

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. Applications for the M.A. program are considered year-round.

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
- GRE score of 300 (verbal + quantitative) or greater for regular admission.

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 three 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 two minor fields. They also choose between two study plans: Plan I (thesis process requirement) and Plan II (non-thesis process requirement).

MA Curriculum (Plan I) Hours

Required Courses

Major field: 9 credit hours (4 courses)-core course required

1st Minor: 6 credit hours (2 courses)-core course required

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

Methods: 6 credit hours (2 courses)

PSC 521 Research Design

PSC 500 Departmental Seminar I

Thesis: 6 credit hours (2 courses)

PSC 599 Thesis Research

Total: 33 credit hours (11 courses)

MA Curriculum (Plan II) Hours

Required Courses

Major field: 12 credit hours (4 courses)-core course required

1st Minor: 6 credit hours (2 courses)-core course required

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

Methods: 6 credit hours (2 courses)

PSC 521 Research Design

PSC 522 Quant Methods PSC I

Elective: 3 credit hours (1 course)

Total: 33 credit hours (11 courses)

Transfer Credit

M.A. students may request to transfer a maximum of 12 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 in the AMP program may count up to 15 hours of graduate courses toward both the BA and the MA degree. Six hours of graduate PSC courses may be used to meet the BA major requirements; up to 9 additional PSC graduate hours may count as electives to meet the 120-hour requirement for the BA. Requirements to be considered for admission include an overall GPA of at least 3.75 and the completion of 90 hours or more by start date of the graduate program. 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. Comprehensive examinations are administered during the Fall and Spring semesters only. The Director of Graduate Studies determines the dates for Comprehensive Examinations and 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 27 credit hours of course work, 6 credit hours of PSC 599 Thesis Research, a written comprehensive examination in their major field, a thesis, and a final oral examination of the thesis. Plan I students will complete 9 credit hours in the major field, 6 credit hours in the first minor, and credit hours in the second minor. In addition, students must complete PSC 521 Research Design and

PSC 522 Quantitative Methods I as well as the core seminar in their major field and two minor fields.

Plan II

Students who choose Plan II will complete 33 credit hours of course work and a written comprehensive examination in their major field. Students will complete 12 credit hours in the major field, six credit hours in the first minor, and six credit hours in the second minor. In addition, students must complete PSC 521 Research Design and PSC 522 Quantitative Methods I as well as the core seminar in their major field and two minor fields.

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 .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.

Scholastic Requirements

Refer to the Graduate School [scholastic requirements](#) 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.