

POLITICAL SCIENCE, MA

The Department of Political Science offers graduate study leading to the doctor of philosophy in political science. The department admits students only for the PhD program, but a master's degree may be obtained en route to the PhD.

The PhD is earned through a combination of coursework and dissertation. The program is designed to provide students with both general training in political science and the opportunity to specialize in their areas of interest.

The subfields of political science found in our department are American politics (<https://polisci.wisc.edu/american-politics/>), comparative politics (<https://polisci.wisc.edu/comparative-politics/>), political theory (<https://polisci.wisc.edu/political-theory/>), international relations (<https://polisci.wisc.edu/international-relations/>), and political methodology (<https://polisci.wisc.edu/political-methodology/>).

The department has a national and international reputation for the high quality of its faculty and the diversity of their approaches and interests. It has long been recognized for an acceptance of varied approaches to the study of politics and for its collegiality. The Political Science Department shares faculty with the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs (<http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/>), the Law School (<http://www.law.wisc.edu/>), and the Department of Gender and Women's Studies (<http://womenstudies.wisc.edu/>). The presence of programs and centers such as the African Studies Program (<http://africa.wisc.edu/>), the Center for European Studies (<https://europe.wisc.edu/>), the Center for Jewish Studies (<http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/>), the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) (<http://www.creeca.wisc.edu/>), Integrated Liberal Studies (<http://ils.wisc.edu/>), the International Studies major (BA (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/institute-regional-international-studies/international-studies-ba/>) and BS (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/institute-regional-international-studies/international-studies-bs/>)), Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies (<http://www.lacis.wisc.edu/>), and others is also beneficial to our graduate students, providing opportunities for the advancement of interdisciplinary approaches in student research.

ADMISSIONS

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Students may not apply directly for the master's and should instead see the admissions information for the PhD. (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/political-science/political-science-phd/>) This master's program is offered for work done en route to the PhD.

FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The department currently guarantees at least five years of financial support to all students admitted to the doctoral program, assuming they are making satisfactory progress toward their degrees. This funding may be in the form of fellowships, teaching assistantships, or project assistantships. All appointments receive valuable fringe benefits such as tuition remission and eligibility for excellent health insurance.

The department does not admit for a master's degree in political science. Please see admissions information for the PhD. (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/political-science/political-science-phd/>)

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirements-text>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policies-text>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW-Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail

Minimum 30 credits
Credit Requirement

Minimum 30 credits
Residence Requirement
Credit Requirement

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
Other Grade Requirements	No other grade requirements.
Assessments and Examinations	No formal examination required.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

The MA is not offered as a standalone degree program, but is earned along the way to the PhD. To leave with a master's degree, students must complete the minimum degree requirements listed above as well as follow the parameters below in consultation with the program.

Code	Title	Credits
At least 18 of the 30 credits must be earned in graduate courses in Political Science numbered 800 or above.		18
No more than 3 credits of POLI SCI 999 may fulfill degree requirements.		
Courses taken outside the department must be chosen in consultation with a student's advisor and must be at a level (course numbered 300 or above) for which graduate credit is available.		

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

No credits from graduate work from other institutions may transfer toward the degree.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

No credits from an undergraduate degree are allowed to transfer toward the degree.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special student at UW-Madison

No credits from a UW-Madison University Special student career may transfer toward the degree.

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

All students are required to meet with their advisor to discuss the first-year review.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credit maximum. Refer to the Graduate School: Maximum Credit Loads and Overload Requests (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1228/>) policy.

TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeeabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)

- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
 - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.
 - b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.

- c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.

4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

OTHER

The department currently guarantees at least five years of financial support to all students admitted to the doctoral program, assuming they are making satisfactory progress toward their degrees. This funding may be in the form of fellowships, teaching assistantships, or project assistantships. All appointments receive valuable fringe benefits such as excellent health insurance and tuition remission.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Department of Political Science PhD students are encouraged to participate in our weekly workshops and colloquia. The workshops and colloquia offered in the department are the American Politics Workshop (<https://sites.google.com/view/uwpoliscipw/home/>), Comparative Politics Colloquium (<https://sites.google.com/wisc.edu/cpcwisc/home/>), International Relations Colloquium (<https://sites.google.com/view/ircwisc/>), Political Economy Colloquium (<https://sites.google.com/wisc.edu/pecwisc/home/>), MEAD – Models and Data Workshop (<https://sites.google.com/view/meadwisc/home/>), and the Political Theory Workshop (<https://sites.google.com/view/uwmadisonptw/home/>).

Workshops are one of the most important intellectual spaces in the department, providing an opportunity to become exposed to cutting-edge research and a chance to meet with scholars from other universities. In addition to featuring faculty papers and outside speakers, the workshops are an integral part of graduate training, serving as a place for students to present papers, as well as dissertation prospectuses, grant proposals, dissertation chapters, and practice job talks.

The department also hosts the Political Science Graduate Workshop (PSGW), which focuses on personal and professional development for graduate students in the department. The PSGW's mission is to "foster communication and information-sharing among the grad students and faculty members of the political science department and to promote professional development opportunities for the grad students." The topics covered in PSGW range from topics in graduate life (health and balance, financial life) to discipline professional development (publishing, communications). This workshop convenes several times per semester each academic year.

The department also actively supports our students throughout their job search. The Director of Graduate Studies and the major advisors review all job market materials such as CVs, writing samples, and diversity and teaching statements. In addition, the department arranges special informational sessions, mock interviews, and practice job talks to prepare students for the kinds of questions they will face from potential employers.

This support complements other departmental activities designed to professionalize graduate students, including brown bag discussions about attending professional conferences, publishing opportunities, and seeking grant funding.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Develop an appreciation of the diverse subfields of political science.
2. Learn to articulate questions of importance to the field that can be answered using the methods of political science.
3. Learn to select and utilize methods of political inquiry appropriate to particular research questions.
4. Learn to constructively critique existing work in political science.
5. Develop an understanding of political science from an historical context.
6. Recognize and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct in research, teaching, and service.