



Master of Arts in Political Science

**Department of Political Science
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MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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The primary mission of the Political Science MA Program is to provide high-quality instruction and training representing the breadth and depth of knowledge in the field to prepare our graduates for a wide variety of options after completing the MA. We offer a traditional approach to the MA to serve the diverse needs of our students and prepare them for a number of scholarly and professional pursuits. Some of our graduates go on to pursue a Ph.D. or law degree, others teach at community colleges or high schools, and others seek careers in government, politics (e.g., as lobbyists, policy analysts, campaign consultants) and in business and the non-profit sector. We also encourage political science MA students to integrate applied experiences, such as teaching and internships, into their program of study.

Financial Assistance

Graduate students who may be eligible for loans, scholarships, and work study funds should contact the Financial Aid Office for further information. Applications should be submitted by March 1 each year for priority consideration.

University Requirements

Department regulations listed here set out only part of the graduate students' obligations for University requirements; students should refer to the section GRADUATE ADMISSIONS under "Admission Requirements" in The University Catalog for minimum University admission and degree requirements.

Course Requirements for the Master's Degree: 30 units

Continuous enrollment is required. Any semester, in which a graduate student is not enrolled in coursework, they must enroll through Continuing Education to maintain their continuous enrollment. All requirements for the degree are to be completed within five years of the end of the semester of enrollment in the oldest course applied toward the degree. See "Graduate Education" in The University Catalog for complete details on general degree requirements.

Prerequisites for Admission to Conditionally Classified Status

1. Students must have a satisfactory grade point average: A 3.0 (on a scale where A = 4.0) in the last 30 semester units attempted and a 2.75 in the last 60 semester units attempted.
2. Approval by the Department of Political Science and the Office of Graduate Programs.
3. An acceptable baccalaureate in Political or Social Science from an accredited institution, or an equivalent approved by the Office of Graduate Programs.

All new students enter as conditionally classified graduate students. Conditionally classified students are expected to make no grade lower than a B-, and finish all course work (no "Incomplete" or "Satisfactory Progress").

Prerequisites for Admission to Classified Status:

In addition to the requirements for admission to conditionally classified status:

1. Completion of a minimum of at least 9 units of graduate study as a conditionally classified student, including a graduate seminar.
2. Completion as an undergraduate or post-graduate of the prerequisite courses in Political Inquiry (POLS 331 or equivalent) and 3 units in Political Theory.
3. Completion of the course in Political Science Research Methods. The student may complete this requirement by taking POLS 631 in his/her graduate program.
4. Formation of a graduate advisory committee. This should be done as early as possible and in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. Generally, no more than 15 units will be counted toward the graduate degree program in Political Science taken before the formation of the graduate committee.

Where the student has selected the Comprehensive Examination Plan, the graduate advisory committee must be chosen from the list of faculty assigned to the examination fields of study. If the student selects the Thesis Plan, at least two of the three faculty members on the committee, including the chair, must be chosen from the Political Science Department.

Note: These committees (i.e., Comprehensive or Thesis Plan Committees) will be responsible for all guidance of the student through the completion of the degree.

5. Development of an approved master's degree program plan. The graduate advisory committee works with the student in the development of the student's master's degree program plan. The plan must be approved by the graduate advisory committee, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Office of Graduate Programs.

Advancement to Candidacy

In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Completion of at least 18 units of the student's master's degree program plan.
2. Graduate advisory committee approval of the student's thesis proposal or the two study fields in which the examinations will be taken.
3. A minimum grade point average of 3.0.

Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Political Science

Completion of all requirements as established by the department graduate committee, the graduate advisory committee, and the Office of Graduate Programs, to include:

Completion of an approved program consisting of 30 units of 400/600-level courses as follows:

- (a) At least 24 units in the discipline of political science.
- (b) At least 18 units required for the degree in 600-level courses in political science or in a social science approved by the student's graduate advisory committee.
- (c) Not more than 6 semester units of transfer and/or extension credit (correspondence courses and U.C. extension course work are not acceptable).
- (d) Not more than 3 units of internship course work and only if the student has a GPA of 3.2 or better and the student's graduate committee and/or the Graduate Coordinator agree that the internship is a meaningful educational experience. Approval requires a letter to that effect which must be entered in the student's file.
- (e) Not more than 9 units of Independent Study (POLS 697) and Master's Thesis (POLS 699T); not more than 6 units of Master's Thesis (POLS 699T).
- (f) Students are required to take a minimum of 9 units from each of two study fields, including at least one graduate seminar from each of these two study fields. There are three study fields:

i) **American Politics – Mandatory Field**

Foundation: 6 units

2 courses required:

POLS 621 Seminar in American Politics
POLS 631 Seminar in Research Methods

Theory and Institutions: 6 units

2 courses selected from:

POLS 601 Seminar in State and Local Politics
POLS 632 Seminar in Political Theory
POLS 651 Seminar in Public Law
POLS 672 The U.S. Presidency
POLS 673 The U.S. Congress

American Politics Elective Courses: 6 units

2 courses selected from:

POLS 601 Seminar in State and Local Politics
POLS 602 Public Administration and Democracy
POLS 604 Seminar in Political Communication
POLS 623 Political Parties
POLS 624 Seminar on Public Opinion
POLS 626 Interest Groups, Protest Movements and Political Change
POLS 627 U.S. Campaigns and Elections
POLS 632 Seminar in Political Theory
POLS 671 Seminar in American National Government
POLS 672 The U.S. Presidency
POLS 673 The U.S. Congress
POLS 689 Internship
POLS 697 Independent Study

Note: Only 3 units of POLS 689 or POLS 698 may count toward the 6 units of American Politics Elective Courses.

ii) **International Relations and Comparative Politics**

Required Courses: 3 units

1 course selected from:

POLS 611 Seminar in Comparative Government
POLS 641 Seminar in International Relations

Elective Courses: 6 units

2 courses selected from:

POLS 611 Seminar in Comparative Government
POLS 641 Seminar in International Relations
POLS 697 Independent Study
POLS 446D International Relations of the Pacific Basin
POLS 446F International Relations of Western Europe
POLS 447 Vietnam and Foreign Policy
POLS 448 Politics of Terrorism
POLS 449 Pro-seminar in International Relations
POLS 498 Special Topics

Note: Only 3 units of POLS 698 may count toward the 6 units of International Relations and Comparative Politics Elective Courses.

iii) **Public Policy and Public Affairs**

6 – 9 units (2 courses required, up to 3 permitted):

POLS 601 Seminar in State and Local Government
POLS 602 Public Administration and Democracy
POLS 653 Environment Policy and the Law
POLS 660A Seminar in Public Management
POLS 660B Seminar in Public Personnel Administration
POLS 660C Seminar in Administration of Public Financial Resources
POLS 662 Seminar in Organizational Theory in the Public Sector
POLS 664 Seminar in Public Policy in Health and Human Services
POLS 668 Seminar in Public Policy Formation
POLS 669 Public and Non-Profit Program Evaluation
POLS 689 Internship/Fieldwork

Note: Only 3 units of POLS 389 may count toward the 6 – 9 units of the Public Policy and Public Affairs course requirements.

0 – 3 units (1 course permitted)

POLS 624 Seminar on Public Opinion
POLS 626 Interest Groups, Protest Movements and Political Change
POLS 671 Seminar in American National Government
POLS 673 The U.S. Congress

Students are encouraged to take additional courses in study fields in which they elect to be examined.

For students who select the Thesis Plan, the final three units will be fulfilled by taking three Master's Thesis units (POLS 699). For students who select the Comprehensive Exam Plan, the final three units will be fulfilled by taking an elective course chosen from the approved courses in one of their two fields of study.

2. Completion and final approval of one of the following, as specified by the student's graduate advisory committee:

- a. **Thesis Plan**

The candidate shall submit an acceptable thesis based upon research developed by the student and agreed to by the student's graduate advisory committee.

1. Thesis Proposal: A proposal (prospectus or detailed outline) of the thesis must be submitted to and approved by the graduate advisory committee before the student begins the thesis. The proposal includes at least a statement of the problem or hypothesis, the basic research methods to be employed, justification of the study's value, and estimated time of completion. The proposal is a formal document that must have appropriate attention given matters of format, documentation, and quality of writing.
2. Registration in POLS 699T, Master's Thesis: The student should register for POLS 699T Master's Thesis no earlier than the second semester in the program and in accordance with his/her thesis plan. However, it is advisable that the student complete most of the program course work before registering for POLS 699T Master's Thesis.
3. Approval of Master's Thesis: The thesis shall be approved by all three members of the Graduate Advisory Committee and the Graduate Coordinator.
4. Oral Defense of Master's Thesis: A required oral defense of the thesis shall be conducted by the candidate's graduate advisory committee. Interested faculty members may attend. The oral defense is generally limited to matters within the scope of the thesis. The candidate may repeat the defense one time if failed by the committee on the first attempt. The time and date of the defense must be noted in print and circulated to the Office of Graduate Programs at least one week prior to the date.

- b. **Comprehensive Examination Plan:**

1. Written Comprehensive Examinations: The candidate shall complete and pass eight-hour written examinations in each of two study fields in which she/he has chosen to be examined.
2. Preparation and Evaluation of Comprehensive Examinations: A two-member committee shall be chosen each year by the Graduate Coordinator to write and read exams for each of the approved study fields.
3. Grading: Each examination shall be graded as honors, pass, or fail.
4. Repeating Written Examinations: Both examinations must be passed. The candidate may repeat each of the examinations once.

Approval by the departmental graduate committee and the Graduate Coordinators Committee on behalf of the faculty of the university.

Graduate Literacy Requirement – Writing proficiency is a graduation requirement.

Political Science graduate students will demonstrate their writing competence through the first seminar in which they enroll. The instructor of that seminar will certify for the Graduate Coordinator that the student has met the requirement. Consult with the Graduate Coordinator for specifics.

Graduate Grading Requirements

All courses in the major (with the exceptions of Independent Study- 697, and Master's Thesis-699, or Master's Project-699) must be taken for a letter grade, except those courses specified by the department as ABC/No Credit or Credit/No Credit grading only. A maximum of 10 units of Credit/No Credit grades may be used on the approved program (including 697, 699, and courses outside the major). While grading standards are determined by individual programs and instructors, it is also the policy of the university that unsatisfactory grades may be given when work fails to reflect achievement of the high standards, including high writing standards, expected of students pursuing graduate study.

Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average in each of the following three categories: all course work taken at any accredited institution subsequent to admission to the master's program; all course work taken at CSU, Chico subsequent to admission to the program; and all courses on the approved master's degree program.

In addition, no course in which a grade lower than B- is earned will be counted toward the fulfillment of any graduate degree requirements.

Graduate Advising Requirement

Advising is mandatory each semester for all Political Science MA students. Consult with the Graduate Coordinator for specifics.

For further information concerning the MA program, please contact:

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