

POLITICAL SCIENCE  
DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM GUIDE  
*Last updated 5/9/24*

**DEGREE PURPOSE**

The Doctoral degree in Political Science prepares students for academic careers in research and teaching, as well as professional careers in public service and the private sector. The program introduces the graduate student to the substantive, theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of politics, and trains the student to perform original research on political behavior.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The faculty of the Department of Political Science approves the following procedures for the Doctoral degree program. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to follow the procedures outlined herein as well as those procedures and requirements contained in the UNT Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.unt.edu>).

**GENERAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

1. The total Doctoral program must cover at least seventy-two (72) hours beyond the Bachelor's degree or sixty (60) hours beyond the Master's degree, including dissertation credit. The required hours beyond the Master's degree can be reduced to as little as forty-two (42) hours with consent of the Advisory Committee and Graduate Advisor. Credit hours earned in a previous Master's degree are not directly transferable/applicable to the Doctoral degree at UNT. The Doctoral degree is not automatically granted upon the completion of the specified coursework. Rather, successful completion of the Doctoral degree depends upon the student's ability to demonstrate the capacity to understand and use the necessary subject matter and tools of their chosen fields of study through satisfactory performance on two (2) Field Examinations, an Oral Qualifying Examination (including defense of a dissertation prospectus), and the completion and oral defense of a dissertation that makes a scholarly contribution to the field of study;
2. Every student must take the Seminar in the Foundations of Political Science (PSCI 5351), two methodology courses, one advanced tool course, and two proseminars. The two required methodology classes--- Seminar in Political Science Techniques and Methods (PSCI 5340) and Quantitative Political Research Methods (PSCI 5320)---are to be taken in the first semester during which they are available to the doctoral student. The advanced tool course is determined in consultation with the student's Advisory Committee. Advanced tool courses include (but are not limited to) PSCI 6321 (Multiple Regression), PSCI 6350 (Game Theory for Political Science), or a foreign language course. Each course must be passed with a grade of "B" or better in order to count towards degree completion;

A student must elect to focus study in two fields for the Ph.D.: a first field within Political Science, a second field within Political Science. Students are expected to complete a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of coursework in their first field and a minimum of twelve (12) hours of coursework in their second field. The Seminar in the Foundations of Political Science (PSCI 5351), Seminar in Political Science Techniques and Methods (PSCI 5340), and Quantitative Political Research Methods (PSCI 5320) courses do not count toward the fulfillment of these fields requirements, but the advanced tool and the proseminars do count toward the fulfillment of these fields. The remaining credit hours required for the degree will consist of elective courses that must be approved by the student's Advisory Committee as relevant to the proposed course of study. Elective courses may be drawn from a single discipline or it may be made up of courses drawn from several disciplines. Students will take Field Examinations in their first and second fields. The fields available for selection for first and second fields in Political Science are: (a) American government and politics, (b) comparative government and politics, (c) international relations, and (d) political theory.

3. Registration for dissertation credit is required in at least two consecutive terms in the final year of graduate work;
4. A minimum of two consecutive semesters of full-time residence coursework (18 semester hours) is required; and
5. All degree work toward the Ph.D. must be completed within eight (8) years of the time Doctoral credit is first given (this includes any credits on the degree plan transferred from other institutions).

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage). Students should review the policy (UNT Policy Number 06.003; <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). Violations of academic integrity will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy.

Before enrolling in the first semester of doctoral study, students are expected to complete a plagiarism tutorial that shall be designated by the Graduate Advisor and to send evidence of completion of the tutorial to the Graduate Advisor during their first semester in the program. Students will not be permitted to register for credit hours until they provide evidence of their completion of the tutorial. Students may petition the Graduate Advisor for a waiver or modification of the requirement in extraordinary circumstances. Nothing in this policy should

imply that students in the program are excused from informing themselves of the University's policies regarding academic integrity.

### **ADVISING & ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

The student is responsible for following their degree plan and for meeting all the requirements of the UNT Graduate Catalog relevant to the Ph.D. program. After the first year, graduate students are formally advised by their Advisory Committees.

#### **First-year Students**

Students entering the program will be assigned a Faculty Academic Advisor. The Advisor will advise the student until the student has assembled their Advisory Committee. Students in their first semester will meet with their Faculty Academic Advisor between September 1 and October 31. The Faculty Academic Advisor submits a brief narrative report of the meeting to the Graduate Advisor and to the student. Students will only be able to receive a registration code from the administrative assistant for the graduate program once the current year's narrative has been submitted. In extraordinary circumstances, the Graduate Advisor may allow a student without a current narrative to receive a registration code.

#### **Continuing Students**

Continuing students meet with their Advisory Committee between September 1 and October 31. The chair of the student's Advisory Committee submits a brief narrative report of the meeting to the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant and to the student. Students will only be able to receive a registration code from the administrative assistant for the graduate program once the current year's narrative has been submitted. In extraordinary circumstances, the Graduate Advisor may allow a student without a current narrative to receive a registration code.

#### **Advisory Committee Composition**

Except for those students on probation, students will assemble faculty Advisory Committees in their second semester, or after nine hours of study. Advisory Committees must have representatives from each of the three fields of study chosen for the Ph.D., plus a fourth Departmental Representative. The representative from the student's first field shall be designated as the Major Professor. Signatures of Advisory Committee members should be collected on the Faculty Advisory Committee Form and submitted to the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant. All committee members are subject to approval by the Graduate Advisor. Once the Advisory Committee is formed, the student must arrange a meeting with the full committee to formulate a degree plan.

#### **Advisory Committee Duties**

The duties of the Advisory Committee will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Providing advice and assistance related to the student's degree plan;
- Conducting the student's Oral Qualifying Examination;
- Conducting the student's Oral Dissertation Prospectus Defense;
- Supervising the student's Dissertation; and
- Conducting the student's Oral Dissertation Defense.

The Advisory Committee will meet at least once a year to monitor the student's progress in the degree program. This meeting will be scheduled by the student in consultation with the Major Professor. A mandatory meeting will occur between September 1 and October 31 of each year. Graduate students should submit to their committee in advance of the meeting a CV and a completed copy of the Advisory Committee Information Form detailing activities from the previous academic year directed toward making academic progress. The Major Professor will submit a narrative report of the meeting, along with the student's report and CV, to the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant and to the student. Students will only be able to receive a registration code from the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant once the current year's narrative has been submitted. In extraordinary circumstances, the Graduate Advisor may allow a student without a current narrative to receive a registration code. Students cannot register for classes without a registration code.

### **Changing Advisory Committee Membership**

A change in committee composition may be initiated by the student at any time except during the Field Examination process. The revision to committee membership follows the same procedures and subject to the same limitations as the initial committee appointments. The Field Examination process begins when the student notifies the Graduate Advisor of their intention to take the Field Examination and concludes with the successful completion of the Oral Qualifying Examination. Upon successful completion of the Oral Qualifying Examination, the Advisory Committee may be reconstituted to include representatives from only two fields in political science or two fields in political science and one external field.

### **DEGREE PLANS**

The Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the student, should complete a degree plan form, and submit it to the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant. This form will be the basis of the official degree plan kept in the files of the Toulouse Graduate School. This plan is the official template by which the Toulouse School determines whether students fulfilled their degree requirements at the time of graduation. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the student's Advisory Committee and submitted to the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant for forwarding to the Toulouse Graduate School.

In compiling the student's degree plan, certain special requirements will be taken into consideration by the Advisory Committee:

1. Degree plans must include a minimum of credit hours of work as specified in the General Degree Requirements, including 9-12 hours of dissertation credit (PSCI 6950);
2. Each Ph.D. student's degree plan must include a three-hour Seminar in the Foundations of Political Science (PSCI 5351), a three-hour Seminar in Political Science Techniques and Methods (PSCI 5340), and a three-hour course in Quantitative Political Research Methods (PSCI 5320), one advanced tool course, and two proseminars;
3. A maximum of twenty-four (24) hours of work beyond the Master's level may be transferred from recognized institutions in accordance with the rules of the University of North Texas Graduate Catalog, but only on the recommendation of the student's

Advisory Committee to the Graduate Dean. Automatic acceptance of transfer credit should not be presumed;

4. Waiver of any required course must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee;
5. All of the Ph.D. credit must be in courses numbered 5000 or above if taken at UNT, or the equivalent thereof if taken elsewhere; and
6. No more than 18 hours of the course work on a student's degree plan may be taken in Special Problems or Individual Research courses.

## **SATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress toward the completion of their degrees. Failure to maintain satisfactory progress or otherwise not follow the rules of this program guide may result in a student being removed from the program on the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor and approval of the Graduate Studies Committee. Students with any two grades of "C" or below will automatically be removed from the program. Retaking a course to replace a grade of less than "B" does not expunge the low grade for purposes of this rule, but it does expunge the grade for purposes of calculating the GPA.

Factors used to determine satisfactory progress include:

1. Any student receiving a grade of C or less in any course during the first 9 hours of study or earning a GPA below 3.0 will be placed on probation, and will be notified of the fact. Students on probation will not be allowed to form Advisory Committees. Students remaining on probation following their second semester may be removed from the program by the Graduate Studies Committee upon the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor;
2. Students must obtain a grade of at least "B" in the Seminar in the Foundations of Political Science (PSCI 5351), Seminar in Political Science Techniques and Methods (PSCI 5340) and Quantitative Political Research Methods (PSCI 5320);
3. Students are required to maintain a "B" average in graduate course work. Students with grade point averages (GPA) below 3.0 will be placed on probation and may be removed from the program for inadequate progress by the Graduate Studies Committee upon the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor, if the student fails to return to good standing the following semester. The Graduate School requires a minimum 3.0 GPA overall to award a degree;
4. Consistent with the requirement of finishing the program in 8 years, it is expected that students will take their field examinations and complete the research practicum requirement by the end of their sixth long semester of study and defend a dissertation prospectus by the start of their seventh long semester;
5. It is further expected that courses started will normally be courses completed. It is suggested that when extenuating circumstances make it necessary to withdraw from or take an incomplete in a course, the student confer with their Major Professor. Excessive

or habitual withdrawal or incomplete may be deemed "unsatisfactory progress" by a student's Advisory Committee or the Graduate Studies Committee; and

6. Students who have not formed an Advisory Committee by the beginning of their second year may not be eligible for assistance in the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships and the like. Students who are not making satisfactory progress through the program, as outlined in this document may not be eligible for such assistance.

## **FIELD EXAMINATIONS**

### **Purpose & Form**

Field Examinations are intended to test the student's preparation and comprehension in their fields of study, as well as their ability to conduct independent research. The student will be held responsible not only for material covered in coursework, but also general mastery of the fields being tested. In addition to satisfactorily answering exam questions, the student must also submit a paper which demonstrates competence in producing original research and answer questions during an oral examination.

#### *Written Exam*

Students will be presented with a list of field examination questions from each of their fields of study and will answer three (3) questions from their first field and two (2) questions from their second field. Answers must reflect a mastery of the relevant literature, as well as independent, critical thought. The written exam will be take-home, open book in format, and students will have 72 hours to complete the exam.

#### *Research Paper*

With submission of the written exam, students are also required to submit a research paper on a topic of their choosing. Students must identify an adviser for the research paper by the end of their fourth semester, which may or not be the first-year adviser assigned to them. The topic may be specific to the student's first or second field of study, or span the subfields of political science. Acceptable article length for most journals is eight thousand to ten thousand words and papers should be a similar length.

Guidelines for the paper are as follows:

- An introduction framing the significance of the question
- A comprehensive yet succinct literature review placing the research in the context of prior work on the subject
- A discussion of research design (where subfield appropriate)
- Appropriate empirical analysis (where subfield appropriate)
- A conclusion highlighting the contributions of the research
- Papers must be *solo authored*.

Papers may draw from papers originally written for courses. However, it is generally the case that course papers will need substantial revision before becoming suitable research papers.

#### *Oral Exam*

Following the submission of the written materials, an oral exam, not exceeding two hours, will be scheduled within a three week period. The oral exam may consider aspects of the written exam, research paper, or any subject matter in the student's fields of study.

### **Enrollment**

Students taking field examinations must be continuously enrolled in the Doctoral program.

## **Scheduling**

Field examinations take place in January before the student's sixth long semester. Each student must indicate to the Graduate Advisor their intent to take the Field Examinations at the end of the semester preceding the semester in which the Field Examinations are to be taken. The Graduate Advisor will schedule the exact times and dates of the Field Examinations, as well as the general rules and instructions (e.g., submission guidelines, limit on answer length, etc.)

Failure to take the field examination at this scheduled time for other than valid reasons (as described below under Requesting Delays), to turn in a complete exam by the listed deadline, or to comply with the exam rules and instructions provided by the Graduate Advisor, shall be considered as a failure on the Field Examination.

Under normal circumstances, the oral exam will be scheduled no later than three weeks following the submission of the written exam and research paper. The final grade shall be shared with the student no later than two business days after the oral exam.

## **Requesting Delays**

Requests to delay taking the comprehensive examination will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances. Such circumstances are defined as including (i) an unforeseen severe medical or other health emergency of the student or someone for which the student has ongoing care responsibilities; (ii) the death of a partner or close relative; or (iii) other life-changing emergencies, such as an immediate and unforeseen loss of housing due to a natural disaster and/or other unstable or dangerous living situations. Students may not request a delayed examination for foreseeable and/or preventable events. Students are urged to plan ahead and ensure they are prepared to take the comprehensive examinations as scheduled.

Students must request the delay of the comprehensive examination in writing and offer documentation to support the request, using the following procedure:

- The request must be in writing and received within five (5) business days from the emergence of the extraordinary circumstance. Exceptions to this rule can be made only in cases where the student can demonstrate that they were not capable of making the request within the specified period.
- The request must be directed to the official university email addresses of the graduate advisor(s), with a copy to the student's major professor and the chair of the department.
- The request must be accompanied by documentation that allows for thorough evaluation the request.

If the request is made during the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) long semester, the graduate advisor(s) will decide regarding the request in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee, and the student's major professor. If the request is made on or after Reading Day of the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) long semester, but before the commencement of the examination just prior to the start of the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) long semester, a decision may be made by the graduate advisor(s), unless broader consultation is feasible. The graduate advisor(s) may consult with the Dean of Students and request additional information. However, to obtain any confidential information, the Graduate Studies Committee must obtain the relevant waiver(s) and/or permissions from the student.

If insufficient information is available to make a positive decision in favor of the student, the exception will not be granted. The graduate advisor(s) will complete the review process within ten (10) business days of receipt. If the comprehensive examination is to take place within less than ten (10) business days from the receipt of the request, the graduate advisor(s) will make every

effort to complete the decision process within two business days. The decision regarding the student's request will be communicated to the student at their official university email address, with a copy to the student's major professor and the chair of the department.

If an extension request is denied, the student may appeal the decision if they consider that important facts have not been duly considered. The student should write an appeal letter to the chair of the department. This letter should include the basis for the appeal, i.e. the student should make reference to the extraordinary circumstance that prompted the appeal and briefly explain why they consider that original verdict either underestimated or improperly assessed the circumstance. The chair will then meet with the student to evaluate the appeal. If feasible, the meeting will include the student's major professor and the graduate advisor(s); the chair may consult with the executive committee. The chair will communicate the decision regarding the appeal within two business days after this meeting.

### **Incomplete Exams**

The Field Examination must be complete to be graded. This means that it must include a completed field paper (with completed analyses and discussion of results and conclusions where relevant), as well as answers to three (3) questions from the student's first field and two (2) questions from the student's second field. The convener of the grading committee will be responsible for checking to verify that the student has submitted all of these materials (note that this verification is only to determine whether all materials have been submitted – this is not the time to judge the quality of the materials); if uncertain, the convener may discuss this issue with the remainder of the committee, or if needed, the graduate advisor(s). An incomplete examination will not be evaluated; the student will be considered to have failed the exam without receiving any written comments or going to an oral exam. The student may then proceed to the exam re-take opportunity three months later, but this will be his/her only remaining opportunity to complete the field exam requirement (i.e., there will be no additional re-take opportunities after this). Any requests for exceptions must follow the standard procedure for requesting a delayed exam, as laid out above.

### **Grading**

The student will submit the written exam, research paper, and current curriculum vitae to the Graduate Advisor. The Graduate Advisor will select an Examination Committee of five Graduate Faculty members, with three from the student's first field (including the student's major professor) and two from the student's second field of study. This committee will also be responsible for scheduling and conducting the Oral Exam. Each examiner shall give a grade of (1) pass with distinction, (2) pass, or (3) fail. Following the oral exam, each grader shall record their vote on a ballot, along with written comments to be made available to the student. The final decision on the grade for the examination shall be made by majority rule among members of the Examination Committee. The Graduate Advisor shall notify the student's Advisory Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee whenever a student fails a Field Exam.

### **Re-examination Following Failure**

A student who fails the exam may retake the examination no later than three months following the administration of the first exam. The student may be asked to resubmit the exam in its entirety, or selected parts of the exam. Grading of the re-examination materials must include at least one Graduate Faculty member who was not part of the original Exam Committee. No student shall be permitted to take examinations (all or part) more than twice.

## **RESEARCH PRACTICUM & PROSPECTUS**

### **Practicum**

Students must achieve a grade of B or better in a six-hour Research Practicum course (PSCI 6940) to be taken in the student's sixth long semester, following completion of the Field Exams and during the semester that the Oral Qualifying Exam is administered. The purpose of the Research Practicum is to generate a dissertation Prospectus to be defended before the student's Advisory Committee by the beginning of the seventh long semester.

### **Prospectus**

The Prospectus must include (1) a statement of the principal question to be investigated or hypotheses to be tested, (2) a review of the relevant literature and a statement of the expected contribution of the proposed dissertation, and (3) a statement of the methodology to be used. The Prospectus must show enough research and planning that the student is able to defend the probability of its successful completion.

Prospectus defense meetings are scheduled on consultation between the student and their Advisory Committee. While only committee members vote on the satisfactory nature of the Prospectus, Prospectus defense meetings are open to the entire faculty. Unless provided an extension by the Graduate Advisor, students must defend their Prospectus prior to the start of their seventh long semester. Students who do not defend their Prospectus before the start of their eighth long semester may be removed from the program by the Graduate Studies Committee upon the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor.

## **ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY**

Upon satisfactory passage of field examinations in their first and second fields, passage of an oral qualifying examination, and successful defense of a dissertation prospectus, a student will be eligible for admission to doctoral candidacy. The Graduate Advisor will notify the Toulouse Graduate School of the student's admission to doctoral candidacy.

## **DISSERTATION**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the dissertation is for the student to demonstrate its proficiency in social science. To do so, the dissertation must make an original contribution to the field of study, must display mature and critical scholarship, and must demonstrate competency in research and in the presentation of findings in an acceptable scholarly manner.

### **Registration**

A student must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of three credit hours of dissertation credit (6950) during each long semester until dissertation has been accepted by the Dean of the Graduate School. No student shall register for dissertation credit until a Prospectus has been approved by their Advisory Committee. Thesis or dissertation registration in at least one summer session is required if the student is using university facilities and/or faculty time during that summer session. Doctoral students must maintain continuous enrollment until their degree is conferred. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will either invalidate any previous

thesis or dissertation credits or will result in the student being removed from the degree program unless granted an official leave of absence by the Graduate Dean for medical or other exceptional reasons.

### **Style**

The style of the dissertation should follow the UNT Toulouse Graduate School standards (<http://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/theses-and-dissertations>).

### **Defense**

When the completed Dissertation is accepted by the Major Professor, it is read by the other members of the Committee. On the recommendation of the Committee, a Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation is scheduled. The usual examiners will be the members of the student's Advisory Committee, but the Defense is open to the University faculty. On the satisfactory completion of the Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation, the candidate is recommended to the Graduate Dean to receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science at the next commencement.

### **PASS-THROUGH MASTER'S IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Students who are admitted to a doctoral degree plan in the Department of Political Science, after completing a bachelor's degree, may receive a "pass-through" master's degree in Political Science after completing all requirements for the master's degree while continuing the doctoral program. All of the course work to be credited toward the master's degree plan must be numbered 5000 or higher. Please see the Political Science Master's Degree Program Guide for master's degree requirements. Coursework counted toward a pass-through masters cannot be counted again toward the doctoral degree requirements. To secure this degree, students must complete the following steps:

- 1) Submit an Application for Pass-Through Master's Degree to the Toulouse Graduate School;
- 2) Submit a master's degree plan to the Graduate Advisor's administrative assistant. Once the admission application has been approved by the department, the degree plan will be submitted to the Toulouse Graduate School; and
- 3) The student submits an application for graduation for the semester in which the degree requirements are completed.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

The provisions of this document apply to all students registering for the first time after April 25, 2018. Students who enrolled prior to this date may elect to follow the "Doctoral Degree Program Guide" in effect at the time of their enrollment in the Ph.D. program in Political Science or may elect to follow the regulations contained herein.

### **QUESTIONS**

Any questions that might arise which are not covered by this Program Guide and the Graduate Catalog should be discussed with the Graduate Advisor.