

Political Science

Degrees Offered

- Master of Arts
- Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the Program

The graduate program is designed to provide 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 program 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 from classes offered in 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 program 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 leads to mastery of two of the four available areas of emphasis -- American politics, comparative politics, international 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

CHAIR

- John Kilwein - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
Associate Professor, Public Law, Judicial Politics, Public Policy, Public Administration

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

- William Franko - Ph.D. (University of Iowa)

DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

- John C. Kilwein - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)

PROFESSORS

- Clarissa Estep - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
Director of International Studies Program
- Joe D. Hagan - Ph.D. (University of Kentucky)
Barnette 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
- Sam Workman - Ph.D. (University of Washington)
Director - Institute for Policy Research and Public Affairs, John D. "Jay" Rockefeller School of Policy and Politics

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

- R. Scott Crichlow - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)
International Relations, Foreign Policy Decision-making, Middle East Politics
- Vito D'Orazio - Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University)
Regular Graduate Faculty, Woodburn Associate Professor, International Relations, Data Sciences
- Christina Fattore - Ph.D. (Florida State University)
International Political Economy, International Organization, European Union Politics
- William Franko - Ph.D. (University of Iowa)
American Politics, State and Local Politics, Public Policy

- David Hauser - Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh)
International Conflict, National Security Analysis
- Matthew Jacobsmeier - Ph.D. (University of Rochester)
American Politics, Political Behavior, Public Opinion, Research Methods
- John C. Kilwein - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
Regular Graduate Faculty, 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
- Mason Moseley - Ph.D. (Vanderbilt University)
Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics, Comparative Political Institutions
- Trisha Phillips - Ph.D. (Rice University)
Social and Political Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Research Ethics

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- Samantha Godbey - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
Director of Debate
- Jonathan M. King - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
Regular Graduate Faculty, Judicial Politics
- Shaniqua Williams - Ph.D. (Auburn University)
Regular Graduate Faculty, Public Administration, State and Local Politics

PROFESSOR EMERITI

- Richard Brisbin - Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins University)
- Robert E. DiClerico - Ph.D. (Indiana University)
- Allan S. Hammock - Ph.D. (University of Virginia)
- Susan Hunter - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
- Sophia L. Peterson - Ph.D. (University of California, Los Angeles)
- James Whisker - Ph.D. (University of Maryland)
- Jeffrey S. Worsham - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin)

Admissions for 2026-2027

M.A. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

In addition to the university requirements for admission (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#classificationtext>), applicants to the master's program must have an overall undergraduate and/or graduate grade point average of 3.0 or better to be considered for admission as a regular graduate student. Applicants typically have completed a B.A. in Political Science, but students from other fields and disciplines are also encouraged to apply.

PH.D. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Admission to the doctoral program in Political Science is open to applicants with either a bachelor's or master's degree. In addition to the university requirements for admission (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#classificationtext>), applicants to the Ph.D. program must have an overall undergraduate and/or graduate grade point average of 3.0 or better to be considered for admission as a regular graduate student. Admission to the Ph.D. is competitive; on average, successful applicants typically have earned a 3.5 or better GPA. Applicants to the Ph.D. program typically have completed a degree in Political Science, but students from other fields and disciplines are also encouraged to apply. Some training in statistics and a strong background in written communication is desired.

Admission Requirements for both programs:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/>).
- Transcripts from all institutions attended.
- Three letters of recommendation from professors well#positioned to assess the applicant's potential for success in graduate school. A recommendation from a supervisor from the applicant's employment history who is well#positioned to discuss intellectual potential may be appropriate as well.
- A statement of purpose (200-500 words in length) that describes the applicant's intellectual and career goals and how the program (M.A. or Ph.D.) will help achieve those goals.

International Applicants:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/>).
- International applicants should view additional requirements here (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#internationaltext>) and here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/information-for/international-students/>).
- Language proficiency is required in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. See here (<https://elli.wvu.edu/testing-resources/english-proficiency-gtas/>).

Application Deadlines:

- The Political Science graduate programs admit for the Fall semester and consider applicants for that term on a rolling basis. Applicants for the spring semester are only considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Applicants who wish to be considered for graduate assistantships and/or tuition support should submit a complete application by January 15th.
- The department may review applications after the January 15th deadline, but applicants applying after this date may not receive full consideration for support.
- Exceptional Ph.D. applicants who apply by January 15th may be nominated by the Political Science program for competitive University Fellowships. Qualified applicants will be notified if they are nominated. More information on WVU fellowships can be found here (<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/finances/fellowships/>).

For more information please contact: pols.grad@mail.wvu.edu

Certain application requirements may be waived based on a preliminary review of an application by the program.

M.A. and Ph.D. Major Code: 1464

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

- Political Science, M.A.

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

- Political Science, Ph.D.

Degree Progress

All graduate students enrolled in at least one credit hour during the academic year must be provided with a written evaluation from their program following the end of each spring term. This requirement may be waived for students in good standing who are expected to graduate in spring or summer. Specific processes and timelines for each program's evaluation can be found in the graduate handbook. Annual evaluation may result in probation for students either not making adequate degree progress or failing to uphold professional standards.

Master's Benchmarks

- By the end of year 1, students should have completed core coursework.
- By the end of year 2, students should have completed all elective coursework to finish all degree requirements.

DOCTORAL BENCHMARKS

- By the end of semester 2, students should have selected a permanent faculty advisor.
- By the end of semester 5, students should have passed first candidacy exam.
- By the end of semester 6, students should have completed core coursework and passed second candidacy exam.
- By the end of semester 7, students should have defended their dissertation prospectus.
- By the end of semester 10, students should have completed, defended, and submitted their dissertation.

More information can be found in the Political Science Department Graduate Student Handbook (<https://politicalscience.wvu.edu/graduate/current-graduate-students/graduate-handbook/>).