



Department of Political Science

THE MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

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THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: *Policies and Procedures Handbook*

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Political Science is a general post-baccalaureate degree that gives students a broad understanding of political science through intensive study of several subfields within the discipline. The Department's Master's program is also designed to give students a firm grounding in scientific-based inquiry into problems in politics. Students learn how institutional design, economic and cultural factors shape the distribution of power and patterns of cooperation and conflict in society within and outside of government. The M.A. degree in Political Science allows students to develop a deeper understanding of political ideas and institutions, more sophisticated research skills, a better grasp of governments abroad, and a broader knowledge of international politics.

In the M.A. program, it is possible to specialize in American Politics, policy processes and institutions, American political behavior, judicial politics, urban politics, political economy, public administration, comparative politics, and international relations. The M.A. degree is useful for students who are already in or planning on a career in secondary education, public policy, or politics. It is also useful for students who are considering doctoral education. It is particularly valuable for students simply interested in learning more about politics and public policy.

The Political Science faculty provides accessible, creative, and professional Master's degree preparation. Their active research and publication records contributed significantly to UM-St. Louis programs being ranked fifth among small research universities in 2006-2007.¹ In addition, several of our faculty members have won prestigious teaching awards.

The Political Science Graduate Committee, consisting of the Department Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and several faculty members, is charged with the administration of the graduate program in Political Science. The graduate program in Political Science is governed by the policies and procedures of the Graduate School at UM-St. Louis. Master's students are expected to be familiar with the policies and procedures set forth in this document, in the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin* and the policies of the Graduate School.

The Political Science Graduate Studies Organization portal on MyGateway is the official site for information about the Political Science Department's graduate programs, including the M.A. in Political Science. All Political Science M.A. students have access to the MyGateway portal. The portal is maintained by the Graduate Director and it is updated on a regular basis. The Graduate Studies portal contains all information and documents about the Master's program, M.A. policies and procedures, style manual for master's papers and theses, graduate school policies and deadlines, conference information and graduate student awards (including awards for Master's students).

¹See "UMSL, IS Program Receive Top Ranking," <http://www.umsl.edu/services/ur/media/newsrel/nov28rank.htm>, November 28, 2007. Date last visited, June 12, 2008.

II. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Criteria

For admission, a student should have a baccalaureate degree (B.A.) with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 overall and in the major on a 4.0 scale. The applicant should have an undergraduate background in political science or the social sciences. Students whose total undergraduate GPA and major GPA are between 2.75 and 2.99 *may* be admitted on a restricted basis. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test Score is required and scores should be submitted at the time of application. The GRE test score *cannot* be waived for the master's program. Prospective students cannot substitute the GMAT or the LSAT for the GRE. GRE scores older than five years cannot be submitted. Two letters of recommendation from persons qualified to evaluate the applicant's recent academic work are requested for each student applying to the program. Students who do not meet these requirements may be admitted upon approval of the Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School.

B. Application Process

Prospective students must apply online for admission to the Master's program in political science at <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/prospective/apply-online.html>. Deadlines are: July 1 for the fall semester, December 1 for the winter semester, and May 1 for the summer term. Applicants must submit *all* required materials in advance of the admission deadline. Applications will not be processed until all required materials have been submitted. The Graduate Director processes applications when they are complete. Applicants are informed of admission decisions by mail from the Graduate School. The Graduate Director will notify new Master's students by mail welcoming them into the program and indicating important steps to take prior to course registration. Go to the Graduate School website, "You've Been Accepted, What You Need to Know," at <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/prospective/accepted.html> for additional information

III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The department requires a minimum of 27 semester hours of course work and 6 hours of exit project work, totaling 33 credit hours for the M.A. in Political Science.

Coursework:

18 hours must be at the 6000 level

12 hours must be in core courses in Political Science, including:

PS 6401: Introduction to Policy Research

and three of the following Political Science core courses:

PS 6410: Introduction to Policy Analysis

PS 6420: Proseminar in Public Law

PS 6430: Proseminar in American Politics

PS 6440: Proseminar in Public Policy Administration

PS 6450: Proseminar in Comparative Politics
PS 6460: Proseminar in Political Theory
PS 6470: Proseminar in Urban Politics
PS 6480: Proseminar in International Relations

Students can plan their degree program to reflect one or more of the following six emphasis areas:

American Politics
Comparative Politics
International Politics
Political Process and Behavior
Public Administration and Public Policy
Urban and Regional Politics

IV. EXIT PROJECTS

Students must also select one of the following exit projects to complete the Master's degree in Political Science: (1) a six-hour thesis, (2) a six-hour internship, or (3) six hours of additional course work and an approved paper. Students pursuing a Master's degree as their terminal degree may choose the non-thesis or internship option if they wish; however, we encourage students who plan to continue graduate studies in a Ph.D. program to take the thesis option.

To remain in good standing, Master's students must enroll for at least one semester each calendar year. Students who do not enroll will become inactive and be required to reapply. If students reapply and are readmitted, they will be subject to all regulations in effect at the time of readmission.

A. M.A. Thesis Option

The Master's thesis is the preferred option for receipt of the M.A. in Political Science. M.A. students seeking admission into our doctoral program in Political Science should have a very strong record as a Master's student and demonstrate potential for success in political science at the doctoral level.

A Master's student who is engaged exclusively in thesis research during a given semester must enroll for one or more hours in PS 6494: Thesis Research. The student will enroll for as many hours as necessary to complete the department requirement of 33 credit hours. The thesis should be completed at the same time all credit hours are met (33 hours). For information about submitting your final version of the Master's thesis, go to <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/thesis/index.html>.

Master's degree students who write a thesis must submit to the dean of the Graduate School one copy of the thesis by the posted university deadline, normally six weeks before the end of the term in which graduation is sought. The chairperson of the thesis committee is responsible for verifying that the final draft of the thesis is acceptable to the Graduate Dean and the thesis committee. Students shall disseminate the thesis according to current Graduate School procedures. In addition, students must provide an electronic copy of their thesis to the Department's Graduate Program Administrative Assistant for recordkeeping purposes.

B. Non-Thesis Option

For students selecting the non-thesis option, they must complete six hours of additional course work (33 hours) and an approved paper. For the paper requirement, students can submit either a: (1) course paper, (2) research paper, or (3) a theoretically informed case study. The student is expected to meet with his or her Advisor to discuss the student's preferred paper option and, if necessary, how the paper can be extended and enhanced. The paper, and subsequent revisions, must be approved by the student's committee. The paper should be approximately 25-35 pages in length (typed, double-spaced; excluding footnotes, references, appendices, front and back page matter).

C. Internship Option

Master's students may take an internship, PS 6495 (up to six credit hours) to gain first-hand experience in research and administrative positions. Those credit hours would apply to the "emphasis area" component of the curriculum. Consult the Graduate Director and Internship Coordinator for further information.

V. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

According to the Office of Research Administration, human subjects research includes *any* data gathering on humans for scientific purposes. Graduate student research that involves data gathered from human subjects through interviews, mail surveys, or telephone surveys requires review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before actual research begins. Failure to comply with human subject guidelines could jeopardize the University's federal funding. The Master's thesis proposal *must* be approved by the student's Master's Committee before applying to the IRB. After approval, the student's Advisor (thesis Chair) will assist the student in filling out the IRB Review forms and obtaining IRB approval of the thesis research, or the granting of an exemption. Human subject application forms and other information may be found at: <http://www.umsf.edu/services/ora/compliance/human.html>.

VI. MASTER'S COMMITTEES

Students are encouraged to think about and discuss their research interests with their advisors early in the program. After the second semester, students are encouraged to choose a faculty member in their area of concentration in the Political Science Department to serve as the student's Advisor. The student's Advisor will also serve as the Chair of the student's Master's Committee. The Master's Committee consists of the Chair and two additional faculty members of the Graduate Faculty of UM-St. Louis chosen by the student in consultation with his or her Advisor and the Graduate Director. An outside member of the department may be appointed to the M.A. Committee with the approval of the Graduate Director.

VII. FINAL ORAL REVIEW

Each candidate for a Master of Arts degree is given a final oral review conducted by a student's Master's committee on the course work completed and the student's chosen exit project. Students must consult with their committee chairs to discuss oral review expectations.

VIII. SUBMITTING THE EXIT PROJECT

A. Master's Forms

The M2 Form, "Appointment of Thesis, Examination, Paper or Project Committee must be submitted to the Graduate School after your exit project has been approved by your Committee. Go to <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/thesis/index.html#> for the Graduate School's rules on submitting your thesis. Students should consult with the Graduate Program's Administrative Assistant about submitting exit projects and meeting Graduate School deadlines to assure graduation eligibility.

B. Electronic Submission of Master's Theses and Exit Project Papers

All political science graduate students are required to electronically submit their final version of master's theses and exit project papers the Graduate Program's Administrative Assistant for recordkeeping purposes. Files submitted in a word processing format will be converted to pdf format.

IX. GRADUATION

A. Application for the Master's Degree

Master's students must file forms with the Graduate School before a candidate can receive a degree. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program's Administrative Assistant of graduation plans and to see that these forms are completed and turned in to the Graduate School. The Department's Graduate Program Administrative Assistant will assist students in submitting the appropriate forms to the Graduate School. Master's students must file the M1: "Program for Master's Degree" Form prior to taking eighteen credit hours. The M1 Form *must* be typewritten or filled-in pdf form. The Graduate School will not accept a handwritten M1 Form. A student who decides to change his or her degree program after the M1 Form has been submitted to the Graduate School must file the G-8: "Petition For Change in the Degree Program" Form with the Graduate School.

B. Fees

Master's candidates must pay a "Final Semester Graduate Education Fee." Graduate students must enroll in the semester in which they graduate. If they have completed required course work, thesis, and dissertation credits, they must enroll in "Graduate Exam." Master's candidates must pay a "Thesis Fee" for the binding and microfilming of their thesis.

X. ADVISING AND COURSE REGISTRATION

A. Course Registration and Continuous Enrollment

Students must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies about their course schedule and specific questions about the curriculum. The Director of Graduate Studies approves course registration. Master's students must register for courses through the University's MyView Student Information System.

B. Advising

The Director of Graduate Studies advises all students in the Master's program. Students will have a mid-program review at the end of 12-15 hours of coursework. At this review, students will discuss their

academic performance and program with the Graduate Director. The student should also consult with his or her Advisor on a regular basis to discuss course work and exit projects.

C. Course Descriptions and Inter-University Agreement

The UM-St. Louis *Bulletin* describes graduate course offerings at UM-St. Louis. Master's students are encouraged to contact the course instructor for more detailed information on course content and requirements.

Master's students are permitted to take a course not offered by UM-St. Louis at Washington University, St. Louis University, or Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, upon approval by the Graduate Director.

D. Course Loads and Time Frame for Degree Completion

The normal course load for full-time Master's students is nine credit hours (3 courses). Part-time M.A. students usually take 6 hours (2 courses) per semester. According to Graduate School rules, the maximum time allowed for completion of a master's degree is six years after the first course enrollment.

Graduate classes meet once a week. In order to facilitate graduate study by both full-time and part-time students, graduate courses are almost exclusively offered in the late afternoon or evenings. Students cannot enter a course in progress without approval. Master's students may not enter courses after the first week of the semester.

XI. EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

A. Satisfactory Progress

The Graduate School does not recognize a D grade for a course carrying graduate credit. Therefore, grades lower than C- are recorded as F.

The University calculates three types of GPA: (1) the GPA for courses attempted at the end of the semester, (2) the cumulative GPA on the transcript which includes all graduate courses taken at UM-St. Louis, including courses that may not be part of the degree program and (3) the GPA for courses that are part of the Master's program. Transfer courses are not included in any GPA calculation. Master's students' GPAs must be at least a 3.0 for students to receive the degree. Under Graduate School policy, grade modification is not an option for students. Graduate courses cannot normally be taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

B. Delayed Grades

Master's students must make an effort to complete courses on time. It is up to the discretion of the instructor whether to submit delayed grades. According to University policy, delayed grades that are not changed within two semesters automatically turn into "F" grades. The instructor may subsequently change F grades to other grades when all work has been completed. Students may not graduate with any delayed grades on their transcript for course work required for that degree. In addition, students who stop attending class without officially dropping the course receive F grades.

C. Academic Probation

Master's students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward the degree. Failure to make adequate progress in the Master's program jeopardizes a student's potential to complete the degree and their financial aid. In accordance with Graduate School policy, the Department will place a graduate student with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 on academic probation for one semester.

If at the end of the probationary semester the cumulative GPA is at least 3.0, the probationary status is removed. A probationary student who fails to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 may be allowed a second probationary semester. A student is subject to dismissal upon failure to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 by the end of the second probationary semester, or at any time a semester or cumulative GPA falls below 3.0.

The Graduate School will inform students of their probation by letter, with copies sent to the Graduate Director, the Graduate Admissions Office and Financial Aid.

D. Dismissal from the Master's Program

A Master's student who is on probation for more than two semesters study will be dismissed, unless the Dean of the Graduate School approves an exceptional request for continuation from the Advisor and/or Graduate Director. In addition, upon recommendation of the Department, the Graduate School may dismiss any graduate student who does not make adequate progress.

The Graduate School will inform students of their dismissal by letter, with copies sent to the Graduate Director, the Graduate Admissions Office and Financial Aid.

E. Residence Requirement

The final two-thirds of the courses in the Department's master's degree program must be completed in residence at UM-St. Louis.

F. Leave of Absence

Master's students who are forced to interrupt their course work for a period of one or more years should request a leave of absence from the University. Requests should indicate the reason for leaving and the expected date of return to the University. The Dean of the Graduate School approves all leave of absence requests. The leave of absence is designed to suspend the requirement for continuous enrollment. It does not affect the maximum time limitation set for the Master's unless a specific exception is approved.

XII. TRANSFERRING GRADUATE CREDIT

Students may transfer up to twelve credit hours from an accredited graduate program into the Master's program, subject to the approval of the Graduate Director and the Graduate School. Students must request transfer credits and bring supporting documentation (prior course syllabi for example).

XI. 2 + 3 B.A./M.A. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The 2+3 combined B.A./M.A. program in Political Science provides an opportunity for outstanding students with educational maturity to complete the requirements for both degrees in five years of full-time

study. The purpose of the dual degree is to offer highly qualified students the challenge of graduate study earlier than is usually the case. The combined program requires a minimum of 140 credit hours of which at least 33 must be at the graduate level in political science. In qualifying for the B.A., students must meet all University and College requirements. Students in the combined 2+3 program who successfully complete the requirements for the M.A. degree will be awarded a B.A. degree simultaneously upon completion of at least 107 hours of undergraduate credit.

A. 2 +3 Graduate Requirements

1. Pol Sci 6401: Introduction to Policy Research (3 credits)

2. Plus 3 of the following (9 credits):

PS 6420: Proseminar in Public Law
PS 6430: Proseminar in American Politics
PS 6440: Proseminar in Public Policy Administration
PS 6450: Proseminar in Comparative Politics
PS 6460: Proseminar in Political Theory
PS 6470: Proseminar in Urban Politics
PS 6480 :Proseminar in International Relations

3. Plus 5 Additional Graduate Political Science Classes (15 credits)

Students should select an emphasis in American Politics, Public Policy, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, or International Relations.

4. Plus Exit Project (6 credits): Thesis Option, Non-Thesis Option or Internship Option.

Summary of Credits in Political Science:

B.A.: 27 hours (12 hours completed in lower division courses before admission to the 2+3 program).

M.A.: 33 hours at the graduate level.

IX. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY

The Department of Political Science and the University of Missouri-St. Louis recognize that academic honesty is essential for the intellectual life of the University. Master's students are expected to adhere to responsible and ethical conduct in scholarship and research. Master's students are subject to sanctions and dismissal from the M.A. program if they fail to satisfy the Department's and the University's standards of ethics and intellectual integrity. According to the University's Standard of Conduct 200.010, conduct for which students are subject to sanctions include academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism or sabotage.

According to the Graduate School Student Handbook, sanctions for graduate students are always stiffer than for undergraduate students. Students who are charged are given due process. That means that they have the right to know about the charge and give their side of the story. If the investigation finds that the student is guilty of academic dishonesty, administrators write a formal disciplinary letter stating the sanction. Included in the disciplinary letter is a separate sheet on which students who are given sanctions can agree to them or not. If they appeal, they face a hearing committee. They can also appeal the committee's decision to the Chancellor.

X. GRADE GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL POLICY

The Department of Political Science follows the University's Grade Appeal policy as stated in the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin*. In cases of course grade disputes between students taking graduate political science courses and their instructors, graduate students are expected to discuss the grade with the instructor and request that the instructor review the grade. Every effort should be made to resolve the grade dispute without further intervention. The instructor is free to change the grade or not as is appropriate. If the grade dispute is not resolved informally, a student may initiate a formal grade grievance procedure within thirty working days of the start of the first regular semester (fall or spring) following the semester for which the grade was given, or thirty days after the assignment of the grade (whichever is later) (see the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin* for the grade appeal procedure).

XI. DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS POLICY

The graduate program's administrative assistant maintains an academic file on each student in the Master's program. Academic files contain the records of M.A. students' application materials, academic progress in the program, grades, courses, student evaluations, documentation pertaining to the formation of thesis committees and other relevant information. M.A. students should add their curriculum vitae (or resumé) to their files that faculty may use in writing letters of recommendation for them. Master's students have a right to see the material placed in their own academic files *except* for letters of recommendation or other information where the student waived their right to review the material. In order to review one's academic file, the student should submit a request to the Graduate Program's administrative assistant.

XII. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on behalf of graduate students, faculty and staff. According to the University's Standard of Conduct, 200.010, graduate students are expected to behave in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution. Issues of disruptive graduate student conduct are dealt with according to the rules and procedures under the Student Conduct Code, 200.020(C). The University can take appropriate action against students for conduct on or off campus in order to protect the physical safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors. See the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin* for details.

Master's students should communicate with their advisor (thesis chair) on a regular basis in order to inform them of their progress. Master's students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies about their concerns or problems they might be encountering in the M.A. program. At times, conflicts may arise between Master's students, faculty and advisors. If the student is unable to solve the conflict with the faculty member, the student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies regarding the problem. If the matter cannot be resolved informally by the Graduate Director, the Graduate Director will make a formal recommendation to the student. If the student disagrees with the Graduate Director's recommendation, then the student has a right to appeal to the Graduate Dean within five days after receiving the Graduate Director's recommendation.

Conflicts between graduate students are handled informally by the Graduate Director. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to work out solutions to their problem on their own before they develop into an intractable situation. If the conflict persists, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the Student Conduct Regulations, Section 200.010 and Section 200.020.