Political Science

Degrees Offered

- Master of Arts
- Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the Program

To give advanced training to students who desire to enter research or teaching fields relating to American politics, public policy (either U.S. domestic or international), comparative politics, and/or international politics, and to those seeking careers as policy analysts in government or the private sector.

The Master of Arts is designed to provide students with a broad knowledge of political science and the policy-making process. This includes the study of many over-arching factors shaping political thought, analysis, decision-making, and an examination of specific influences that shape public policies at the international, national, state, and local levels of government. Students choose classes from the fields of American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and public policy in addition to taking three classes in political methodology designed to ensure students possess expertise in how to conduct systematic quantitative research. Most graduates will take jobs in government or with private firms needing specialists in policy analysis; however, this degree also leaves students well-placed for further study of these issues in Ph.D. programs.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is designed for people planning careers as researchers and teachers in institutions of higher education or as policy analysts in government or the private sector. All students are expected to complete coursework that should include mastery of two of the four major subfields (the subfields include American politics, international politics, comparative politics, and public policy) and to pass general exams in two of them. The student’s coursework will provide them with a firm grounding in relevant literatures and prepare them to make their own contributions to the fields in which they specialize. Coursework is also available to train students as expert analysts who will leave the program with a comprehensive knowledge of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, as well as a thorough understanding of the dynamics of political institutions. The design of the program will ensure that our graduates are trained in research methodology and statistical techniques.

Faculty

The Department of Political Science has nineteen full-time faculty members. The major strengths of the graduate faculty consist of American politics (specialties include political institutions, political behavior, public opinion, and judicial politics), public policy (specialties include bureaucracy, law and society, and social welfare policies), international politics (specialties include U.S. foreign policy, comparative foreign policy, international political economy, and national security policy), comparative politics (specialties include comparative political institutions, elections systems, contentious politics, and cross-national political analysis), and research methods.

Research

Graduate students have opportunities to conduct research with political science faculty. Several members of the faculty regularly co-author papers with graduate students. Some graduate students have co-authored articles and book chapters with faculty and have worked on externally-funded grant projects.

Financial Aid

The department has a number of Graduate Assistant (GA) positions. All new applicants are considered for these positions. GA positions cover university tuition and provide a stipend. In addition, the Department provides waiver hours for graduate students. These waiver hours provide for payment of all, or a portion, of university tuition. The Department awards GA positions and waiver hours on a competitive basis because there are fewer GA positions and fewer waiver hours than students who desire them. The Department considers applicants’ GRE scores, undergraduate and/or graduate GPAs, letters of recommendation, and so on when determining the merit of applicants. Although Ph.D. students receive priority for funding, outstanding MA candidates have received funding in the past. Some students in the program also find GA positions outside of the department. Students interested in financial assistance should apply directly to the Department of Political Science. Graduate assistants may enroll for no more than nine credit hours per semester (excluding colloquium).

FACULTY

CHAIR
• R. Scott Crichlow - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)

PROFESSORS
• Joe D. Hagan - Ph.D. (University of Kentucky)
  Barnett Professor, International Relations and World Politics, Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis
• Erik Herron - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
  Eberly Family Professor, Political Institutions, Elections, Post-Communist Europe and Eurasia
• Jeffrey S. Worsham - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin)
  Public Policy (Regulation, Social Welfare), Bureaucratic Politics and Public Administration

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS
• Erin Cassesse - Ph.D. (State University of New York, Stony Brook)
  American Politics and Political Behavior; Gender, Religion, and Public Opinion; Political Psychology, Research Methods
• R. Scott Crichlow - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)
  International Relations, Foreign Policy Decision-making, Middle East Politics
• Christina Fattore - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
  International Political Economy, International Organization, European Union Politics
• John Kilwein - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
  Associate Chair, Public Law, Judicial Politics, Public Policy, Public Administration
• Jason MacDonald - Ph.D. (The George Washington University)
  American Politics, Congress, Research Methods
• Philip Michelbach - Ph.D. (University of California)
  Political Theory, American Political Thought, German Political Thought, Comparative Democratic Theory
• Trisha Phillips - Ph.D. (Rice University)
  Social and Political Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Research Ethics

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS
• Shauna Fisher - Ph.D. (University of Washington)
  Judicial Politics, Law and Courts, Judicial Policy-Making
• William Franko - Ph.D. (University of Iowa)
  American Politics, State and Local Politics, Public Policy
• Simon Haeder - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin)
  American Politics, Public Policy, Health Politics
• Patrick Hickey - Ph.D. (University of Texas)
  American Political Institutions, Presidency
• Matthew Jacobsmeier - Ph.D. (University of Rochester)
  American Politics, Political Behavior, Public Opinion, Research Methods
• Jay Krehbiel - Ph.D. (Washington University)
  Comparative Politics, Judicial Politics, Comparative Political Institutions
• Mason Moseley - PhD (Vanderbilt University)
  Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics, Comparative Political Institutions
• Matthew Wilson - Penn State University
  Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics, Research Methodology

TEACHING ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS
• Clarissa Estep - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
  International Relations
• David Hauser - Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh)
  International Conflict, National Security Analysis

TEACHING ASSISTANT PROFESSORS
• Boris Barkanov - Ph.D. (University of California, Berkeley)
  Comparative Politics, International Relations

M.A. ADMISSION INFORMATION
Most applicants for the Master of Arts degree will have completed a B.A. in Political Science. However, students from other fields and disciplines are also encouraged to apply. Applicants should have an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better and should submit three letters of recommendation from faculty familiar with their work. All students wishing to be considered for departmental financial support during their first year in the program must also submit the results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE requirement will be waived for applicants not seeking departmental financial support who have an undergraduate or graduate GPA of at least 3.5 at the time of application.

In order to remain in good standing, students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative average and receive a 3.0 average in each semester for which they are enrolled. Students who do not maintain a 3.0 cumulative average will be placed on probation and will be suspended if they fail to regain a 3.0 cumulative average in their next nine hours of study. Successful completion of the degree entails completing 36 hours of Political Science courses, not
counting any hours earned for POLS 799. 9 of those hours must include completion of POLS 600, POLS 601, and POLS 602. All students must enroll in POLS 799 each semester in residence.

PH.D. ADMISSION INFORMATION

Admission to the Ph.D. program is open to students with either a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Students with degrees in political science, economics, public administration, sociology, history, psychology, engineering, social work, business, law, medicine, or journalism are encouraged to apply. Applicants will ideally have a grade point average of 3.5 or better. Some training in statistics and a strong background in written communication is desired. In addition, all applicants must submit the results of the Graduate Record Examination and at least three letters of recommendation from faculty familiar with the applicant’s work. Applicants from foreign countries must submit the official results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as well. Admission will be based on an overall assessment of the individual’s record.

Students must complete 42 hours of coursework. This should include 12 hours in each of two subfield specialties (students will work with their advisors to build an appropriate combination of classes to cover two of the following four subfields – American politics, public policy, comparative politics, and international relations), 12 hours of research methods courses, and 6 hours of Political Science electives. In addition to their coursework, students must also pass written comprehensive examinations in their two specialty subfields and complete and defend a dissertation. All coursework completed for the M.A. at West Virginia University also counts toward the Ph.D. Coursework from other institutions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

In order to remain in good standing, students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative average and receive a 3.0 average in each semester during which they are enrolled. Students are required to spend at least one year (two semesters) in residence. All graduate students must enroll in POLS 799 each semester in residence.

Master of Arts

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.

Students must register for POLS 799 each semester they are in residence.

- POLS 600 Introduction to Political Research: 3
- POLS 601 Quantitative Political Analysis: 3
- POLS 602 Advanced Quantitative Methods: 3

Political Science Electives (any 400, 500, 600, 700 level POLS course excluding POLS 799. A maximum of 12 hours of 400-level coursework and at least 24 hours of 500-level of higher coursework): 27

Total Hours: 36

Doctor of Philosophy

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.

Students must register for POLS 799 each semester they are in residence.

Select two from the following: 24

American Politics (12 hours)

- POLS 593 SPTP: Minority Political Research
- POLS 630 Seminar: American Politics and Policy
- POLS 691 Advanced Topics
- POLS 710 Judicial Politics, Policy and Law
- POLS 712 American Construction and Political Development
- POLS 715 The American Presidency
- POLS 791 ADTP: Public Opinion/Public Behavior
- POLS 791 Advanced Topics
- POLS 791 ADTP: Political Behavior

Comparative Politics (12 hours)

- POLS 493 Special Topics
- POLS 493 Special Topics
- POLS 493 SPTP: International Organizations
- POLS 550 Comparative Politics
- POLS 555 Comparative Public Policy
- POLS 559 Contentious Politics
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<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>ADTP: State in World Politics</td>
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<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
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<td>POLS 593</td>
<td>SPTP: Contentious Politics</td>
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<td>POLS 593</td>
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<td>POLS 691</td>
<td>ADTP: African Politics</td>
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<td>POLS 691</td>
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<td>POLS 691</td>
<td>ADTP: Western Dem Politics</td>
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**International Relations (12 hours)**

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<tr>
<td>POLS 560</td>
<td>International Theory and Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>ADTP: State in World Politics</td>
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<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>ADTP: International Conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 600</td>
<td>Introduction to Political Research</td>
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<td>POLS 665</td>
<td>Comparative Foreign Policy</td>
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<td>POLS 666</td>
<td>National Security Policy</td>
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<td>POLS 667</td>
<td>Foreign Policy Decision Making</td>
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**Public Policy (12 hours)**

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<tr>
<td>POLS 493</td>
<td>Special Topics</td>
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<td>POLS 493</td>
<td>SPTP: Minority Politics</td>
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<td>POLS 530</td>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
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<td>POLS 531</td>
<td>Economic Analysis of Politics</td>
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<td>POLS 536</td>
<td>Politics of Agenda Setting</td>
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<td>POLS 555</td>
<td>Comparative Public Policy</td>
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<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
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<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>ADTP: Research Ethics</td>
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<td>POLS 611</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Relations</td>
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<td>POLS 635</td>
<td>Seminar: Policy Evaluation</td>
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<td>POLS 638</td>
<td>Seminar: Policy Implementation</td>
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<td>POLS 691</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
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**Political Science electives (any 500, 600, 700 level POLS course excluding coursework used to satisfy field coursework requirement and POLS 797 and POLS 799)**

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<tr>
<td>POLS 600</td>
<td>Introduction to Political Research</td>
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<td>POLS 601</td>
<td>Quantitative Political Analysis</td>
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<td>POLS 602</td>
<td>Advanced Quantitative Methods</td>
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Select from one of the following: 3

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<td>POLS 593</td>
<td>SPTP: Qualitative Political Meth</td>
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<td>POLS 591</td>
<td>ADTP: International Conflict</td>
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<td>POLS 603</td>
<td>Advanced Quantitative Analysis</td>
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<td>POLS 670</td>
<td>Professional Seminar in Political Theory</td>
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<td>HIST 700</td>
<td>Historiography</td>
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<td>SOCA 511</td>
<td>Survey Research Methods</td>
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<td>SOCA 721</td>
<td>Qualitative Methods</td>
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<td>STAT 513</td>
<td>Design of Experiments</td>
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**Dissertation**

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<tr>
<td>POLS 797</td>
<td>Research</td>
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**Comprehensive Exam Field 1**

**Comprehensive Exam Field 2**

**Dissertation Prospectus**

**Dissertation**

**Dissertation Defense**

**Total Hours** 66
Major Learning Goals

POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. A command of basic substantive knowledge about the basic institutions, political actors, and relevant processes in state, national, and international political systems – in particular as they apply to the student’s particular area of emphasis.

2. A knowledge of major policy issues in state, national, and international affairs and an appreciation of the complexity reflective of the uncertainties, trade-offs, and institutional/bureaucratic context of problems confronting governments.

3. An ability to think critically about political phenomena in a way that applies alternative explanatory perspectives across the major theoretical schools of thought in the political science literature.

4. A demonstrated capability to carry out systematic empirical research in political science, i.e. articulate a theoretical question, construct a rigorous research design, and analyze data or cases using appropriate methodological approaches.

5. An appreciation of the policy implications of different theoretical approaches and, more generally, how they relate to the larger ethical issues facing the West Virginia, national, and international communities.