

Master of Arts Degree

**Department of Political Science
Kansas State University**

**Student Guide
Revised 2019**

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THE MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Political Science Master of Arts program meets the educational and professional needs of three groups of students:

- Those planning to become high school teachers or instructors in two-year colleges.
- Working professionals and other adults desiring to improve their qualifications or seeking a greater understanding of political life.
- Students wishing to prepare for Ph.D. or other advanced study.

The degree requirements are structured, therefore, to provide students with an education which prepares them for a mature grasp of politics, a respect for intellectual integrity, and an ability to communicate effectively. Graduate work in political science is offered in American government and politics, comparative government and politics, international relations, and political thought.

The following requirements supplement those prescribed by the University and the Graduate School.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

All candidates for the Master of Arts in political science must fulfill the following requirements.

Core Courses [15 credit hours]: The Master of Arts degree in political science is a 30 hour degree program. All candidates are required to take the following core courses. Please note that only two of the seminars are offered each year.

POLSC 700	Research Methods in Political Science	Fall Semester, each year
POLSC 805	Seminar: American Government Problems	Fall Semester, even number years
POLSC 811	Seminar: International Politics	Fall Semester, odd number years
POLSC 821	Seminar: Political Thought	Fall Semester, even number years
POLSC 841	Seminar: Comparative Politics	Fall Semester, odd number years

Area of Concentration/Political Science Electives [15 credit hours]: Candidates for the MA in political science are required to focus their studies upon an area of concentration within the discipline. The majority of the fifteen hours of coursework beyond the required core courses will typically focus in the area of concentration. The department offers four such areas including American government and politics, international relations, comparative government and politics and political thought. Students are advised to decide upon an area of concentration at or before the completion of nine hours of coursework.

Writing Requirement Options: Candidates for the MA in Political Science are required to complete a substantial writing/research project. Students may choose, in consultation with the MA Director and their supervisory committee, one of three programs leading to the Master of Arts degree:

- **Option A: Thesis.** This option requires 30 hours of graduate credit including 6 hours of credit for a thesis. Of the remaining 24 hours, at least 18 hours must be in political science.
- **Option B: Report.** This option requires 30 hours of graduate credit, including two hours of credit for a written research report. Of the remaining 28 hours, at least 19 hours must be in political science.
- **Option C: Non-Thesis/Report.** This option requires 30 hours of graduate credit in political science which will include the four required 800-level seminars. In addition, students in this option should write four research papers in conjunction with the field seminars acceptable to the professors involved. The four papers should be turned in to the major professor/chair or the student's supervisory committee.

Comprehensive Examination: All Master of Arts degree candidates must successfully complete a written comprehensive examination. The responsibility for initiating the process rests with the student in consultation with his/her supervisory committee. See Appendix C for a detailed discussion of the examination.

Residency and Other Requirements: Master's students should observe the following general course hour guidelines.

- A minimum of 18 hours in residence.
- A minimum of 18 hours in Political Science.
- A minimum of 18 hours of courses numbered 700 or above.
- A maximum of three hours of "non-class" seminars or courses (e.g., readings, problems, internships).
- In unusual situations, courses numbered below 600 can be applied to the MA degree but these cannot be courses in political science and the maximum number of these course hours is six.
- Students must be enrolled for a minimum of one credit hour the semester they expect to receive their degrees.

STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Upon completing nine hours of course work students should meet with the MA Director to identify a major professor and supervisory committee. This committee (including the major professor) shall be composed of at least three members.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Each student should file a Program of Study [see Appendix B] upon the completion of nine hours of coursework. This document formalizes the membership of the student's supervisory committee and summarizes the course work completed and projected. The Program of Study form is available on the Graduate School's web site -- www.k-state.edu/grad/. It should be completed in consultation with the student's supervisory committee.

ADVISING

Normally all students will confer with the Director of Graduate Studies concerning course enrollment.

PI SIGMA ALPHA

There is also a chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science honor society, which each year will induct eligible students (3.7 or over GPA in the core courses) into this national organization. Interested students should contact the director of graduate studies.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Graduate Assistantships are competitively awarded by the Department of Political Science. Those who wish to be considered for an Assistantship should submit an application for graduate financial assistance along with a cover letter by March 1. See Appendix D for details.

SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Each year the Department of Political Science awards a number of scholarships and fellowships on a competitive basis. Those who wish to be considered for these scholarships should submit an application for graduate financial assistance along with a cover letter by March 1. See Appendix D for details.

POLICY ON COMPETENCY REVALIDATION

If a student's program of study includes any course credits more than six years old at the time the student is about to complete all degree requirements, a plan to revalidate those courses must be prepared by the director of graduate studies in consultation with the Graduate School.

RECEIPT OF DEGREE

Students are reminded that they must complete their internships, reports, and related course requirements before they are eligible to receive their degrees. Also, students must be enrolled for a minimum of one credit hour the semester they expect to receive their degrees.

Students who plan to graduate during a particular semester should obtain a **Graduation Schedule** and file a **Graduation Check Sheet** from the Graduate School, Fairchild Hall. The schedule announces all the important dates and deadlines which a student needs to know for graduation, and the check sheet will instruct the Graduate School to confirm the student's degree status.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

According to the Kansas State University Graduate School, graduate students are held responsible for knowing the academic policies and degree requirements set forth in the Bulletin (General Catalog). They are likewise held responsible for knowing the regulations concerning the degree they plan to take and any special requirements within the department or academic unit. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to be informed regarding the University's policies as to the standard of work required for continued enrollment in the Graduate School. The Graduate Office should be consulted if additional information is needed.

PLACEMENT

K-State's Placement Center is available for helping students in their job search. Internships also serve as a vehicle for placement as often interns are retained as permanent employees. The director of graduate studies and the student's graduate advisory committee will work closely with MA graduates to help locate appropriate employment opportunities.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for admission, a student must have a Bachelor's degree with a minimum of 3.0 GPA (on a four point scale). Others with at least a 2.7 GPA may be admitted on "probation," or

on "special student" category. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is recommended for all students applying to the Political Science program, but is not required.

Additional Requirements for International Students

- **English Language Proficiency:** The Graduate School requires each international applicant whose native language is not English to demonstrate competence in the English language by making a satisfactory score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
 - There are three types of TOEFL scores: paper-based TOEFL, computer-based TOEFL and TOEFL IBT (internet-based TOEFL taken in real time). TOEFL scores are valid for two years from the initial test date.
 - A score of at least 550 (paper-based test), 213 (computer-based test), or 79 (IBT - internet-based test) on the TOEFL is required to be considered for admission to the Graduate School. Applicants with scores of 600 (paper-based), 250 (computer-based) or 100 (IBT - internet based) or above may be considered for regular admission.
 - Applicants with scores between 550/213/79 and 599/249/99 may be admitted provisionally and must at the time of their enrollment demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing English and in understanding spoken American English to the satisfaction of the Graduate School.
 - All international students entering the Graduate School with a TOEFL score less than 600 will be required to demonstrate proficiency in written and oral English at the time of enrollment. Those who do not meet the minimum proficiency standard **will be required to complete specified courses** offered by the English Language Program (ELP) at Kansas State.
- **Affidavit of Financial Support:** U.S. Immigration regulations require Kansas State University to verify that international students have the financial resources to pay for all educational, living, and other expenses. This form is available on the Graduate School's web site. Can pull the Word version into this document.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

Application is made electronically via the Graduate School's website [<http://www.k-state.edu/grad/admissions/application-process/>]. In addition to an application fee, you will be prompted to supply the following supporting materials:

- Undergraduate transcripts from all undergraduate institutions.
- Statement of your career objectives relative to pursuing the MPA degree.
- Three letters of recommendation particular to this application.

International students also will be asked to provide:

- An affidavit of financial support
- An English language proficiency score.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Dr. Brianne Heidbreder
Director of Graduate Studies
KSU Department of Political Science
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Manhattan, KS 66506
Tel: (785)532-6842
polsci@ksu.edu

APPENDIX A: MA FACULTY

Sam Bell, Department Head, Professor, Ph.D., Binghamton University, Foreign Policy, International Relations.

Ethan Bernick, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Florida State University, Public Policy, Southern Politics, Research Methods.

Nate Birkhead, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Indiana University, US Politics, US and State Legislative Processes, Political Parties.

Sabri Ciftci, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Florida State University, Comparative Politics, Political Behavior, Research Methods.

John Fliter, Associate Professor, Ph.D., University of Maryland, Public Law, Constitutional Law, Criminal Justice.

Michael Flynn, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Binghamton University, US Foreign Policy, World Politics, International Security.

Brianne Heidbreder, Associate Professor, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Public Administration, American Politics.

Laurie Johnson, Professor, Ph.D., Northern Illinois University, Political Philosophy, and International Relations Theory.

Emizet Kisangani, Professor, Ph.D., University of Iowa, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Research Methods.

Andrew Long, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Florida State University, International Relations, Security Studies.

Carla Martinez Machain, Associate Professor, Ph.D., Rice University, International Conflict, Military Strategies and Conflict Outcomes.

Jeff Pickering, Professor, Ph.D., Indiana University, International Relations, Foreign Relations.

Alissandra Stoyan, Assistant Professor, Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics.

John Warner, Assistant Professor, Ph.D. University of California, Davis, Political Thought.

Zhiwei Zhang, Assistant Professor, Ph.D., University of Kentucky, Public Administration, Public Finance.

APPENDIX B:

GRADUATE SCHOOL FORMS

Program of Study

Approval to Schedule Final Exam

APPENDIX C

Comprehensive Examination

All Master of Arts degree candidates must successfully complete a written comprehensive examination. The responsibility for initiating the process rests with the student in consultation with his/her advisory committee. This exam is normally taken late in the student's final semester.

Request to take the comprehensive exam: Each semester the director of graduate studies will post dates associated with the examination process. The first of these will require students taking the exam to state their intention in writing to the director of graduate studies.

Preparation for the Examination

- **Meeting with the Advisory Committee:** At about the mid-point in the semester, students taking the exam will meet with their advisory committee to discuss the process and the expectations. To ensure that the committee and the candidate are on the same page at the completion of this meeting the candidate should communicate his/her understanding of the issues addressed at the meeting in written form to the director of graduate studies.
- **Approval to Schedule Final Examination Form:** In order to schedule the examination with the Graduate School, an "Approval to Schedule Final Examination" form [see Appendix B] must be obtained from and returned to the Graduate School. The form is available under the "Form Finder" link on the Graduate School's web site [www.k-state.edu/grad/]. All members of the student's graduate supervisory committee must sign this form. The Graduate School views both the written examination and the oral defense of a thesis or report as part of the same examination process. Hence, if you are pursuing the non-thesis/report option, the date on the approval form is the date of the written exam. If, however, you are writing a thesis or report, the date on the approval form is the date of the oral defense of the thesis or report.
- **Consultation with Individual Faculty:** Typically the student will follow-up individually and in detail with each member of the MPA faculty who is responsible for any of the core course questions.

Exam Preparation: All exam questions will be prepared by the student's supervisory committee. Where necessary, committee members will consult with professors from whom the student has taken course work.

Administration: Each semester the director of graduate studies announces the comprehensive examination date. This date is typically late in the semester. Normally the duration of the exam is a maximum of six hours. In unusual situations, the candidate in consultation with their supervisory committee may request an alternative to the established exam date. The director of graduate studies is responsible for exam logistics.

Contents of the Comprehensive Examination: The comprehensive examination is typically structured as follows.

- One section [question(s)] is designed to evaluate the student's ability to integrate materials in the major area of concentration -- presumably based in large part upon the field seminar.
- One section [question(s)] deals specifically with other course work in the major area of concentration.
- One section [question(s)] is designed to evaluate the student's ability to synthesize materials from several fields of political science -- presumably based upon the four field seminars.

Grading the Examination: All questions will be read by each member of the student's supervisory committee. Occasionally, a non-committee faculty member from whom the student had classes is asked to contribute question(s) for the exam. In such situations, that faculty member will also read the student's exam, but will not be a voting member of the committee. Under certain circumstances, and at the discretion of the student's advisory committee, an oral exam may be administered as a follow-up to the written comprehensive exam.

Passing performance requires agreement among a majority of the committee. The committee will give an overall grade of "pass with distinction", "pass", or "fail".

A second examination is permitted if a candidate fails all or a portion of a master's examination. The second exam cannot take place fewer than two months or more than fifteen months after the failed examination unless an extension is granted by the Dean of the Graduate School. No third examination will be allowed.

Notifying the Student: Students shall receive evaluation of their performance via email with a letter to follow within two weeks after the examination

Oral Defense of Thesis or Report: Candidates choosing either the thesis or the report option are required to pass an oral defense of the research. At the discretion of the student's supervisory committee, the oral defense may also include questions of a general nature pertaining to the field of political science. The oral examination is taken when the student's committee certifies that a satisfactory copy of the report or thesis has been presented. Passing performance requires agreement among a majority of the committee.

Non-Thesis/Report Requirements: Under the so-called "four seminar paper option" students must submit "clean" copies of the four papers to the director of graduate studies.

Appendix D

Financial Assistance

The Department of Political Science has two types of financial assistance available to support graduate study including graduate assistantships and graduate scholarships or fellowships. **The application deadline for all department financial assistance is March 1.**

Graduate Assistantships

Types of Assistantships: The Department of Political Science provides financial aid to students in the form of a graduate assistantship on a competitive basis in exchange for assistance to faculty with their teaching, or research, or both.

Selection Criteria: Awards reflect the following criteria:

- Academic performance, promise, and intellectual ability.
- Past performance as a departmental assistant, if applicable.
- Teaching and research needs of the department faculty.
- Financial need.

Conditions of Assistantship: Graduate assistants must enroll in a minimum of six credit hours per semester and make reasonable degree progress as reflected by at least a 3.0 GPA. During the period of appointment assistants may not hold another paid full time position of any kind. The department reserves the right to withdraw support at any time if academic performance falls below the 3.0 GPA or if the job performance is not satisfactory.

Amount of Assistance: Graduate assistantships involve a stipend, a tuition waiver for up to 10 credit hours per semester and fee reductions. The amount of the stipend changes from year-to-year and may be obtained by contacting the director of graduate studies.

Duties: Graduate assistants are required to work a maximum of 20 hours per week in support of the research, teaching, and administration of departmental faculty and staff. Both faculty and graduate assistants are responsible for documenting the hours worked.

Supervision: Each assistant is assigned to one or two faculty members, depending on the department's needs and the student's preference. Graduate assistants may be asked to help any other member of the department faculty, subject to clearance with the student's principal adviser.

Renewal of Assistantship: The assistantship is awarded for one academic year, assuming all conditions are met. A reapplication is required for each additional year of support.

Graduate Scholarships

The Department of Political Science also offers a number of scholarships. These vary in terms of the amount of assistance and the exact requirements of each. Those specifically targeted for MPA students are the John Carlin Scholarship in Public Administration and the Tummala Fellowship.

How to Apply

Besides the materials discussed above for admission to the MPA Program, applicants should submit the following to the director of graduate studies.

- One copy of an application form which is available on the department's web site.
- A formal covering letter of application. This letter may also be used to expand on items in the application form.

Award Announcement

All applicants will be notified of the department's decisions, and award recipients will be asked to acknowledge acceptance formally. Awards are announced on or about April 15. Ordinarily, there are no summer term graduate assistantships