

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER • COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

Department of Political Science

Graduate Handbook

The following is intended as a general overview of the requirements and expectations graduate students in the Master's Program of Political Science will have to fulfill in completing their degrees. Students should note that while this guide is intended to provide the most comprehensive overview of department expectations, each student's experience will be shaped by their own schedules, expectations, and research interests and as such may deviate from the schedule outlined in the following pages.

TIMELINE:

Graduate Students who enroll full-time in the department and work on their theses/projects on a consistent basis can expect to take between two and five years to complete their degrees. Students who enroll on a part-time basis, take leaves of absence, or who stop and start their course work or thesis work can expect to take longer. The length of time for completion will depend largely on the nature of the student's final research and her/his timeline for completing the final thesis or project. While it is not impossible for students to complete their degree in less than two years, we strongly advise that students take at least this much time to assure that their thesis/project meets the highest standards of academic excellence when they are done. The Graduate Student rules for the University of Colorado allow for a maximum of five years for students to complete their Master's degree. After five years if a student has not completed their degree they must receive a waiver signed by the department to stay in the program.

ADVISORS:**Current Graduate Advisors**

Thorsten Spehn, (303) 556-8317

Jana Everett, (303) 556-3513

Generally speaking, each graduate student will have two advisors in their graduate career: the department's graduate advisor and a principal advisor. (Note: in some instances this may be the same person in which case students will have only one advisor).

The department graduate advisor is available to guide you in the expectations and requirements of the department as a whole and to provide support particularly in the first year as students look for a principal advisor. You must also visit a department graduate advisor for any procedural questions regarding your enrollment, graduation, or status in the department. You are strongly encouraged to meet with the graduate advisor before enrolling in coursework and to check with advisor (along with your principal advisor) regularly to make sure you are on the right course. At the end of the day while the faculty and staff in the department can provide feedback useful to your career in the MA program, please note that only the graduate advisor can provide actual advising. Moreover, you will be held to the policies outlined here, and as such should view these rules as binding.

Your principal advisor should be one of the full-time rostered faculty and should serve as both a resource in helping you shape your research interests (particularly around the thesis/project) and as the chair of your thesis/project committee. Your principal advisor will ultimately be the person who decides when you have successfully completed your thesis proposal, when you are ready to begin writing your thesis, when you have completed successful drafts of your thesis/project, and when you are prepared to defend your

thesis/project. In short, in selecting your principal advisor you should be sure to find someone who you feel comfortable with as well as someone who best matches your research interests as they will be your principal source of support as you work on your thesis/project. (Note: The principal advisor/committee chair is almost always a full-time rostered faculty member; however, there are exceptional cases in which students are allowed to select a part time faculty to chair their committee. The department will consider such an exception provided the following: a.) the part-time faculty has an expertise in an area not covered by any of the full-time faculty, b.) the selection is approved by the Dean, c.) at least two full-time rostered faculty in Political Science also sit on the committee.)

COURSE WORK

When completing the department requirements it's important to remember the following:

- You must complete a minimum of 16 units in the Department of Political Science at UC Denver.
- You must maintain a 3.0 GPA or better.
- There is no substitution for the required classes.

Seminars

Upon entering the program all graduate students are advised to enroll in "The State of the Discipline" (this class is required as of Fall 2000), as well as one to two additional courses (depending on whether you are full-time or part-time student). In completing their coursework all graduate students must complete the course entitled "The State of the Discipline" and at least one graduate seminar in each of the following fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics or International Relations, and Political Theory/Philosophy.

In addition to completing these four courses, graduate students are also required to complete between 3-6 hours of thesis or project work (PSC 5950 or PSC 5960) and between 12-15 hours of elective credits (depending on whether they are planning to complete a Thesis, or Project for their Master's Degree-see below). Note that students must be within three credits of completing their coursework prior to signing up for master thesis/project hours.

The following graduate level courses count toward the seminar in American Politics:

- PSC 5014 - American Politics
- PSC 5024 - State Politics: Focus on Colorado
- PSC 5025 - Local Governance and Globalization
- PSC 5044 - The Presidency
- PSC 5054 - The Legislative Process
- PSC 5074- Community Organizing
- PSC 5094 - Urban Politics
- PSC 5236 - American Foreign Policy
- PSC 5264 - Judicial Politics
- PSC 5354 - Environmental Politics and Policy
- PSC 5477 - The U.S. Constitution: Law and Politics
- PSC 5457 - American Political Thought
- PSC 5545 - Immigration Politics
- PSC 5627 - Gender and Politics
- PSC 5837 - Contemporary Issues in Civil Liberties
- PSC 5914 - Community Development

The following graduate-level courses count toward the seminar in Comparative Government-International Relations:

- PSC 5085 - Comparative Public Policy
- PSC 5105 - Comparative Politics: Europe
- PSC 5115 - Third World Politics
- PSC 5125 - Third World Political Development

- PSC 5135 - Political Economy of Latin America
- PSC 5145 - Indigenous Politics
- PSC 5165 - The Political System of Japan
- PSC 5175 - Mexico/Argentina/Brazil: Political Economy
- PSC 5206 - Social Movements, NGOs, and Global Politics
- PSC 5216 - International Relations
- PSC 5217 - Human Rights in Theory and Practice
- PSC 5225 - Democracy and Democratization
- PSC 5236 - American Foreign Policy
- PSC 5245 - Gender, Globalization, and Development
- PSC 5256 - The National Question and Self-Determination
- PSC 5266 - International Law
- PSC 5276 - Conflicts and Rights in International Law
- PSC 5286 - International Relations: War or Peace
- PSC 5326 - Advanced International Political Economy: Globalization
- PSC 5446 - Advanced Indigenous Peoples' Politics
- PSC 5545 - Immigration Politics
- PSC 5555 - International Women's Resistance
- PSC 5615 - Chinese Development
- PSC 5726 - U.S. and China Relations
- PSC 5807 - Conflict Behavior and the Politics of Violence
- PSC 5996 - The Middle East at Hand

The following graduate level courses count toward the seminar in Political Theory-Philosophy:

- PSC 5005 - Political Theory After 9/11
- PSC 5007 - Beyond Political Correctness
- PSC 5013 - Philosophical Problems in the Social Sciences
- PSC 5057 - Religion and Politics
- PSC 5217 - Human Rights in Theory and Practice
- PSC 5417 - Practical Utopias
- PSC 5407 - Topics in the History of Political Thought
- PSC 5427 - Oppositional Discourse and New Political Movements
- PSC 5457 - American Political Thought
- PSC 5747 - Legal Reasoning and Writing
- PSC 5807 - Conflict Behavior and the Politics of Violence
- PSC 5827 - Political Psychology

While these classes will cover the seminar requirements, students should also note that the department typically offers additional classes every semester (listed as 5008) that will often cover many of these requirements. Be sure to check with an advisor if a class is not on this list.

Elective Credits

In addition to the four seminars required, students will also have to take between 12-15 hours of elective credit to complete their coursework. Students who are anticipating choosing Plan 1 (Thesis) will need to take 12 units of elective credit, those choosing Plan 2 will need to take 15 units

Students can earn elective credits by taking Political Science Graduate Seminars or by taking a limited number of independent studies, graduate level courses in other departments, or internships/cooperative education courses in political science. However, students should note that they cannot receive more than 9 total credits in independent studies, internships or graduate courses outside the department to count toward their total elective credits. Therefore, you should expect to take between 1-2 additional political science seminars to complete your elective credits. While we encourage students to explore all of their options in filling their electives, it is also possible to earn all of your elective credits strictly through political science graduate level courses.

Transfer Credits

Master's students also have the option of transferring credit that was received at another institution (or through UC Denver as a non-degree student) or that was completed in a different master's level program. Students cannot transfer regular undergraduate credits to their master's degree; however, undergraduates who have taken and successfully passed graduate level courses can transfer those credits to be applied toward their Master's in Political Science at UC Denver (provided they did not count those credits toward their undergraduate degree). No more than 9 credits of non-degree and transfer credit can be applied to the total 30 credits needed to complete the Master's of Political Science. Overall, while students may take courses outside the department to count toward their Master's degrees, you must take at least 16 credits of coursework from the UC Denver political science department.

COMPLETING THE THESIS or PROJECT

Every Master's student must complete some form of original research in the final stage of their degree. While this usually takes the form of a Master's thesis, the department also offers students the option of completing a Master's project.

Students should note that both the thesis and the project require discipline and a good deal of work in researching, writing and re-writing of material. Specifically, students should anticipate completing at least three drafts of their final project/thesis before it is ready for a defense. For many this can be a difficult and stressful stage in the overall master's degree process; however, with a good foundation of coursework, a reasonable time line, and a strong proposal this can also be the most exciting period of your MA career.

Thesis/Project

Every student must put together a three member faculty committee to supervise the entire MA thesis or project (from proposal to defense). The chair of the committee should also be your principal advisor and must be a full-time faculty member; however, the department will consider an exception in the event that a.) the part-time faculty has an expertise in an area not covered by any of the full-time faculty, b.) the selection is approved by the Dean, c.) at least two full-time rostered faculty in Political Science also sit on the committee.

Students should work closely with the chair of their committee on early drafts of the thesis/ project and begin to work with the second committee member once he/she has a complete draft. Typically students submit a "nearly final" draft of the thesis or project to the third committee member before the thesis defense. The chair and the second member of the committee decide when the student is ready to defend the thesis/project.

Thesis/Project Proposal

Prior to working on a thesis/project, all graduate students are required to complete a proposal outlining the scope, intent/importance, and methodology of their thesis/project. All graduate students must have their thesis proposal approved and signed off by each of the members of their committee prior to signing up for master thesis/project units (see the Thesis/Project Proposal Approval Form).

The thesis/project proposal should be a minimum of 10-12 double-spaced pages and (is typically between 12-20 pages) and should include the following information:

- 1. state the principal hypothesis, thesis, or central arguments to be investigated;
- 2. locate the thesis in relation to the existing literature on the subject (literature review);
- 3. describe the method(s) which will be used;
- 4. describe the expected results;
- 5. discuss the potential value of the thesis/project;
- 6. indicate potential problems and how you will deal with them.
- 7. outline the subsequent chapters/subsections of the research.

Please note that while rostered faculty members have a duty to help students through this process, the student is responsible for the development of an acceptable proposal. Students who undertake research beyond the proposal-writing stage without having secured the committee's agreement to serve and its approval of the proposal are at risk of investing time and effort in a thesis/project which may ultimately prove to be unacceptable to the Department.

Recommended steps preparing the thesis/project proposal:

Write down possible thesis topics whenever they occur to you. (Don't wait until you finish your course work.) Write a brief, informal description of each potential topic, and circulate and discuss it with faculty members and other students.

When you have developed the topic you wish to pursue and the feedback you have received from faculty indicates that your idea is a feasible MA thesis/project topic, secure the agreement of one faculty member to serve as chair of your committee, and another faculty member to serve as first reader.

Work closely with your advisor and the first reader to develop a full proposal.

Upon approval of the proposal by your advisor and first reader, complete the composition of your thesis committee by securing the agreement of a third faculty member to serve as second reader and her/his approval of your proposal.

Once your committee is satisfied with the proposal have each of the members sign the Thesis/Project Proposal Approval form.

Thesis v. Project

As mentioned above, in completing the required work for their MA students can chose from following the thesis option, or the project option. However, regardless of whether you are working on a thesis, or a project each student must complete a total of 30 credit hours to graduate from the department.

Students who choose the thesis option will complete an original piece of research approximately 60-80 pages in length. While some students have completed longer theses, we strongly dissuade anyone whose work exceeds 100 pages. Students who would like to pursue a doctoral degree after they complete their MA are advised to choose the thesis option as it will give them experience completing original empirical research and can serve as a writing sample when applying to these programs.

Students who choose the project option will typically be engaged in some form of organizing, community development, or work outside the university that they want to expose to greater scrutiny, analysis, and even development. The project option allows these students to conduct research with the goal of translating this material into something immediately useful to a setting outside of the university. While students enrolled in this option will have to take additional coursework, the writing element of the project is about half that of a thesis (30-50 pages). While the project option allows some flexibility for the student and advisor to determine the final form of the research, MA projects need to be passed through a committee in the same manner as a traditional thesis.

Ultimately, whether you are working on a thesis or a project you will be expected to turn in a chapter at a time to your chair (instead of waiting until you have completed the entire thesis/project). Expect an average turn-around-time of two-three weeks (depending on the time in the semester) and avoid last minute rushes! The process of going from proposal to completed thesis/project rarely takes less than two semesters to complete. Be prepared to write and rewrite several drafts of your research before it is completed. Also, it is a good idea to check with the chair of your committee (and your second and third reader) to assure that they are not going on sabbatical during the last year of your thesis/project as this can make a timely termination of degree more difficult.

If students are interested in seeing what previous political science MA theses look like, there is a collection

of theses in the department library.

Thesis/Project Defense

Once a graduate student has completed several drafts of their thesis/project and sufficiently satisfied any questions of their chair, they may (with approval from the chair) schedule their thesis/project defense date. This is one of the final stages of the degree process and typically entails a review of the research (including the central hypothesis, evidence collected, significance of research, and any problems/unexpected results encountered) in front of the entire thesis/project committee. Students are asked questions about their work and are expected to be able to defend their research and their approach in a professional manner. If the student successfully defends their thesis/project then the members of the committee will sign off and the final product will need to be submitted to the Graduate division. However, there are usually further revisions to be made after the defense and before the final product can be submitted as complete. Be sure to pick up "Guidelines for Preparing Masters' and Doctoral Theses" from the Graduate School (UC Denver Building 720). You will also have to submit your thesis for format review.

DEADLINES

For students ready to graduate (in the fall, spring or summer terms, respectively), here are some of your responsibilities:

- Submit application for candidacy to the graduate school after getting signature of principal advisor and Anna Sampaio (see Schedule of Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates for list of deadline dates which are also in the schedule).
- Submit intent to graduate form online to the graduate school (see Schedule of Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates for list of deadline dates) at: www.cudenver.edu/admissions/Registrar/Graduation%20Information/pages/default.aspx
- Schedule thesis defense/graduate exam with the graduate school (see Schedule of Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates for list of deadline dates).
- Submit thesis to your principal advisor for format review and to the graduate school in final form (see Schedule of Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates for list of deadline dates).
- Ensure grade changes for incompletes are submitted (see Schedule of Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates for list of deadline dates).
- Students must be registered during the semester of their final exam/defense. For purposes of this requirement, a new semester begins on the first day of instruction for that semester.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: I'm planning to graduate this semester. What forms do I need, where can I get them, and where are they turned in?

Answer: CLAS Dean's Office is located in the North Classroom Building, Suite 5014.

Forms indicated as *Downloadable* can be obtained on the Graduate School website at:

<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GradSchool/Forms.htm>

Question: ON THE DIPLOMA CARD, WHAT IS MY DEGREE AND MAJOR CODE? **Answer:** For Political Science, the Degree is MA, and the Major Code is PSCI, fill in the graduating semester, circle Graduate and Liberal Arts & Sciences, make sure your name is entered as you'd like it to appear on your diploma, and that your phone and mailing address are correct. You do not need your advisor's signature on this card, only your own.

Question: IS THE DEADLINE DATE FOR DEFENDING THESIS, REPORT OR PROJECT ABSOLUTE?

Answer: For the most part, yes, since it allows your advisor and committee the time to make requests for revisions and for you to make them before the semester ends. Depending on departmental policies, you may be able to extend the time period if you're having trouble assembling the committee in one place at

the same time or other circumstances make the date difficult to meet (your illness or for a member of your committee, difficulty in obtaining data, etc.). You **MUST** consult with your advisor periodically during this semester to make sure deadlines can be met, or to make alternate arrangements when problems arise.

We expect that all signed Exam Report Forms be returned to the CLAS Dean's Office by the time grades are due for the semester. ***These cannot be carried by the student.***

Thesis option:

Eight graduate-level courses and a six credit MA thesis. The six credits should be split up and taken over more than one semester.

Project option:

Nine graduate-level courses and a three credit MA project.

Question: DO I NEED TO BE REGISTERED FOR CLASSES IN THE SEMESTER I AM GRADUATING?

Answer: You **MUST** be registered for the semester in which you are taking the comprehensive exam, defending your thesis, or presenting your project. If you are not taking a class or registered for thesis or project credit, you will need to sign up for Candidate for Degree.

Candidate for Degree is available to students who have completed all required courses and requirements. A special processing form is needed. Please see your advisor.

You will be charged for one credit hour of tuition, but earn 0 credits. You'll also pay the Information Technology and Student Information System (SIS) fees.

Question: HOW DO I FILL OUT THE REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION FORM?

Answer: You fill out the Request for Examination form, in consultation with your committee chair (graduate advisor) to set the date of the exam. List all members of your committee and indicate the committee chair. Plan to schedule the exam prior to the semester deadline so that any revisions required by the committee can be completed by the end of the semester. It's advisable to have your advisor/committee chair initial the date of exam, since no signature line is included.

The graduate advisor will give the student permission to proceed with scheduling the comprehensive exam/defense. It is then the student's responsibility to schedule the exam and make sure that all committee members agree to the date, time and place it will be held.

Question: I'M SUBMITTING A THESIS. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Answer: All theses must be submitted to the Graduate School for format review. For review, submit an unbound final draft of the thesis to the Graduate School Office, 1380 Lawrence St., Suite 1400. Contact Lisa Atencio or Katie Ludwin at 303-556-2550 for further information.

You will receive back a list of format revisions that must be made before the final copy is submitted. You also will be working with your graduate advisor/committee to make content revisions prior to submitting the final copy. The document, *Guidelines for Preparing a Thesis/Dissertation* (dated 2000), is downloadable from their website: <http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GradSchool/Forms.htm>

Thesis submission is done in addition to the above forms for graduation. Please be sure to abide by these posted deadlines, which are "set in stone" due to binding and processing requirements. If you miss the final deadline to turn in the completed thesis, you will graduate the next semester.

Question: HOW DO I FILL OUT THE ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY FORM?

Answer: This four-page form is used to list all the credits (courses, thesis/project, independent study/internship, and transfer) you wish to apply toward your degree plan, which is then signed by your graduate advisor, department chair/program director, and yourself. Please fill out as completely as possible, including: instructor's name, course title/number, semester taken and grade received for every credit.

If you want to include more than nine (9) hours of non-degree or other transfer credit in your degree plan, your advisor must send a memo to the CLAS Graduate Associate Dean indicating which courses are to be allowed. To transfer course credit from a non-CU institution, a Request for Transfer of Credit is completed and sent to the CLAS Dean's Office for approval and forwarding to the Records Office. This form must also be accompanied by an official transcript from the transferring institution. (NOTE: Courses taken at UC Denver or other CU campuses do not require the transfer form and official transcript to be transferred to your program, since they already appear on the CU transcript.)

If you have taken longer than seven (7) years to complete your degree, your graduate advisor must write a memo addressed to the CLAS Graduate Associate Dean indicating why your degree progress was interrupted and asking for an extension of this time limit for a stated amount of time (usually one year).

If you wish to include a course taken more than ten (10) years prior to your graduating semester, you must have the course validated by the instructor or by arrangement with your graduate advisor. Use the Course Validation Form and forward to the CLAS Dean's Office.

These forms are downloadable from the Graduate School website:
<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/GradSchool/Forms.htm>

Question: WHAT IF I ALREADY FINISHED THE FINAL VERSION OF MY THESIS?

Answer: You do not have to register for any credits *if* you've completed all the requirements for your degree, passed your exam, and your committee has returned the signed Exam Report Form to the CLAS Dean's Office. HOWEVER, if you still have revisions to make on your thesis before your committee will sign off on the Exam Report Form (when there is no comp. exam), you'll need to be registered for at least 1 hour of thesis/project credit or Candidate for Degree.

Question: WHAT FORM IS NEEDED TO REGISTER FOR THESIS, PROJECT, OR INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDITS?

Answer: Use the *UC Denver Special Processing Form*, available in departmental offices, CLAS Advising, Admissions and Records, Student Service Center, and downloadable from the Records Office website:

<http://www.cudenver.edu/Admissions/Registrar/Forms/default.htm>

This form is also needed to register for Candidate for Degree when online registration deadline has passed.

Instructor/graduate advisor and dean's signature approvals are required. Go to the CLAS Advising Office (North Classroom 2024) for the signature of the CLAS Graduate Associate Dean. The Advising Office will keep one copy and return the original for you to turn in to Records.

Question: WHO IS MY PRIMARY CONTACT FOR CLAS GRADUATE ADVISING ON FORMS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER'S STUDENTS?

Answer: Jill Hutchison, the CLAS Graduate Coordinator, will be able to help you with problems and questions about registration, paperwork for graduation, and deadlines. Her contact information is:

Jill Hutchison CLAS Dean's Office North Classroom, Suite 5014 Voice: 303-556-2646 Fax: 303-556-4861 E-Mail: jill.hutchison@cudenver.edu

For specific questions about degree requirements, departmental approval of your Application for Admission to Candidacy, and to schedule your comprehensive exam or thesis/project defense, consult your graduate advisor.