

# Political Science Pays Off

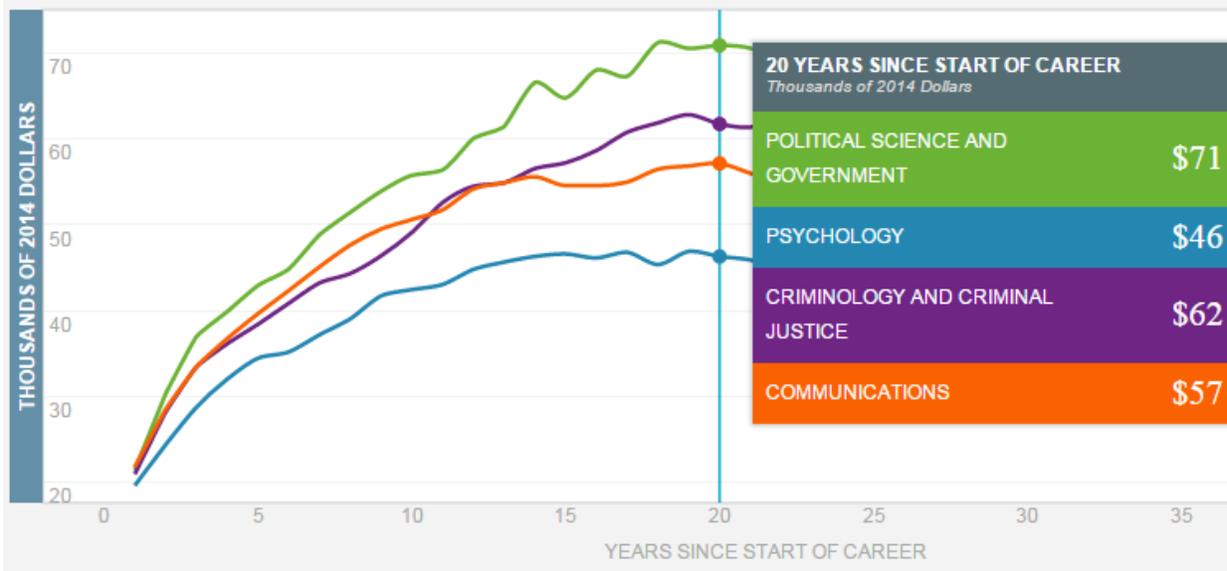
Considering a major in political science? Your interest may be spurred by the desire to understand politics, or the wish to make the world a better place, or your plans to attend law school, or by your understanding of the fundamental importance of power, justice, and law in shaping the kind of society we live in. But you are making a good choice financially as well.

The Hamilton Project ([http://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/career\\_earnings\\_by\\_college\\_major/](http://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/career_earnings_by_college_major/)) has analyzed reams of US Census American Community Survey data to assess how people with different majors do financially. The graphs below show a few of the many comparisons this data allows you to make. The upshot is that Political Science is a good investment.

20 years post-degree, the typical (median) political science major with no graduate degree earns \$71 thousand dollars a year. Compare this with the typical criminology and criminal justice major, who earns \$62 thousand, the typical communications major, who earns \$57 thousand, or the typical psychology major who earns \$46 thousand.

## Annual Earnings

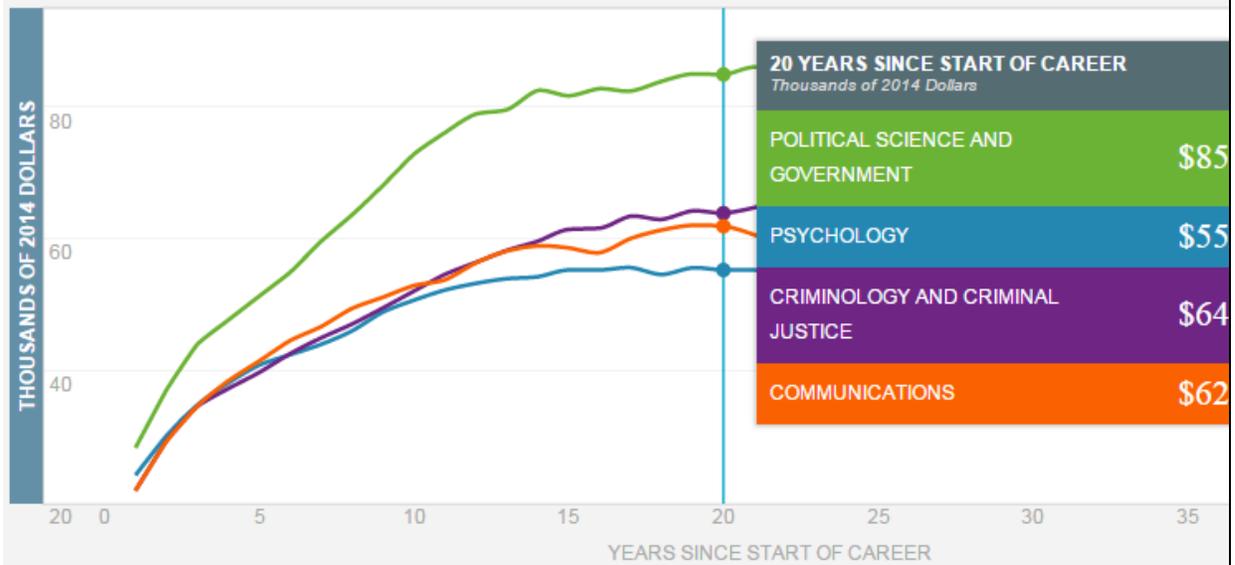
MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS OVER CAREER



Add in those with graduate degrees, and political science majors do even better. The typical political science major (including those with graduate degrees) \$85 thousand per year, far and away better than the typical criminal justice major with a graduate degree who earns \$64 thousand, or the typical psychology major with a graduate degree who earns \$55 thousand.

## Annual Earnings

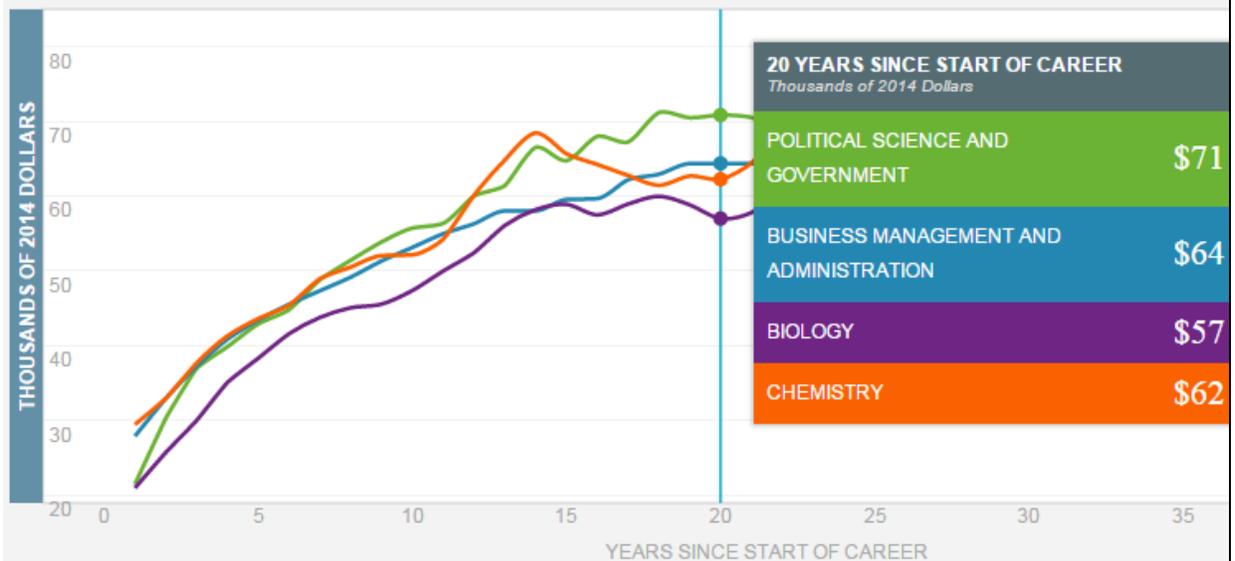
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But what about those who say you should pursue studies in natural science or business – something more technical or more practical? We would take issue with the claim that political science isn't technical or practical but be that as it may, political science majors once again perform well. 20 years since start of career, the median political science major with no graduate degree earns seven thousand more than the median business administration major, nine thousand more than the median chemistry major, and fourteen thousand more than the typical biology major.

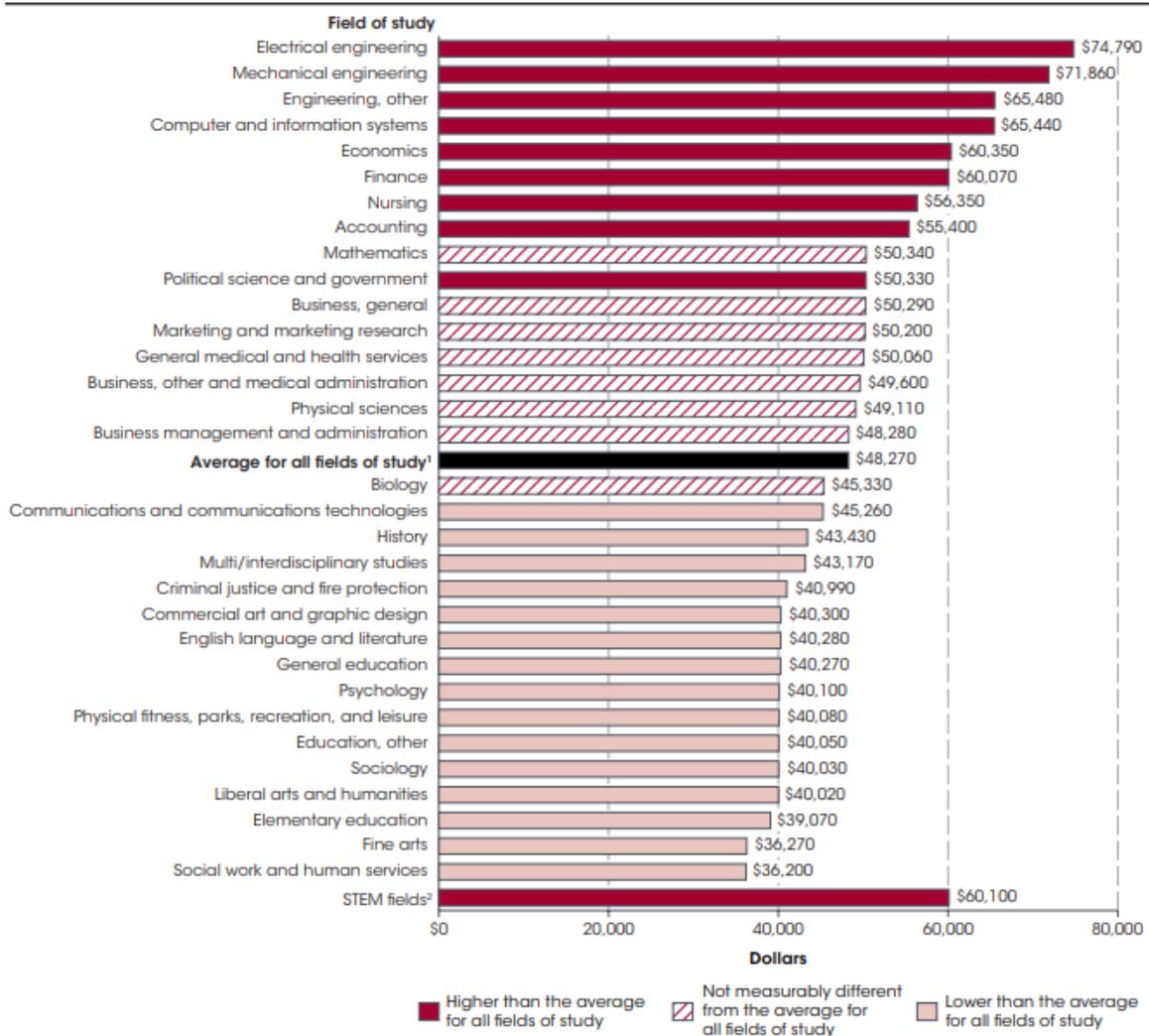
## Annual Earnings

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS OVER CAREER



A Department of Education study using Census data found that 25 to 29 year old political science majors earn significantly more a few years post-degree than the average college major. You can read the report here: [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe\\_sbc.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_sbc.pdf). Political science and government majors earn more on average than business majors, marketing majors, physical sciences majors, and biology majors, among many others.

**Figure 1. Median annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree recipients, by selected fields of study: 2016**



<sup>1</sup> Includes fields not separately shown.

<sup>2</sup> "STEM fields" include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies.

NOTE: Only fields in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree recipients had earned degrees are displayed. Median earnings are for full-time year-round employees (those who worked 35 or more hours per week and 50 to 52 weeks in the year).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 505.10.