

# Graduate Handbook

2020-2021

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**

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The department offers four programs:

- Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
- 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 (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 an 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, and any students considering part-time study should discuss their plans with the Director of Graduate Studies.

### **First and Second Year Reviews**

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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**

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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**

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

### **Qualifying Examinations**

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#### **Purpose**

One of the most important steps in the doctoral program is the qualifying examination process. Qualifying examinations or “comps” 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 requirement. Students are expected to take the exams after completing at least 30 hours of coursework and no more than 39 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 (one major and one minor) 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 (Advanced 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 September and

February and of each school 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.

*What do the exams consist of?*

Students take a full exam for the field in which they intend to write their dissertation that consists of mandatory and/or specific questions. For their second field, students will take a shorter exam comprised of a single question from the full exam that provides the student an opportunity to display a broad understanding of the field.

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 compile the 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 sheets 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 or a summer of preparation for the exams is suggested.

### **Taking the exams**

*What can I expect during the exam week?*

Exams will be take-home and open, i.e. students can use their notes, book, and online sources. Students will receive both their first and second field exams at the same time and have 56 hours – 3 days, 2 nights – to complete them. That is, exams will be sent to students at 8am on Day 1 and will be returned to DGS by 4pm on Day 3.

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. All exams will be submitted to TurnItIn software to discover plagiarism, which may result in termination.

*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?*

Each field has a faculty coordinator. In consultation with the graduate director, the field coordinators will appoint two additional members to each exam committee from among the graduate faculty in each field. The composition of exam committees is anonymous, and students' exams will be de-identified, as well.

Exam committee members will discuss the qualifying exams at a synchronous (virtual or in-person) meeting held for this purpose.

Exam committees will assess each exam on the following criteria:

1. 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?
2. Has the student addressed and included the most important literature relevant to the question? If not, what is missing?
3. Has the student made factual errors in interpreting the literature? If so, what are those errors?
4. Has the student shown an appreciation of whatever controversies exist in the field or does s/he tend to present only one view?

Exam committees will submit an assessment of “Pass,” “Pass with Distinction,” or “Fail.” Each committee member will sign the final evaluation. Once both evaluation committees have submitted their assessments, the Graduate Director will inform the student in writing of the exam results and provide any written comments supplied by the faculty evaluators. Students and committee members shall not discuss exam results until after the Graduate Director shares the results.

*What happens if I fail one or both exam/s?*

Students will have two chances to pass each of the two exams. If the exam committee gives a failing grade, the exam will be sent to all members of the field for a final vote. Students who fail one or both exams are strongly encouraged to re-take it/them the next time they are given. Upon the second failure of either, the student will be terminated from the program. There are no appeals for failing exams outside the university’s Grade Appeal Process. There will be no oral exams.

*After I pass, what’s next?*

Students should immediately submit a [Report for Comprehensive and Qualifying Examinations](#) form.

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 should defend a dissertation prospectus.

## **Dissertation Procedures**

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Students are urged to begin thinking about their research topic as they progress through their coursework. When coursework 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**

Students preparing to write a dissertation should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to initiate the process of constituting a 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. Once students form a committee they should submit an [Appointment of Doctoral Dissertation Committee](#) form.

### **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. Once the committee passes the prospectus, the student shall complete a [Prospectus Approval for Doctoral Dissertation](#) form.

The presentation date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and, subsequently, scheduled with the Assistant to the Political Science Graduate Director. An electronic copy of the dissertation prospectus shall be made available to the Director of Graduate Studies and the dissertation committee at least two weeks in advance of the oral presentation. Members of the faculty must be notified of both the date of the oral presentation and the availability of the research design.

### **Dissertation 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.

The defense date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and scheduled with the Assistant to the Political Science Graduate Director. An electronic copy of the dissertation to be defended shall be made available to the office of the Director of Graduate Studies and the dissertation committee at least two weeks in advance of the defense. Members of the faculty must be notified of the date of the defense and the availability of the final copies of

the dissertation.

Once approved, students should submit a [Doctoral Dissertation Approval](#) form.

### **Reproduction**

The defended 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 [here](#).

**Yearly checklist: Direct Admit Ph.D.**

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	<b>Task</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Semesters 1-4	Complete Coursework Complete M.A. in passing	Masters-in-passing must be completed by end of 33 hours of coursework
Semesters 5-6	Complete qualifying exams Defend dissertation proposal	Qualifying exams or “comps” should be taken upon completion at least 30 hours of coursework, and no more than 39 hours of coursework, beyond the MA degree.  Dissertation proposal should be defended within 90 days of comprehensive exams.
Semesters 7-8	Complete dissertation	

**Degree Requirements: Direct Admit Ph.D.**

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<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Courses</b>
Methods	12	8800, 8805, 8810, 8830/8840/85XX in consultation w/DGS
Major	12	
Minor	9	
Breadth	3	Can be waived w/DGS permission
Pedagogy	3	
Electives	3	
Master's in Passing Paper	3	
Comprehensive Readings	3	
Prospectus	0	
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED</b>	<b>48</b>	

**Yearly checklist: Post-M.A. Ph.D.**

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	<b>Task</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Semesters 1-3	Complete Coursework	36 hours of coursework beyond the M.A.
Semesters 3-5	Complete comprehensive exams Defend dissertation proposal	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.  Dissertation proposal should be defended within 90 days of comprehensive exams.
Semesters 6-8	Complete dissertation	

**Degree Requirements: Post-MA Ph.D.**

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<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Courses</b>
Methods	12	8800, 8805, 8810, 8830/8840/85XX in Consultation w/DGS
Major	9	
Minor	6	
Breadth	3	
Electives	3	
Comprehensive Readings	3	
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED</b>	<b>36</b>	
*Pedagogy	3	

\*Note: Pedagogy (POLS 8997) can count towards the 36 required hours if students receive at least 3 transfer credits. Transfer credits are judged on a case-by-case basis by the DGS with faculty input.

## **Master of Arts (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 Politics
- 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**

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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. Once students form a committee they should submit an [Appointment of Master's Thesis Committee](#) form.

### **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 to the Graduate Director and committee members 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. Once the committee passes the prospectus, the student shall complete a [Prospectus Approval for Master's Thesis](#) form.

### **Thesis Expectations**

The M.A. thesis should follow the format of an article in a Political Science research journal, normally running 8,000-10,000 words (approximately 30-40 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.

The defense date must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. An electronic copy of the thesis shall be made available to the Director of Graduate Studies and the thesis committee at least one week in advance of the defense. Members of the faculty must be notified of both the date of the defense and the availability of the final typed copies of the thesis. Once approved, students should submit a [Master's Thesis Approval](#) form.

## **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 and Capstone Project Procedures**

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Students pursuing any of the M.A. curricula (general or specialized) may choose not to write a non-thesis option – either a paper or a capstone project. 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 30 hours of coursework (rather than the 24 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.

Students are urged to begin thinking about their research topic as they progress through their coursework. 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 **Non-Thesis 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. Once approved, students should submit a [Non-Thesis Master's Capstone Project Approval](#) form. Students writing a non-thesis paper should register for 3 hours of POLS 8990.

**Capstone Projects** are completed by students in the Educator and Professional Politics tracks. These students should register for 3 capstone project hours and constitute a committee according to the same rules as above. Capstone projects may be research papers,

but they may also take another form such as the development of an innovative curriculum or the writing of a policy paper. Once approved, students should submit a [Non-Thesis Master’s Capstone Project Approval](#) form.

**Yearly checklist: M.A. Program**

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	<b>Thesis Option</b>	<b>Non-thesis Option</b>
Semester 1	Coursework	Coursework
Semester 2	File Status Selection form (Thesis)	File Status Selection form (Non-Thesis)
Semester 3	Defend thesis proposal	Consult with non-thesis/capstone project committee
Semester 4	Defend thesis	Complete non-thesis paper/capstone project committee

## Department Policies

### Evaluations

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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 first year with the goal of assessing progress towards degree. They will also 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

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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

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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 Code of Conduct](#).

### **Classes Outside of the Department**

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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

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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. In addition, 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

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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

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You must register, and remain registered, for 12 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 12 hours, nine are coursework hours and nine are registered as Research and/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 12 hours. Therefore, unless advised otherwise, in semesters you are taking comprehensive exams, you should register for three hours of Comprehensive Exam readings, nine hours of Thesis Research, and six hours of Research or Teaching internship.

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**

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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**

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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. You 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**

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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 12 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 & Resources**

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[Policies and Procedures](#)

[Academic Progress Requirements](#)

[Required Milestones](#)

[Graduate Clearance](#)

[Graduate Assistant Resources](#)

[Wellness Resources](#)

[Quick Links](#)

## Political Science Graduate Catalog

# 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 Politics**
- **Dual B.A./M.A. in Political Science**
- **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science**

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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, except when specially waived by the Director of Graduate Studies.
  - b. Have an acceptable 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 or a related field.
  - 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 an acceptable cumulative master's grade-point average and substantial prior coursework in political science or a related field, 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 world 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 Political Science for Educators
- Concentration in Professional Politics

The department also offers an informal track that provides a specialization in public law (see below).

#### 1. Methods Sequence

Students should select from the following two methods tracks. Those planning to apply for a PhD should strongly consider the advanced track.

##### a. Regular methods track:

1. POLS 6800 Research Design and Applied Data Analysis (3)

##### b. Advanced methods track:

1. POLS 6800/8800 Elements of Research Design (3)
2. POLS 8805 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis (3)
3. Either POLS 8810 Uses of Intermediate Statistical Methods in Political Science Research or POLS 8840 Qualitative Research Methods (3).

#### 2. Experiential Learning Project (6)

- a. Students may elect to complete one internship or other experiential learning module for up to 6 credit hours.
  - b. This experience is a core element of the professional politics concentration, but students in other concentrations may substitute it for two elective courses.
  - c. Experiential learning projects must receive the advance permission of the departmental M.A. Director or the Director of Graduate Studies.
  - d. Each three hour segment of Experiential Learning requires the equivalent of 10-15 hours per week of work for one semester. This can be in the form of an internship or employment acquired by the student, a project through the Georgia Municipal Association, a study abroad program, or other relevant experience.
  - e. Students should select a faculty advisor for their project and complete the required experiential learning form. Faculty advisors will generally require students to keep a journal of the work that they are performing and/or to complete a paper.
  - f. Students will register for POLS 8995 Administrative & Policy Internship the semester they complete this project.
  - g. Students may also partially fulfill the requirement by taking PMAP 8900, the project consulting-based capstone course in the Andrew Young School's M.P.P. degree program.
3. Thesis (6)
- a. Students wishing to complete a thesis may substitute 6 thesis hours for 6 hours of coursework or experiential learning. Such students would then complete a thesis in lieu of the non-thesis paper described below.
  - b. Students planning to apply for a PhD are strongly encouraged to select this option.

4. Required for concentration in General Political Science

- a. POLS 6100/8100, POLS 6200/8200, or POLS 6400/8400.
- b. Additional graduate Political Science courses required to complete 30 total hours of coursework. The number of courses needed will vary depending on the student's methods track and completion of experiential learning or thesis 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.

5. Required for concentration in American Politics

- a. POLS 6100/8100
- b. Additional graduate Political Science courses required to complete 30 total hours of coursework. The number of courses needed will vary depending on the student's methods track and completion of experiential learning or thesis hours. All but one course should be chosen from American politics or public law offerings. One course should be chosen from another sub-field as a distribution requirement.

6. Required for concentration in International & Comparative Politics

- a. POLS 6200/8200
- b. POLS 6400/8400
- c. Additional graduate Political Science courses required to complete 30 total hours of coursework. The number of courses needed will vary depending on the student's methods track and completion of experiential learning or thesis hours. All but one course should be chosen from the areas of comparative and international politics. One course should be chosen from another sub-field as a distribution requirement.

7. Required for specialization in Public Law

- a. POLS 6100/8100, POLS 6200/8200 or POLS 6400/8400
- b. POLS 8140
- c. POLS 8145
- d. Additional graduate Political Science courses required to complete 30 total hours of coursework. The number of courses needed will vary depending on the student's methods track and completion of experiential learning or thesis hours. All but one course should be taken in public law or in public law related fields. One course should be chosen from another sub-field as a distribution requirement.

8. Required for concentration in Political Science for Educators

- a. Core seminars in a sub-fields of political science. Choose one:
  - i. POLS 6100/POLS 8100 American Politics (3)
  - ii. POLS 6200/POLS 8200 Comparative Politics (3)
  - iii. POLS 6400/POLS 8400 International Politics (3)
- b. Courses in the teaching of political science
  - i. POLS 6987 Teaching Politics with Simulations (3)
  - ii. POLS 6988 Teaching American Citizenship (3)
- c. Additional graduate Political Science courses in at least two sub-fields to complete 30 total hours of coursework. The number of courses needed will vary depending on the student's methods track and completion of experiential learning or thesis hours.
- d. A capstone project under the supervision of two faculty members (3 hours).
  - i. This project should include a "deliverable," which may be a research paper, a policy memo, an innovation teaching strategy, or something else.

- ii. Students undertaking this project should register for POLS 8990: Capstone Project.

9. Required for concentration in Professional Politics

- a. POLS 6100/8100 Seminar in American Politics (3)
- b. Select one course:
  - i. POLS 8110 State Politics (3)
  - ii. POLS 6158 Campaign Organization and Management (3)
  - iii. POLS 6139 Interbranch Politics (3)Necessary substitutions can be made with the advance permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.
- c. Select one course:
  - i. POLS 6200/8200 Seminar in Comparative Politics (3)
  - ii. POLS 6400/8400 Seminar in International Politics (3)Necessary substitutions can be made with the advance permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.
- d. Additional graduate Political Science courses in at least two sub-fields to complete 30 total hours of coursework. The number of courses needed will vary depending on the student's methods track and completion of experiential learning or thesis hours. The courses should be selected to strengthen knowledge of practice areas related to a student's professional goals.
- e. A capstone project under the supervision of two faculty members (3 hours).
  - i. This project should include a "deliverable," which may be a research paper, a policy memo, an innovation teaching strategy, or something else.
  - ii. Students undertaking this project should register for POLS 8990: Capstone Project.

10. Students in General Political Science, American Politics, Comparative and International Politics, and Public Law who are not completing a thesis must present a non-thesis project.
  - a. A research paper completed according to departmental guidelines.
  - b. Non-thesis papers must be read and approved by a two-person faculty committee.
  
11. With the advance permission of the M.A. Program Director or the Director of Graduate Studies, a student may substitute up to two required POLS courses for graduate-level courses taught by other departments at Georgia State. These substitutions should contribute to the student's chosen course of study.

### **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. Typically, students apply four graduate Political Science courses (12 hours) to their undergraduate degree requirements in Area H.

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. Once admitted, they will need to fulfill the regular M.A. requirements listed above for each concentration, though they may take up to 9 experiential learning hours (POLS 8995 Administrative and Policy Internship) as a substitute for general required courses.

Information about the dual program, including application instructions and program requirements, can be found at [cas.gsu.edu/dual-degrees/](https://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. [POLS 8830](#) Advanced Quantitative Methods, [POLS 8840](#) Qualitative Research Methods, or – with prior consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies –any POLS 85XX course in Political Theory (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. After consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies, students may also replace either POLS 8830 or 8840 with a doctoral-level political theory course.
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, thirty-six hours of coursework must be completed (excluding the required methods sequence). Only 8000-level coursework in political science will be counted towards this requirement, unless other courses are specifically allowed by the Director of Graduate Studies.
6. Distribution Requirement: To ensure a broad knowledge of the discipline of Political Science, all students must take at least one course in a field that will not serve as a qualifying exam field. For the purposes of this requirement, the fields are: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Political Theory, and Public Law. Students who wish to have their distribution requirement waived may appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies if they can show that an extra major field, minor field, or methods course is critical to their professional development. Students should choose their remaining courses in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies in accordance with the student’s planned qualifying exam fields ([POLS 8100](#) to [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. Students completing this requirement will receive three (3) hours of degree credit under POLS 8996: Research Internship. This requirement must be met by the completion of 33 hours of coursework.
8. Qualifying Exams
  - a. All doctoral students must pass a written examination in one major and one minor field. For the purposes of this requirement, the fields are: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Political Theory, Public Law, and

Research Methods. All students are expected to take their qualifying 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 qualifying exams after 42 hours will be subject to *scholastic termination*. Direct-admit doctoral students must have taken at least four (4) courses in their major field and at least three (3) courses in their minor field. Post-MA doctoral students must have taken at least three (3) courses in their major field and at least two (2) course in their minor field. (Students taking Qualifying Exams in Research Methods may not count POLS 8800, 8805, or 8810 towards the three-course requirement). Students must register for three (3) hours of [POLS 8900: Comprehensive Readings](#) during the semester of the exams, and these hours will count towards their degree. Students may take the exams twice if necessary.

9. 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 or another conference approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. 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.
10. At least twenty hours of [POLS 8999](#) Thesis Research.
11. Students must defend their dissertation proposal no later than 90 days after having completed the qualifying exams.
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. Faculty affiliates may chair dissertation committees. 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 Ph.D. 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.

**Graduate Assistants**

Graduate assistants are required to enroll for a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester. These credit hours will consist of courses required for the prescribed program of study, as well as additional hours of POLS 8996, 8997, 8998, and 8999.

## PhD Qualifying Exam Guidelines by Subfield

*Note: These guidelines are subject to change. Please check with a faculty member in the relevant subfield for advisement.*

### International Politics

Students must take:

1. POLS 8400: International Politics
2. One course in two (for the major) or one (for the minor) of the following subfields:
  - a. International Governance (POLS 8421: International Organizations and Institutions, 8422: NGOs and World Politics, POLS 8427: Politics of Human Rights, or POLS 8490: International Law)
  - b. International Political Economy (POLS 8430: International Political Economy)
  - c. International Security (POLS 8470: Military Conflict and International Security or POLS 8490: Conflict and Development)
  - d. International Political Culture (POLS 8490: Constructivism or POLS 8485: Ethics of International Relations)
  - e. Foreign Policy (POLS 8490: Foreign Policy or POLS 8490: Domestic Politics and International Relations)

To complete their sequences, students may take:

Any additional POLS 84XX course.

Structure of the Comprehensive Exam:

Major Field: Choice of one out of two questions covering the core theories of IR (Part 1)  
Choice of two questions from a list of multiple options (Part 2). The questions answered should cover different subfields, and the committee will ask one question related to each IR graduate course in a subfield taken by the students being tested in a given semester.

Minor Field: Choice of one out of two questions covering the core theories of IR.

### Political Theory

Students must take:

POLS 8560: Classical and Early Modern Political Thought  
POLS 8570: Modern Political Thought

To complete their sequences, students may take:

Any additional graduate Political Theory courses.

### **American Politics**

Students must take:

POLS 8101: American Political Behavior  
POLS 8102: American Political Institutions

To complete their sequences, students may take:

Any additional graduate American Politics courses

### **Structure of the Comprehensive Exam:**

**Major Field:** 3 questions: Choose 1 broad question (out of 2), then choose 1 institutions question (out of 2), and 1 behavior question (out of 2).

**Minor Field:** 1 question: Choose 1 broad question (out of 2) to answer.

### **Comparative Politics**

Students must take:

POLS8200: Comparative Political Analysis  
POLS8205: Comparative Political Change

To complete their sequences, students may take:

POLS8210: Democratic Construction and Decay  
POLS8220: Authoritarian Survival and Collapse  
POLS8230: Political Violence and Regime Transition  
POLS8240: Comparative Political Behavior  
POLS8250: Comparative Political Economy

POLS8290: Studies in Comparative Politics  
Any other graduate courses in Comparative Politics

#### Structure of the Comprehensive Exam:

Major Field: 3 questions: answer 1 broad mandatory question (out of 1), and then chose 2 additional questions from a list of at least 5 questions from core courses of the comparative curriculum.

Minor Field: 1 questions: answer 1 broad mandatory question (out of 1).

#### **Public Law**

Students must take:

POLS8140: Judicial Process  
POLS8145: Law, Courts, and Policy

To complete their sequences, students may take:

Any other graduate courses in Comparative Politics

#### Structure of the Comprehensive Exam:

Major Field: 3 questions: answer 1 broad mandatory question (out of 1), then choose 2 additional questions from a list of at least 3 questions.

Minor Field: 1 question: answer 1 broad mandatory question (out of 1).

#### **Research Methods**

Students must take:

POLS 8800: Research Design  
POLS 8805: Introduction to Quantitative Research  
POLS 8810: Regression Analysis  
POLS 8830: Advanced Quantitative OR  
POLS 8840: Advanced Qualitative

To complete their sequence, students may take:

Any two additional graduate Research methods courses; courses outside the department may be substituted with Graduate Director approval