



DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE

# GRADUATE HANDBOOK 2021-2022

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# DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

## HANDBOOK FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

### 2021-2022

The Department of Political Science at the University of New Mexico offers both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, with strengths in American Politics/Policy and Comparative/Latin American Politics. The department also offers a B.A./M.A. shared-credit program for UNM Political Science majors.

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/2021-2022/colleges/arts-sciences/political-science/graduate-program.html>).

#### *General Requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies*

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/2021-2022/graduate-program.html>).

#### **1. CONCENTRATIONS OF STUDY**

The Department offers concentrations in the following areas:

American Politics  
Comparative Politics  
International Relations  
Public Policy  
Methodology

A pro-seminar (with the exception of *Methodology*) and Ph.D. comprehensive examination is offered in each of these concentrations. A pro-seminar is also offered in Latin American Politics as part of the Comparative Politics concentration. M.A. students choose one concentration. Ph.D. students choose a primary and a secondary concentration.

#### **2. M.A. AND Ph.D. TIMELINES**

Deadlines for completion of program requirements are based on full-time graduate status. Students in part-time status (averaging less than 8 credit hours per semester) will have their deadlines approved by the graduate committee on a case-by-case basis, according to a student's progress through the program. Ph.D. students have the same coursework requirements for the first two years of the program and typically earn a M.A. enroute to their Ph.D.; their methods and concentration requirements for the first three years of the program are greater than that of M.A. students.

### **3. COMMITTEE ON STUDIES (COS)**

The key to successful progress in all graduate programs is for the student to work closely with their faculty advisory committee, known at UNM as the Committee on Studies (COS). The department encourages students to select the three-member committee carefully. The Committee on Studies should contain expertise in the student's chosen concentration(s).

The Department must be notified in writing of the COS membership, using the COS form available from the department, by February 15, or one month into the second semester of graduate study. Students should review their COS membership periodically and change as needed. (The OGS version of the form is available at <https://gradforms.unm.edu>.)

### **4. MASTER OF ARTS—CORE & CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

The master's 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 concentration. The M.A. is offered under three plans. Those pursuing a B.A./M.A. or an M.A. as their terminal degree are expected to follow Plan III (32 credit hours of coursework only). Those pursuing a Ph.D. are expected to follow Plan II (32 credit hours of coursework plus a qualifying exam). The Plan I M.A. is 26 credit hours of coursework, 6 credit hours of thesis writing, and a defense of the thesis; this is not the expected route for current students in the program.

Students pursuing the M.A. must take POLS 581 (Statistics for Social Research), POLS 582 (Political Science as a Discipline and a Profession), and POLS 580 (Introduction to Empirical Research). In addition, they must complete at least three pro-seminars, including one in their chosen concentration. Pro-seminars are designed to be a wide-ranging introduction to the literature of a concentration. They must also complete at least one graduate research seminar in their chosen concentration. 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 Director, in consultation with the COS when available. All requirements for the Master's degree must be completed within a five-year period.

Students pursuing the M.A. who select the methodology concentration must take POLS 681 (Advanced Statistical Analysis for Social Science Research) and two additional methodology courses in political science or other disciplines, as approved by the Political Science Graduate Director, and one research seminar employing advanced research methods.

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

Students are required to submit a Program of Studies (available on the OGS website at <https://gradforms.unm.edu>). 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 department's Graduate Program Coordinator prior to the Office of Graduate Studies deadlines of March 1<sup>st</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup> or July 1<sup>st</sup> of the *semester prior* to graduating (Plan III) or taking the qualifying exam (Plan II).

**Summary of M.A. Core, Concentration Requirements, and Accompanying Paperwork**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Core Coursework</i>	<i>OGS Requirements</i>
(1) Fall	POLS 581 & 582 At least one pro-seminar	n/a
(2) Spring	Concentration Requirements	COS form by Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup>
(3) Fall	POLS 580 Complete pro-seminars	Program of Study by Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup>
(4) Spring	Concentration Requirements	n/a

\* *This timeline is based on full-time status.  
Timelines will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis*

***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. Masters students are expected to meet their general requirements per the UNM Catalog. (See links on page 2 of this Handbook.)

**5. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY—CORE & CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Ph.D. requires 48 credit hours of coursework plus 18 hours of POLS 699 (Dissertation). All students must complete, at UNM, the methodology sequence (POLS 581, 580 and 681), *Survey of Political Science as a Discipline and Profession* (POLS 582); three pro-seminars (including one in each chosen concentration); two research seminars in their primary concentration and one research seminar in their secondary concentration. Grades of a “B” or higher must be attained in POLS 581 and 580. All core and concentration courses/requirements must be fulfilled before taking the comprehensive exams.

Students who select the methodology concentration must take two additional methodology courses in political science or other disciplines, as approved by the Political Science Graduate Director, over and above the methodology sequence (581, 580 and 681), and one research seminar employing advanced research methods.

***Transfer Work***

Students entering the Ph.D. program with an M.A. degree from another institution or department must complete the general coursework and credit requirements listed above for all Ph.D. students. On rare occasion, the Political Science Graduate Committee, may, at its sole discretion, waive a general or specific course requirement upon presentation of evidence that a student’s coursework at a previous graduate institution is fully equivalent to UNM Ph.D.-level Political Science offerings. Transfer work, per the Office of Graduate Studies, may not exceed 50% of the coursework applied toward the degree.

### ***Ph.D. Qualifying Exam***

*Research Paper:* To satisfy the University of New Mexico requirement for an Ph.D. qualifying examination, students pursuing a Ph.D. are required to complete a research paper in any concentration offered by the department. A first draft of the paper must be completed by the end of the student's third semester of coursework, giving the student up to one additional semester to polish the paper to the expected quality standards. Students are encouraged to complete a draft of their paper as part of POLS 580: *Introduction to Empirical Research*, a required course normally taken in a student's third semester. The paper will be evaluated by three members of the department faculty, chosen by the student in consultation with the Committee on Studies, one of whom needs to have primary expertise in the paper's area of concentration. Papers will be evaluated as: Ph.D. pass with distinction, Ph.D. pass, M.A. pass, or fail. The evaluating committee will provide a single assessment of the final paper. Any student who does not meet the end of the fourth-semester deadline for completing the paper will receive a fail. Students who receive an M.A. or Ph.D. level pass (and who have completed all other requirements towards the degree) will be eligible to receive an M.A. degree. Students who do not receive a passing grade will be allowed one opportunity to re-submit the paper before the start of the next semester. Students who receive a failing grade on the paper after their second attempt will be dismissed from the program. In order to continue towards the Ph.D. degree, students must receive a Ph.D. level pass on their first or second attempts. Students planning to receive their M.A. degree in the semester in which they complete the research paper requirement must adhere to all OGS graduation deadlines. Students who receive less than a Ph.D. pass on their research paper will generally not be issued an assistantship contract for the subsequent semester.

### ***Masters En route***

Students will be granted an *M.A. en route* (Plan II) following their successful completion of the research paper, which constitutes the Ph.D. qualifying exam. Students are required to submit a Program of Studies (available at <https://gradforms.unm.edu>). 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 department staff prior to the Office of Graduate Studies deadlines of March 1<sup>st</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup> or July 1<sup>st</sup> of the *semester prior* to receiving the *M.A. en route*.

### ***Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination***

*Written and Oral Examinations:* Ph.D. students are required to pass two examinations (a combined written and oral examination in their primary concentration and a written exam in their secondary concentration), before being advanced to candidacy. Doctoral comprehensive exams in both concentrations will be taken in the same semester, with a one- or two-day break scheduled between the written exams and must be taken no later than the middle of the sixth semester, as scheduled by the department. The written exams will be followed as soon as feasible (normally within two weeks) by an oral exam in the student's primary concentration before a committee of three faculty members. Students will have 8 hours to complete two questions for each written exam. Three faculty members in each concentration will evaluate written exams. In the student's primary concentration, the written and oral parts of the examination will be evaluated as one exam. Exams are graded as pass with distinction, pass, or fail. The evaluating committees in each of the concentrations will provide a single assessment of the exams in each of the primary and secondary concentrations. Students who do not receive a pass in either

concentration will have one opportunity to retake the failed exam(s) before the start of the next semester, as scheduled by the department. Failure to pass comprehensive examinations will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program and cancellation of any contracts. Students who pass exams in both of their concentrations will be advanced to candidacy.

### ***Dissertation***

Upon passing the comprehensive exams, the candidate may proceed to the dissertation phase, 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. A Dissertation Committee of no less than four members is assembled, including the dissertation advisor. At least one member shall be from another graduate unit or university based on competence in an area related to the candidate's dissertation. More details about the composition of the Dissertation Committee is available [here](#). Forms for appointing Dissertation Committees are available on the Office of Graduate Studies' website (<http://grad.unm.edu/resources/gs-forms/index.html>). 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 in front of 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 their dissertation proposal or dissertation does not show satisfactory progress, the student will be notified, in writing, that their 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 fieldwork, 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 Committee (available on the OGS website <http://grad.unm.edu/resources/gs-forms/index.html>). This form must be submitted to department staff to be approved by the chair of the Committee on Studies, the Department Chair, and the Office of Graduate Studies prior to the student being advanced to candidacy.

**Summary of Ph.D. Core, Concentration Requirements, and Accompanying Paperwork**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Core Coursework</i>	<i>Department Requirements</i>	<i>OGS Requirements</i>
(1) Fall	POLS 581 & 582 At least one pro-seminar	n/a	n/a
(2) Spring	POLS 681	n/a	COS form
(3) Fall	POLS 580 Complete pro-seminars	Research Paper (Draft)	n/a
(4) Spring	Concentration Requirements	Research Paper	Program of Studies by Finals Week
(5) Fall	Concentration Requirements	n/a	n/a
(6) Spring	Concentration Requirements	Comprehensive exams in major and minor concentrations*	n/a
(7) Fall	699		Application for Candidacy
**Variable	n/a	Dissertation Prospectus	Dissertation Committee Form

\* *This timeline is based on full-time status and passage of the comprehensive exams at the Ph.D. level on the first attempt. Timelines will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis.*

\*\* *Students have five years from the completion of comprehensive exams to complete the Ph.D. program. Students must show progress each semester (see Dissertation section above) once admitted to candidacy.*

***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. (See links on page 2 of this Handbook.)

**6. ACADEMIC PROGRESS REVIEW**

The academic records of all graduate students are reviewed each semester. M.A. candidates must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.2 on all graduate courses taken at UNM, while Ph.D. students 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 student may include no more than two ‘C’s in their program, as stipulated on the Application for Candidacy and Program of Studies. 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” (PR) or “no progress” (NP) from their advisors each semester. Failure to show progress on the dissertation is grounds for termination of candidacy.

## **7. B.A./M.A. SHARED-CREDIT TWO-STEP APPLICATION PROCESS**

UNM undergraduate Political Science majors who meet the eligibility requirements may apply to the B.A./M.A. shared-credit program in their junior year as the first step. They apply to the M.A. program after their first semester taking graduate courses as the second step.

The eligibility requirements are (1) completing POLS 2140 (Political Analysis) with a B or better, (2) completing the rest of their departmental core courses, (3) completing at least two upper-division courses with a B or better taught by Department tenured/tenure-track faculty, (4) having a GPA of 3.50 or better in their Political Science courses, (5) having an overall GPA of 3.20 or better, and (6) being able to complete 90 hours toward their BA degree by the end of their junior year. The application process for the first step involves the Undergraduate Advisor certifying that these requirements are met and approval and advising from the Political Science Graduate Director.

For the second step, students apply to the M.A. program as any other applicant would. However, GRE requirement will be waived for this application as the student's grades in our courses provide appropriate screening for the M.A. program.

The graduate coursework for the B.A./M.A. shared-credit program is the same as the coursework for the Plan III M.A.

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

Currently enrolled M.A. students may apply to the Ph.D. program at the end of their third semester in the M.A. program. The GRE requirement will be waived for this application as the student's grades in our courses provide appropriate screening for the Ph.D. program. Admission to the Ph.D. program is competitive. Internal applicants are considered in a pool with external applicants. Successful applicants will be expected to defend a research paper in their fourth semester for their Ph.D. qualifying exam unless an exception is provided by the Graduate Committee.

## **8. 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 passed the comprehensive exam in the appropriate concentration or at the department's 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.

Other assistantship and fellowship opportunities exist with the Office of Graduate Studies, Center for Regional Studies, the Latin American and Iberian Institute, the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center. The Department Chair and the Graduate Director 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.

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.**

Continued 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 their financial support.

(Updated August 2021)