

# MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM GUIDE

## Purpose of the Degree

The Master's degree in Political Science is intended to prepare students for academic careers in research and teaching, and professional careers in public service or the private sector. It may thus serve the needs of both students and practitioners of government, politics, and business.

The program is designed to introduce the student to both substantive and methodological aspects of the study of politics. The faculty of the Department of Political Science has adopted the following procedures for the Master of Arts and Master of Science programs. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to follow the procedures outlined herein and those listed in the [UNT Graduate Catalog](#). Your program will be assisted by conscientious attention to these regulations and your cooperation will be appreciated.

## General Degree Requirements

1. The total Master's program must cover at least thirty hours. However, the degree is not automatically granted upon the completion of specified course work. Rather, its successful completion depends upon the student's ability to demonstrate a capacity to understand and use the necessary subject matter and tools of his/her chosen areas of study through 1) satisfactory completion and oral defense of a Master's thesis; or 2) completion of a written Field Exam in their major field.
2. Every student must take two methods courses. PSCI 5340 (Seminar in Political Science Scope and Methods) and PSCI 5320 (Quantitative Political Research Methods) are to be taken in the first semester during which they are available. Both courses must be passed with a grade of "B" or better.
3. A student must elect two areas of study from political science or from two areas of political science and an outside minor for the Master's degree. The two required courses (PSCI 5340 and PSCI 5320) will not count toward the fulfillment of these fields. The areas available for selection in Political Science are: (a) American government and public law, (b) comparative government and politics, (c) international relations, (d) political theory, (e) methodology.

Any area chosen as an outside minor must be approved by the student's Advisory Committee as relevant to the proposed course of study. The outside minor area may be drawn from a single discipline, or it may be made up of courses drawn from several disciplines if the committee believes such a composite minor to be suitable to the student's program of study. The minor should include a minimum of six hours of course work.

4. All work toward the Master's degree must be completed within six years of the time Master's credit is first given (this includes any credits on the degree plan transferred from other institutions).

## General Information

Students in the program will be evaluated during their first year to ensure they are suitable candidates for continued study. Any student receiving a grade of C 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 dropped from the program by the Graduate Studies Committee upon the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor.

## Advisory Committee

Students entering the program will be assigned a Faculty Academic Advisor, who will advise the student until the student has assembled his or her Advisory Committee. Except for those on probation, students will assemble faculty Advisory Committees in their second semester, or after 9 hours of study. Advisory Committees must have representatives from each of the two areas of study chosen for the Master's degree, plus a third Departmental Representative. The representative from the student's major area of study shall be designated as the Major Professor.

Signatures of Advisory Committee members should be collected on the Faculty Advisory Committee Form and turned in to the Graduate Advisor. All committee members are subject to approval by the Graduate Advisor. Once the Advisory Committee is formed, the student must arrange a meeting with all the committee members to compile a degree plan.

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; supervising the student's thesis; conducting the student's oral thesis defense. In addition, 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 advisor. This meeting will occur between September 22 and October 31 of each year. Graduate students should submit to their committee in advance of the meeting a CV and one-page report detailing activities from the previous academic year directed toward making academic progress. The major advisor will submit a narrative report of the meeting, along with the student's report and CV, 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. Students cannot register for classes without a registration code.

Students in their first semesters who have not yet assembled an Advisory Committee will meet with their Faculty Academic Advisor between September 22 and October 31 of each year. This meeting will be scheduled by the student in consultation with the Faculty Academic Advisor. The Faculty Academic Advisor will submit a 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. Students cannot register for classes without a registration code.

## Degree Plan

The Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the student, should complete a [degree plan form](#), and give it to the Graduate Advisor. This form will be the basis of the official degree plan kept in the files of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. This plan is the official template by which the Toulouse School determines whether students have 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 for forwarding to the Toulouse School.

1. The Degree Plan must include a minimum of thirty graduate semester hours chosen from two areas of political science or from two areas of political science and an outside minor. It is filed with the Graduate School and courses listed on it must be completed to meet the graduation requirements for the Degree. Substitutions or changes on the degree plan require prior approval of members of the student's Advisory Committee from the relevant areas of specialization.
2. Each Master's student's degree plan must include a three-hour Seminar in Political Science Scope and Methods (PSCI 5340), a three-hour course in Quantitative Political Research Methods (PSCI 5320), and a three-hour Proseminar in each area of Political Science elected for inclusion in the program of study.

3. A maximum of 6 hours of work 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. Waiver of any required course must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

4. Students pursuing the Master of Science degree must demonstrate proficiency in research methods by successful completion of at least six hours of coursework, beyond the required sequence of PSCI 5340 and PSCI 5320, in a first or second field of political methodology with a grade of B or better in each of those courses. These courses will ordinarily include Regression, Maximum Likelihood Estimation, or Game Theory, but others can be selected with the advice and approval of the student's Advisory Committee.

## **Advising for Registration**

The student is responsible for following his/her degree plan and for meeting all the requirements of the UNT Graduate Catalog relevant to the Master's program. To assist the student in meeting these obligations, the Department requires that each graduate student consult with the Graduate Advisor during their first and second semester they register for classes.

## **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 will result in a student being dropped 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 dropped 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.

Three factors used to determine satisfactory progress include:

1. Students must obtain a grade of at least "B" in PSCI 5340 and PSCI 5320.

2. 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 dropped from the program for inadequate progress by the Graduate Studies Committee upon the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor if they do not return to good standing the following semester. Remember that the graduate school requires a minimum 3.0 GPA overall to award a degree.

3. 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 his/her Major Professor. Excessive or habitual withdrawal or incomplete may be deemed "unsatisfactory progress" by a student's Advisory Committee.

## **Thesis**

Students may opt to demonstrate research competency by completing and successfully defending a thesis. A maximum of six hours of thesis (PSCI 5950) may count toward a student's 30 hours of Master's work. A student may not register for Thesis hours until at least 12 semester hours of graduate work have been completed. The Departmental deadline for completing - and filing for - the degree is ten days prior to the Graduate School deadline as published in the Graduate Catalog. The student will follow acceptable University and Departmental style guidelines in preparing the thesis. The Department of Political Science has adopted the APSA Style Manual as the guide for citations, references, and other questions of format in theses. Students are responsible for obtaining a copy

and observing its standards. Students should follow the guide for PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATIONS, THESES, AND PROBLEMS IN LIEU OF THESIS (published by UNT Graduate School) in preparing final copies of the thesis for submission to the Graduate School. The student shall have one legible copy of the thesis for each member of the Advisory Committee. Meeting the University and Departmental deadlines is the responsibility of the student.

## **Oral Examination**

The student and the major professor will schedule a two-hour final Oral Examination as soon as possible after the thesis has been approved for defense. The Advisory Committee will conduct the exam, which will cover a defense of the thesis, substantive knowledge of courses taken, and the reading lists, as well as bibliographical familiarity with the areas of specialization.

The Committee can vote to: 1) pass the student unconditionally; 2) pass the student with conditions that must be met before the degree can be granted; 3) fail the candidate with reexamination permitted; or, 4) fail the candidate with no reexamination permitted.

The student and the major professor will secure the proper report forms from the Graduate Advisor of the Department and return those forms as soon as the examination is completed.

## **Field Examination**

Students opting not to write a thesis must demonstrate research competency by successfully completing a Field Exam in their major area of study. The student will be held responsible not only for material covered in course work, but also for general mastery of the sub-area being tested.

Grading Field Examinations: Field Examinations will be graded in a period not to exceed two weeks, with the two-week period beginning on the day after the exam is given for each area of study. The Graduate Advisor will distribute copies of the exams to all qualified readers in each area of study. Grading of each exam will be done by at least two Graduate Faculty members from the appropriate area.

The grade each examiner shall give will be either (1) Pass with distinction, (2) Pass, or (3) Fail. Each grader shall record his/her vote on a single ballot to be returned to the area representative on the committee, along with written comments to be made available to the student upon request.

A meeting of the faculty of an area shall be held to discuss a final grade for the examination if at least one person in the area votes for failure. The final decision on the grade for the examination shall be made by majority rule among members of the area participating in grading the examination. If there is a tied decision among the initial graders, an additional UNT Graduate Faculty member from the area should be brought in to break the tie. If all the available Graduate Faculty from an area have been used and a tied decision exists, the faculty member from the area who is on the Committee shall cast the decisive vote.

Re-Examination After Failure on Field Examinations: A student whose performance on the Field Examinations is judged unsatisfactory may, retake the examination no later than the long semester following the administration of the first exam. Retaken examinations shall be given at the next scheduled examination of Field Examinations. No student shall be permitted to take an examination (all or part) more than twice.

The Graduate Advisor shall notify the student's Advisory Committee whenever a student fails any Field Examination.

## **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance for graduate students is available in the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and teaching fellowships. Inquiries about such aid and applications should be addressed to the Graduate Advisor of the Department of Political Science. The deadline for applications for financial assistance is January 15th each year. Students who have not formed an Advisory Committee by the beginning of their second year may not be eligible for assistance. Students who are not making satisfactory progress through the program, as outlined in the "Master's Degree Program Guide," may not be eligible for assistance.

## **Effective Date**

The provisions of this document apply to all students registering for the first time after April 1, 2013. Students who enrolled prior to this date may elect to follow the "Master's Degree Program Guide" in effect at the time of their enrollment in the Master's program in Political Science or may elect to follow these regulations.

## **Questions or Problems**

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