

Political Science

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Degree Requirements

PhD in Political Science

Students in the PhD program are expected to acquire the following:

- A broad understanding of several fields of political science as a discipline
- Methodological competence sufficient to be productive professionals
- Specialized expertise in a particular field of concentration

The procedures and requirements described below are designed to facilitate the achievement of these objectives. In addition to the formal requirements stated here, we provide a list of recommendations that students should follow to succeed in the program. For a detailed year-to-year outline of requirements and recommendations, please refer to the section "Specific Requirements for Each Year in the Program" at the end of the *Guide to Graduate Studies*, located on the Graduate Program website (<https://polisci.wustl.edu/resources/>).

Exceptions to any of these requirements must be approved by the director of graduate studies (DGS) in consultation with the Graduate Committee and, as needed, the respective Field Committee.

General Course Requirements

In general, all students must successfully complete the following core courses with a grade of B or better:

- Math Camp (offered during the August before the first semester)
- Pol Sci 505 Theories of Individual and Collective Choice I (first semester)
- Pol Sci 5052 Mathematical Modeling in Political Science (first semester)
- Pol Sci 581 Quantitative Political Methodology I (second semester)
- Pol Sci 582 Quantitative Political Methodology II (third semester)
- Pol Sci 5024 Causal Inference (fourth semester)
- Pol Sci 590 Research Workshop I (fifth semester)

According to the Probation and Dismissal Policy, if a student fails to obtain a B (3.0) in one of the required courses, they will be placed on academic probation and have the opportunity to retake the course the following year. Failure to obtain a B (3.0) after taking the course for the second time will result in dismissal from the program. Furthermore, failure to obtain a B (3.0) in another required course while on probation is considered extreme underperformance and will result in dismissal from the program.

In addition to required courses, students will be taking courses in different fields. Courses are mainly concentrated during the first two years. Students should plan to take four courses (12 units) per semester during their first year and three courses (9 units) per semester during their second year.

Fields

The department divides the discipline of political science into six fields:

- American politics
- Comparative politics
- Formal theory
- International politics
- Political and social theory
- Quantitative methods

Before writing the dissertation, students must pass a qualifying evaluation (refer to next section) and fulfill requirements for certification in one major and one minor field. The major and minor field certifications are intended to ensure that students possess broad familiarity with the literature and material in the fields presented.

Field requirements are met by completing the required courses with a grade of B+ or better. A major field requires completing four courses in that field with a grade of B+ or better; a minor field requires completing three courses in that field with a grade of B+ or better.

Students are expected to complete course requirements for the major and minor by the end of their fourth semester. Exceptions can be granted by the DGS on a case-by-case basis but are not possible beyond the student's sixth semester.

Field Requirements

American Politics

- Major: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least four graduate-level seminars in American politics, including Pol Sci 520 American Political Institutions and Pol Sci 5678 American Political Behavior.
- Minor: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least three graduate-level seminars in American politics, including Pol Sci 520 American Political Institutions and Pol Sci 5678 American Political Behavior.

Comparative Politics

- Major: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least four graduate-level seminars in comparative politics, including Pol Sci 510 Approaches to Comparative Politics.
- Minor: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least three graduate-level seminars in comparative politics, including Pol Sci 510 Approaches to Comparative Politics.

Formal Theory

- Major: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least four graduate-level seminars in formal theory, including Pol Sci 505 Theories of Individual and Collective Choice I and three other 500-level courses that require Pol Sci 505 Theories of Individual and Collective Choice I as a prerequisite. With permission of the Formal Theory Field Committee, an appropriate 500-level economics course may be substituted.
- Minor: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least three graduate-level seminars in formal theory, including Pol Sci 505 Theories of Individual and Collective Choice I and two other 500-level courses that require Pol Sci 505 Theories of Individual and Collective Choice I as a prerequisite. With permission of the Formal Theory Field Committee, an appropriate 500-level economics course may be substituted.

International Politics

- Major: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least four graduate-level seminars in international politics. This requirement includes the 500-level graduate sequence and 500-level political science and economics courses authorized by the International Politics Committee.
- Minor: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least three graduate-level seminars in international politics. The requirement includes the 500-level graduate sequence and 500-level political science and economics courses authorized by the International Politics Committee.

Political and Social Theory

- Major: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least four graduate-level courses in political theory; the theory faculty recommends at least two of the History of Political Thought courses (Pol Sci 5090 History of Political Thought I: Justice, Virtue, and the Soul, Pol Sci 5092 History of Political Thought II: Legitimacy, Equality and the Social Contract, and Pol Sci 5093 History of Political Thought III: Liberty, Democracy, and Revolution) and at least two seminars in political theory.
- Minor: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least three graduate-level courses in political theory authorized by the Political Theory Committee.

Quantitative Methods

- Major: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least four methods courses, including the required sequence (Pol Sci 581 Quantitative Political Methodology I and Pol Sci 582 Quantitative Political Methodology II) and additional elective methodology courses authorized by the Quantitative Methods Committee.
- Minor: Students must satisfactorily complete (with a grade of B+ or better) at least three methods courses, including the required sequence (Pol Sci 581 Quantitative Political Methodology I and Pol Sci 582 Quantitative Political Methodology II) and an additional elective methodology course authorized by the Quantitative Methods Committee.

According to the Probation and Dismissal Policy, if a student fails to meet field requirements as a result of grades or for other reasons by the end of their fourth semester, they will be placed on probation for one semester. Failure to meet the field requirements by the end of that probationary semester results in dismissal from the program.

Qualifying Evaluations

Each student will be evaluated at the end of each semester through their second year. These evaluations will take place at the end of their first and second semesters, the end of their first-year summer, and the end of their third and fourth semesters.

Evaluation criteria for the academic year include the following: regular classroom attendance (at least 90%), participation in departmental intellectual life (e.g., seminars, conferences, professionalization workshops), and grades (a grade of B or higher for all required courses). Grades will be particularly emphasized, and faculty of required courses will use grades as clear communication that students have mastered the course material. Each required course will include a cumulative final exam or another final assignment of a cumulative nature that will assess the student's broad mastery of relevant materials.

At the end of their first-year summer, students must submit (a) evidence of research progress (which can consist of skill development, collaborative research, or individual research output) and (b) feedback from a faculty mentor.

The DGS will distribute a survey to all faculty to collect the necessary feedback regarding student performance and engagement. To remain in good standing, students must (a) be making good progress with respect to their course work and mentored teaching experience assignments; (b) be advancing in terms of their research trajectory, as appropriate for their stage in the program; and (c) be maintaining professional comportment with faculty, peers, and staff.

If a student fails to successfully pass any of these evaluations, they will be placed on academic probation. If the student makes significant progress during the next evaluation period and satisfactorily addresses the terms of the probation, they will be removed from probation and return to good standing. Failing to make significant progress during the next evaluation period may result in dismissal from the program.

Third-Year Paper Requirement

During their second and third years, each student is required to produce a solo-authored research paper. The expectation is that this paper will be in the same field as the student's dissertation and at the level of quality for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

Students need to identify two advisors (i.e., the research paper chair and a second reader) and obtain their signatures on the Research Paper Proposal Form after taking the qualifying exam (i.e., by the end of January of their second year). In consultation with these advisors (i.e., the committee), they need to develop a research design (motivation, theory, design, data sources) by the last day of classes of the spring semester of their second year. By the end of the spring semester, the

student needs to schedule a formal defense of the proposal with their committee and, after the defense, submit a form with the advisors' signatures to the departmental administrative assistant responsible for graduate affairs.

The third-year paper is due to the committee by the first day of classes of the third year. The committee will grade these submissions within the first two weeks of the semester. At this point, students will either receive a "revise and resubmit" or a "reject and resubmit" from their committee. A "reject and resubmit" is a judgment by the faculty that the paper does not reflect satisfactory progress toward the research paper. Students receiving this evaluation will be placed on academic probation, and a failure to significantly improve the project will result in dismissal from the program. In extraordinary circumstances, a "conditional accept/high pass" may be granted.

Students will enroll in Research Workshop during their third year. This fall workshop is devoted to helping students revise their papers for final submission.

The final papers are due to the DGS and both readers by the start of the sixth semester. Students are required to defend this paper publicly. The DGS will organize a public presentation for all research papers within the first three weeks of the spring semester.

The Third-Year Committee will evaluate the quality of the research paper and its potential for submission to and acceptance in a peer-reviewed journal. Students who received a "reject and resubmit" during the first round should anticipate stricter scrutiny from faculty at this stage. The paper can be graded as pass or fail. A failing grade in this defense by students who previously received a "reject and resubmit" will result in dismissal from the program. A failing grade without a prior "reject and resubmit" will result in the student being placed on probation until they resubmit and successfully pass the research paper requirement, which must occur before the end of the spring term. Failing to submit the revised paper and earn a passing grade by the end of the spring term will result in dismissal from the program.

In the event of disagreement between the chair and the reader, the DGS will select a third reader in consultation with the faculty in the student's area of study to evaluate the paper and make a decision about the final grade. The research paper chair and the reader(s) will inform the student and the DGS of the final grade, together with an explanation, within two weeks after the defenses have been completed.

Dissertation Committee and Prospectus Requirement

Students are required to form a Dissertation Defense Committee that consists of at least three full-time Washington University faculty members by the start of the fifth semester (January of their third year). The formation of the Dissertation Defense Committee requires selecting a dissertation chair and at least two other faculty members and then submitting the Dissertation Defense Committee Proposal Form. The DGS will assist the student in making sure the composition of the committee meets the requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Students will enroll in the year-long Research Workshop during their third year. The spring semester of this workshop is devoted to helping students develop their dissertation prospectuses.

Students are required to have defended the dissertation prospectus by the end of the sixth semester (May of their third year). Dissertation prospectus defenses will be announced in advance and will be open to the public. Students who fail to schedule a defense or who fail the defense will be put on probation and may re-defend their prospectus by August 1. Failing to schedule or failing the re-defense results in dismissal from the program.

Students are encouraged to apply for the National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant and to other outside funding agencies to pursue additional financial support for their dissertation research.

Summary Timeline

(Please refer to "Specific Expectations for Each Year in Program" in the *Guide to Graduate Studies* on the Graduate Program website (<https://polisci.wustl.edu/resources/>) for more details.)

- End of second semester: Evaluation of class performance and meeting with the DGS
- End of third semester: Required courses (with the exception of the Research Workshop) completed
- Beginning of fourth semester (January): Submit Third-Year Paper Form (seeking chair and reader)
- End of fourth semester: Major and minor field requirements completed; defend research paper prospectus to chair and second reader
- Before the start of fifth semester (August): Submit third-year paper
- Beginning of sixth semester (January): Resubmit and defend third-year paper; submit Dissertation Committee Proposal Form
- End of eighth semester: Defend Dissertation Prospectus (resubmitted prospectus must be defended before the start of the seventh semester)

Dissertation and Defense

The requirements for the completion of the dissertation are described in the general degree requirements by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, which are applicable to all Washington University doctoral candidates.

Graduation

Students need to graduate by May of their sixth year. Failure to do so results in the student being placed on probation. The student then has a chance to finish their dissertation by August of that same year. Otherwise, they will be dismissed from the program.

Foreign Language Requirement

There is no uniform foreign language requirement set by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, or by the department. The extent and substance of foreign language competence required will be determined by the Graduate Committee in consultation with the student and their advisor.

Mentored Teaching Experience Responsibilities

Mentored Teaching Experiences (MTEs) are curricular in nature and require that students collaborate with a faculty member.

Mentored teaching responsibilities vary from course to course but, in all cases, consist of attending class and grading papers and assignments. Examples of other responsibilities include running discussion sections or reviews, disseminating course materials, and holding office hours.

Graduate students are expected to participate in the MTE for an average of 13.5 hours per week. During some weeks, the MTE will involve considerably fewer hours; during other weeks (usually around midterms and finals), it will involve considerably more hours.

Faculty are expected to set expectations for grading at the beginning of each semester, and graduate students should plan accordingly for weeks of heavier grading or other responsibilities.

According to the Probation and Dismissal Policy, poor performance in the fulfillment of mentored teaching responsibilities will result in the student being placed on probation. Lack of improvement while on probation will result in dismissal from the program.

Mentored Experience Requirement

All students need to meet the mentored experience requirement of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, by the time they graduate. This requirement includes the following:

- Participating in departmental intellectual life, which includes but is not limited to meeting with outside speakers, attending talks and in-house conferences, presenting their own research, assisting with graduate student recruitment, and helping to organize in-house conferences (e.g., CPAC)
- Participating in an MTE for a "core" course in the student's field of study; "core" courses include introductory courses, Quantitative Political Methods, and other courses considered "core" by the DGS
- Giving at least one supervised guest lecture or presentation
- Participating in the MTE or teaching a class that involves regular interaction with students

The Department of Political Science has its own unique Mentored Experience Requirement Implementation Plan (PDF) (http://bulletin.wustl.edu/grad/artsci/politicalscience/Political_Science_Mentored_Experience_Requirement.pdf) that all students in this program should review.

AM in Statistics

Students pursuing a PhD in political science may apply for a tailored AM in statistics. The completion of this program should not add any more time to a student's time to degree. Students should consult with Professor Betsy Sinclair (<https://polisci.wustl.edu/people/betsy-sinclair/>) if they are interested in pursuing this AM degree.