

POLITICAL SCIENCE, MA

The Master of Arts (MA) degree primarily serves students who seek a career in public service, or who intend to pursue a PhD degree at a later date, either at the University of Alabama or at another institution. Students in the MA program will take many of the same courses that PhD students take. MA students typically complete the degree in two years. The Department of Political Science offers two paths to the MA degree in Political Science, which are detailed in the Requirements tab. All students in the MA program are subject to the rules and conditions specified in this handbook and in the University's Graduate Catalog.

Admissions

The Political Science Department maintains a selective MA program and invites applications for consideration by the department's Graduate Studies Committee. Admissions to the M.A. program are only considered for the Fall semester. While funding for M.A. students is uncommon, applicants should apply by December 1 for full funding consideration. Otherwise, applications are due by February 15.

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

- 3 letters or recommendation
- A resume

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

Students will be expected to attain a satisfactory degree of knowledge and competence in two of the following fields of Political Science: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Public Policy & Administration, and Political Theory. Students choose a major field and minor field. They also choose between two study plans: Plan I (thesis process requirement) and Plan II (non-thesis process requirement). In either event, students pursuing the M.A. degree must also complete 6 semester hours of methodology courses (PSC 521 Research Design and PSC 522 Quantitative Methods) along with 3 semester hours of professionalization (PSC 500 and PSC 501; 1.5 credits each).

MA Curriculum (Plan I)	Hours
Required Courses	
Major field: 12 credit hours (4 courses)-core course required	
Minor: 6 credit hours (2 courses)-core course required	
Methods: 6 credit hours (2 courses)	
PSC 521 Research Design	3
PSC 522 Quant Methods PSC I	3
Elective: 3 credit hours (1 course)	
Professionalization: 3 credit hours (2 1.5-hour courses)	
PSC 500 Departmental Seminar I	1.5
PSC 501 Departmental Seminar II	1.5
Thesis: 6 credit hours (2 courses)	
PSC 599 Thesis Research	1-6
Total: 36 credit hours (13 courses)	

MA Curriculum (Plan II)	Hours
Required Courses	
Major field: 12 credit hours (4 courses)-core course required	

Minor: 6 credit hours (2 courses)-core course required

Methods: 6 credit hours (2 courses)		
PSC 521	Research Design	3
PSC 522	Quant Methods PSC I	3
Elective: 9 credit hours (3 courses)		
Professionalization: 3 credit hours (2 1.5-hour courses)		
PSC 500	Departmental Seminar I	1.5
PSC 501	Departmental Seminar II	1.5
Total: 36 credit hours (13 courses)		

Transfer Credit

M.A. students may request to transfer a maximum of 9 credit hours from another institution, subject to Departmental approval. Students must provide syllabi for all courses for which transfer credit is requested. Decisions on granting transfer credit will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the faculty member(s) teaching the most nearly equivalent UA course. In order to receive transfer credit, courses must be judged to have a workload and content comparable to departmental graduate courses. Core seminars in each field must be taken in residence.

Refer to the Graduate School [Master's degree requirements](#) page for more information.

Accelerated Master's Program

The Department of Political Science participates in UA's Accelerated Master's Program (AMP), which allows gifted and highly motivated Political Science and International Studies majors to obtain an MA degree while completing their Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. Students need to meet UA's residency requirement and have completed three-quarters of the hours required for the major by the start date of the program. Based on normal 3-hour courses, this means completion of 24 hours, or 8 courses for the BA in Political Science and 27 hours, or 9 courses for the BA in International Studies. International Studies majors applying to the MA program in Political Science must have completed a minimum of 9 PSC credit hours by the start date of the graduate program.

Refer to the Graduate School accelerated master's program page for more information.

Comprehensive Examination

The written comprehensive examination will cover the student's major field and will require integration of material across courses in the field. Students are eligible to take comprehensive exams no earlier than the last semester of their required coursework. Students with incompletes may not take comprehensive examinations.

Major field comprehensive examinations for the Fall semester will take place the third Tuesday of each September. Major field comprehensive examinations for the Spring semester will take place during the second half of March at a date to be determined by the Director of Graduate Studies each year. The Director of Graduate Studies solicits exam coordinators for each field. The exam coordinators will develop the comprehensive examination in consultation with relevant colleagues in the field.

Plan I

Students who choose Plan I will complete 36 credit hours of course work, 6 credit hours of PSC 599 Thesis Research, a thesis, and a final oral examination of the thesis. Plan I students will complete 12 credit hours in the major field, 6 credit hours in the minor, and 3 elective credit hours. In addition, students must complete PSC 521 Research Design and PSC 522 Quantitative Methods I, the PSC 500 and PSC 501 Professionalization Seminars, as well as the core seminar in their major field and minor field.

Plan II

Students who choose Plan II will complete 36 credit hours of course work and a written comprehensive examination in their major field. Students will complete 12 credit hours in the major field, 6 credit hours in the minor, and 9 elective hours. In addition, students must complete PSC 521 Research Design and PSC 522 Quantitative Methods I, the PSC 500 and PSC 501 Professionalization Seminars, as well as the core seminar in their major field and minor field.

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

MA students typically complete the degree in two years.

Refer to the Graduate School [Master's degree requirement](#) page for more information.

Student Progress Requirement

Students in the MA program will take many of the same courses that PhD students take and will be expected to conduct the same course work to qualify for course credits. Students are required to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies prior to registering for classes each semester.

Additional Academic Requirements

MA students are required to register for PSC 500 Departmental Seminar I in the Fall semester and PSC 501 Departmental Seminar II in the Spring semester. These courses are professional socialization seminars that are offered on a pass/fail basis for 1.5 credit each. These courses cover numerous topics such as effective teaching strategies; attending and participating in political science conferences; publishing your work in professional journals; the academic job market; and ethical issues facing instructors and researchers. These courses will meet approximately once each month, with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or a faculty member coordinating the discussion. In addition to the class meetings, students will also attend research presentations and job talks as part of the professionalization process.

Academic Misconduct Information

The Department is committed to creating and maintaining a pleasant and safe working environment for all of its faculty, staff, and students. We do not tolerate sexual harassment of any sort, and offenders will be reported to the proper University authorities.

Refer to the Graduate School [academic misconduct policy](#) for more information.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Refer to the Graduate School withdrawal and leave of absence policy for more information.

Academic Grievances Information

Refer to the Graduate School [academic grievance procedure](#) for more information.

Grades and Academic Standing

Refer to the Graduate School grades and academic standing for more information.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

Refer to the Graduate School student deadlines page for more information.

Application for Graduate Information

Refer to the Graduate School [Master's degree requirements](#) page for more information.