way to let off steam! Check out the wide range of programs and facilities available to you to stay active.

Student Experience Office

You can also get involved in campus extra-curricular activities to relieve stress and have some fun! Find out more about the leadership development and community service-learning opportunities available to you at the [Student Experience Office](#) (SEO) and how you can get involved in campus [clubs and societies](#). Here are some to look for:

- [Carleton Political Science Society](#)
- [Carleton International Relations Society](#)
- [Carleton University Debate and Speech](#)
- [Carleton United Nations Society](#)

Stay on top of **Department news, information, and events** by connecting with the Brightspace [Virtual Undergrad Office](#).

Be sure to read our regular undergrad newsletter, *What's Happening*
Available on Virtual Undergrad Office Brightspace pages

Contact the **Political Science Undergraduate Advising Office**:
Email: PSCI.Advising@Carleton.ca | Phone: 613-520-2600, ext. 2776



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