

PhD in Political Science

Degree Requirements

A student's doctoral program must include at least 45 hours of graduate seminars, exclusive of comprehensive exams and dissertation research. At the discretion of the student's doctoral program committee, up to 30 hours of an MA program may be included in the PhD program.

Students choose a primary and secondary field from the four doctoral fields: American political institutions and behavior, comparative politics and government, international relations, and public policy and administration.

Graduate courses must include:

- A minimum of 12 seminar hours in the primary (research) field
- A minimum of nine seminar hours in a secondary field supporting the primary field
- A minimum of 13 hours in a methodology or research tool field. Required courses include POL_SC 7000, POL_SC 7010, and POL_SC 9030.
- The remaining six hours in the methodology field may be in advanced formal or quantitative methods, advanced foreign language, or a combination of the two.

Besides completing the necessary course work, the candidate must demonstrate the capacity to use a research tool (such as a foreign language or statistics), should obtain some teaching experience in political science (for academic careers), must pass written and oral comprehensive examinations, must submit and defend a dissertation proposal, and must submit and defend a dissertation.

All required courses and the comprehensive examination must be completed within five years of the first semester in the graduate program. The dissertation must be completed and defended within five years of passing the comprehensive examination.

The PhD usually requires five years full time or the equivalent in part-time work beyond the bachelor's degree and four years beyond the master's degree. Full-time students (including teaching and research assistants) must carry a minimum of nine credit hours of courses per semester (except for students conducting dissertation research).

The first five semesters of doctoral study typically include course work and preparation for the comprehensive examinations. Comprehensive exams (POL_SC 9970) are typically taken in the spring of the third year. A proposal for dissertation research is defended within a few months of the comprehensive exams. The remaining time is devoted to dissertation research (POL_SC 9090).

A doctoral student must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA after the first semester and a 3.4 cumulative GPA in subsequent semesters. Comprehensive exams and dissertation proposal must be completed within a timely fashion. Most students complete the doctoral program within five years.

Admissions

Admission into the PhD program is determined by the graduate studies committee's consideration of the applicant's academic record, personal statement, letters of recommendation, and the GRE.

Admission Contact Information

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Admission Criteria

Fall deadline: January 4

- Minimum TOEFL score for international students: 89
- Minimum GPA: 3.0 overall, in last 60 hours, and in political science courses
- 12 hours of upper-division course work in political science is recommended.

Required Application Materials

- Graduate School online application
- One to two page statement of purpose, describing interests and goals in graduate study in Political Science
- Three letters of recommendation
- Unofficial transcripts from all universities from which degrees were earned (official transcripts required upon admission)
- Official results from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
- Academic writing sample
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores (for international students)