

How International Are Undergraduate Political Science Programs at Liberal Arts and Sciences Colleges and Universities in the Midwest?

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Internationalization is a hot topic on college and university campuses today. It is also one of the hot button topics facing the APSA (see Varshney 2004; Breuning 2005). Although relatively recent to APSA, internationalizing the higher education curriculum has long been a concern of educational scholars. Arum (1987) identifies three areas in which campuses can pursue internationalization: promoting the international content of curricula, tracking the international movement of scholars and students, and providing technical assistance and educational cooperation programs that engage American education in efforts abroad. Rivers (1994) adds a fourth dimension: promoting awareness of other cultures and ways of thinking through extracurricular cross-cultural experiences, which would ideally include outreach to the surrounding community.

There are many known benefits that derive from the internationalization of student experiences. These include developing *international competence*—including cultural and linguistic skills—and critical thinking skills among students (Breuning, 2005; Schattle, 2003; Rivers 1994) and promoting national security (Altbach 2002). Altbach summarizes these benefits thusly:

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Even before September 11, 2001 international education was receiving increasing attention, with American colleges and universities adding *global awareness* and *intercultural competencies* to their mission statements and learning outcomes for general education. These efforts are intended to enhance the skills of college graduates in a global workforce, to enable students to participate in solutions to pressing global problems, and to promote global peace and understanding. These significant educational goals immediately come to mind in discussions of international education.

Traditionally, international education has been valued because it “promotes the attainment of self-knowledge, which is among the oldest objectives of education” (Stewart 2004, 159). Although this theme is prevalent in the literature on international education, scholars increasingly acknowledge that, in an interconnected and globalized world, the importance of international education lies not only in personal enrichment but also—and perhaps more crucially—in the attainment of intercultural competencies (Carter 1994; Kitsantas 2004; Lewis 1995). Intercultural competencies are defined by the ability to see both difference and similarity, to see both unique aspects of cultures as well as commonalities between them (Cushner 1998; Khoi 1994). Further, intercultural competencies are closely linked to the development of higher order thinking skills, which include the ability to perceive and understand different perspectives.

The APSA has made great efforts at “internationalizing” the political science discipline (Rajae 2005). Two recent articles published in *PS: Political Science and Politics* have called for the greater internationalization of American political science (see Varshney 2004, Breuning 2005). However, these efforts have largely focused on recruiting international scholars as members of the Association. However, despite these efforts,

remarkably little has been written regarding the first of Arum’s (1987) areas of internationalization—promoting the international content of the political science curriculum. To be sure, these are not mutually exclusive areas—bringing in international faculty can do much to internationalize the political science curriculum. Breuning (2005, 435) touched upon the importance of internationalizing both the Association’s membership *and* the classroom curriculum by arguing that:

internationalization and cross-national collaboration at primarily undergraduate institutions is likely to have an impact not only on the faculty, but also—and very directly—on the students. In other words, investing in the internationalization and cross-national collaboration of faculty at primarily undergraduate institutions enriches the education of students and better prepares them for the challenges of a multicultural and globalized environment.

Nonetheless, bringing international faculty to many cash-strapped, primarily undergraduate institutions, especially in the Midwest, presents special challenges. However, as Breuning (2005, 435) notes, exposure to international affairs in areas of the country such as the Midwest should be at least as important an educational priority as it is elsewhere in the country. Students in the Midwest have traditionally had less exposure to the world beyond the borders of their own country and are less likely to have traveled abroad. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and aware of continuous but vague threats of terrorism, some students (and their parents) have become increasingly reluctant to study abroad. Despite the considerable diversity between Midwestern, primarily undergraduate, liberal arts institutions, lack of exposure to the world beyond the U.S. borders aptly describes their collective student body.

So how internationalized are the political science curriculum at primarily

undergraduate institutions in the Midwest?¹ This paper examines two facets of the internationalization of the political science curriculum. First, using a broad survey of the curricula of 189 liberal arts and sciences colleges and universities across 10 Midwestern states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin), we examine the extent to which students are exposed to international affairs via the political science major. Our survey also takes into account the form that the “delivery” of this material takes place (via area studies, thematic studies, integration in general classes, etc.). Second, we examine the departmental and institutional features that correlate with variations in the extent to which the curriculum is internationalized.

By answering our query, we hope to advance the discipline in two ways. First, identifying different curricular structures is consistent with the recent push toward developing the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education (largely promoted by the initiatives associated with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching) to address issues of pedagogy and curriculum and investigate the *context* (particularly curriculum structure) in which learning takes place (see Boyer 1990; Hutchings and Shulman 1999). Second, we seek to identify those departmental and institutional factors (if any) that are associated with variations in curricular design. This latter goal, in part, can help identify the institutional roadblocks that may prevent curricular reform, and will be of practical interest to academics interested in revising the political science curriculum at their own institutions. Indeed, knowing the factors (i.e., institutional characteristics as well as other contextual features) that correlate with the degree to which political science programs expose their majors to international affairs may provide these programs with insights for their institution-appropriate structural design or redesign.

Method

To assess the various programs we first consulted the Carnegie classification system and identified the masters I, masters II, and primarily baccalaureate liberal arts institutions from the 10 aforementioned states in the Midwest. In total, we examined 283 institutions, of which 189 (67.7%) reported offering a political science major.² There was wide variation in the size of the schools—the largest of these institutions had 16,121 undergraduate students and the smallest 567. Eight-

teen (9.5%) of the schools were in Iowa, 34 (17.6%) in Illinois, 20 (10.6%) in Indiana, 8 (4.2%) in Kansas, 17 (9.0%) in Michigan, 19 (10.1%) in Minnesota, 20 (10.6%) in Missouri, 7 (3.7%) in Nebraska, 26 (13.8%) in Ohio, and 20 (10.6%) in Wisconsin. One hundred thirty-five (71.4%) were private schools, whereas the remaining 54 (28.6%) were public institutions (see Table 1 for list of schools).

We used each department’s web site to examine the structure of the political science majors at these 189 colleges and universities. Since many students now narrow down their choice of colleges by examining institution and departmental web sites as a prelude (or sometimes alternative) to a campus visit, web sites have become an important tool for universities to advertise and explain their majors. While deriving data from university web sites may have its limitations, they do provide important insights into each university’s offerings as well as an efficient way to gather comparative data.

Each college and university that has a political science major was coded for the characteristics of the major, the features of the department/discipline and the characteristics of the institution. The major coded characteristics were: the proportion of the total number of courses offered that included comparative or international content³; the *minimum* number of courses a political science student was required to take that involved international or comparative content⁴; the number of full-time faculty who have training in comparative politics or international relations⁵; and the number of geographic areas covered by the course offerings reported in college and university catalogs.⁶

In addition, we also included several “independent” variables that may correlate with variations in the degree to which a political science program offers international content. These involve both departmental/discipline characteristics such as the proportion of faculty that were Comparative or IR instructors and whether the political science program was administratively housed in a “combined” department (such as a department of history and political science or a department of social science, or behavioral sciences).⁷ This provided some indication as to the relative freedom political scientists have to construct their own curriculum. In addition to disciplinary characteristics, we also examined institutional characteristics, such as the total undergraduate student enrollment at the institution, the student/faculty ratio, and whether the school was a private or public institution. In addition, we examined

the impact of whether the institution offered a separate IR or International Studies major. It is quite conceivable that the presence of such majors would increase the likelihood of IR or Comparative course offerings. On the other hand, political science disciplines may view such majors as a way of absolving the political science major of offering *any* international or comparative courses.

Finally, in order to discern the quality of the institution, we created a dummy variable of whether the institution was classified as “most or more selective,” by *US News and World Report* in their annual *America’s Best Colleges* (2004); schools were coded “1” if they were listed as either most or more selective, and “0” if otherwise. We used this measure rather than other indicators of quality (such as faculty research productivity) because 1) unlike other measures this is an officially ascribed classification as opposed to one based upon subjective indicators; and 2) these institutions are more likely to market themselves as quality teaching rather than research institutions.

Results

Table 2 reports some basic institutional characteristics, as well as characteristics of the political science majors for the 189 colleges and universities. As indicated, most of the schools were private (71.4%) and most were independent political science departments (67.4%). A further 37% of the institutions were considered either most or more selective. Regarding the characteristics of the disciplines, the average total number of political courses offered by these colleges and universities was 33 (with a high of 112 and a low of 8) and the average percent of those courses that had either Comparative or IR content was 27.7% (with a low of 5% and a high of 59%). Further, the average number of political science courses required for a major was 10.27 and the average percent of those courses that had either comparative or IR content was 14.1%. On average about a third of political science faculty at primarily undergraduate institutions teach Comparative or IR courses (with 27 schools reporting no Comparative or IR full-time faculty).

Figure 1 reports the frequency counts for the number of courses required for the political science major. As indicated, the modal number of courses is 10 (64 institutions) closely followed by 11 courses (49 institutions). One program required 14 courses and one required only six political science

Table 1
List of Schools with Political Science Majors and States in Which They Are Situated

College	State	College	State
Adrian College	Michigan	Grand View College	Iowa
Albion College	Michigan	Grinnell College	Iowa
Alma College	Michigan	Gustavus Adolphus College	Minnesota
Alverno College	Wisconsin	Hanover College	Indiana
Anderson University	Indiana	Hastings College	Nebraska
Aquinas College	Michigan	Heidelberg College	Ohio
Ashland University	Ohio	Hillsdale College	Michigan
Augsburg College	Minnesota	Hiram College	Ohio
Augustana College	Illinois	Hope College	Michigan
Aurora University	Illinois	Illinois College	Illinois
Avila College	Missouri	Illinois Wesleyan University	Illinois
Baker University	Kansas	Indiana University-Purdue University	Indiana
Baldwin-Wallace College	Ohio	Fort Wayne	Indiana
Beloit College	Wisconsin	Indiana University Northwest	Indiana
Bemidji State University	Minnesota	Indiana University South Bend	Indiana
Benedictine University	Illinois	Indiana University Southeast	Indiana
Bethany College	Kansas	John Carroll University	Ohio
Bethel College	Minnesota	Kalamazoo College	Michigan
Blackburn College	Illinois	Kenyon College	Ohio
Bradley University	Illinois	Knox College	Illinois
Briar Cliff College	Iowa	Lake Forest College	Illinois
Buena Vista University	Iowa	Lake Superior State University	Michigan
Butler University	Indiana	Lawrence University	Wisconsin
Calvin College	Michigan	Lewis University	Illinois
Capital University	Ohio	Lincoln University	Missouri
Cardinal Stritch University	Wisconsin	Lindenwood University	Missouri
Carleton College	Minnesota	Loras College	Iowa
Carroll College	Wisconsin	Luther College	Iowa
Carthage College	Wisconsin	Macalester College	Minnesota
Central College	Iowa	MacMurray College	Illinois
Central Methodist College	Missouri	Malone College	Ohio
Central Missouri State University	Missouri	Manchester College	Indiana
Central State University	Ohio	Marian College	Indiana
Chicago State University	Illinois	Marian College of Fond Du Lac	Wisconsin
Coe College	Iowa	Marietta College	Ohio
College of Saint Benedict/St. John's University	Minnesota	Marygrove College	Michigan
College of Saint Catherine	Minnesota	McKendree College	Illinois
College of the Ozarks	Missouri	Millikin University	Illinois
College of Wooster	Ohio	Minnesota State University, Mankato	Minnesota
Columbia College	Missouri	Missouri Southern State College	Missouri
Concordia College-Moorhead	Minnesota	Missouri Valley College	Missouri
Concordia University	Illinois	Missouri Western State College	Missouri
Cornell College	Iowa	Monmouth College	Illinois
Creighton University	Nebraska	Moorhead State University	Minnesota
DePauw University	Indiana	Morningside College	Iowa
Doane College	Nebraska	Mount Mercy College	Iowa
Dominican University	Illinois	Mount Union College	Ohio
Dordt College	Iowa	Muskingum College	Ohio
Drake University	Iowa	Nebraska Wesleyan University	Nebraska
Drury University	Missouri	North Central College	Illinois
Earlham College	Indiana	North Park University	Illinois
Eastern Illinois University	Illinois	Northeastern Illinois University	Illinois
Eastern Michigan University	Michigan	Northern Michigan University	Michigan
Elmhurst College	Illinois	Northwest Missouri State University	Missouri
Emporia State University	Kansas	Northwestern College	Iowa
Fort Hays State University	Kansas	Oberlin College	Ohio
Franciscan University of Steubenville	Ohio	Ohio Dominican College	Ohio
Franklin College of Indiana	Indiana	Ohio Northern University	Ohio
Friends University	Kansas	Ohio Wesleyan University	Ohio
Grand Valley State University	Michigan	Olivet Nazarene University	Illinois

continued

Table 1 Continued

College	State	College	State
Otterbein College	Ohio	University of Minnesota-Duluth	Minnesota
Park College	Missouri	University of Minnesota-Morris	Minnesota
Pittsburg State University	Kansas	University of Nebraska at Kearny	Nebraska
Purdue University Calumet	Indiana	University of Nebraska at Omaha	Nebraska
Quincy University	Illinois	University of Northern Iowa	Iowa
Ripon College	Wisconsin	University of Saint Francis	Illinois
Rockford College	Illinois	University of Southern Indiana	Indiana
Rockhurst University	Missouri	University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	Wisconsin
Roosevelt University	Illinois	University of Wisconsin-Green Bay	Wisconsin
Saginaw Valley State University	Michigan	University of Wisconsin-La Cross	Wisconsin
Saint Cloud State University	Minnesota	University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh	Wisconsin
Saint Mary's College	Indiana	University of Wisconsin-Parkside	Wisconsin
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota	Minnesota	University of Wisconsin-Platteville	Wisconsin
Saint Mary College	Kansas	University of Wisconsin-River Falls	Wisconsin
Saint Olaf College	Minnesota	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point	Wisconsin
Saint Xavier University	Illinois	University of Wisconsin-Superior	Wisconsin
Simpson College	Iowa	University of Wisconsin-Whitewater	Wisconsin
Southeast Missouri State University	Missouri	Urbana University	Ohio
Southern Illinois University	Illinois	Valparaiso University	Indiana
Southwest Baptist University	Missouri	Wabash College	Indiana
Southwest Minnesota State University	Minnesota	Walsh University	Ohio
St. Ambrose University	Iowa	Wartburg College	Iowa
Stephens College	Missouri	Washburn University	Kansas
Taylor University	Indiana	Wayne State College	Nebraska
The Denison University	Ohio	Webster University	Missouri
The Hamline University	Minnesota	Western Illinois University	Illinois
The University of Findlay	Ohio	Westminster College	Missouri
Trinity Christian College	Illinois	Wheaton College	Illinois
Truman State University	Missouri	William Jewell College	Missouri
University of Detroit Mercy	Michigan	Winona State University	Minnesota
University of Evansville	Indiana	Wisconsin Edgewood College	Wisconsin
University of Illinois at Springfield	Illinois	Wisconsin Lutheran College	Wisconsin
University of Indianapolis	Indiana	Wittenberg University	Ohio
University of Michigan-Dearborn	Michigan	Xavier University	Ohio
University of Michigan-Flint	Michigan	Youngstown State University	Ohio

courses. Figure 2 reports the minimal number of Comparative or IR courses an undergraduate major must take to complete a degree. Although most programs require two courses (88 institutions), a fairly large number (29) require *no comparative or IR courses for political science majors*. Finally, Figure 3 reports the number of geographic areas covered by the course offerings of these 189 institutions. Many institutions offer a variety of area studies courses with the modal number of three geographic areas covered (with 43 institutions offering courses covering three areas, 13 offering five areas, and two offering six areas). However, 43 political science programs offered no courses covering geographic areas outside of the U.S.

What disciplinary/departmental and/or institutional variables correlate with the extent to which programs offer a higher proportion of Comparative or IR

courses? Table 3 reports the results of a set of three regression analyses that examine the relationship between a number of independent variables and:

- the percent of total courses offered that are Comparative/IR (Model 1);
- the percent of required major courses that are Comparative/IR (Model 2);
- the percent of full-time faculty whose specialty is Comparative/IR (Model 3).

In the first two models we examine the impact of the percent of full-time faculty who are Comparative/IR; whether the political science discipline is combined with other disciplines in a departmental structure, whether the institution is most or more selective (or otherwise); whether there is an IR or International Studies major separate from the political science major; the size of

the institution measured in terms of total undergraduate student enrollment; the student/faculty ratio; and whether the school was private or public.

From Table 3 it is clear that the only variable that is related to the percent of course offerings that are Comparative/IR for both the total number of courses and for major courses is the percent of Comparative/IR full-time faculty. Interestingly, none of the other independent variables are related to course offerings, including measures of the size of the institution, whether it was private or public, whether the institution was more or less selective, and whether the institution offered a separate IR or International Studies major.

Model 3 uses the percent of full-time faculty who are Comparative/IR as the dependent variable. As indicated, none of the independent variables are related to the dependent variable in this model. This of course suggests

Table 2
Institutional and Disciplinary Characteristics

Public/Private	Public = 28.6%(54) Private = 71.4% (135)
Selectivity	Most or more selective = 37% (70)
Combined department?	32.6% (n = 63)
Average number of political science courses listed in catalog	33
Average percent of political science courses listed in catalog that were comparative or IR courses	27.7%
	Low = 5%
	High = 59%
Average number of political science courses required for a major	10.27
Average percent of required political science courses that were comparative/IR courses	14.1%
Average percent of full-time faculty who were comparative/IR	34.0%
	Low = 0% (n = 27)
	High = 100% (n = 4)

Figure 1
Number of Frequency Counts for the Courses Required for a Political Science Major

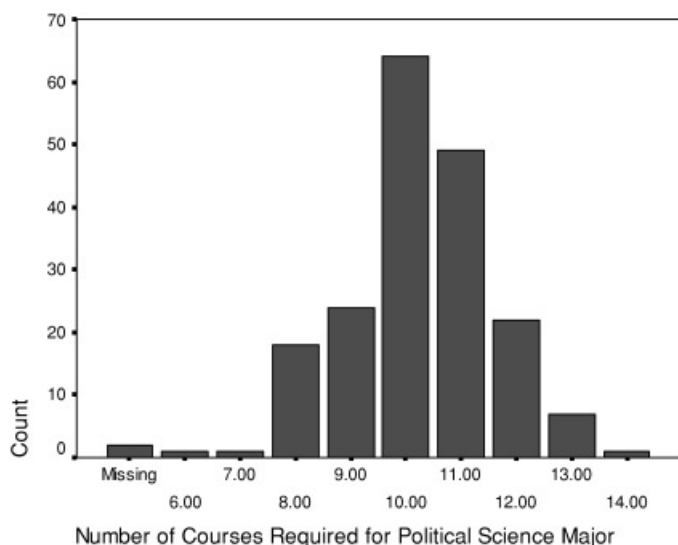
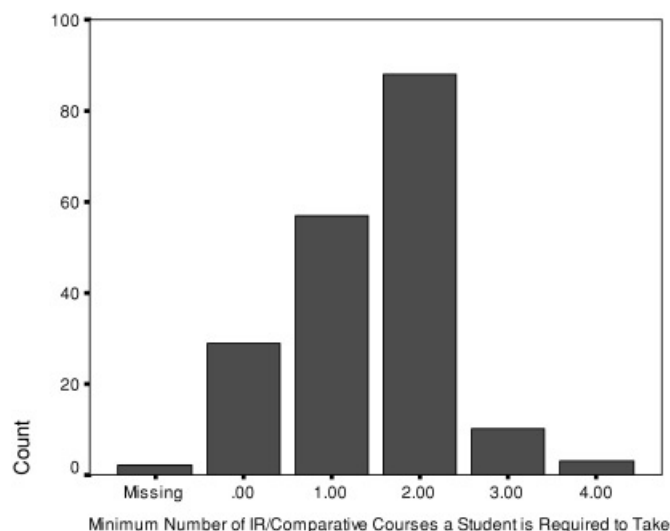


Figure 2
Minimum Number of IR/Comparative Courses a Student is Required to Take



that the percent of Comparative/IR faculty are not necessarily constrained by physical limitations such as institution size or institutional characteristics such as the level of selectivity or whether it was a private or public school.

Conclusion

How internationalized is the political science curriculum at primarily undergraduate institutions in the Midwest? Without comparing to levels of internationalization in other regions of the country, this question is difficult (if not impossible) to definitively answer. Nonetheless, most of the programs surveyed require that political science students

take only a minimal number of courses in IR or Comparative (at most two and quite often only one course of 10). Disturbingly, 29 institutions require no international courses of their undergraduate majors. Interestingly, the presence of an IR or International Studies major as an alternative to political science, neither enhances or detracts from the international content of the political science major at these institutions.

Part of this may be due to the lack of qualified faculty available to teach such courses. One of many recommendations made by the ACE/Carnegie Project on Internationalizing the Curriculum was to provide support (both logistic and financial) for outreach efforts to international faculty. Perhaps in addition, the Associa-

tion might consider expanding efforts to facilitate visiting scholar positions for international scholars at institutions that do not offer many Comparative/IR courses, and/or to provide greater resources to faculty at such institutions to acquire international experiences that might assist in expanding course offerings. Even short-term scholarly visits (such as those sponsored by the Center for International Educational Exchange, CIEE) would benefit such faculty immensely. These short-term trips (usually lasting 10–14 days in the summer) require only a few thousand dollars. Perhaps APSA could help facilitate the travel of political science faculty from smaller institutions that do not have the faculty training to offer a substantial

Table 3
Coefficient Estimates for Three Models

	Model 1 Dependent Variable = Percent of total courses offered that are Comparative/IR Coefficient (standard error)	Model 2 Dependent Variable = Percent of Required Major Courses that are Comparative/IR (i.e., the minimum number of Comparative/IR courses as student is required to take over total number of courses) Coefficient (standard error)	Model 3 Dependent Variable = Percent of Full-Time faculty who are Comparative/IR Faculty Coefficient (standard error)
Percent of full-time faculty who are comparative/IR	.10** (.03)	.22*** (.03)	—
Combined department dummy	.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)	.02 (.03)
Selectivity dummy	.002 (.01)	-.001 (.01)	.02 (.03)
Presence of IR/IS major	.001 (.01)	-.005 (.01)	.04 (.03)
Student enrollment	.001 (.002)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Student/faculty ratio	.001 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.001 (.007)
Private school dummy	.001 (.02)	.002 (.02)	.02 (.05)
	Adjusted R-Square = .05	Adjusted R-Square = .20	Adjusted R-Square = .03

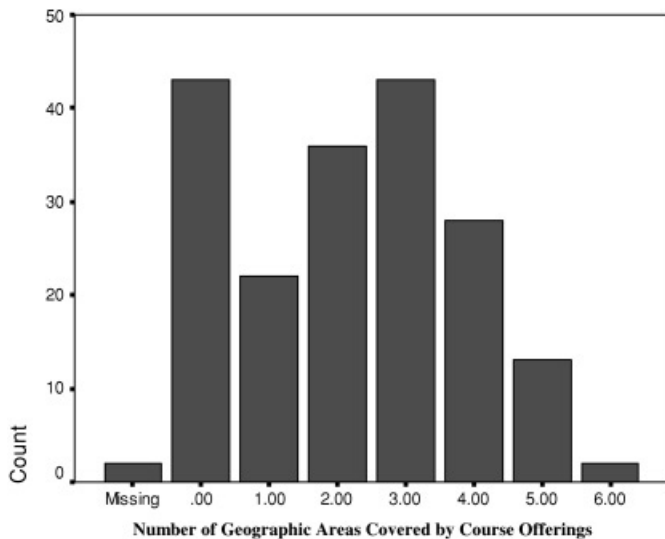
N = 189

*p ≤ .05

**p ≤ .01

***p ≤ .001

Figure 3
Number of Geographic Areas Covered by Course Offerings



number of Comparative or IR courses. If APSA is serious about efforts to promote the internationalization of the Association and of the political science discipline,

then it must make a more concerted effort to include in that process faculty at primarily undergraduate teaching institutions throughout the country.

Notes

1. We chose Midwestern institutions because these schools are less likely to have access to international resources, yet serve large numbers of undergraduate students.

2. The definition of a political science major included majors listed as “political science,” “politics,” “government,” and “political science and international relations.” Not included were majors defined as combination majors (such as “history and political science” and “politics and sociology”) nor interdisciplinary majors with a concentration in political science. This is because the Wahlke report (1991) did not speak directly to these majors, and we can thus expect them to be structured very differently than other purely political science majors.

3. These courses include not only those on non-U.S. countries and International Relations (IR), but also courses such as “Political Economy” and “Comparative Political Parties,” and “Comparative Gender Politics.”

4. Expressed as a percentage of the total number of political science courses required for a political science major.

5. Ideally, this would involve examining the academic background of the faculty. However, this was not possible, so as a second best alternative, we identified such faculty by both their list of publications (when available) and/or the courses they taught. Using a very permissive

standard, even if a faculty member taught both American or IR courses AND American courses, they were counted as Comparative or IR faculty. This measure was expressed again as a percentage, with the ratio of Comparative/IR faculty over the total number of full time faculty in the discipline.

6. These geographic areas included: Western Europe, Eastern Europe (including the former Soviet Union), the Middle East and Central Asia, East and Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

7. Departments that were listed as “political science and international relations” were coded as political science departments, given their common genealogy.

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