

# POLITICAL SCIENCE MA

## More Information

### Advising Requirement

Advising is mandatory for this program. Consult your department advisor or program coordinator for information.

The primary mission of the political science MA program is to provide high-quality instruction and training representing the breadth and depth of knowledge in the field to prepare our graduates for a wide variety of options after completing the Master of Arts in Political Science. We offer a traditional approach to the MA to serve the diverse needs of our students and prepare them for a number of scholarly and professional pursuits. Some of our graduates go on to pursue a PhD or law degree, others teach at community colleges or high schools, and others seek careers in government, politics (e.g., as lobbyists, policy analysts, campaign consultants), and in business and the nonprofit sector. We also encourage political science MA students to integrate applied experiences, such as teaching and internships, into their program of study.

## Requirements for the MA in Political Science

Completion of all requirements as established by the department MA Committee, the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice, the graduate advisory committee, and Graduate Studies, to include:

1. Completion of an approved program consisting of 30 units of 400/500/600-level courses as follows:
  - a. At least 24 units in the discipline of political science.
  - b. At least 18 units required for the degree in 600-level courses in political science or in a social science approved by the student's graduate advisory committee and the Graduate Coordinator.
  - c. At the discretion of the academic program, a maximum of six semester units of special session credit earned in non-matriculated status combined with all transfer coursework may be counted toward the degree requirements. This applies to special session credit earned through Open University, or in courses offered for academic credit through Regional and Continuing Education. Correspondence courses and UC Extension coursework are not acceptable for transfer.
  - d. Not more than three units of internship course work and only if the student has a GPA of 3.2 or higher and the student's graduate committee or the Graduate Coordinator agrees that the internship is a meaningful educational experience.
  - e. Not more than nine units of POLS 697 and POLS 699T; not more than six units of POLS 699T.
  - f. Students take five course seminars and one American Political Institution course. The remaining courses consist of electives, internship, independent study, and thesis units.
  - g. For students who select the Thesis Plan, the final three elective units are fulfilled by taking three units of POLS 699T. For students who select the Comprehensive Exam Plan, the final three units are fulfilled by taking an elective course chosen from the approved courses.
2. Completion and final approval of one of the following, as specified by the student's graduate advisory committee.

#### a. Thesis Plan

The candidate shall submit an acceptable thesis based upon research developed by the student and agreed to by the student's graduate advisory committee.

- i. Thesis Proposal: a proposal (prospectus or detailed outline) of the thesis must be submitted to and approved by the graduate advisory committee before the student begins the thesis. The proposal includes at least a statement of the problem or hypothesis, a relevant review of the literature, the basic research methods to be employed, justification of the study's value, and estimated time of completion. The proposal is a formal document that must have appropriate attention given matters of format, documentation, and quality of writing.
- ii. Registration in POLS 699T: the student should register for POLS 699T no earlier than the second semester in the program and in accordance with his/her thesis plan. However, it is advisable that the student complete most of the program course work before registering for POLS 699T.
- iii. Approval of Thesis: the thesis shall be approved by all members of the graduate advisory committee.
- iv. Oral Defense: a required oral defense of the thesis shall be conducted by the candidate's graduate advisory committee. Interested faculty members may attend. The oral defense is generally limited to matters within the scope of the thesis. The candidate may repeat the defense one time if failed by the committee on the first attempt. The time and date of the defense must be noted in print and circulated to the Office of Graduate Studies at least one week prior to the date.

#### b. Comprehensive Examination Plan

- i. Written Comprehensive Examination: the candidate shall complete and pass a written examination.
- ii. Preparing for Comprehensive Exam: students are given lists of suggested readings for various fields of study in political science. Candidates are expected to have a broad understanding of their fields of study and to cite the relevant and important scholarly literature in responding to comprehensive exam questions.
- iii. Grading: the examination shall be graded as pass or fail.
- iv. Repeating Written Examination: the candidate may repeat the examination once.

3. Approval by the departmental graduate committee and the Graduate Council on behalf of the faculty of the University.

| Course                                | Title                              | Units |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Core Requirements</b>              |                                    |       |
| POLS 611                              | Seminar in Comparative Government  | 3     |
| POLS 621                              | Seminar in American Politics       | 3     |
| POLS 631                              | Research Methods                   | 3     |
| POLS 632                              | Seminar in Political Theory        | 3     |
| POLS 641                              | Seminar in International Relations | 3     |
| <b>American Political Institution</b> |                                    |       |
| Select one of the following:          |                                    |       |
| POLS 601                              | State and Local Government         |       |
| POLS 651                              | Seminar in Judicial Politics       |       |
| POLS 672                              | The U.S. Presidency                |       |
| POLS 673                              | The U.S. Congress                  |       |
| <b>Elective Courses</b>               |                                    |       |

|  |  |           |
|--|--|-----------|
| Select 12 units from the following: <sup>1</sup> |  | 12        |
| POLS 414   | Politics of Terrorism                                      |           |
| POLS 449   | Issues in Comparative Politics and International Relations |           |
| POLS 498   | Special Topics   |           |
| POLS 601   | State and Local Government <sup>2</sup>                    |           |
| POLS 602   | Public Administration and Democracy                        |           |
| POLS 624   | Seminar on Public Opinion                                  |           |
| POLS 626   | Interest Groups, Protest Movements, and Political Change   |           |
| POLS 627   | U.S. Campaigns and Elections                               |           |
| POLS 651   | Seminar in Judicial Politics <sup>2</sup>                  |           |
| POLS 653   | Environmental Policy and the Law                           |           |
| POLS 660A  | Public Management  |           |
| POLS 660B  | Public Personnel Administration                            |           |
| POLS 660C  | Public Budgeting and Finance                               |           |
| POLS 662   | Organizational Theory in the Public Sector                 |           |
| POLS 664   | Public Policy in Health and Human Services                 |           |
| POLS 668   | Public Policy Formation                                    |           |
| POLS 669   | Public and Non-Profit Program Evaluation                   |           |
| POLS 671   | Topics in American Politics                                |           |
| POLS 672   | The U.S. Presidency <sup>2</sup>                           |           |
| POLS 673   | The U.S. Congress <sup>2</sup>                             |           |
| POLS 689   | Intern/Fieldwork Public Admin                              |           |
| POLS 697   | Independent Study  |           |
| POLS 699T  | Master's Thesis  |           |
| <b>Total Units</b>                               |  | <b>30</b> |

<sup>1</sup> Thesis students take three units of POLS 699T

<sup>2</sup> Course may be used to satisfy this requirement if not used above.

## Graduate Grading Requirements

All courses in the major (with the exceptions of Independent Study - 697, Comprehensive Examination - 696, Master's Project - 699P, and Master's Thesis - 699T) must be taken for a letter grade, except those courses specified by the department as ABC/No Credit (400/500-level courses), AB/No Credit (600-level courses), or Credit/No Credit grading only. A maximum of 10 units combined of ABC/No Credit, AB/No Credit, and Credit/No Credit grades may be used on the approved program (including 697, 696, 699P, 699T and courses outside the major). While grading standards are determined by individual programs and instructors, it is also the policy of the University that unsatisfactory grades may be given when work fails to reflect achievement of the high standards, including high writing standards, expected of students pursuing graduate study.

Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average in each of the following three categories: all course work taken at any accredited institution subsequent to admission to the master's program; all course work taken at CSU, Chico subsequent to admission to the program; and all courses on the approved master's degree program.

In addition, no course in which a grade lower than B- is earned will be counted toward the fulfillment of any graduate degree requirements.

Continuous enrollment is required. At the discretion of the academic program, a maximum of six semester units of special session credit earned in non-matriculated status combined with all transfer coursework

may be counted toward the degree requirements. This applies to special session credit earned through Open University, or in courses offered for academic credit through Regional and Continuing Education.

## Graduate Time Limit

All requirements for the degree are to be completed within five years of the end of the semester of enrollment in the oldest course applied toward the degree. See Master's Degree Requirements (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/graduate-requirements/masters-degree-requirements/>) for complete details on general degree requirements.

## Graduate Requirement in Writing Proficiency

All students must demonstrate competency in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. Political Science graduate students will demonstrate their writing competence through the first seminar in which they enroll. The instructor of that seminar will certify for the Graduate Coordinator that the student has met the requirement. Consult with the Graduate Coordinator for specifics.

## Prerequisites for Admission to Conditionally Classified Status

1. Satisfactory grade point average as specified in Graduate and Postbaccalaureate Admission Requirements (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/graduate-requirements/graduate-postbaccalaureate-admission-requirements/>).
2. Approval by the department and Graduate Studies.
3. An acceptable baccalaureate in Political or Social Science from an accredited institution, or an equivalent approved by Graduate Studies.
4. All new students enter as conditionally classified students. Conditionally classified students are required to make no grade lower than a B-, maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0, and finish all course work (no "Incomplete" or "Satisfactory Progress").

## Prerequisites for Admission to Classified Status

In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Completion of a minimum of nine units of graduate study as a conditionally classified student, including a graduate seminar.
2. Formation of a graduate advisory committee. This should be done as early as possible and in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. For students who select the Thesis Plan, at least two of the faculty members on the committee, including the chair, must be chosen from the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice. The Thesis Committee and the Graduate Coordinator are responsible for all guidance of the student through completion of the degree. For students who select the Comprehensive Exam Plan, the Graduate Coordinator organizes the graduate advisory committee and is responsible for guidance of the student through completion of the degree.
3. Development of an approved master's degree program plan. The Graduate Coordinator works with the student in the development of the student's master's degree program plan. The plan must be approved by the graduate advisory committee, the Graduate Coordinator, and Graduate Studies.

## **Advancement to Candidacy**

In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Completion of at least 18 units of the student's master's degree program plan.
2. Graduate advisory committee approval of the student's thesis proposal or the intention to attempt the comprehensive exam.
3. A minimum grade point average of 3.0.