Graduate Handbook

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Department of Political Science

Georgia State University

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Introduction

This Handbook describes requirements for earning advanced degrees in the Department of Political Science. Graduate students are responsible for knowing about and complying with the Department of Political Science policies and requirements described in this Handbook as well as the policies and requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences detailed in the Graduate Catalog.

Programs

The department offers four programs:

- Master of Arts in Political Science
- Dual B.A./M.A. in Political Science
- Dual M.A. in Political Science and Master of International Business (in cooperation with the Robinson College of Business)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
The Ph.D.

Students who do not already hold an M.A. in political science, and who are admitted to the Ph.D. program, will receive and M.A. “in passing” as they complete the requirements for the doctoral degree. (Such students are referred to as “direct admit” Ph.D. students). The requirements for direct admit Ph.D. students are somewhat different for those students who already hold an M.A. in political science.

The Ph.D. degree can be completed on either a full-time or part-time basis. However, the Department strongly encourages students to pursue the degree full-time if possible, and any students considering part-time study should discuss their plans with the Director of Graduate Studies.

First and Second Year Reviews

All doctoral students will be evaluated by the Department’s graduate faculty as to their performance in the program at the end of their first and second years in the program.

Areas

The department recognizes six fields in the discipline for the purposes of comprehensive exams and course requirements:

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Politics
- Political Theory
- Public Law
- Research Methods

Basic degree requirements

Please see the Graduate Catalog, reprinted below, for the specific degree requirements.

The Major Area Paper

Major Area Paper Requirements

Following successful passage of their written comprehensive exams, students must write a major area paper related to their proposed dissertation topic. Major area papers must be read and
approved no later than 90 days after the successful completion of comprehensive exams.

Major area paper topics must be related to the student’s proposed dissertation interests, and must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies as well as the student’s dissertation chair. Similar to passing comprehensive exams, successfully completing the “MAP” is a step which each student must take prior to advancing to candidacy and writing a dissertation.

The MAP will be evaluated by three members of the faculty – two who are specialists in the area and one who is not. The student’s dissertation chair will be one member of the committee; the other specialist will also be chosen by the student in consultation with the graduate director. The third, “outside” member of the committee will be chosen by the graduate director.

MAPs will be due to MAP committees no later than 90 days after the successful completion of comprehensive exams; the specific due date will be announced at the start of every semester by the graduate director. MAPs will be graded as either “Passing” or “Inadequate.” If a MAP is determined to be “inadequate,” students will be allowed one chance to revise the paper based on the committee’s feedback. This revised paper is due no later than 30 days from when the grade was communicated to the student. Failure to submit a passing MAP after the revision period will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.

As with all work a student completes in the doctoral program – including for courses and comprehensive exams – the MAP should reflect the student’s original work. Any hint of plagiarism, or other potential violation of the University’s Academic Honesty Policy, will result in severe consequences including the potential of dismissal from the program.

**Major Area Paper Guidelines**

The primary purpose of the MAP is for the student to demonstrate competency within the specified “major area.” Major areas are distinct from, and thematically narrower than, exam fields. A major area might be a substantial topic within an exam field (such as American presidential politics or comparative government formation), or a substantial topic which crosses subfield lines (e.g., game theoretical treatments of legislative politics).

There are two different ways a student may demonstrate competency in their major area: writing (1) a critical review of the literature within the student’s major area or (2) an original research paper which contributes to (or at least tests a hypothesis related to) the major area. For the first option, students should be sure to discuss the reach and limitations of the existing literature in terms of questions asked, concepts raised and answers offered, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the existing concepts and answers. For the second option, students may choose
to test alternative hypotheses stemming from the existing literature or probe different methods or measurements that stem from the literature as well as offering alternatives that will hopefully contribute to the existing literature. Students must consult with and obtain approval from their MAP committee when determining the paper format. A completed MAP should be approximately the length of a publishable scholarly article.

Students should meet with their MAP committee members as soon as possible after successfully passing comprehensive exams to discuss the committee’s expectations for the paper. The student and the committee should discuss and obtain agreement upon the following points: the MAP topic, the scope of the major area, the format of the paper (including whether it will be a critical review or an original research paper), length guidelines, and any additional expectations or requirements the committee wishes to specify. In general, a student’s MAP committee will be available for verbal consultation, but not to read drafts of the paper.

Note that although the official requirement is that the MAP be completed no later than 90 days after completing comps, it is not necessary to wait until comps are completed for students to start working on (or even completing) their MAPs. Indeed, in nearly every case the work a student does for the MAP will help him or her prepare for exams. Students may not turn in as a MAP a previously submitted and graded seminar paper. However, students and their committee may decide that it would be appropriate for the student to base the MAP on a paper that he or she wrote in a graduate seminar, pending substantial revision or expansion of the original paper; similarly, committees may approve the student basing their MAP on a previous conference paper, published article, or MA thesis. These issues should also be discussed at the initial MAP committee meeting, and students must obtain formal approval from the committee before utilizing any previous work.

Successful completion of the MAP requirement means that the student has completed the necessary steps to advance to candidacy and enter the dissertation stage of the program. The student should formally create their dissertation committee within 30 days of completion of the MAP requirement, and submit to the graduate director a completed “Declaration of Intent” form. We also encourage all students to meet with their dissertation committee within this time period. Students must then defend their dissertation proposals within 90 days of successfully completing the MAP requirement.

**Qualifying Examinations**

**Purpose**

One of the most important steps in the doctoral program is the qualifying examination process.
Qualifying examinations serve to demonstrate that students have acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to function as independent scholars in political science generally and in their chosen fields of specialization. Breadth of knowledge is expected as well as a deep, critical understanding of the literature. Equally important is the ability to apply that understanding to the central, enduring and practical questions of politics and government. As the qualifying examinations constitute one of the last qualifying steps prior to the dissertation, significant emphasis is placed upon ensuring that students are well prepared to move on to the final phase of their studies.

**Timing**

*When can you take comps?*

PhD qualifying exams are taken after all coursework is completed. With permission of the Director of Graduate Studies, students may be permitted to take qualifying exams during their final semester of formal coursework. However, students may not take doctoral exams if they have Incomplete or In Progress grades in previous courses (that is, prior to the semester in which exams are taken), which are part of their formal program of study for the doctorate. To be eligible to take the qualifying exams, students must also have an overall GPA of at least 3.4 and have taken at least three graduate courses in each of the two exam fields (no double counting of courses). In addition, students should have completed their course distribution and methods/language requirements. Students are expected to take the exams after completing no more than 36 hours of coursework beyond the MA degree. To confirm eligibility to take the exams, students should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the semester in which they plan to sit for the exams. Students must enroll in POLS 8900 Qualifying Readings in the semester in which they take their exams.

Students will take two written exams in two separate fields of the discipline (choosing from American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Political Theory, Public Law, and Research Methodology). Students wishing to take a qualifying exam in Research Methodology must complete the required methods sequence, including both 8830 (Advanced Quantitative Methods) and 8840 (Qualitative Methods), as well as at least one additional methods course; the exam will cover both quantitative and qualitative methods.

*When will the exams be scheduled?*

All students taking PhD exams in a given semester will take the written exams on the dates scheduled for that semester. PhD qualifying exams will be scheduled in February and September of each year. No exceptions will be made, and no exams will be scheduled in the summer. The
Director of Graduate Studies will announce the scheduled dates early in each semester. If an oral examination is requested by a committee, the Director of Graduate Studies will schedule it no later than two weeks after the request is made. Oral examinations should be 30 minutes to one hour per subject. Students are required to be physically present for oral examinations, and they will be closed-book, closed-note.

**Content**

*What do the exams consist of?*

The PhD qualifying exam consists of two on-campus, closed-note, eight-hour written exams in the student’s major fields of study and, if requested by the committee, an oral exam. Oral examinations are normally requested when a committee judges the written exam to have been on the border between pass and fail. In writing their qualifying exams, students are expected to demonstrate competent knowledge of major theories, methods, and substantive understandings prevalent in the discipline and in their specific fields of study.

**Preparation**

*How should you prepare for qualifying exams?*

The purpose of a doctoral qualifying exam is to ensure that students gain sufficiently broad and deep knowledge of the literature in the fields in which they plan to teach and/or conduct research. The requisite knowledge is acquired both through coursework and through the process of preparing for the qualifying exams themselves. The student’s ability to cite, synthesize, and analyze the existing literature should not be limited to textbooks or to other readings from the core courses, but should draw from readings done for research papers as well as supplemental readings that are relevant to the core courses of your exam fields. Thus the preparation process, in addition to the exam itself, represents part of the value of taking qualifying exams.

Questions will require students to demonstrate familiarity with literature of the discipline, to examine major explanatory and normative theories, and to discuss and integrate theories, ideas, and substantive information in their respective fields of study.

To prepare for qualifying exams students must consider prominent theories and ideas in their chosen fields of study, and should consult early in their preparations with faculty members in those fields to discuss expectations and essential reading. It is the student’s responsibility to determine what will constitute your reading list — students should not expect faculty to furnish you with a ready-made list. They can however expect faculty to offer suggestions for readings beyond their syllabi, and to offer comments on a reading list that the student compile. Students
should be sure to acquire copies of the latest syllabi from professors for the core courses of their exam fields. Students should consider making sheet summarizing briefly the main arguments of each of their readings, for quick reference when taking the exam. Most important, note that the material covered in each of your courses provides an introduction to the main topics in the particular fields, and not the totality of the essential literature; rather, students should develop a reading list early on to ensure they have adequate time to read the literature not covered in their seminars.

A file of questions posed in previous doctoral exams is also available in the department office—it is imperative that students request access to these from the Assistant to the Graduate Director so as to better familiarize themselves with the format, content, and style of written examinations. Students are advised to practice writing out an answer to an exam question or two, under constraints resembling those that will be encountered when taking the exam itself. This will ensure that the exam succeeds or fails based on the student’s knowledge of the relevant literature, and not on the absence of familiarity with the test format.

PhD students should set aside adequate time to study for qualifying exams; at least one semester and a summer of readings in preparation for the exams is suggested.

**Taking the exam**

*What can I expect during the exam week?*

During exam week, students can expect to have an exam every other day. Exams will be administered on campus, and in a closed-note format, and must be completed individually with no external assistance. All written exams last for 8 hours. Students may not utilize notes or other materials and sources, nor may they collaborate with others. Students will sign an honor pledge in advance of taking their exams stating that they agree to abide by these policies and informing them that the consequences for cheating, plagiarism or collaboration will be severe, including the possibility of dismissal from the program.

*What are the best strategies for answering the questions?*

The best advice is to answer the questions directly and fully as posed. Masterful answers that do not actually address the questions as posed are not passing answers. Likewise, brief answers that demonstrate technical accuracy but which stop short of demonstrating the student’s mastery of the field’s breadth and depth are not rewarded. For an excellent (and somewhat humorous) discussion of how to avoid the pitfalls of essay exams, see Charles King, *Battling the Six Evil Geniuses of Essay Writing,* PS (March 1998). Students should also pay special attention to time
management. Writing two excellent answers but failing to allot ample time to a third exam question can result in a failing grade on the overall exam. In your responses, devote special attention to demonstrating your knowledge of the relevant concepts and the supporting literature. Compare and contrast, through reference to the existing scholarly work, the different theoretical and analytical positions on the subject. Reference to a scholar and his/her work adds nothing unless it is placed in the broader context of the literature’s development. It is not wrong to criticize the literature or the field, only to do so poorly. Provide answers rich with examples. Answers that have clear introductions, arguments that are logically organized, and conclusions that are persuasive are naturally advantaged.

How are the exams graded?

A two-member faculty committee, chosen by the Director of Graduate Studies, is responsible for reading and evaluating all exams in each field. Each student will thus have four faculty members evaluating them, two for each of the two exams. The same faculty committee grades all exams taken simultaneously in the same field by multiple students. Students’ names are removed from the exams, and the composition of exam committees is anonymous as well.

Written qualifying exam answers are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Has the student answered the question asked? Has the student provided a sufficiently qualifying answer to the question or has s/he neglected to address areas of importance?
- Has the student interpreted the question as expected and if not, why not? Does this difference in interpretation affect the performance? How?
- Has the student addressed and included the most important literature relevant to the question? If not, what is missing?
- Has the student made factual errors in interpreting the literature? If so, what are those errors?
- Has the student shown an appreciation of whatever controversies exist in the field or does s/he tend to present only one view?

The faculty evaluation committee will submit a unified assessment of the exam to the Director of Graduate Studies, assigning a grade of “Pass with Distinction,” “Pass,” “Referral to an Oral Examination,” or “Inadequate.” Once both evaluation committees have submitted their reports, the Graduate Director will inform the student in writing of the exam results and provide any written comments supplied by the faculty evaluators.

What happens if a student fails the written exam?
In the event of unsatisfactory performance on a written exam (i.e., a grade of “Inadequate”), the student can repeat the exam once. Any re-take of an exam must take place the next time exams are offered. Students not passing a qualifying exam are strongly encouraged to meet with the relevant faculty members in the field and with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss strategies for improvement. Faculty members writing questions for an exam re-take have the discretion to ask entirely new questions, a mix of new questions and those appearing on the initial exam, or the exact same questions from the original exam.

What happens if my committee requests an oral examination?

Individual examination committees may, at their discretion, require students to complete an oral examination. This would normally be required in cases where the written examination is judged to be on the border between pass and fail. In cases where committees require an oral examination, no result will be communicated to students before the oral examination takes place, although feedback on the written exam may be provided. Oral examinations will normally be scheduled within two weeks of being requested, and they will normally take 30 minutes to one hour per subject. If requested, students must be physically present for the oral exam. The exam itself will be closed-book, closed-note. The oral exam is an opportunity for faculty to probe the student’s depth of understanding and to follow up on points and issues raised by the student in the written exam. It is an opportunity to see if the student has reached a sufficient level of sophistication to apply what s/he has learned to the task of formulating and developing a dissertation. After the oral exam, the committee will then consider the student’s performance on both the oral and written components in rendering its decision. This decision will not normally be given to the student immediately following the oral, although committees should attempt to let students know their results as quickly as possible. If a student fails the examination after the orals, the same rules apply as if he or she had failed the written examination.

After I pass, what’s next?

Within six weeks of passing both of their qualifying exams, students should formally constitute their dissertation committees and schedule a joint meeting with their committee members to discuss the direction of the dissertation project. No later than 90 days after successfully completing the written exams, students must submit and have approved their “major area” paper. No later than 90 days after approval of the major area paper, they should defend a dissertation proposal.

Dissertation Procedures

Students are urged to begin thinking about their research topic as they progress through their
coursework. When coursework, language/research skill requirements and comprehensive examinations have been completed, students may register for the required number of POLS 8990 credits and begin the formal procedures for dissertation work.

**Admission to Doctoral Candidacy**

Upon successful completion of all coursework, language/research skill requirements and comprehensive examinations, and approval of the dissertation research topic, students will be admitted to doctoral candidacy. Admission to candidacy must be achieved within four calendar years of admission to the doctoral program. Students must apply with the Graduate Office for admission.

**Forming the Committee**

Dissertation committees must have three members of the graduate faculty of the Department of Political Science. Additional members from inside or outside the department may be appointed with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. Students preparing to write a dissertation should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to initiate the process of constituting a committee. Completion of a “Declaration of Intent” form is required.

**Prospectus/Prospectus Defense**

Students will write a dissertation prospectus that outlines their proposed research design. The research design will then be orally presented and defended; the presentation session shall be open to all members of the faculty and to others. The acceptability of the prospectus shall be determined by at least a two-thirds vote of the members of the dissertation committee.

Two copies of the dissertation prospectus shall be made available in the office of the Director of Graduate Studies at least two weeks in advance of the oral presentation. Members of the faculty must be notified by the dissertation committee chairperson of both the date of the oral presentation and the availability of the research design. The presentation date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Defense**

There shall be a final oral defense of the dissertation. The defense shall be administered by the dissertation committee, and shall be open to all members of the faculty and to others. The acceptability of the dissertation shall be determined by at least a two-thirds vote of the members of the committee.

Two copies of the dissertation to be defended shall be made available in the office of the Director of Graduate Studies at least two weeks in advance of the defense. Members of the faculty must
be notified by the chairperson of both the date of the defense and the availability of the final typed copies of the dissertation. The defense date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Reproduction

The defend and approved dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate Office of the College of Arts and Sciences; for graduation purposes, the necessary last step is the formal submission of the finished thesis. Specific guidelines regarding the format and submission requirements of completed dissertations, as well as deadlines for submission, are available from the Graduate Office or from the Assistant to the Political Science Graduate Director.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly checklist: Post-M.A. Ph.D.</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semesters 1-4</td>
<td>Complete Coursework</td>
<td>36 hours of coursework beyond the M.A. and language/research skills requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semesters 5-6</td>
<td>Complete comprehensive exams</td>
<td>Comprehensive exams should be taken upon completion of 36 hours of coursework. Comps must be taken after no more than 42 hours of coursework have been completed. MAP should be completed within 90 days of passing comprehensive exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write Major Area Paper</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester 6</td>
<td>Defend dissertation proposal</td>
<td>Dissertation proposal should be defended within 90 days of completion of MAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semesters 7-8</td>
<td>Complete dissertation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Semesters 1-6                     | **Complete Coursework**  
Masters-in-passing must be completed by end of 33 hours of coursework  
**Complete M.A. in passing**  
Satisfy language/research skills requirement |
| Semesters 5-6                     | **Complete comprehensive exams**  
Comprehensive exams should be taken upon completion of 54 hours of coursework. Comps must be taken after no more than 42 hours of coursework have been completed.  
**Write Major Area Paper**  
MAP should be completed within 90 days of passing comprehensive exams. |
| Semester 6                        | **Defend dissertation proposal**  
Dissertation proposal should be defended within 90 days of completion of MAP.                                                        |
| Semesters 7-8                     | **Complete dissertation**                                                                                                                  |
The M.A.

The Department of Political Science at GSU offers students the option of completing a terminal Master’s degree. The Master's in Political Science is a rigorous graduate program that trains students for a career in governance as well as in social science research.

The Department offers the following concentrations of study:

- General Political Science
- American Politics
- International & Comparative Politics
- Political Science for Educators
- Professional Political and Governmental Practices
- Public Law
- Dual B.A./M.A. Program in Political Science

Each concentration has its own requirements listed below and in the University's Graduate Catalog.

**M.A. Thesis Procedures**

Not all M.A. students will write a thesis. Please see the catalog, reprinted below, for the options for each type of M.A. degree.

Students who choose the thesis option are urged to begin thinking about their research topic as they progress through their coursework. When courses have been completed, students may register for the required number of POLS 8990 credits and begin the formal procedures for thesis work. The following procedures have been established for the supervision, presentation, and approval of theses.

**Committee**

Thesis committees must have three members of the graduate faculty of the Department of Political Science. Additional members from inside or outside the department may be appointed with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. Students preparing to write a thesis must meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to initiate the process of constituting a committee. Completion of a “Declaration of Intent” form is required.
**Prospectus/Prospectus Defense**
Students will write a thesis prospectus that outlines their proposed research design. The research design will then be orally presented and defended; the presentation session shall be open to all members of the faculty and to others. The acceptability of the prospectus shall be determined by at least a two-thirds vote of the members of the thesis or dissertation committee. Two copies of the thesis prospectus shall be made available in the office of the Graduate Director at least one week in advance of the oral presentation. Members of the faculty must be notified by the thesis committee chairperson of both the date of the oral presentation and the availability of the research design. The presentation date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Thesis Expectations**
The M.A. thesis should follow the format of an article in a Political Science research journal, normally running 10,000 words (approximately 40 pages). It will include an abstract, introduction, literature review closely related to statement of problem, formal statement of the theory and specific hypothesis/hypotheses to be tested, description of research methods and data, findings and analysis, conclusion and bibliography. The thesis will present the results of primary research, original theoretical contribution, or creative approach to a problem. It should be of a quality suitable for submission to a professional conference or research journal.

**Defense**
There shall be a final oral defense of the thesis. The defense shall be administered by the thesis committee, and shall be open to all members of the faculty and to others. The acceptability of the thesis shall be determined by at least a two-thirds vote of the members of the committee.

Two copies of the thesis shall be made available in the office of the Director of Graduate Studies at least one week in advance of the defense. Members of the faculty must be notified by the thesis committee chairperson of both the date of the defense and the availability of the final typed copies of the thesis. The defense date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Reproduction**
The defended and approved thesis must be submitted to the Graduate Office of the College of Arts and Sciences; for graduation purposes, the necessary last step is the formal submission of the finished thesis. Specific guidelines regarding the thesis format and submission requirements, as well as deadlines for submission, are available from the Graduate Office or from the Assistant to the Political Science Graduate Director.
MA Non-Thesis Procedures

Students pursuing any of the M.A. curricula (general or specialized) may choose not to write a thesis. Students are urged to begin thinking about their research topic as they progress through their coursework. Students might choose the non-thesis option if they wish to consider the M.A. their terminal degree, but we encourage those students wishing to pursue the Ph.D. degree to follow the full thesis option.

Students choosing the non-thesis option must take 33 hours of coursework (rather than the 27 hours required under the thesis option). All other course requirements are the same as under the thesis option. This is a College requirement and cannot be waived by the department.

The non-thesis research paper should be a research paper presenting original research, extended and enhanced to meet the standards of a conference paper presentation. These standards include a statement of the problem, questions or hypotheses raised by the problem, and original research on that problem and relevant questions. Conference papers are normally 20 to 40 pages in length and should address an important problem, reflect knowledge of the relevant literature as it pertains to the questions, and provide preliminary answers based on competent research to the questions raised by the problem.

The paper must be approved by a committee composed of a faculty advisor and one additional faculty member. The committee is to be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

### Yearly checklist: M.A. Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Thesis Option</th>
<th>Non-thesis Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>File declaration of intent form</td>
<td>File declaration of intent form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 3</td>
<td>Defend thesis proposal</td>
<td>Consult with non-thesis committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 4</td>
<td>Defend thesis</td>
<td>Complete non-thesis paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Department Policies

Evaluations

Student progress will be periodically evaluated by the graduate director and the graduate committee, depending on the students’ progress towards their degree and program of study.

Direct Admit PhD students will be evaluated at the end of their second year with the goal of determining whether they will be allowed to continue with the PhD program or asked to leave with a terminal MA degree. Please see ‘dismissal policies’ for a deeper discussion of dismissals after the second year review.

The graduate director will periodically review student progress and may request the graduate committee to formally evaluate any student found to be making unsatisfactory progress towards their degree (e.g.; low grades, dropped courses, incomplete grades, failure to complete key milestones throughout the program of study).

Dishonesty Policy, Dismissal and Appeals

The department of political science takes academic honesty very seriously. Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the College. Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade to expulsion. Academic dishonesty and punishments associated with cases of academic dishonesty are described in the GSU student Code of Conduct.

Dismissal

Students may be terminated from the graduate program for a number of reasons, including (but not limited to): Plagiarism and academic dishonesty, failure to progress through the program, and failure to achieve minimum grade requirements (3.0 for MA, 3.4 for PhD students).

Failure to progress in your program of study is defined by failing to meet program milestones (outlined in section 5 of this handbook). Fulltime students who are not adhering to the schedule outlined in section 5 will receive a warning from the graduate director. If they continue to fall behind, the department may terminate them from their program. Similarly, students are expected to maintain the grades necessary for their program of study. MA students falling below a 3.0 GPA will be put on probation by the university and may be terminated by the department. PhD students failing to achieve a 3.4 (the minimum GPA required to take their qualifying exams) may be terminated from the program. Finally, direct admit PhD students failing to demonstrate the necessary skills required for PhD work by the end of their second year will be advised to leave.
the program with their MA degree or terminated from the PhD program.

Students wishing to appeal department decisions regarding termination, grades and exam results may do so in writing to the Department Chair.

Procedures for appealing grades are described in the GSU student handbook.

**Classes Outside of the Department**

The department will accept courses outside the department (with the advanced approval of the Graduate Director). The number and content of these classes varies by degree program. See the university catalog for a description of permissible course substitutions by degree program and concentration.
Assistantships

Participating in the life of the department

The Department has made an investment in your education and professional development. We expect you to be a regular and active participant in the life of the Department. As a condition of your assistantship, you will be expected to attend job talks, lectures, and other events sponsored by the Department, and you may be called upon from time to time to help with such things as the recruitment of new graduate students or undergraduate majors, etc.

Required teaching courses

All doctoral students on assistantship must take the “teaching” course (POLS 8997) in their first year. All other doctoral students are strongly encouraged to take this course as well. Students should also take the ‘teaching 1101’ and ‘teaching 2401’ courses.

Hours and Pay

You must register, and remain registered, for 18 credit hours each semester by the appropriate deadlines. These include a full course load until you have completed the coursework component of your graduate program. Thus of the 18 hours, nine are coursework hours and nine are registered as Research or Teaching internship. After coursework is complete, you should register each semester for nine hours of Thesis Research and nine hours of Research or Teaching internship. Please note that the application of your tuition waiver, as well as your pay, is dependent upon you registering for 18 hours.

You will be assigned to work for a specific faculty member or be placed in the GRA Pool whereby faculty can request help for specific projects. You are expected to work, on average, 12 hours per week. You are expected to perform your duties on campus during normal working hours (Monday – Friday, 8am-5pm). Exceptions to this expectation will be made for professional and academic reasons (including, but not limited to: class schedule, conference attendance, job interviews). If you have a professional or academic conflict which will prevent you from completing your assigned GRA task, you must contact the Graduate Director prior to the conflict to work out a solution to cover your missed work.

You are expected to keep (in real time) a record of the work you have done and the number of hours you work each week and the tasks you have completed. This will help both you and the faculty member(s) you work with assess the appropriateness of assignments and deadlines given you as well as your performance as an assistant.
You are responsible for verifying that your paycheck accords with the paperwork that you signed at the beginning of the semester or year. Notify Colleen Williams and Robert Daniel immediately of any discrepancies. Please note that you will be held responsible for the difference if you are incorrectly overpaid. If you are underpaid, please keep in mind that it becomes increasingly difficult to ensure that you are fully paid the more time passes from the underpayment. The university’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Absences and Disputes

Disputes or problems connected to the performance of your assistantship duties should be referred to the Director of Graduate Studies.

If a student is unable to complete his or her duties due to a medical or family emergency, he or she must contact the graduate director immediately and must provide documentation of the illness or emergency.

Work Duties

There are three general types of assignments: (1) availability in the GRA pool, (2) working with a specific faculty member, (3) teaching.

Teaching

More advanced students may be asked by the Department to serve as Graduate Student Instructors, with responsibility for teaching their own section of an introductory course.

The Pool

Students in the graduate student pool will be given short term assignments to faculty members or to department projects. If you are assigned to the GRA Pool, you are expected to promptly respond to emails from the pool director letting you know about your assignments; once assigned to a professor, you are expected to check in with that faculty member regularly. Unless otherwise specified, this should be at least weekly. Your are also expected to keep the pool director and the faculty member you are currently assigned to fully informed regarding any schedule changes or unforeseen events that bear upon your ability to perform your job.

Full semester assignments

Some students will be assigned to a single faculty member, or to a department project, for the entire semester. If you are assigned to work for a specific faculty member, you are expected to check in with your assigned faculty member at regular intervals. Unless otherwise specified by your faculty member, this should be at least weekly. You are also expected to keep your faculty
member fully informed regarding any schedule changes or unforeseen events that bear upon your ability to perform your job.

Assignment, Renewal & Revocation of Assistantships

Students enrolling in the PhD program receive priority for Department funding opportunities. Our goal, if funds allow, is to fund qualified PhD students making good progress for 4 years (5 for Direct Admit students).

Assistantships are reviewed at the end of each calendar year. Assistantship assignments are subject to the needs of the department, your performance as an assistant, your academic performance, your adherence to department guidelines, and budget constraints.

Students who do not complete their assigned work (and are not excused from work due to a medical or family emergency) will receive a warning. Upon the second infraction, the student will be put on probation. If the student fails to complete an assigned task a 3rd time in a single semester, the students’ assistantship will be revoked.

- Students on assistantship are expected to be full-time students.
- Any employment outside the department is limited to no more than 12 hours per week.
- All students on assistantship are expected to make satisfactory progress through their program of study. Satisfactory progress includes, but is not limited to, adhering to all deadlines stipulated in the Graduate Catalog.
- All students on assistantship who have completed at least 18 hours of coursework must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.7 or better, calculated from the date when the student was first awarded an assistantship. Students receiving less than a 3.7 will have their records reviewed by the graduate committee, and may lose their assistantship.
- Any grade below a C received in a graduate seminar will result in a revocation of the student’s assistantship.
- All students on assistantship must complete the requirements for any Incomplete within the two semester limit established by the University. Failure to complete these requirements, reflected by the Incomplete automatically converting to an F, will result in an immediate revocation of the student’s assistantship.
- All students on assistantship must abide by the University’s Policy on Academic Honesty. Any student found guilty of violating the Academic Honesty Policy will be immediately removed from his/her assistantship.
Forms

- Declaration of Intent, Ph.D.
- Declaration of Intent, M.A.
3350 Political Science

Programs Offered:

- **Master of Arts in Political Science**
  - General Political Science
  - Concentration in American Politics
  - Concentration in International and Comparative Politics
  - Concentration in Political Science for Educators
  - Concentration in Professional Political and Governmental Practices
- **Dual B.A./M.A. in Political Science**
- **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science**

The purpose of the Master of Arts (M.A.) degree program is to guide students in the development of analytical and critical capabilities through inquiry into political and governmental processes. The objective of the program is to provide education for persons interested in pursuing careers in research, teaching, or the professional practice of public service and politics. Students can choose a degree program that will provide them with a general knowledge of the discipline, or one that will provide them with a specialization in American politics, international and comparative politics, or the professional practices of government and politics.

A Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) prepares students for careers in research and teaching. Students enhance their skills by furthering their knowledge of the literature of the discipline, increasing their methodological ability, and writing a publishable dissertation. The Ph.D. program produces scholars who are experts in their substantive field of study and who are able to combine theoretical sophistication with methodological rigor.

Applicants may obtain additional information about the Department of Political Science by contacting
the Director of Graduate Studies at the addresses above.

**Additional Admission Requirements**

In addition to the general requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Political Science has the following requirements:

1. Applicants to the M.A. degree program must:
   a. Submit acceptable scores on the verbal, quantitative, and analytical sections of the GRE.
   b. Have a 3.0 cumulative undergraduate grade-point average and the equivalent of at least a minor in political science.
   c. Submit two letters of recommendation from individuals who can evaluate the applicant’s potential to do graduate work in political science.
   d. Submit official transcripts from all colleges and/or universities applicant has attended.
   e. Submit a statement of research interest and goals for political science degree.
   f. Submit a writing sample demonstrating graduate level research capabilities

2. Applicants to the Ph.D. degree program must:
   a. Submit acceptable scores on the verbal, quantitative, and analytical sections of the GRE.
   b. Have a 3.3 cumulative master’s grade-point average and substantial prior coursework in political science, preferably with a thesis.
   c. Submit three letters of recommendation from individuals who can evaluate the applicant’s potential to do graduate work in political science.
   d. Submit official transcripts from all colleges and/or universities attended.
   e. Submit a statement of research interests and goals for political science degree.
   f. Submit a writing sample demonstrating graduate level research capabilities
   g. Applicants who intend to pursue comparative politics as their major field should have at least one year of college level training in a foreign language.

**Degree Requirements**

Both masters and doctoral students must be registered for a minimum of three (3) semester hours the semester of completion of all degree requirements.

**Master of Arts**

- General Political Science
• Concentration in American Politics
• Concentration in International and Comparative Politics
• Concentration in Professional Political and Governmental Practices
• Specialization in Public Law
• Joint Master of Arts in Political Science and Master of International Business

General Political Science (33)

1. Required Methods Sequence (9 hours)
   a. POLS 8800 Elements of Research Design (3)
   b. POLS 8805 Introduction to Qualitative Analysis (3)
   c. Either POLS 8810 Uses of Intermediate Statistical Methods in Political Science Research or POLS 8840 Qualitative Research Methods (3). Students who wish to substitute another course for the third required methods course (either POLS 8810 or POLS 8840) may do so with advance permission of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Six additional graduate Political Science courses (18 hours). Students should take one course in three of the five major areas of study. These areas include American government and politics, comparative politics, international politics, political theory and public law. Two of the six courses may be taken outside the department, with the advance approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

3. Thesis Option:
   a. A minimum of six hours of POLS 8999 Thesis Research.
   b. A thesis, written following successful defense of proposal before three-member faculty committee. The chair and at least one member of this committee must come from the department’s graduate faculty, but the third member may come from the graduate faculty of another department at Georgia State University or from among the department’s permanent non-graduate faculty. Subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, additional members beyond the required three may also come from outside the university, normally among members of the political science graduate faculty at an MA or PhD granting institution.
   c. A thesis defense.
4. Non-Thesis Option (Students wishing to pursue a doctoral degree should not choose this option):
   a. Six additional hours of graduate courses in political science.
   b. A research paper completed according to departmental guidelines. First readers on this paper should be chosen from among the department’s graduate faculty, but second readers may also be chosen from among the department’s permanent non-graduate faculty or from among the graduate faculty of other departments at Georgia State University, subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Concentration in American Politics (33)

1. Required Methods Sequence
   a. POLS 8800 Elements of Research Design (3)
   b. POLS 8805 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis

2. Either POLS 8810 Uses of Intermediate Statistical Methods in Political Science Research or POLS 8840 Qualitative Research Methods (3). Students who wish to substitute another course for the third required methods course (either POLS 8810 or POLS 8840) may do so with the advance permission of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

3. POLS 8100 Seminar in American Politics (3)

4. Five additional courses (15 hours) chosen from general American offerings, Public Law, American Institutions, or American Political Behavior (POLS 6100-6180, POLS 8100-8180). One course may be taken in a different political science concentration with the advance approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. Two of these courses may be taken in another department with the advance approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

5. Thesis Option:
   a. A minimum of six hours of POLS 8999 Thesis Research.
   b. A thesis, written following successful defense of proposal before three-member faculty committee.
   c. A thesis defense.

6. Non-Thesis Option (Students wishing to pursue a doctoral degree should not choose this option):
a. Six additional hours of graduate courses in American politics (POLS 6100–POLS 6180, POLS 8100–POLS 8180)
b. A research paper completed according to departmental guidelines

**Concentration in International and Comparative Politics (33)**

1. Required Methods Sequence
   a. **POLS 8800** Elements of Research Design (3)
   b. **POLS 8805** Introduction to Quantitative Analysis
   c. Either **POLS 8810** Uses of Intermediate Statistical Methods in Political Science Research or **POLS 8840** Qualitative Research Methods (3). Students who wish to substitute another course for the third required methods course (either POLS 8810 or POLS 8840) may do so with the advance permission of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

2. **POLS 8200** Comparative Political Analysis (3) and **POLS 8400** International Politics (3).

3. Four additional courses (12 hours) chosen from the areas of comparative (POLS 6200–POLS 6280, POLS 8200–POLS 8280) and international politics (POLS 6400–POLS 6480, POLS 8400–POLS 8480). Two of these courses may be taken in other departments with the advanced approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. One may be taken in a different political science concentration with the advanced approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

4. Thesis Option:
   a. A minimum of six hours of **POLS 8999** Thesis Research
   b. A thesis, written following successful defense of proposal before three-member faculty committee
   c. A thesis defense.

5. Non-Thesis Option (Students wishing to pursue a doctoral degree should not choose this option):
   a. Six additional hours of graduate courses in comparative (POLS 6200–POLS 6280, POLS 8200–POLS 8280) and international politics (POLS 6400–POLS 6480, POLS 8400–POLS 8480).
   b. A research paper completed according to departmental guidelines.
Concentration in Political Science for Educators (30)

1. Required methods course
   o **POLS 6800** Research Design and Applied Data Analysis (3)

2. Core seminars in the sub-fields of political science
   o **POLS 8100** American Politics (3)
   o **POLS 8200** Comparative Politics (3)
   o **POLS 8400** International Politics (3)

3. Courses in the teaching of political science
   o **POLS 6987** Teaching Politics with Simulations (3)
   o **POLS 6988** Teaching American Citizenship (3)

4. Specialized courses in political science
   o Coursework in political science at the 6000 or 8000 level (9)

5. A capstone course in which the student will complete a research project under the supervision of a faculty member.
   o **POLS 6990** Teaching Politics and Government – Capstone Project (3)

Concentration in Professional Political and Governmental Practices (33)

Based on the belief that career paths in public service and politics require individuals to have multiple professional and political skills, the department offers this concentration. This program also offers students the ability to gain hands-on experience with an experiential learning project requirement, as well as multi-disciplinary learning by encouraging students to take related courses in other departments within the University. This program is offered as a terminal degree with a non-thesis option.

1. Required Methods Sequence (6)
   a. Select one course:
      - **POLS 8800** Elements of Research Design (3)
      - **POLS 6800** Research Design and Applied Data Analysis (3)
   b. **POLS 8110** State Politics (3)

2. Each student should take 6 additional graduate Political Science courses selected from the following three practice areas. Additional research methods courses can be counted under any of the practice areas. [Note: potential class options are listed under each practice area, but other courses may be used as well] (18):
a. Political Communication and Campaign Practices
   - POLS 6158 Campaign Organization and Management (3)
   - POLS 8160] Public Opinion & Attitudes (3)
   - POLS 8150 Political Parties and Interest Groups (3)
   - POLS 8155 Electoral Behavior (3)
   - POLS 8175 African-American Political Participation (3)
   - POLS 8223 Comparative Electoral Systems (3)
   - POLS 8475 War and Public Opinion (3)
   - POLS 8510 Theories on Democracy (3)

   - POLS 8100 Seminar in American Politics (3)
   - POLS 8140 Judicial Process & Policy Making (3)
   - POLS 8145 Laws, Courts, and Policy (3)
   - POLS 8170 American Legislative Process (3)
   - [ POLS 8180] Presidential Politics (3)
   - POLS 8270 Comparative Political Economy (3)
   - POLS 8273 Political Economy of Development (3)
   - POLS 8430 International Political Economy (3)
   - POLS 8450 U.S. Foreign Policy (3)
   - POLS 8510 Theories on Democracy (3)

c. International and Comparative Practices
   - POLS 6420 International Law (3)
   - POLS 8205 Comparative Democratization (3)
   - POLS 8210 Political Development (3)
   - POLS 8215 Politics of Peace (3)
   - POLS 8421 International Organizations and Institutions (3)
   - POLS 8422] NGOs and World Politics (3)
   - POLS 8450 U.S. Foreign Policy (3)
   - POLS 8480 Transitional Justice and the Politics of Memory (3)
   - POLS 8485 Ethics of International Relations (3)
3. Experiential Learning Project (9 hours) – Students must complete one experiential learning project for 9 credit hours; students may choose to find an internship with an organization or political campaign or create another experiential learning project related to their main practice area. All experiential learning projects must receive the advance permission of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies before students will be allowed to register for POLS 8995 (Administrative & Policy Internship) hours. Students may choose to take an additional graduate-level course (3 hours), and thus complete a 6-hour experiential learning project, with the advance permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.

4. We encourage students to take courses in other departments within the University. Up to three courses (9 hours) in departments outside of Political Science may be used if relevant and with advance permission of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

5. A non-thesis research paper completed according to departmental guidelines

Specialization in Public Law (33)

1. Required Methods Sequence
   a. POLS 8800 Elements of Research Design (3)
   b. POLS 8805 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis (3)
   c. Either POLS 8810 Uses of Intermediate Statistical Methods in Political Science Research or POLS 8840 Qualitative Research Methods (3). Students who wish to substitute another course for the third required methods course (either POLS 8810 or POLS 8840) may do so with advance permission of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Either POLS 8100 Seminar in American Politics, POLS 8200 Comparative Political Analysis, or POLS 8400 International Politics (3)

3. POLS 8140 Judicial Process & Policy Making (3)

4. POLS 8145 Law, Courts & Policy (3)

5. Either POLS 8427 International Human Rights, POLS 6220 Comparative Legal Systems, or POLS 8139 Constitutional Theory (3)

6. Choose one additional Public Law or Public Law-related course (3). One course may be taken in a different political science concentration with the advance approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. Potential courses include, but are not limited to:
   a. POLS 6130 Constitutional Law
b. **POLS 6131** Civil Rights & Liberties  
c. **POLS 6420** International Law  
d. **POLS 6425** International Criminal Justice  
e. **POLS 8421** International Institutions & Organizations

7. Choose one elective course in consultation with the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.  
   (3). Two of the above courses may be taken in another department with the advance approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

8. Thesis Option:  
   a. A minimum of six hours of **POLS 8999** Thesis Research.  
   b. A thesis, written following successful defense of proposal before three-member faculty committee.  
   c. A thesis defense.

9. Non-Thesis Option (Students wishing to pursue a doctoral degree should not choose this option):  
   o Six additional hours of graduate courses in Public Law or Public Law-related courses.  
   o A research paper completed according to departmental guidelines.

**Dual B.A./M.A. Program in Political Science**

The department offers a dual Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Political Science. The dual degree opportunity enables qualified students to enroll in graduate courses late in their undergraduate program and apply the coursework toward both the bachelor’s and master’s programs.

Students must be formally accepted into the dual degree program by the department and College of Arts and Sciences to be able to take graduate courses as an undergraduate. Additionally, acceptance into the dual program does not constitute admission to the master’s program. Students must fulfill regular graduate admissions requirements and apply for the master’s program following college processes.

Information about the dual program, including application instructions and program requirements, can be found at cas.gsu.edu/dual-degrees/.

**Doctor of Philosophy**

1. **POLS 8800** Elements of Research Design (3)  
2. **POLS 8805** Introduction to Quantitative Analysis (3)  
3. **POLS 8810** Uses of Intermediate Statistical Methods in Political Science Research (3)
4. Either **POLS 8830** Advanced Quantitative Methods or **POLS 8840** Qualitative Research Methods (3). Students intending to write their dissertations in Political Theory may make a request to the departmental Director of Graduate Studies that up to two of the four courses in the required methods sequence be waived.

5. An additional twenty-four hours of coursework beyond the M.A. (excluding the required methods sequence). For students without an M.A. in hand, 54 hours of coursework must be completed, including the required methods sequence.

6. Distribution Requirement: To ensure a broad knowledge of the discipline of Political Science, all students must take at least one course each in two fields that will not serve as comprehensive exam fields. For the purposes of this requirement, the fields are: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Political Theory, and Public Law. The remaining courses should be chosen by the student in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies in accordance with the student’s planned comprehensive exam fields (**POLS 6130–POLS 8980**).

7. Students admitted to the program without a previously earned MA will earn an ‘MA in passing’ consisting of a rigorous research paper. This requirement must be met by the completion of 33 hours of coursework.

8. Comprehensive Exams and Field Paper Requirements
   a. All doctoral students must pass a written examination in two of the following fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Political Theory, Public Law, and Research Methods. All students are expected to take their comprehensive exams after completing no more than 42 credit hours of coursework in political science at Georgia State beyond the M.A. In order to take these exams, a student must have a 3.4 grade-point average in political science courses taken in the Ph.D. program at Georgia State University. Students who do not have the required 3.4 GPA for graduate Political Science courses taken at Georgia State after 36 hours will be issued a *scholastic warning*. Students who have failed to achieve the required 3.4 GPA to take the comprehensive exams after 42 hours will be subject to *scholastic termination*. Students must also have taken at least three courses in each of their examining fields in preparation for the comprehensive exams. Students must register for PolS 8900 during the semester of the exams. Individual exam committees, at their discretion, may require students to complete an oral examination as part of their comprehensive exams. Students may take the exams twice if necessary.
b. All doctoral students must also write one “major area” paper; this requirement must be completed within 90 days of successful completion of the written comprehensive exam requirement. Major area paper topics must be related to the student’s proposed dissertation interests, and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies as well as a member of the graduate faculty from the student’s primary field.

c. Major area papers will be read and reviewed at a set date each semester (90 days after the last comprehensive exams were returned) by committees composed of three members of the graduate faculty of the Department of Political Science. Two members of the major area paper committee will be specialists in the chosen topic area or in a related field; the third committee member will be someone whose primary research is in a separate field. Outside readers will be selected by the Director of Graduate Studies at the outset of each academic year. The other two committee members will be chosen by the student in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the student’s major advisor; the major advisor may serve as one of the committee members.

9. Foreign Language and Research Skill Requirement: In addition to the required methods sequence, students must demonstrate further research competency by either taking one additional methodology course (to be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies) or passing a foreign language proficiency examination administered by the Department of World Languages and Cultures. Ph.D. students with a major in Comparative Politics must present a foreign language. The Department strongly urges students to complete this requirement before taking the comprehensive examination.

10. Professionalization/Research Presentation Requirement: All doctoral students will be required by the time they have completed 36 hours of coursework to present a major research paper at the annual GSA Graduate Student Conference. Doctoral students will also be expected to attend Departmental colloquia, workshops, and other events and presentations on a regular basis as part of their ongoing professionalization activities.

11. Twenty hours of POLS 8999 Thesis Research. Students must defend their dissertation proposal no later than 90 days after their major area papers are approved.

12. Dissertation written and approved by a three-member faculty committee. The chair and at least one member of this committee must come from the department’s graduate faculty, but the third member may come from the graduate faculty of another department at Georgia State
University. Subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, additional members beyond the required three may also come from outside the university, normally among members of the political science graduate faculty at a PhD granting institution.

13. First and Second Year Process

a. First Year Review: Based on each first year doctoral student’s research interests, he or she will be assigned a faculty mentor in that area. All doctoral students will be evaluated at the end of their first year by the Department’s graduate faculty as to their performance in the program to date. An unsatisfactory review may result in dismissal from the program.

b. Second Year Review: All doctoral students will again be evaluated at the end of their second year by the Department’s graduate faculty as to their performance in the program to date. An unsatisfactory review may result in dismissal from the program.

14. Ph.D. students must have approval from the Director of Graduate Studies to count online courses towards their degree.

No grade below a “C” may be used towards the M.A. or Ph.D. degrees. In addition, because the field of political science changes so quickly, the department will not normally support the use of coursework and other qualifications older than seven years towards the M.A. and ten years towards the Ph.D.