

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in POLITICAL SCIENCE

***NOTE: THESE RULES ARE IN EFFECT FOR GRADUATE COHORTS
STARTING IN THE FALL OF 2017.***

**Department of Political Science
Graduate Program
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**Home page: <http://www.polsci.uh.edu/>
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THE PROGRAMS

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is the highest conferred by the Department of Political Science. Students who have earned a doctoral degree in political science from the University of Houston have pursued careers in academia, in local and federal government agencies, and in the private sector, including in the market research field. The Ph.D. is a research degree that is never awarded solely as the result of any prescribed period or program of study, no matter how faithfully followed. The degree is granted only when students show general proficiency, distinctive attainment in the field of Political Science and, particularly, the ability for independent investigation as demonstrated in a dissertation presenting original research.

The faculty members of the department provide a wide range of courses in the following general topics:

- American Politics
- Public Policy
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory
- Research Methods

Part-time students are admitted to all these programs and are treated in the same way as full-time students except that it is understood that they will proceed more slowly. All students must complete the Doctor of Philosophy in no more than ten years.

ADMISSION REQUIRMENTS

Applicants must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution by the date of enrollment, at least a 3.00(B) grade point average (A=4.00) in the last 60 hours of undergraduate or graduate course work, and have taken the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). For students fulfilling the English proficiency requirements with the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), please note that the University of Houston sets minimum standards (please consult the University's admission page for more details). Conditional admission may occasionally be granted despite a below-standard GRE score, grade point average, or TOEFL score. Applicants should prepare a one-page statement of purpose and secure three letters of recommendation, preferably from professors directly familiar with their academic work. In the one-page statement, applicants should clearly indicate that their ultimate goal is to earn a Ph.D.. This is particularly important for students seeking financial support in the form of a teaching assistantship since such financial support is rarely awarded to students who indicate their intention to earn a terminal master's degree.

Go to <http://www.polsci.uh.edu/graduate/graduate.html> and click on "graduate" then "admission" for more information on admissions requirements.

If you are an international applicant, please note that there are additional admission requirements. These can be found at

http://www.polsci.uh.edu/graduate/graduate_application_requirements_intl.html

A student must be admitted to the graduate program in order to enroll in any graduate courses in the department. Post baccalaureate students are students who have an undergraduate degree but have not been admitted to a graduate program at the University of Houston, or other university (Rice University, for instance) with whom the department of political science has a reciprocal agreement. Such students may not enroll in graduate courses offered by the political science department.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of 48 hours of course work is required for a political science Ph.D., plus at least 12 hours of dissertation credit. Students must successfully complete oral and written comprehensive examinations.

Comprehensive examinations are normally given after two and a half years of coursework, or the equivalent in terms of credit hours for part-time students. Upon successfully completing exams, students are expected to be continuously enrolled in dissertation hours until the degree is completed. Students who are not on teaching fellowships may enroll for as little as 3 dissertation hours per semester (this includes the summer), but note that a student must enroll for a minimum of 12 dissertation hours prior to completion of the degree. Following the completion of a dissertation, students must participate in an oral dissertation defense. Students who enroll as doctoral candidates must complete their degree requirements within 10 years of the date of first enrollment with a doctoral degree objective. Failure to comply will result in the candidate being ineligible for the doctoral degree. Doctoral students who fail to complete the dissertation within 5 years after passing the comprehensive examination must retake the examination.

All students intending to obtain a Ph.D. must take the three required core courses in their first two years in the program, or, in the case of part-time students, as soon as practically possible. Students who are admitted to the Ph.D. program with financial support must enroll in the department's core courses during their first year in the program.

Core Courses

- POLS 6302 Research Design for Political Scientists
- POLS 6480 Quantitative Methods I
- POLS 6481 Quantitative Methods II

The core curriculum is designed to provide beginning Ph.D. students with a broad overview of important topics in Political Science. For the beginning student, the core should provide the necessary background to select areas for further concentrated study. The methodological component of the core (POLS 6480 and POLS 6481) is designed to provide the student with the appropriate statistical foundation to become an informed consumer of Political Science research and to set the stage for the student to perform research of his/her own.

Students are also expected to meet the following requirements:

1. A graduate student who receives a grade of C+ or lower in 12 semester hours of credit at this institution for application toward the graduate degree, whether or not in repeated courses, is ineligible for any advanced degree at this institution and will not be permitted to re-enroll for graduate study.
2. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.00 (B) for all graduate courses attempted; failure to maintain this average may result in a warning, probation or suspension. You must have at least a 3.00 (B) in order to graduate. Students should understand that this is a minimum requirement, and that it is possible to maintain a GPA of 3.00 or above and still not satisfy requirements for satisfactory progress toward the degree (See “Satisfactory Progress” below).
3. In general, graduate students are expected to be enrolled in at least one course in each long semester (i.e., fall and spring semesters) until the degree program is completed and the degree is awarded. Students who cannot enroll in any given semester must apply for a leave of absence in advance in order to remain in good standing. This includes the time it takes a student to write a dissertation. All petitions for a leave of absence must be approved by the graduate committee. Failure to remain continuously enrolled without prior permission for a leave of absence may terminate your studies in this program.
4. Students who are pursuing degrees in the graduate political science program cannot enroll in other graduate or professional programs. Students who do enroll in such programs will be considered to have violated departmental expectations for adequate progress toward a degree and will not be allowed to register for further political science credit. Doing so will also be deemed a violation of the requirement for continuous enrollment. Such students can apply for readmission to the graduate program when they are no longer enrolled in other graduate and professional programs. Readmission to the graduate program in political science will then be at the discretion of the graduate committee.
5. Degrees are not awarded automatically upon completion of all scholastic requirements. To be considered a candidate for a degree, the student must apply for graduation in PeopleSoft. Deadlines for filing the application for graduation are listed in the academic calendar. These deadlines usually fall within the first two weeks of the semester the student wishes to graduate. Candidates for graduation who have been previously disapproved must reapply for graduation at no additional charge.
6. Graduate students in the political science department may not register for independent study/readings for course credit. On rare occasions, this stipulation can be waived by appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies.

**DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES, GRADUATE COMMITTEE,
ADVISORS, SUPERVISORS**

The initial point of contact between graduate students and the Department of Political Science is the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies is advised on all matters pertaining to the graduate program, from admission of students to dispensations from specific course requirements, by a Graduate Committee consisting of tenured or tenure track members of the Political Science Department.

During the career of any doctoral student, there is need at successive stages for a Faculty Advisor (to advise on course work), a chair of the PhD. Examining Committee (to oversee the comprehensive examination), and a chair of the Dissertation Committee (to supervise the student's dissertation). Often the same person will serve in each of these capacities, but this is not necessary. What is necessary is that from the start each graduate student should have in mind the need to develop ties with particular members of the faculty who may serve in one or more of these capacities.

Normally after the first year in the program, students should have identified faculty members with similar research and methodological interests to those of the student. Students can approach these faculty and express their interest in working with them. It is also helpful if students take courses with the faculty in question, explore the possibility of working for them as research assistants, and in other informal ways develop a professional relationship with them. One of the best ways of establishing such a relationship is to demonstrate competence as a researcher, since faculty are always looking for skilled research assistants. Ultimately, the creation of the relationship between graduate student and faculty mentor is an informal process. Students cannot be compelled to work with a particular faculty member, nor are particular faculty obligated to supervise the work of particular students.

The actual choice of a faculty advisor at any time will be made in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. We recommend that each student meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or with a Faculty Advisor at least once each year. The purpose of these meetings is to:

- A. Review the student's performance,
- B. Discuss and make changes, if necessary, in the student's declared area(s) of interest,
- C. Examine the progress in completing required courses and tool requirements,
- D. Discuss the student's career goals,
- E. Develop the degree plan,
- F. Schedule Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations, when appropriate,
- G. Evaluate the student's status regarding Teaching and Research.

The student is responsible for requesting advising sessions, and the appropriate faculty members are normally expected to honor such requests in a timely manner.

DEGREE PLAN

During the last semester of core course work students should develop a degree plan in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the student's academic adviser. Students must select two areas of study in Political Science in which to concentrate.

One of the chosen areas is designated a student's major area, and a minimum of twelve semester hours (four courses) is required in this area. In the minor area of study, nine semester hours (three courses) are required as a minimum. Students will also have six hours (two courses) in elective courses which can be taken in any area chosen.

It is required that students with a major or minor in American Politics take at least one course from each of the following two subsets:

1. Elections, Public Opinion, Psychology and Politics
2. Legislative Process, The Presidency, Political Parties

TOOL REQUIREMENTS

The tool requirement exists for the purpose of assuring competence in the methods necessary for effective scholarship in the student's chosen specialty. Each student must complete 2 relevant research courses beyond POLS 6480 and POLS 6481. Choice of possible tool offerings should in all cases be guided by the question of appropriateness for the student's academic interest. Students should consult with their advisor about the most appropriate courses for them. Among the possible course offerings that may satisfy the requirement area:

- A. Political methodology courses: POLS 6482 (Advanced Multivariate Methods) plus one additional course (for instance, POLS 6384, 6385, or 6386).
- B. Computer Applications at a more advanced level than POLS 6480 and POLS 6481.
- C. Foreign language (in rare instances).
- D. Other research methods specifically relevant to the dissertation research of the student.

In all cases, the student's choice of tool requirements must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies

DEGREE PATH

In most cases, the American politics core course and the first two courses in the methods sequence should be completed in the student's first year.

Progress toward degree will normally take a path similar to the following:

Year One:

1. Research Design (POLS 6302)
2. Methods (POLS 6480)
3. Elective (1)
4. Methods (POLS 6481)
5. Major (1)
6. Minor (1)

Year Two:

- 7. Tools (1)
- 8. Major (2)
- 9. Minor (2)
- 10. Tools (2)
- 11. Major (3)
- 12. Minor (3)

Year Three:

- 13. Major (4)
- 14. Elective (2)
- 15. Prospectus seminar

QUALIFYING PAPER

The qualifying paper should present and answer an original research question on a subject area that is to be the student's primary focus for their future academic work. The paper should be of sufficient quality to be presented at an academic conference or to be submitted for publication. With regard to structure, format, and topic, papers should resemble work published in peer-reviewed journals in the field. As such, they should not exceed 40 pages in length, including all tables, figures, notes and reference. Length is not a substitute for quality, and often detracts from it. Papers will be evaluated for knowledge of subject, originality of ideas, and craftsmanship of research. Ideas for the paper may originate from and build upon previous seminar papers or theses.

Students should seek faculty advice as they write the paper. Students should also assemble an examining committee of at least two faculty members, one of whom is designated as the chair. The paper must be submitted to the full committee by **September 1** in the year preceding comprehensive exams (i.e., early in the Fall Semester of a student's 3rd year). The examining committee should render a decision no later than October 15. If a paper is deemed unsatisfactory, the student will have until **December 1** to submit a revised paper. If the student does not pass with this second round, then s/he will not be able to take comprehensive exams in February. Students will not be allowed to take comprehensive exams without satisfactory passage of the qualifying paper.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

After completing at least 48 hours of coursework (of which a minimum of 27 must have been completed in residence at the University of Houston) the Ph.D. student will take written and oral comprehensive exams. Students should understand that merely completing the course work requirement does not necessarily mean they are ready to take exams. Rather, students should be intellectually prepared to demonstrate substantive knowledge as well as critical and analytical skills in two broad areas (chosen from among those listed on page 2).

Structure of the Exam

Each student will qualify in two (2) fields.

Every student must take a comprehensive exam in at least one of the following fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, Political Theory. Each area exam will be divided between questions of a broad general nature and questions that are more detailed and specific (these are known as subfields). Students will be expected to demonstrate a broad general knowledge of their major area of study and a detailed knowledge of specific fields or issues within that area. Students are tested in at least 2 subfields within each of the major fields of study. Students choose subfields in conjunction with their committee members based on courses they have taken.

Possible sub-field topics are:

American

- American Political Development
- Congress
- Constitutional Law
- Elections/Electoral Behavior
- Institutions
- Judicial Process and Behavior
- Political Parties
- Presidency
- Public Opinion
- State and Local Government/Federalism

Comparative

- Comparative Elections
- Comparative Legislatures
- Comparative Political Parties
- Democratization
- Political Institutions
- Political Economy of Development
- A Specific Country or Region (Such as Latin American or European Politics)

Public Policy

- Policy Analysis
- Policy Process

And Specialty Areas such as:

- Civil Rights Policy
- Economic Policy
- Education Policy

- Environmental Policy
- Health Care Policy
- Poverty Policy
- Regulatory Policy
- Social Welfare Policy

Political Theory

- American
- Ancient
- Contemporary
- Modern

However, The **International Relations** (IR) comprehensive exam does not have subfield options. Instead, a student taking the exam will be asked to answer one general question (out of two choices) and two issue-specific questions (out of four choices). The issue-specific questions draw from the particular problems and research questions addressed in the IR graduate courses taken by the student. These issues include international trade, finance, monetary relations, migration, the democratic peace, the bargaining model, repression, capitalist peace, sovereign debt, foreign aid, information and IR, commitment problems, terrorism, mediation, international institutions, and audience costs, among others.

In addition, students taking IR as a major or minor will not choose their exam committee. Instead, the same two IR faculty members will serve on all comprehensive exams committees within a given exam cycle. IR faculty will rotate in and out of the committee “team” after each exam cycle.

Exam Timing and Process

These examinations will normally be given in February, but, in rare and exceptional cases, students may be permitted to take them in summer after the student’s second year. Students who take exams early will typically have entered the program with a MA in political science and must meet two requirements: they must have a dissertation prospectus approved by a dissertation committee and be recommended by their dissertation advisor. Students will not be permitted to delay their exams beyond the normal February date.

The written part of the exam will consist of a one day take-home exam in each area. Copies of old exam questions are archived by the Graduate Advisor and may be viewed upon request. The oral exam typically takes two hours.

A student who is ready to take Ph.D. exams must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and his/her Faculty Advisor regarding the selection of a Ph.D. Examining Committee.

An application to take the comprehensive exams must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by **September 15** in the year preceding the comps. It must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the student's Faculty Advisor and then filed with the Graduate Office. The application must include the names of four faculty (two in each field) who will comprise the student's examination committee.

If a student fails an exam in one area, the Committee may recommend either retaking that one area exam or both exams. Students who fail exams must retake the exam(s) they failed in the summer (August) of the same year. Should the student fail on the second try, whether he/she retakes the whole examination or just a part, that student cannot be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree in political science.

In order to be eligible to take comprehensive exams students must have demonstrated that they are prepared to conduct the independent research that will become their dissertation. They can demonstrate this in one of two ways: 1) If the student has identified a faculty member who has agreed to supervise his/her dissertation, the prospectus can be written under the supervision of that faculty member. The student must have this dissertation prospectus approved by a dissertation committee and be recommended by their dissertation advisor. 2) If the student has not identified a dissertation chair and/or if the student does not have a well-defined topic, he/she should enroll in the dissertation prospectus course that is offered every Fall semester. The course is offered on a pass-fail basis. Completion of this course requires the submission of a preliminary dissertation prospectus that is approved by the course instructor. In either case a copy of this prospectus should be provided to the graduate advisor's office.

A dissertation prospectus typically includes the following components:

- the research question
- the previous literature that has explored this issue
- the dissertation research design and methodology
- the data that will be used to address the research question

For students in political theory who will not be writing a data-based dissertation, a prospectus would include

- the question(s) that the dissertation will explore
- the approach the dissertation will take (i.e., analytical, textual, historical)
- the relation of the project to the major work in the area
- an overview of how the dissertation will proceed: its logic, possible section or chapter divisions

Ph.D. EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Graduate students in the Department of Political Science should, throughout their time in the program, have in mind the selection of a Ph.D. Examining Committee. Ideally, this Committee should consist of faculty with whom the student has studied, although student exams can be read by any faculty member who teaches and does research in the field in question. The Ph.D. Examining Committee will generally consist

of at least four members, two from the student's major area and two from the minor area. Normally the student's Faculty Advisor will be included as an examiner in the major field and will chair the Examining Committee. Responsibilities of the Examining Committee include meeting with the student well prior to the exam (usually in the preceding Fall Semester) to advise the student on preparation and discuss the exam format, preparing exam questions, grading written exams, and conducting an oral exam.

The same committee should normally provide the pool from which the Dissertation Committee (see next section) is ultimately chosen, though this is not required. It is preferable that a single Graduate Supervisory Committee serves in various capacities throughout a student's career, but the different committees mentioned in these pages may have different members.

Upon completion of the written and oral examinations, the Ph.D. Examining Committee will designate a grade in each of the area examinations. This designation shall either be distinction, high pass, pass, low pass, or fail.

DISSERTATION AND DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

A dissertation must make a meaningful contribution to scholarly knowledge in Political Science and conclusively demonstrate the student's ability to carry through original research. No later than sixty days after successfully passing the comprehensive examinations, all students are expected to meet with their doctoral dissertation committee. This committee consists of the dissertation chair, at least two faculty members from the Department of Political Science, and one instructor outside of Political Science who is tenured or tenure-track faculty with a Ph.D., and who currently serves in a department at the University of Houston or elsewhere for a minimum of four committee members. Normally the chair of this committee is the same faculty member who chaired the student's comprehensive examination committee. The composition of the student's dissertation committee is subject to the approval of the Graduate Director. A Committee Appointment Form must be initialed by each member of the committee to acknowledge their agreement to participate in the dissertation process, and the completed form must be filed with the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. A copy should also be on file with the Graduate Director.

At the time of the student's first meeting with the dissertation committee, s/he will present the committee with the dissertation prospectus that was completed prior to taking comprehensive exams. After the committee has approved the prospectus, the student should periodically keep the committee members apprised of the status of the research project and s/he should secure committee approval of any substantive changes that may occur in the project as detailed in the research design.

While writing a dissertation, the student must register each semester for the number of dissertation hours required by the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Failure to register for these hours may lead to the student's termination from the program. Upon completion of a dissertation, the student will participate in an oral dissertation defense, to be questioned by the members of his/her dissertation committee. Members of the committee signify the successful defense of a dissertation by signing the student's dissertation signature sheet.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS TOWARD THE DEGREE

Every spring semester the department's faculty meets to review the progress of all students in the department's Ph.D. program. This review will usually involve consultation with all faculty members who have taught the student during the previous two semesters. The Director of Graduate Studies will refer to the Graduate Committee for review any students who do not seem to be making adequate progress toward the Ph.D. degree.

Students are expected to meet the following minimum standards:

- maintain a 3.0 grade point average,
- receive one A or A- for every three courses completed, and
- carry on their transcripts no more than two incompletes at any one time (except in cases of medical emergency, which must be documented to the satisfaction of the Director of Graduate Studies).

Students who have not met these minimal requirements will be deemed not to have made satisfactory progress. After having registered for 18 hours or more of course credit, students who have not made satisfactory progress will be counseled by the graduate committee and given the opportunity to explain what steps they will take to improve their performance in the future. Such students will be advised that they are in jeopardy of losing financial support or being expelled from the political science Ph.D. program. A letter to that effect will be entered into each student's file. These students will be given a probationary semester to improve their grades and/or to remove incompletes from their records.

Students who have any incompletes or have not achieved grades of A or A- for one third of their graduate credit hours will not be permitted to take doctoral comprehensive exams. Full-time students will normally take their exams after their third year. Part-time students must complete a minimum of 48 hours of course credit before taking comprehensive exams.

Independent of the "progress review", the Director of Graduate Studies is responsible each semester for monitoring whether students are making satisfactory progress toward their degrees, discussing the situation with the student, and reporting and making recommendations to the Graduate Committee regarding any student failing to make satisfactory progress.

Students in the Political Science Graduate Program who are not doing satisfactory work may be advised to pursue the M.A. degree only and not go on for the Ph.D. Depending on how many courses they have completed at the point such advice is given, these students may choose either the Plan I M.A. (which requires a thesis) or a Plan II M.A. (which requires more course work and a bibliographic essay). Students who are not doing satisfactory work will receive a letter from the department notifying them of this. Any student who fails to make satisfactory progress may be suspended from the Graduate Program by the Director of Graduate Studies. A student may appeal a

suspension to the Graduate Committee.

EXPENSES AND FINANCIAL AID

For current information on tuition and fees please refer to <http://www.uh.edu/financial/graduate/tuition-fees/tuition.php>.

In addition to Fellowships offered by the University for which many students are eligible (please see <http://www.uh.edu/admissions/financial/graduate/fellowships-scholarships>), the Political Science Department also has a varying number of Teaching Assistantships available from year to year. Teaching Assistants who enroll in and complete nine of course work per semester receive a tuition rebate for a limited number of semesters.

Students may receive Teaching Assistantships up to but not beyond their 5th year after beginning the Program. Students who exhaust their GTF (ten semesters) will not be eligible for extensions to their graduate assistantships. Such students may be contracted to teach courses as adjunct or clinical faculty, but they cannot receive additional support as graduate assistants, except for those students who are particularly deserving because of extraordinary prior accomplishments during their graduate careers. Such students must obtain the approval of the graduate committee to receive continued financial support from the political science department.

Assistantships are awarded on a year-by-year basis, and continuation is predicated on good performance as a T.A., a strong G.P.A., and continued satisfactory progress toward the degree. All students who are on financial aid from the University of Houston or the Department of Political Science must register for 9 hours each semester. If on aid for the summer, the student must register for a designated number of hours each summer session (check with the Graduate Advisor for the designated number).

Acceptance of a graduate assistantship in the department of political science indicates the student's agreement not to accept other employment.

99-HOUR DOCTORAL CAP

Students who are on fellowships should be aware of the following University policy, as spelled out in the University's Graduate Catalog Online:

"99-Hour Cap

The State of Texas subsidizes a large portion of the costs of doctoral education at its public universities, and the State Legislature has decided to limit the length of time the state will continue this subsidy for individual students. The Legislature has voted to stop providing state money for educating graduate students who have 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral work. This law has come to be called the "99-hour doctoral cap."

All doctoral students who accumulate more than ninety-nine doctoral semester credit hours at any Texas public institution of higher education will be charged the nonresident tuition rates irrespective of student residency status or any appointment, fellowship, or other circumstance that would normally entitle them

to resident tuition rates.”

In practice this limit is most likely to affect students who hold TA-ships for 5 years who also accept summer TA-ships. (The first 30 hours of study at UH is considered master's degree hours, and does not count towards this limit.) So far this relatively new rule has affected only a very few Political Science students, but it is your responsibility to be aware of this and all other policies spelled out in the Graduate Catalog. Those are University policies which the Department is required to follow.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are expected to read and understand the University policy on academic honesty. Part of this policy can be summarized as follows: it is a grave offense to present someone else's work as if it were your own. Cutting-and-pasting from other articles and failure to give credit to sources are forms of plagiarism. The Department of Political Science will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Students suspected of violating these rules will be referred to the Department's Academic Honesty Officer. Penalties will be assessed in accordance with these procedures. Penalties may range from an "F" in the course to expulsion from the University. In other words, don't do it!

http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/Academic_Honesty/uhhonpol_article3.html

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Further information regarding the assistantships may be available from the Graduate Advisor. If you are interested in applying for financial aid (in the form of grants, loans, employment, etc.) through the University of Houston please be aware that the priority deadline for submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is April 1. (Please contact the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid www.uh.edu/finaid).

The University reserves the right to make changes in any publication without notice as necessitated by University or Legislative action, or action by the Coordinating Board.