

# DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

## HANDBOOK FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

*Revised Fall 2013*

The Department of Political Science at the University of New Mexico is a department of eighteen full-time faculty members. The department offers both the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, with strengths in American Politics/Policy and Comparative/Latin American Politics.

This handbook is designed to provide an overview of policies pertaining to graduate education in the Political Science Department. Requirements and course listings can be found in the current UNM Catalog. <http://catalog.unm.edu/catalogs/2011-2012/colleges/arts-sciences/political-science/graduate-program.html>

### 1. FIELDS OF STUDY

The Department offers specialized study in the following fields:

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Public Policy
- Methodology

A pro-seminar (with the exception of *methodology*) and comprehensive examination is offered in each of these fields of specialization. A pro-seminar is also offered in Latin American within Comparative Politics.

### 2. COMMITTEE ON STUDIES (COS)

The key to successful progress in all graduate programs is for the student to work closely with his or her faculty advisory committee, known at UNM as the Committee on Studies (COS). The department encourages students to choose their three committee members carefully. Selection of faculty members for an individual's Committee on Studies should reflect his or her fields of specialization. When the student's fields of specialization include a cognate discipline (e.g., Sociology, Economics, Public Administration, and History), a faculty member from that particular department may be included in the student's Committee on Studies; however, this representative shall not serve as COS chair and does not qualify as a member of the field paper committee.

The Department must be notified in writing of the COS membership, with the COS form available from the department, by February 15, or one month into the second semester of

graduate study. At the beginning of each Fall Semester, the student should review their COS membership and change as needed.

At the Ph.D. dissertation stage, a Dissertation Committee of no less than four members is assembled, including the dissertation advisor. At least one member shall represent another graduate unit or university based on competence in an area related to the candidate's dissertation. Forms for appointing Dissertation Committees are available on the Office of Graduate Studies' website. <http://ogs.unm.edu/resources/ogs-forms/index.html>

### **3. MASTER OF ARTS—CORE REQUIREMENTS**

The masters program is designed to introduce students to the breadth of the discipline, while providing tools for in-depth independent research. Students receive training in research methodologies that permit them to pursue original research in their chosen field of interest. All students must complete a comprehensive examination in their major field of study. The M.A. is offered under two plans, with thesis and without. Those who opt to write a Master's thesis must take at least 24 credit hours of coursework. The non-thesis plan entails a minimum of 32 credit hours. The plans are described as follows:

**Plan I (Thesis):** A minimum of 24 semester hours of coursework is required, including at least 9 hours in regularly scheduled graduate seminars at the 500 level, as well as the thesis. The student's Committee on Studies must approve both the coursework and the thesis. The student will select a member of the graduate faculty to serve as both the COS chairperson and the director of the thesis. The student will then choose two additional faculty members who work in consultation with the chair of the COS.

**Plan II (Non-thesis):** A minimum of 32 hours of course work is required with at least 12 hours in regularly scheduled graduate seminars at the 500 level. The student will choose a chairperson and two additional members from among the graduate faculty for his/her committee.

Students under both plans in the M.A. program must take PS 580 (Introduction to Empirical Research) and PS 581 (Statistics for Social Research); PS 582 (Political Science as a Discipline and a Profession); grades of 'B' or higher must be attained in the PS 580-581 sequence. The "B" requirement may be waived for terminal masters students. Students must also complete at least one graduate research seminar. In addition, M.A. students must complete pro-seminars in at least three fields of study. Pro-seminars are designed to be a wide-ranging introduction to the literature of a field. The Department discourages students from enrolling in hybrid courses (undergraduate courses for which graduate credit is allowed); hybrid courses may only be taken with approval of the graduate advisor, in consultation with the COS when available. All requirements for the Master's degree must be completed within a five-year period.

### ***Program of Studies***

Students are required to submit a Program of Studies (available on the OGS website <http://ogs.unm.edu/resources/ogs-forms/index.html>). Subsequently, the application must be approved by the chair of the Committee on Studies, the Department Chair, and the Office of Graduate Studies. This form must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by March 1<sup>st</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup> or July 1<sup>st</sup> of the *semester prior* to taking the comprehensive exam.

### ***Comprehensive Examinations***

After the student has completed coursework requirements with a GPA of at least 3.2, the student will take a written comprehensive exam in the chosen field of specialization. The exam is take-home, nine hours in duration, and must be submitted as an electronic document. Old exams, as well as pro-seminar syllabi from various fields of study, are available in the department office and should be supplemented with advice from the field faculty. The exam should be taken no later than in the semester following completion of 27 hours of coursework. Students are required to have completed a pro-seminar and at least one other course in a field, met the language/methodology requirement (methodology sequence ps580-582 with a grade of “B” or higher in each course), and filed and received approval of the Program of Studies before attempting comprehensive exams. Students that choose methodology as a field of specialization are required to take two courses beyond those required of all students. Students that choose public policy may take an American politics course with significant policy content as one of their required courses. Students are encouraged to enroll in at least one directed readings course during the semester in which they take their comprehensive exam in preparation for the exam. The written examination in the field of specialization will be prepared and graded by members of the department in each field. If a student fails the examination, he/she has one chance to retake and pass the exam. The re-examination must be completed in the semester following the failed exam. Failure to pass the comprehensive exam will result in dismissal from the program.

**NOTE:** *Comprehensive exams will be given twice a year, in late October and late March.*

### ***General Requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies for the Master’s Degree***

The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) is the central graduate academic administrative unit at the University of New Mexico. Students are expected to meet their general requirements per the UNM Catalog. <http://catalog.unm.edu/catalogs/2011-2012/graduate-program.html>.

#### **4. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY—CORE REQUIREMENTS**

Requisite coursework consists of a minimum of 18 post-M.A. credit hours for those who earned their M.A. in this department, but 24 credit hours for those who earned an M.A. in another program. Students must complete at least three graduate pro-seminars. Students pursuing a Ph.D. choose two fields of concentration. Beyond the pro-seminar, students must take two additional courses in their primary field of study and one additional course in their secondary field of study. Students must also complete the department's series of courses in research methodology (PS 580, 581 and 681). Grades of 'B' or higher must be attained in PS 580 and 581. The Department discourages students from enrolling in hybrid courses (undergraduate courses for which graduate credit is allowed); hybrid courses may only be taken with approval of the graduate advisor, in consultation with the COS when available. During the coursework stage, the Department defines normal progress as 9 credit hours per semester.

##### ***Comprehensive Examinations***

Students pursuing a Doctoral Degree at UNM will concentrate on two fields of study, and will take comprehensive, written exams in those two fields in successive semesters. Students must complete course requirements before taking comprehensive exams. The exam is take-home, nine hours in duration, and must be submitted as an electronic document. Old exams, as well as pro-seminar syllabi from various fields of study, are available in the department office and should be supplemented with advice from the field faculty. The first exam should be taken no later than in the semester following completion of 27 hours of coursework. Students that choose methodology as a field of specialization are required to take two courses beyond those required of all students. Students that choose public policy may take an American politics course with significant policy content as one of their required courses. Students are encouraged to enroll in at least one directed readings course during the semester in which they take their comprehensive exam in preparation for the exam. The written examination in the field of specialization will be prepared and graded by members of the department in each field. If a student fails the examination, he/she has one chance to retake and pass the exam. The re-examination must be completed in the semester following the failed exam. Comprehensive exams are also required of students entering the doctoral program from an outside Master's program and from a different Master's program at UNM. Ph.D. students must achieve a minimum 3.5 GPA. Students who transfer internally from our M.A. program to our Ph.D. program who have passed a comprehensive exam at the Ph.D. level must meet all field and methods requirements described in addition to taking their second comprehensive exam.

##### **Masters on Route**

Students will be granted an *M.A. on Route* in the semester in which they pass the second comprehensive exam. Students are required to submit a Program of Studies (available on the OGS website <http://ogs.unm.edu/resources/ogs-forms/index.html>). Subsequently, the

Program of Studies must be approved by the chair of the Committee on Studies, the Department Chair, and the Office of Graduate Studies. This form must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by March 1<sup>st</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup> or July 1<sup>st</sup> of the *semester prior* to taking the second comprehensive exam.

### **Field Research Paper and Oral Defense**

Ph.D. students will write a field research paper of publishable quality based on original research and orally defend that paper before the departmental faculty. By the end of the semester in which comprehensive exams are completed, Ph.D. students must assemble their committee and submit for their approval a tentative proposal for the field research paper requirement. The final paper and its defense must be completed by the end of the second semester after passing comprehensive exams. The field paper must be approved by the faculty committee before proceeding to the oral defense. The oral defense before the faculty requires that the student discuss the theory, methods, and findings of the research, as well as successfully place his/her research in the broader context of the discipline. This requirement ensures that students have experience with one substantial research effort before designing a dissertation project. Students must successfully complete the paper and oral defense requirements before formal advancement to Ph.D. candidacy. Failure to produce and successfully defend a publishable quality field paper within the two semester period following comprehensive exams is grounds for dismissal from the program.

### ***Dissertation***

Finally, upon completion of the comprehensive exams and the field paper requirements, the candidate may proceed to the dissertation phase. Students may begin taking dissertation hours in the semester in which they defend their field paper assuming all other department and Office of Graduate Studies requirements have been met. At this point, students may want to reconstitute their Committee on Studies to reflect areas of concentration in the dissertation proposal. It is the responsibility of the candidate's Dissertation Committee to approve the student's dissertation proposal and to supervise the student's progress through completion of the project. The candidate prepares a formal dissertation proposal of 10-20 pages, plus appendices, and orally defends the proposal before the Dissertation Committee, before proceeding with the dissertation. The dissertation proposal must be approved by a majority of the committee and a copy of the approved dissertation proposal is to be placed in the student's file. If, in the opinion of a majority of the Committee, a student's work on his or her dissertation proposal or dissertation does not show satisfactory progress, the student will be notified, in writing, that his or her degree candidacy may be terminated. During the dissertation stage, normal progress is considered to be a chapter of written work for each semester, or its equivalent in terms of field work, library research, or data collection and/or analysis.

### ***Application for Candidacy and Appointment of Dissertation Committee***

Students are required to submit an Application for Candidacy and Appointment of Dissertation (available on the OGS website <http://ogs.unm.edu/resources/ogs-forms/index.html>). Subsequently, the application must be approved by the chair of the Committee on Studies, the Department Chair, and the Office of Graduate Studies. These forms should be submitted within a semester of the field paper defense.

### ***General Requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies for the Doctoral Degree***

The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) is the central graduate academic administrative unit at the University of New Mexico. Students are expected to meet their general requirements per the UNM Catalog. <http://catalog.unm.edu/catalogs/2011-2012/graduate-program.html>.

## **6. ACADEMIC PROGRESS REVIEW**

The academic records of all graduate students are reviewed periodically. Master's Degree candidates must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.2 on all graduate courses taken at UNM, while Ph.D. candidates must maintain a GPA of 3.5. Failure to meet this requirement will result in academic probation and—if not corrected within two semesters—expulsion from the program. A candidate should pass all required courses with a grade of at least a 'B'. A student may include no more than two 'C's in his or her program, as stipulated on the Application for Candidacy. A student receiving a third 'C' or a lower grade (including NC) will suffer automatic suspension. At the dissertation stage, students will receive a grade of "progress" (P) or "no progress" (NP) from their advisors each semester. Failure to show progress is grounds for termination of candidacy.

## **8. TRANSFERRING FROM THE M.A. TO THE Ph.D. PROGRAM**

Students who have not been admitted to the Ph.D. program may apply for a transfer from the M.A. to Ph.D. programs during their final semester of study and will be considered by the department at our regular January 15th admissions deadline. Currently enrolled M.A. students will not need to fill out another application form, but they should--(i) provide three letters of recommendation from UNM faculty and (ii) provide at least one writing sample from their graduate career at UNM. Once accepted into the Ph.D. program, the transition will be effected with the "*Change of Degree Level*" form submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Those who transfer internally from the MA program to the Ph.D. program, but not from outside, will be exempt from repeating the comprehensive exam if they received a "Ph.D pass" on the exam as a master's candidate.

Admission to the Ph.D. program is competitive. Internal applicants are considered in a pool with external applicants. For internal applicants, we see our own M.A. program as appropriate screening for the Ph.D. program.

## **9. FINANCIAL AID**

Every semester a review is made of each student's progress toward completing degree requirements. Also reviewed are the teaching and research needs of the department. Financial aid decisions are made in view of these considerations. Financial assistance is generally granted in any one of five contexts:

**Teaching Assistant** – The T.A. is specifically responsible for teaching a section of an undergraduate course for the Department. The Award includes: annual stipends that meet or exceed the minimum salary guidelines set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies, a full or partial tuition waiver, and in-state tuition for hours above the waiver allowance. Teaching Assistantships are limited to those who have the comprehensive exam in the appropriate subfield or at the departments discretion.

**Graduate Assistant** – the duties of the Graduate Assistant are related to research and/or instruction, but do not directly involve an autonomous teaching responsibility for a class. The G.A. Award includes: annual stipends that meet or exceed the minimum salary guidelines set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies, a full or partial tuition waiver, and in-state tuition for hours above the waiver allowance. Both M.A. and Ph.D. students are eligible for a Graduate Assistantship.

**Teaching Associate** – a Teaching Associate holds a Master's Degree (or its equivalent) and is hired to teach an independent course or course section. Associates are paid on a per-course basis.

**Research Assistant** – the R.A. is responsible for the research end of projects conducted within the Department. Stipends vary with available funding, and tuition reimbursements depend on the budget associated with a funded research project.

*(It is the intention of the Political Science department to provide each Ph.D. candidate with an opportunity to teach an introductory course. As our first priority is the teaching mission of the department, we cannot always accommodate student or faculty requests for assignments.)*

Other assistantship and fellowship opportunities exist with the Office of Graduate Studies, the Latin American Institute, the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center. The Department Chair and the Graduate Advisor will seek to nominate students from the department when invited to do so, or will encourage applications for such awards when there is an open competition.

You may indicate your interest in Financial Aid by writing to the ~~Chairman~~ of the Department or to the Graduate Advisor. The number of assistantships is limited. The Department's Graduate Committee allocates them to both current and new graduate students. The committee considers GPA, previous teaching and/or research experience, performance in Political Science graduate courses, and evidence of normal progress within the program for enrolled students. For newly admitted students, letters of recommendation, GRE scores, writing samples, prior grades, and statements of academic and career interest are considered.

**For M.A. students, financial aid is limited to four semesters. For Ph.D. candidates, aid may be limited to six semesters beyond the M.A. degree at the department's discretion.**

Continuing financial support depends upon satisfactory academic performance, fulfillment of assigned responsibilities, and department resources. At the end of each semester, the Graduate Committee reviews the academic records of all continuing students, as well as evaluations of the students by faculty members to whom they are assigned. If evidence of a problem emerges, the head of the Graduate Committee counsels the student regarding areas of strength and weakness, and provides suggestions for improved performance. Students will be notified in writing of any performance failures that might jeopardize continuing financial support.