

# POLITICAL SCIENCE, PHD

The PhD program in Political Science is designed to train scholars for careers in college and university teaching, research, and public service. While emphasizing the scientific study of politics, the department recognizes and incorporates a range of contemporary approaches to the acquisition of knowledge about politics. In this spirit, the PhD program maintains a broad-based orientation to the discipline, which enables students to make intelligent choices about those lines of inquiry most suitable to careers and intellectual concerns. PhD students are an integral part of the learning and teaching experience in our department. They conduct research, teach courses and work closely with various faculty members and students throughout the department.

The greatest strength of our PhD program is its faculty, who are internationally recognized leaders in their fields. They serve as editors at major academic journals in the discipline and publish actively.

PhD students at UWM collaborate closely with faculty members on research and teaching. Coauthorship with faculty members is viewed as a natural and important part of PhD training.

Our PhD program is distinguished by its:

- **Low student-to-faculty ratio**(most graduate seminars have fewer than 10 students), which allows for close collaboration with faculty
- **Research active faculty**,who work closely with graduate students
- **Rigorous training in quantitative methodology**,which prepares students both for careers in research and analysis

The PhD program is for applicants desiring to be trained as independent, original scholars and researchers. Most PhD graduates seek faculty positions at colleges or universities and our department has a strong record of placing candidates in such jobs. Those students who do not seek academic careers are also well served by the high-level analytic training that the program provides. The most important skill that PhD students acquire is the ability to think rigorously. This, combined with our department's emphasis on research design and quantitative methodology, leaves students well-prepared for careers in data science, policy analysis, and government service.

## Admission Requirements

### Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/>) for specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (<https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>).

### Admission

An applicant must meet Graduate School requirements (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/admission/>) plus these departmental requirements to be considered for admission to the program:

1. Evidence of a high standard of achievement in bachelors or previous graduate work.

2. Three letters of recommendation from people familiar with the applicant's scholastic ability and achievements.
3. Personal statement of research interests and how UWM's Political Science Department will help you meet your career and educational goals.
4. Writing sample.

Submission of GRE scores is encouraged (official or unofficial), but not required.

## Credits and Courses

Minimum degree requirement is 54 graduate credits beyond the bachelor's degree, 27 of which must be earned in residence at UWM at the doctoral level.

### Distribution Requirement

To ensure broad exposure to the discipline, students must take a minimum of three courses outside of their prelim fields, at least two of which must be in a single field. Courses used to satisfy this requirement must be taken from the departmental offerings in the four substantive fields described below. Courses that bridge two or more fields of study cannot be used to satisfy this requirement if one of those fields falls within a student's prelim areas.

All courses taken to satisfy the distribution requirement must be political science courses numbered 700 or above.

### Core Research Requirements

Attainment of the PhD denotes a high level of competence in research skills relevant to the discipline of political science. Thus, all students must complete the core departmental research seminars. Since skills learned in these courses are important elements in dealing successfully with subject matter presented in other seminars, students should enroll in these seminars immediately upon entering the graduate program.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Research Methodology</b>		<b>12</b>
POL SCI 700	Scope and Methods of Political Science	
POL SCI 701	Techniques of Political Science Research	
POL SCI 702	Advanced Techniques of Political Science Research	
POL SCI 935	Seminar in Advanced Political Science Methodology <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Courses in two prelim fields</b>		<b>32</b>
<b>Distribution Requirement</b>		<b>9</b>
Minimum three courses outside prelim fields (At least two in a single field)		
POL SCI 990	Research and Thesis	1-3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>54-56</b>

<sup>1</sup> Students using a course from outside the Department of Political Science to satisfy this requirement may enroll on a "Credit/No Credit" basis, where the grade of "Credit" demonstrates satisfactory completion of the requirement. Upon successful petition to the departmental Graduate Committee, a student may gain exemption from this requirement, based on coursework completed in the five years prior to entering the graduate program. Students who receive this exemption

must still complete at least 27 credits in residence. Credits earned to meet the research requirement may count toward the 54 credits of work required for the PhD if they carry graduate credit and are taken for a grade.

In some cases, competence in foreign language skills is necessary for significant disciplinary research. Students may fulfill the research requirements beyond the above seminars through demonstration of a reading knowledge of one foreign language. Competence is established through examination, by an appropriate UWM language department. The student must perform at a level equivalent to six semesters of college-level work in the language.

## Additional Requirements

### Major Professor as Advisor

The student must have a major professor to advise and supervise the student's studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. The incoming student is advised by the Director of Graduate Studies; as that student develops specialized interests within the discipline, the student selects a major professor from within that area of specialization.

### Areas of Concentration

In consultation with the major professor students plan a program of studies through which a high level of competence is gained in two substantive fields (hereafter referred to as "major" or "prelim" fields). The department offers four fields of study:

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory

Competence in these fields is demonstrated by a written and oral preliminary examination. In addition to the fields listed above, students may petition the graduate committee to be examined in an alternative field. This must be a coherent field that is not covered by one of the existing prelim areas.

### Evaluation of Student Progress

The Department annually evaluates the progress of each student, in order to identify areas of strength and weakness as an aid to the student and the student's major professor in planning the program of study. This evaluation is also used to determine whether or not the student should be encouraged to pursue further graduate work.

### Residence

The student must meet minimum Graduate School residence requirements.

### Doctoral Preliminary Examination

The student must pass a doctoral written and oral preliminary examination covering both of their fields of study. The preliminary exam is taken during the semester following the completion of coursework. The dissertation prospectus is also defended during the preliminary examination.

### Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus is a detailed proposal laying out the student's plan for conducting and completing their dissertation research. The prospectus ensures a smooth transition between the preliminary

exam and the dissertation stages. Students typically identify a major advisor in their second or third year and begin working with their advisor on the development of a dissertation plan. The dissertation prospectus must be written during the last semester of coursework and will be defended before the student's dissertation committee at the end of the following semester as part of the preliminary examination.

### Dissertation

The candidate, working under the supervision of the major professor and the candidate's dissertation committee, must write an acceptable dissertation. The dissertation is a major work of publication-quality research. The purpose of the doctoral dissertation in political science is to provide the student with an opportunity to (1) investigate a problem in greater detail than has been possible at any previous point in their graduate career, (2) demonstrate their ability to perform original research, and (3) transmit the written findings and conclusions to others. Guidelines for formatting of the dissertation manuscript are available from the Graduate School.

### Dissertation Defense

The candidate must, as a final step toward the degree, pass an oral examination in defense of the dissertation. The candidate who does not successfully defend a thesis within five years of admission to candidacy may be required to take another comprehensive preliminary examination and be readmitted to candidacy.

### Time Limit

All degree requirements must be completed within ten years from the date of initial enrollment in the doctoral program.

## Political Science PhD Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from the Political Science PhD program will be able to:

- Synthesize and critique leading theories in at least two of the traditional subfields of political science (American politics, comparative politics, political theory, and international relations).
- Develop original, logically coherent arguments to explain political phenomena.
- Craft cutting-edge research designs that are capable of answering key questions in the social sciences.
- Master and apply the latest quantitative (statistical) methodologies to evaluate a research question.
- Develop effective oral presentation skills and use those skills to present one's research at professional conferences, symposia and lectures.
- Compose clear and coherent written texts that describe a research problem, postulate a theory, and examine that theory with evidence.