Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science Program Handbook

Welcome

Mission Statement
The Department of Political Science offers a general Ph.D. degree with concentrations in American Politics (including public policy and public law), Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Beyond mastering the substantive content in these fields of study and developing their own research agendas, students are expected to develop a strong understanding of the tools and approaches central to the scientific study of politics. The program requires students to complete 60 credits beyond the Bachelor of Arts or 42 credits beyond the Master of Arts. The program seeks to prepare students for both academic and non-academic careers. The former includes academic positions at colleges and universities, and the latter includes employment with public, private, and non-profit organizations and institutions. It is expected that the students will complete the program in five to six years.

Purpose
The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or kendall.hartley@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty
A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the Graduate Faculty status web page.

Program Information
Doctor of Philosophy - Political Science
Contact Information
http://www.unlv.edu/politicalscience

Department Chair
John Tuman, Ph.D, WRI B225, john.tuman@unlv.edu

Graduate Coordinator
David Damore, Ph.D, WRI B213, david.damore@unlv.edu

Department Main Office
WRI B227, Phone: (702)895-3307, Fax: (702)895-1065
Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the graduate catalog.

Degree requirements

Students may take courses in American Politics (including public law and public policy), Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Completion of the program requires a minimum of 60 credits beyond the BA or 42 credits beyond the MA (in the latter case, the department will determine the distribution of the 42 credits, based on the student’s transcripts of prior work). In the former case, the 60 credits are to be distributed as follows:

a. Core curriculum (at least 18 credits)
   i. Methods in political science (six credits)
   ii. Research Tool: The research tool can be fulfilled with one of three options:
       a. Foreign Language: Students must demonstrate knowledge of the equivalent of two years of a single foreign language, through either an examination or 12 credits of college-level course work. Those credits would not count toward the required total. This requirement must be met prior to admission to candidacy. No grade below “B” will be accepted. The foreign language selected must be approved by the department as relevant for the student’s research.
       b. Quantitative Methods: With approval from the department, a student may demonstrate advanced quantitative methods necessary for his or her doctoral research.
       c. Qualitative Methods: With approval from the department, a student may demonstrate advanced qualitative methods necessary for his or her doctoral research.
   iii. Proseminars (12 credits): American Politics (including public law and public policy), Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory.

b. Major fields (18 credits, not including proseminars): students select two of the four fields as their major fields of study

c. Electives:
   i. A maximum of six credits outside the department, which must be at the 700-level.
   ii. A maximum of six credits of independent study addressing a topic of interest to students that is not covered by other courses in the program and for which students are able to find a professor willing to oversee their efforts. Specifically, students and the sponsoring faculty member are responsible for drawing up a schedule of reading and writing assignments and list them on the Graduate Independent Study form (available from the department’s web site). Independent studies can be taken for one, two, or three credits; the amount of work for a three-credit independent study should be the same as that for a graduate seminar (approximately six books read and thirty pages written), with the amount of work for fewer credits reduced proportionately. The professor determines the number and length of writing assignments.

d. Dissertation (12 credits; more credits may be taken, but only 12 units will count toward degree)

GPA Requirement

Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for all course work. No course in which a student makes a grade below B will count toward the degree. The only exceptions to this are foreign language courses, in which no grade below B- will satisfy the requirement.

Advisory Committee Guidelines

An Advisory Committee consisting of three faculty members from the department and one faculty representative of the Graduate College (until students have formed their Advisory Committee, the Graduate Coordinator acts as students’ temporary advisor). One of the three departmental members serves as chair and, from that point, as the primary advisor. The chair of the Advisory Committee should be a faculty member from one of the student’s major fields.

With the Advisory Committee’s approval and that of the Graduate Coordinator, students establish a program
of study for their remaining credits.

**Degree Program Benchmarks**

**Comprehensive Written and Oral Examinations**

An important aspect of earning a doctoral degree is demonstrating depth and breadth of knowledge of content and methods. To this end, the department administers comprehensive examinations. Comprehensive examinations are designed to assess competency in formulating cogent answers to complex questions in students’ declared fields of expertise. Only after this competency is demonstrated, can students move on to the more specialized research associated with the completion of a dissertation.

After completion of all required coursework, a student needs to inform the graduate coordinator that he or she intends to take comprehensive examinations. The written component includes an exam in each major field that is administered simultaneously, generally during the fourth week of the semester.

To prepare for the two field exams, a student is expected to consult with his or her graduate committee chair and faculty members serving on the exam committees, as well as review past syllabi for courses in the exam fields. Unofficial reading lists may be available from faculty members. Note that the field exams may include material not listed on past syllabi and reading lists. Previous field exams can be obtained from the graduate coordinator.

Generally speaking, examinations cover theoretical, methodological and substantive debates. Preparation should begin at least 6 months prior to the examination date. The field exams are take-home and open book. All sources must be fully cited. Student should anticipate that each field exam will be about 8,000 to 12,000 words in length, excluding endnotes, figures, and references. The answers written by students have to be original and directly answer the questions being asked on the exam. Therefore, students are prohibited from using previously written material, in part or in whole, to answer exam questions.

About a week after completion, students will receive a grade for each field exam and each response within each field exam. The possible grades are: pass with distinction, pass, or fail. To pass a field exam, a student must pass all questions on the exam.

If a student fails a portion of an exam, and the field committee judges the failed portion of the exam to be close to a passing exam question, then the field committee has the option to invite the student to rewrite the failed portion of the exam. Such an invitation is solely at the discretion of the examination committee. An invitation to rewrite is considered part of the same, discrete, examination process and not a second attempt. If a student fails an entire exam or the examination committee does not invite him or her to rewrite a failed part of the exam, the entire field exam will have to be retaken during a future semester. Students can take each field exam twice. Failing a field exam twice results in separation from the program. Another part of the comprehensive examination is an oral defense of the dissertation prospectus. During the semester a student plans to take the written exam, he or she should consult with his or her dissertation committee chair regarding the preparation of the dissertation prospectus and the scheduling of its defense. Note that the defense does not have to take place during the same semester as the written comprehensive examination. The defense can only occur if a student has passed their field exams. In consultation with their advisor and other relevant faculty members, students select an appropriate topic from which a specific research question of theoretical import can be derived. After conducting preliminary research, students submit a written prospectus, outlining the research question, the methods used to treat the research, the organization of the dissertation project, and the significance of the study to the discipline of political science. Once students have successfully written their prospectus, they need to file the Prospectus Approval Form with the Graduate College.

In order to apply for candidacy (i.e., ABD status) a student needs to complete his or her coursework, pass their field examinations, successfully defend his or her dissertation prospectus, complete the research tool requirement, and successfully defend the prospectus. After doing so, students are then able to enroll for dissertation credits.

**Dissertation**

After the dissertation research is under way, each member of the Advisory Committee reads the dissertation
and may require revisions. In writing the dissertation, students should follow the Guide to Preparing and Submitting a Thesis or Dissertation (available on the Graduate College's Web site); as noted above, the department has no formatting or stylistic requirements of its own, but the Advisory Committee may have such requirements. Twice a year the Graduate College holds a seminar to explain its requirements for writing a thesis/dissertation. Students are strongly encouraged to attend one of those seminars.

The dissertation must be unanimously approved by the Advisory Committee. After the dissertation has been approved, an oral defense of the thesis is held. Students are responsible for arranging a location, date, and time at which all members of the student's committee may attend. The committee may require students to make substantive or stylistic revisions, or both, to the dissertation.

When students have successfully defended the dissertation, made any necessary further revisions, had those revisions approved by the Advisory Committee, and submitted final copies to the Graduate College, students are required to give the department one copy of the dissertation, bound in black cover.

**Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines**

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the graduate catalog.

The Department of Political Science has high expectations of its students, among which are adherence to standards of integrity. Students are expected to do their own work, oral and written, honestly. To this end, students should be familiar with the statement on the subject in the Graduate Catalog.

UNLV also requires all members of the university community to be familiar with the honor code and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. Students are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. UNLV will neither protect nor defend students nor assume any responsibility for violations of fair use laws. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, visit the UNLV copyright Web page. [https://www.unlv.edu/provost/copypright](https://www.unlv.edu/provost/copypright)

One aspect of integrity is providing adequate citations in written work. The department does not have one required format for citations, although professors may impose such a requirement in their courses. If the professor does not do so, students should use a method specified in a style book (e.g., Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*) or make use of the *Style Manual for Political Science*, which is available from the American Political Science Association.

**Annual Review Procedures**

Each spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Annual Review survey. This survey will be sent by the Graduate College to the student's Rebelmail account. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress while setting goals for the year ahead.

**Additional Program Information**

**Graduate Assistantships**

The information here supplements that in the Graduate Assistant Handbook (available on the Graduate College's Web site).

The number of assistantships offered by the department may vary from year to year. The number of vacancies varies from semester to semester. Selection of recipients is made by an ad hoc committee of departmental faculty. Contracts for Graduate Assistants (GAs) begin at the beginning of the week before instruction begins in a semester and end at the end of the final examination period.

Assignments held by Graduate Assistants vary from semester to semester. Assignments are normally made in the week before the contract for the semester begins. Depending upon the faculty member to whom graduate assistants are assigned, they will be either assisting faculty with teaching or research or both. Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis and to maintain an assistantship students must remain in good standing (e.g., maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average and make continuous progress toward their...
Forms and Deadlines
All of the forms listed below are available on the Graduate College’s or the Department of Political Science’s Web sites. For an up-to-date list of deadlines, see the Graduate College’s Web site.

1. Appointment of Advisory Committee.
2. Proposed Doctoral Degree Program, Parts 1 and 2 (on departments website) — after completing course work and before taking the comprehensive examinations. Any change in the proposed degree program must be submitted to the Graduate College on a Change in Proposed Degree Program Form.
3. Prospectus Approval — before enrolling for dissertation credits.
4. Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy — along with the Prospectus Approval.
5. Application for Graduation — early in the final semester of work on the dissertation.
6. Culminating Experience Results — after successfully defending the dissertation.

University Resources
Academic Success Center The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete their studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

Alumni Association
With an alumni base 90,000 strong, the UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office Located in the UNLV Registrar’s Office, the commencement office is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College.

Office of Diversity Initiatives
The vision of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and support for UNLV’s diversity mission: to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment. This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)
The DRC is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Office of International Student and Scholars
International Students and Scholars (ISS) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.
Jean Nidetch Women’s Center
The Jean Nidetch Women’s Center is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women’s Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

UNLV Libraries
UNLV Libraries has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)
The Graduate & Professional Student Association serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

Office of Student Conduct
The Office of Student Conduct is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the UNLV Student Code of Conduct by:
- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Office of Veteran Services
The UNLV Office of Veteran Services is staffed with veterans and GI Bill-experienced staff to assist more than 1,000 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office
The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center
This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the Online Writing Lab (OWL) page.

University Policies and Procedures
Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:
- Academic Integrity
- Activation for Military Service
- Change of Address
- FERPA/Privacy Rights
- Health Insurance - Mandatory
- Jeanne Clery Campus Safety and Security Report
- Proof of Immunization
To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the Graduate Catalog:

- Academic Calendar
- Academic Policies
- Admission and Registration Information
- Degree Progression Policies & Procedures

In addition, the Graduate College website contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

**Handbook Information**