



Master of Arts in Political Science

Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice

California State University, Chico

Chico, California 95929-0455

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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. At the discretion of the academic program, a maximum of 6 semesters units of special session credit earned in non-matriculated status combined with all transfer coursework may be counted toward the degree requirements. This applies to special session credit earned through Open University, or in courses offered for academic credit through Regional and Continuing Education.

Graduate Time Limit:

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 Master's Degree Requirements in the [University Catalog](#) for complete details on general degree requirements.

Prerequisites for Admission to Conditionally Classified Status:

1. Satisfactory grade point average as specified in Graduate and Postbaccalaureate Admission Requirements in the *University Catalog*.
2. Approval by the department and the Office of Graduate Studies.
3. An acceptable baccalaureate in Political or Social Science from an accredited institution, or an equivalent approved by the Office of Graduate Studies.

4. All new students enter as conditionally classified students. Conditionally classified students are required to make no grade lower than a B-, maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0, and finish all course work (no "Incomplete" or "Satisfactory Progress").

Prerequisites for Admission to Classified Status:

In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Completion of a minimum of 9 units of graduate study as a conditionally classified student, including a graduate seminar.
2. Formation of a graduate advisory committee. This should be done as early as possible and in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. For students who select the Thesis Plan, at least two of the faculty members on the committee, including the chair, must be chosen from the Political Science and Criminal Justice Department. The Thesis Committee and the Graduate Coordinator are responsible for all guidance of the student through completion of the degree. For students who select the Comprehensive Exam Plan, the Graduate Coordinator organizes the graduate advisory committee and is responsible for guidance of the student through completion of the degree.
3. Development of an approved master's degree program plan. The Graduate Coordinator 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 Studies.

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 intention to attempt the comprehensive exam.
3. A minimum grade point average of 3.0.

Requirements for the MA Degree in Political Science:

Completion of all requirements as established by the department MA Committee, the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice, the graduate advisory committee, and the Office of Graduate Studies, to include:

1. Completion of an approved program consisting of 30 units of 400/500/600-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 and the Graduate Coordinator.
 - (c) At the discretion of the academic program, a maximum of 6 semester units of special session credit earned in non-matriculated status combined with all transfer coursework may be counted toward the degree requirements. This applies to special session credit earned through Open University, or in courses offered for academic credit through Regional and Continuing Education. (Correspondence courses and UC Extension coursework are not acceptable for transfer.)
 - (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 or the Graduate Coordinator agrees that the internship is a meaningful educational experience.
 - (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 take five core seminars, and one American Political Institution course. The remaining courses consist of electives, internship, independent study, and thesis units.

I. Core Requirements: 15 Units

POLS 611	Seminar in Comparative Government
POLS 621	Seminar in American Politics
POLS 631	Research Methods
POLS 632	Seminar in Political Theory
POLS 641	Seminar in International Relations

II. American Political Institution Course: 3 Units

Students must take one of the following (and the remaining may be taken as electives):

POLS 601	State and Local Government
POLS 651	Seminar in Judicial Politics
POLS 672	The U.S. Presidency
POLS 672	The U.S. Congress

III. Elective Courses: 12 Units

POLS 414	Politics of Terrorism
POLS 449	Issues in Comparative Politics and International Relations
POLS 498	Special Topics
POLS 601	State and Local Government
POLS 602	Public Administration and Democracy
POLS 624	Seminar on Public Opinion
POLS 626	Interest Groups, Protest Movements, and Political Change
POLS 627	U.S. Campaigns and Elections
POLS 651	Seminar in Judicial Politics
POLS 653	Environmental Policy and the Law
POLS 660A	Public Management
POLS 660B	Public Personnel Administration
POLS 660C	Public Budgeting and Finances
POLS 662	Organizational Theory in the Public Sector
POLS 664	Public Policy in Health and Human Services
POLS 668	Public Policy Formation
POLS 669	Public and Non-Profit Program Evaluation
POLS 671	Topics in American Politics
POLS 672	The U.S. Presidency
POLS 673	The U.S. Congress
POLS 689	Intern/Fieldwork Public Administration (<i>Prerequisites: Faculty permission</i>)
POLS 697	Independent Study (<i>Prerequisites: Faculty permission</i>)

(g) For students who select the Thesis Plan, the final 3 units are fulfilled by taking 3 units of Master's Thesis (POLS 699T). For students who select the Comprehensive Exam Plan, the final 3 units are fulfilled by taking an elective course chosen from the approved courses.

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, a relevant review of the literature, 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 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.
- 3) Approval of Thesis: The thesis shall be approved by all members of the graduate advisory committee.
- 4) Oral Defense: 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 Studies at least one week prior to the date.

b. Comprehensive Examination Plan

- 1) Written Comprehensive Examinations: The candidate shall complete and pass a written examination.
 - 2) Preparing for Comprehensive Exams: Students are given lists of suggested readings for various fields of study in political science. Candidates are expected to have a broad understanding of their fields of study and to cite the relevant and important scholarly literature in responding to comprehensive exam questions.
 - 3) Grading: The examination shall be graded as pass or fail.
 - 4) Repeating Written Examinations: The candidate may repeat the examination once.
3. Approval by the departmental graduate committee and the Graduate Coordinators Committee on behalf of the faculty of the University.

Graduate Requirement in Writing Proficiency:

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, Comprehensive Examination - 696, Master's Project - 699P, and Master's Thesis - 699T) must be taken for a letter grade, except those courses specified by the department as ABC/No Credit (400/500-level courses), AB/No Credit (600-level courses), or Credit/No Credit grading only. A maximum of 10 units combined of ABC/No Credit, AB/No Credit, and Credit/No Credit grades may be used on the approved program (including 697, 696, 699P, 699T 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:

Dr. Nicole Sherman, Graduate Coordinator

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