

STUDENT HANDBOOK: GRADUATE PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

College of Arts & Sciences

University of Louisville

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Table of Contents

- I. General information and faculty listing**
- II. Academic program for the M.A.**
 - a. Fields of study
 - b. Core courses
 - c. Requirements for the thesis option
 - d. Requirements for the non-thesis/directed research option
 - e. Accelerated Masters Program
 - f. M.A./J.D. Dual Degree with Brandeis School of Law
- III. Administrative information**
 - a. Admission
 - b. Non-degree status
 - c. Academic advising and orientations
 - d. Early registration
 - e. Grading system
 - f. Academic standing
 - g. Plagiarism, cheating, and use of AI tools
 - h. Program duration, time limits
 - i. Master's candidacy
 - j. Application for degrees
 - k. Email accounts
- IV. Other important information**
 - a. Financial assistance
 - b. Student organizations
 - c. Professional development
 - d. Graduate student honors
 - e. Parental/family/medical leave
 - f. Sexual harassment policy

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Campus Location and Telephone:	Ford Hall, Room 205; 502-852-6831
Website:	www.louisville.edu/politicalscience
Office Hours:	8:30 am – 5:00 pm (fall and spring semester) 8:30 am – 4:30 pm (summer)
Department Chair:	Dr. Tricia Gray (tricia.gray@louisville.edu)
Director of Graduate Studies:	Dr. Laura Moyer (laura.moyer@louisville.edu)

B. PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

The graduate program in the Department of Political Science is governed by a committee selected from among the Department's graduate faculty and appointed by the Department Chair. The Director of Graduate Studies, also appointed by the Chair, serves as the chair of the committee.

The policies outlined below reflect standards set by the Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences (the unit to which the Political Science Department belongs).

C. POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY

The Department of Political Science has a longstanding reputation for outstanding teaching and research. Faculty in the Department have won many teaching awards from the College, University, and the profession, and are regularly recognized by students each year as "Faculty Favorites." Coursework emphasizes both academic and applied skills that prepare students for a range of occupations, as well as doctoral study.

The Department has distinguished itself on the research front as well, with faculty receiving fellowships from prestigious sources like Fulbright, the Ford Foundation, and the Council on Foreign Relations, grants from the National Science Foundation, and major research awards. Individual faculty members are interviewed regularly by the national press about their research, and the department frequently hosts public panels that feature our faculty alongside world-renowned experts. The Department is also home to the Center for Asian Democracy, which is a hub for research and public engagement.

D. FACULTY LISTING: See [Department website](#) for phone, email, and office information.

David Buckley

Paul Weber Endowed Chair in Politics, Science, and Religion

Director of the Center for Asian Democracy

Ph.D., Georgetown University

Associate Professor

Religion and Democracy, Comparative Politics, Survey and Experimental Research

Julie Bunck

Honors Advisor

Ph.D., University of Virginia

Professor

Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics, International Relations

Anne Caldwell

Ph.D., University of Notre Dame

Associate Professor

Queer Theory, Feminist Theory, LGBTQ Politics, Contemporary Political Theory

Anirvan Chowdhury

Endowed Chair in Asian Democracy

Ph.D., University of California-Berkeley

Assistant Professor

Comparative Politics; Gender, Religion, and Political Parties; South Asian Politics

Dewey Clayton

Ph.D., University of Missouri

Professor

American Politics, African-American Politics

Adam Enders

Ph.D., Michigan State University

Associate Professor

American Politics, Public Opinion, Political Psychology, Quantitative Methods

Jasmine Farrier

Ph.D., University of Texas

Professor

American Political Development, Presidency and Congress

Michael Fowler

J.D., Harvard University

Professor

International Law, International Organizations, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

Kristopher Grady**Undergraduate Advisor**

Ph.D., Michigan State University

Associate Professor, Term

International Relations

Tricia Gray**Department Chair**

Ph.D., Miami University

Associate Professor

Latin American Politics, International Relations, Gender and Politics

Shiping Hua**Director, Asian Studies Program**

Ph.D., University of Hawaii

Professor

Comparative Politics, East Asia

David Imbroscio**Metro Louisville Internship Director**

Ph.D., University of Maryland

Professor

Urban Politics, Political Economy

Siddhant Issar

Ph.D., University of Massachusetts

Assistant Professor

Race and Political Theory, Contemporary Political Theory

Cathryn Johnson

Ph.D., Indiana University

Assistant Professor

Comparative Politics, African Politics, Gender and Politics, Qualitative Methods

Melissa Merry

Ph.D., University of Washington

Professor

Public Policy, Environmental Policy, Political Communication, Interest Groups

Laura Moyer**Director of Graduate Studies**

Ph.D., University of Georgia

Professor

Law and Courts, Gender, Race, and American Politics, Quantitative Methods

Rodger Payne

Ph.D., University of Maryland

Professor

International Relations, Security, Environmental Politics

Sherri Wallace

Associate Dean for International Engagement and Equity Programs

Ph.D., Cornell University

Professor

African American Politics, Urban Politics

Charles Ziegler

Ph.D., University of Illinois

Professor

Comparative Politics, Foreign Policy, Politics of Russia and Central Asia

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**A. OVERVIEW**

The Department of Political Science offers the Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Political Science. Students may select from one of two main options for their graduate studies: 1) **the Thesis option**, and 2) the **Non-Thesis option**. Both options offer students training in the full range of fields of study. In addition, students may enroll in the Accelerated Masters program, or the dual M.A./J.D. program with Brandeis Law School.

B. THE M.A. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The M.A. provides students with broad training in the major fields of study in Political Science. Beyond the requirements outlined below, the curriculum is flexible to allow students to design their own program of study. The Department of Political Science enjoys especially strong faculty in two fields of study: International Politics and American Politics. Students are encouraged to concentrate their coursework in one of these fields.

The field of International Politics includes comparative politics and international relations. Members of the Department faculty are experts in the politics of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, North America, and Europe; they also study human rights, international law, diplomacy, religion and political violence, and climate change, among many other areas. The Center for Asian Democracy also has dedicated faculty and post-doctoral students who lend their expertise to the Department and organize public events.

The field of American Politics involves the study of U.S. political institutions, political behavior, and public policy. Members of the Department faculty possess expertise in law and public policy, political psychology, race and American politics, judicial decision making, religion and democracy, environmental policy, gender, sexuality, and politics, and urban politics.

1. CORE COURSES

The M.A. program includes **18 hours of required core courses**. All students must successfully complete the following required courses (6 hours). It is recommended that these courses be completed during the first year and in this order:

- POLS 670 (Research Design)
- POLS 671 (Introduction to Data Analysis)

Students must also successfully complete the following 4 core seminars (12 hours):

- POLS 619 (Seminar in Public Policy)
- POLS 629 (Seminar in American Politics)
- POLS 639 (Seminar in International Relations)
- POLS 649 (Seminar in Comparative Politics)

In addition to the core courses, all students must successfully complete a culminating project.

- Students pursuing the Thesis Option must take **6 hours** of Thesis Guidance (POLS 699) over their last two semesters.
- Students pursuing the Non-Thesis Option must take **3 hours** of Directed Research (POLS 695) in their last semester.

2. 500-LEVEL CREDIT

Students in the M.A. program normally will take coursework numbered 600 or above.

- **Non-thesis students** may take **up to 9 hours** of coursework at the 500 level.
- **Thesis-option students** may take **up to 6 hours** coursework at the 500 level.
- Students enrolling in 500-level courses must meet all the requirements for graduate-level credit set by the instructor of the course.
- Internship classes offered at the 500-level count toward the limit on 500-level classes. (Students doing the internship option for their Directed Research project will enroll in POLS 695.)

3. INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDIT

Students may take up to **3 hours** of independent study credit (POLS 691) under the supervision of a faculty member.

4. INTERNSHIP CREDIT

Students may take up to **6 hours** of internship credit in POLS 510 and 511 under the supervision of a faculty member. **These hours count toward the limit on 500-level credit. Note that the total number of credits received from internship credit and independent study credit may not exceed 6 hours.** That is, students may take 6 hours of internship credit, *or* 3 hours of internship credit and 3 hours of independent study credit. In addition, students in the Non-Thesis track may propose an internship for their Directed Research Project (POLS 695). Please see the section on Directed Research projects for more information.

5. ELECTIVE CREDIT

Students generally take their electives in the Political Science Department but have the option to enroll in courses offered by other departments, if such courses meet their particular educational or career objectives. **With the approval of the Graduate Director, up to 6 hours of coursework may be taken outside the Political Science Department.** Generally, approved courses are offered by the disciplines closely related to Political Science (e.g., history, law, public administration, sociology, economics, communication, geography, justice administration). Coursework from other disciplines also may be approved if a student can demonstrate its relevance to the study of Political Science.

6. TRANSFER CREDIT

Earned graduate credit may be transferred from accredited institutions that offer advanced degrees. **The maximum number of semester hours normally transferable is 6 hours (with the exception of students in the Accelerated Program).** Students requesting transfer credit must produce the required documentation to show that the course meets the standards set by the Department of Political Science for graduate credit. This documentation will include the official transcript, course syllabus, and copies of all assignments completed for the course. Credits that have been applied to any other degree may not be transferred. Credit earned more than three years prior to the student's application to the Graduate School of the University of Louisville will not usually be considered for transfer. **Only courses in which the student earned grades of "B" or better will be considered for transfer (including for Accelerated students).** Hours and quality points earned at other institutions are not included in the calculation of a student's GPA. Students may initiate the transfer of credits after they have enrolled in their first semester of coursework.

7. COURSE LOADS

Full-time study is defined as **9 hours of credit** during the fall or spring semester or **6 credit hours** during the summer session. The maximum number of hours that may be taken in a semester or summer session is 12. Any student seeking to enroll in more than the maximum number of hours must petition the Unit dean for permission.

8. THESIS AND DIRECTED RESEARCH PAPERS COMPARED

The non-thesis track is the most common track. Below, the thesis and the non-thesis directed research paper options are compared.

Thesis

- Probably the biggest, most challenging academic project of a student's academic career
- Goal is to generate original research and to prepare a full-length academic journal manuscript with required supporting materials that are targeted to the specifications of a particular peer-reviewed journal
- Requires 2-3 semesters of work, done mostly independently (under the supervision of a faculty advisor and committee)
- Requires an 8-12 page prospectus to be approved before beginning work, identifying a committee of three faculty, and passing a thesis defense.

- Total length varies depending on the journal requirements but is generally in the 8,000 – 12,000 word range, excluding bibliography.
- For students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. AND who identify a suitable research question in their first year AND who have excellent organizational and time management skills
- Requires original data collection OR original data analysis of existing data OR both
- Limits the number of electives that students are allowed to take (because that time must be dedicated to the thesis)
- Not suitable for M.A./J.D. students

Non-thesis/directed research paper

- Completed in a single semester under the direction of one faculty advisor.
- Requires a 3-page prospectus in the semester that the work is completed
- Typically takes the form of a lengthy literature review or an extended research design (about 5,000 – 7,000 words, excluding a bibliography). It may build from previous seminar papers but cannot be a resubmission of a previous paper.
- Allows a student to take more electives (including additional methods courses outside the department)
- Most suitable for M.A./J.D. students

If well-executed, either the thesis or the directed research paper provides a student with a high-quality writing sample suitable for submission when applying to a Ph.D. program.

What is NOT allowed for either the thesis or the directed research paper options:

- Pure replication papers
- Co-authored work (with a faculty member or other students)
- Work that violates the academic code of honesty

9. THESIS OPTION

a. Overview

Students who choose the thesis option must complete 24 hours of coursework and 6 hours of Thesis Guidance (POL 699) for a total of 30 hours. The six hours of Thesis Guidance should be taken over two semesters, in the second year of the program. Many thesis students spend the summer between their first and second year preparing for the thesis as well.

The thesis serves two primary functions. First, it allows the student to demonstrate that they can make an original research contribution to the discipline, with awareness of relevant scholarly work on the topic, and using appropriate methods. It asks students to pull together their understanding of research design, methods, and political science fields and demonstrate mastery through original data collection, original analysis, or both.

Second, the thesis socializes the student into the process of academic publishing, which is increasingly an expectation of doctoral programs. With the help of their faculty advisor, students will research academic journals relevant for their topic, paying close attention to journal reputation, discipline or subfield focus, methodological preferences, and audience. From this survey, the student will identify a target journal that is a strong fit for their project. (The precise format of the thesis will depend on the scholarly journal selected, but must be a full-length manuscript, not a research note or other short article format.)

The thesis is prepared under the supervision of a faculty advisor who serves as chair of the thesis committee. The student selects a topic in consultation with the advisor and executes the project with the advisor's approval and support. The committee must approve the student's prospectus before the student can proceed.

After a full draft of the thesis is completed and cleared by the faculty advisor, the student distributes the thesis to the committee and must pass a thesis defense prior to submitting the thesis to the Graduate School. While it is not required that a student ultimately submit their completed and defended thesis to the academic journal, this is strongly encouraged.

b. Thesis committee

The committee includes the chair, who must be a member of the Political Science Department's graduate faculty; a second faculty member from Political Science, who must have graduate faculty member status; and a member of the graduate faculty from outside the Political Science Department.

c. Procedures for the thesis option

Students who choose the thesis option must follow specific steps. Please note that all required forms can be found on the Graduate School website under the Current Students tab.

1. **In the first year of the program, meet with the Graduate Director** to discuss, in general terms, the thesis project, faculty members who might be suitable for the thesis committee, and requirements for completion of the project.
2. **Identify the chair of the thesis committee.** The student will secure agreement from a member of the graduate faculty from the Political Science Department to act as chair of the thesis committee. At this time, the chair of the thesis committee should assist the student in selecting the other two members of the committee (one from the department and one from outside the department). It is the responsibility of the committee chair and the student to see to it that all required procedures are followed.
3. **Fill out the Thesis Advisory Committee Appointment form** and submits the form to the Graduate Director, who will forward it to the Graduate School. This form requires the signatures of all members of the committee.

4. **Complete the Thesis/Independent Study form** for POLS 699 with a detailed plan of work description and submits it to their thesis supervisor who signs. They will then send the form to the Graduate Director who signs and sends it to the A&S Deans office where they will approve the form and forward to the registrar's office. (This will need to be done in each of the last two semesters in the program.)

5. **Write the prospectus and secure approval from committee.** The chair of the thesis committee should supervise the preparation of the prospectus and give final approval for review by the second reader on the committee. **The prospectus is then submitted to the Graduate Director, along with a proposed thesis committee. The prospectus must be approved by both the chair of the thesis committee and the second reader on the committee at least 4 months prior to the final oral defense** (e.g., December 1 for a May degree, April 1 for an August degree, August 1 for a December degree). IRB approval may need to be secured at this point, depending on the nature of data collection.

6. **Write each section of the thesis, getting feedback for revisions from chair.** The student should work in close consultation with the committee chair and, if appropriate, other members of the thesis committee. The thesis should conform exactly to the submission requirements set out by the target journal (including citation format, word count, internal structure, appendices, and replication materials). At a minimum, the student should be in contact with the faculty sponsor every 2-3 weeks throughout the term. The student is expected to submit at least one rough draft of the paper to the faculty sponsor and incorporate faculty feedback into the final draft.

7. **Schedule the oral defense.** After the thesis has met the approval of the committee chair and, if appropriate, other members of the thesis committee, **the committee chair schedules the oral defense of the work.**

- **Each member of the committee must receive a clean copy of the thesis at least 2 weeks** before the scheduled oral defense.
- **At least 2 weeks prior to the defense, the student must arrange to submit a Thesis / Dissertation Final Oral Examination Schedule form** to the Graduate School. (The electronic form can be found at the Graduate School website.)
- Final approval of the thesis is made by the three members of the thesis committee, who must each **sign the Electronic Thesis Signature Page form** (available from the [Graduate School website](#)).

8. **Format the thesis consistent with Graduate School guidelines.** The Graduate School requires that all theses include a 150-word abstract and a list of tables and figures. (This will be in addition to the formatting done for the target journal.) Other submission and formatting information is available from the [Graduate School website](#).

9. **Submit the completed thesis to the Graduate School after receiving approval on formatting.** In keeping with the deadlines established by the Graduate School, the student must submit the following:

- One electronic copy with original signatures to the Graduate School.
- One copy emailed to the thesis advisor.
- One copy emailed to the Director of Graduate Studies.

d. Thesis prospectus

The prospectus lays the foundation for the thesis. Given the importance of the document, the student should register for three (3) of the six (6) Thesis Guidance credits during the semester in which the prospectus is being written. Work on the thesis will begin that same semester immediately after the prospectus is approved. The student would register for the remaining 3 credits in the following semester, during which the thesis is being completed and defended.

The prospectus for a master's thesis should be about 8-12 double-spaced pages, including the bibliography, and should include the following:

- Overview of the project, how the research question fits into the existing literature, and the contributions (“so what”) of the work
- Preliminary theory and hypotheses
- Timeline for data collection and writing each section
- Justification for the selection of target academic journal: articulate how the project is good fit for journal's intended audience, topic, and approach (this will require a comparison with work published in prior issues)
- Bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources

Once the prospectus is completed, it must be approved by the chair of the thesis committee and the second reader in the Department of Political Science. (A face-to-face meeting of the student, the thesis committee chair, and the second reader is highly advisable. If the faculty members of the thesis committee have significant reservations about the thesis project, the student will be asked to revise and resubmit the prospectus.)

After the thesis chair and the second reader have given their approval, the prospectus must be sent to the Graduate Director, who will confirm with the committee members that they have approved the project.

If the student cannot address the concerns of the committee members, the student should seriously consider switching to the Non-Thesis Option. Be aware that switching from thesis track to non-thesis track will entail additional course work to achieve the 36 credit hours required for a non-thesis degree.

10. NON-THESIS (DIRECTED RESEARCH) OPTION

a. Introduction

Students who choose the non-thesis option must complete **33 hours of coursework and 3 hours of Directed Research (POL 695) for a total of 36 hours.** The “directed research” may take one of three forms, described below. A student should carefully consider their career goals when determining which option is most appropriate.

- **Option A.** A directed research paper conducted under the supervision of a single departmental faculty member. This is the most common option.
- **Option B.** An internship and significant associated writing supervised by a department faculty member. The student is responsible for identifying the internship.
- **Option C.** An applied project in which a student, working with a department faculty member, draws on existing coursework to produce an original portfolio of career-relevant professional products. Applied projects could include, but are not limited to, policy proposals, grant proposals, or social media campaigns.

Option A (the directed research paper) is often based on prior work the student has done in one or more graduate seminars. Directed research papers are typically between 5,000 – 7,000 words in length and take the form of extended literature reviews or fully developed research design papers. The paper involves substantially revising and probably reframing previously written work. It will entail fresh primary and secondary research and careful integration of the new material into the initial work the student has done on the topic.

b. Procedures for directed research

Students who choose the non-thesis option must follow specific steps:

1. **Meet with the Graduate Director** to discuss, in general terms, which option they are pursuing, faculty members who might be suitable for supervising the work, and requirements for completion of the project. This should occur in 2nd or 3rd semester of the program.
2. **Secure commitment from a faculty member in the Department** to supervise POLS 695. It is the responsibility of the faculty sponsor and the student to ensure that all required procedures are followed.
3. **Register for POLS 695** (Directed Research), regardless of which option has been selected. Students doing Option B (internship) will still register for POLS 695. Use the Independent Study/Internship/Research form found on the Department graduate student [website](#). Fill out and sign the form, then send to the faculty supervisor. After the supervising faculty signs the form, send the form to the Graduate Advisor who signs and sends it to the Department Chair to sign. The Chair then sends the form to the A&S Deans office where they will approve the form and forward to the registrar’s office who will enroll the student in POLS 695.

4. **Write a prospectus**, following the guidance in the following section. The faculty sponsor should supervise the preparation of the prospectus and give final approval. The approved prospectus is then submitted to the Graduate Advisor. **The prospectus must be approved at least 3 months before the end of the semester in which the student intends to complete the directed research paper** (February 1 for the spring semester, May 1 for the summer semester, September 1 for the fall semester). The student should not expect a response from the Graduate Advisor; approval by the faculty sponsor is sufficient to launch the project.
5. **Execute the project, incorporating feedback from the faculty supervisor**. At a minimum, the student should be in contact with the faculty sponsor every 2-3 weeks throughout the semester. The faculty advisor has discretion to determine the deadline for receipt of the finished paper or final project, but in any case, the paper must be given to the sponsor in time for her or him to evaluate it and submit a grade at the end of the semester. There is no oral defense.
6. **Submit the paper or culminating project to the Graduate Director**. After the paper or project has been submitted to the supervising faculty member, it should also be emailed to the Graduate Director. Failure to do so may delay the conferral of the student's degree.

c. Directed Research Prospectus

The prospectus must be approved at least three months before the end of the semester in which the student intends to complete the directed research paper (e.g., January for a May graduation, or August for a December graduation).

The prospectus for a directed research paper, internship, or project should be about three (3) pages double-spaced. It should include a title page with the student's name, the title of the project, the supervising faculty's name, and the semester/year.

For Option A (directed research paper), the prospectus will indicate what existing work is being expanded (e.g., a previous seminar paper), what preliminary work the student has completed, and a plan for the remaining work. It should include a bibliography (not included in the 3 pages).

For Option B (internship), the prospectus will provide a clear description of the organization/employer, the responsibilities of the intern, details on how the internship links to previous coursework, the types of writing assignments that the faculty advisor expects as well as a schedule, and a bibliography.

For Option C (applied project), the prospectus will provide a clear plan for the construction of the portfolio or applied project and how the components link to existing coursework. A bibliography must be provided.

11. HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

If the thesis project or directed research paper involves human subjects (e.g., surveys, experiments, interviews, focus groups), the student will need to apply for Human Subjects Review through the University of Louisville IRB. Note that both the student and the faculty member who is supervising the student must obtain certification for doing research that involves human subjects. This requirement does not apply to research based on secondary analysis of existing data collected by another entity.

C. ACCELERATED PROGRAM

The Department of Political Science also offers its undergraduate political science majors an opportunity to earn both a BA (or BS) degree and an MA degree at an accelerated pace. Typically, students finish their MA degrees within 2-3 semesters of completing their undergraduate degrees. Students in the accelerated program may choose either the Thesis or Non-Thesis option, just like any other student.

This program allows students to complete **up to 12 credit hours** of graduate coursework while enrolled as undergraduate students. Only courses where an “A” or “B” grade was earned may be double-counted for the graduate program, and graduate courses taken as an undergraduate will not transfer to institutions outside of UofL.

Students generally apply to the Accelerated Pathway when they have earned between 60-80 credit hours. Admission to the Accelerated Pathway is not a guarantee that a student will ultimately be admitted to the Masters program, as this will depend on academic performance. In their last semester of undergraduate study, students in the Accelerated Pathway will apply to the Graduate School just as any other Masters applicant would. See the department website for more information on applying.

D. DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM (MA-JD)

1. Introduction

The Brandeis School of Law and the Department of Political Science of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School have developed a program for interdisciplinary studies that will result in dual degrees in Law and Political Science. The program recognizes the many connections among politics, government, and law. Students interested in these connections will have a unique opportunity to explore them in the course of completing the dual degree program. Students enrolled in the program will also acquire interdisciplinary skills in research and writing. The program will prepare students to pursue a wider variety of career options than either the J.D. or the M.A. alone would provide.

A student participating in the dual degree program will be able to combine Law courses and Political Science courses to create a well-defined concentration of study. Examples of such concentrations include environmental law and politics, negotiations and dispute resolution, international law and politics, comparative law and politics, civil rights and liberties, constitutional law and politics, and race, law, and politics.

2. Admission requirements

The M.A./ J.D. program is open to all students who have successfully completed a baccalaureate degree at an accredited college or university. **To be admitted into the program, the student must (1) apply to, (2) meet the admission requirements of, and (3) be accepted by both the School of Law and the Department of Political Science.**

In addition, students currently enrolled only in the Political Science M.A. program must apply to the School of Law **prior to completing 18 credit hours of M.A. course work.** Students currently enrolled only in the School of Law must apply to the M.A. program prior to completing the first semester of the second year of law school.

Upon admission to both schools, students must submit a letter of intent and a proposed course of study to the School of Law or to the Department of Political Science, depending on where they first intend to take courses, or in which they are currently taking courses. A copy of the letter must also be sent to the appropriate office of the other program. Students will need to plan their four-year course of study carefully, taking into account the sequence and the availability of course offerings in each program. Successful applicants will be notified of the procedures to follow in pursuing the M.A./ J.D. course of study.

3. Curriculum requirements

Candidates in the M.A./ J.D. program must complete **81 hours in the J.D. curriculum** (instead of the normal 90 hours) and **either 21 hours in the M.A. curriculum** (instead of the normal 30 hours) **for the Thesis Option** or **27 hours in the M.A. curriculum** (instead of the normal 36 hours) **for the Non-thesis Option.**

Nine (9) hours from each program can be counted as electives in the other program to give the student the requisite hours for both the J.D. and M.A. degrees. M.A. credit will be applied to the J.D. degree on a pass/fail basis only. J.D. credit will be applied to the M.A. degree on a graded basis; only law courses in which the student has earned a “B” or better may be transferred. Only M.A. courses approved by the Law Dean’s Office may be applied to the J.D. degree. Likewise, only J.D. courses approved by the Graduate Advisor in Political Science will be applied to the M.A. degree.

Students should consult the handbooks for each program for complete listings of degree requirements. Students must complete the requirements for both degrees before either degree is awarded.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. ADMISSION

Applicants selected for the program have generally earned at least a 3.0 undergraduate GPA overall or a 3.2 undergraduate GPA in the last 60 credit hours or the equivalent. The priority deadlines for admission are: May 15 (Fall semester), October 15 (Spring semester). Students who apply after these dates may not have their applications processed in time to enroll. Students applying for graduate assistantships in the department must apply no later than April 1, because of the university’s agreement to give students a decision by April 15.

B. NON-DEGREE STATUS

In exceptional circumstances, a student seeking eventual admission into the graduate program and holding a baccalaureate degree will be advised to register for courses in non-degree status. If the student wishes to apply the hours earned under non-degree status, he or she must gain prior approval from the Graduate Advisor for the specific courses to be taken. The student's performance in these approved courses will be used as a part of the evaluation of her or his application. Normally, the maximum number of hours taken in non-degree status that can be applied toward the M.A. degree is six. If the courses offered are at the 500-level, the student must let the instructor know he or she plans eventually to obtain graduate credit for these courses. This ensures the instructor holds the student to the graduate-level requirements and standards set for the course. A student wishing to apply these 500-level hours to the graduate program must demonstrate that she or he has met the graduate-level requirements and standards set by the instructor. Also note that students registering in non-degree status must obtain the permission of the instructor to enroll in any course numbered 600 or above.

C. ACADEMIC ADVISING AND ORIENTATIONS

All new students are required to meet with the Graduate Director to receive academic advising and should continue to do so throughout their time in the program. Students must meet with the Graduate Director prior to embarking on a thesis or directed research project. Students are also encouraged to seek academic advising from other members of the Department faculty, especially those with whom they share academic interests. All students (new and continuing) should attend the orientation session(s) and reception(s) offered by the Department of Political Science and the Graduate School. Students will be notified of the dates, times, and locations of these events.

D. EARLY REGISTRATION

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of early registration. This helps ensure a seat in desired courses and helps the instructor plan the logistics of the class. Graduate courses need a minimum of five students in order to be offered. Early registration for the Spring semester is generally held in October; for the Fall semester it is held in March or April.

E. GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system for the graduate program, along with the quality points accruing for each letter grade, is as follows: A+ (4.0), A (4.0), A- (3.7), B+ (3.3), B (3.0), B- (2.7), C+ (2.3), C (2.0), C- (1.7), D+ (1.3), D (1.0), D (0.7), F (0.0).

“W” means withdrew and carries no quality points. No student may withdraw from any course after mid-semester. In exceptional cases, the Graduate Dean may grant a student's request to withdraw from courses because of illness or conditions beyond the student's control. “I” means work in course is incomplete. If the work is not completed by the end of the next term, regardless of whether the student is enrolled, the “I” automatically becomes an “F.” “X” means coursework has not been finished because of the nature of the research or study involved, e.g., continuing thesis work.

The maximum number of “C” hours (C+, C, or C-) that can count toward the degree is 6. Although D and F will be calculated in the student’s grade point average, courses in which these grades have been earned will not be counted toward the fulfillment of degree requirements. A student who has received the grade of C, D, or F may repeat the course upon the approval of the Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Dean. When a student repeats a course, the grade point average will be calculated on the basis of the last grade earned, although all previous grades will remain on the transcript. No courses being applied to the M.A. degree can be taken Pass/Fail (unless the student is in the non-degree program).

F. ACADEMIC STANDING

To remain in good standing a student must maintain an overall graduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher. A student must be in good standing in order to graduate from the M.A. program. A student whose graduate GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation until the student regains a 3.0 average or is dismissed. Students are ordinarily not permitted to continue on probation for more than one semester.

G. PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, AND USE OF AI TOOLS

The term “academic dishonesty” means obtaining or seeking to obtain an unfair academic advantage for oneself or for any other student. It includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of data or results, falsification of documents or forms, multiple submission without prior authorization, or being complicit in any of these actions.

With respect to use of AI tools, students should assume that AI is NOT allowed to complete graded work unless explicit permission to do so is given by the instructor or in the assignment instructions. When in doubt about whether a particular usage is allowed, students should consult with the course instructor before doing so.

Where AI use is explicitly allowed, citation is still important. See [this link](#) about how to cite AI tools properly. It is best to err on the side of transparency, even when AI is permitted.

Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. Students found responsible for violations may face permanent dismissal from the University.

H. PROGRAM DURATION, DEGREE PROGRESS, AND TIME LIMITS

Full-time students normally complete the M.A. degree in two years. Students enrolled in the Accelerated Masters program typically complete the degree in 2-3 semesters. All graduate students are expected to make steady and satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree. Students who fail to enroll for a period of more than 12 months will be considered to have withdrawn from the program. Students who seek to return after such a period may be required to reapply to the Department for readmission or to petition the Graduate School. Credit earned more than three years prior to the completion of the degree may not be counted toward meeting the degree requirements.

I. MASTER'S CANDIDACY

If a student has completed all of the required coursework for the degree and has registered for but failed to complete a thesis or directed research project, he or she must maintain candidacy status in all subsequent semesters until the degree is completed.

Registration in candidacy status is a means of maintaining continuous registration. This status must be maintained year-round (Fall, Spring, and Summer) until the degree is awarded. Students will be billed at the current rate for candidacy per semester. Once a student registers for candidacy he or she may not thereafter register for additional courses. Exceptions may, in unusual circumstances, be granted by the Unit dean upon written request from the Department.

J. APPLICATION FOR DEGREES

Degrees are awarded in August, December, and May. Candidates who expect to receive degrees on a particular award date must fill out a degree application online. The degree application process is available through ULink (ulink.louisville.edu).

Students must submit their completed application for degrees to the Graduate School on or before the dates specified in the University calendar (posted on the Uof L website). For students seeking degrees in the spring semester, the deadline for degree applications is usually mid-February.

K. EMAIL ACCOUNTS

All graduate students are assigned a University e-mail account. You are expected to check your account on a regular basis. You will receive announcements from various University, College, and Department offices, and instructors use Blackboard to communicate important information about classes. The Political Science Department maintains a graduate student e-mail distribution list to send announcements to you.

IV. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Department of Political Science has a limited number of graduate assistantships to offer exceptionally qualified full-time students. The availability of these funds varies from year to year. If available for a given year, the application deadline will be April 1, subject to change. Students awarded these positions are required to work 20 hours per week assisting faculty members with research, teaching, or administrative projects. Compensation normally includes a monthly stipend, health benefits, and the remission of in-state tuition. Graduate Assistants are discouraged from seeking employment outside the University while they are fulfilling their duties. Graduate Assistants are prohibited from accepting other employment within the University unless the Dean of the Graduate School gives permission to do so. Students seeking other forms of financial assistance should contact the University's financial aid office directly.

Graduate assistantships are also periodically available in other units in the university, such as the Career Center, the Anne Braden Institute, or Alumni Relations. The Department of Political Science does not control selection of these assistantships or work assignments to those outside units.

B. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Graduate students have the opportunity and are encouraged to become involved in numerous student groups. These groups include the campus-wide Graduate Student Council (GSC), the Graduate Network in Arts and Sciences (GNAS), Multicultural Graduate Society (MAGS), College Democrats, and College Republicans. The Department of Political Science must have a student representative on the GSC or the GNAS in order to give Political Science graduate students eligibility to apply for research or travel funds.

C. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The M.A. degree is designed to meet the needs of students seeking careers in teaching, research, and public service and/or who anticipate continuing their studies on the doctoral level. To enhance the ability of students to meet their career goals, the curriculum strives to help students develop specific skills, including written and verbal communication skills, analytical skills, methodological skills, and statistical literacy. It is also strongly recommended that students interested in international studies enroll in foreign language courses to build their skills in this area.

The American Political Science Association (APSA) has a wealth of resources for students available on its [website](#).

The learning environment provided by the program furnishes students with additional avenues for professional development:

- Collaboration with faculty members on research that leads to co-authored publications
- Networking with department alumni at social events
- Participating in Model UN and Model EU competitions
- Presenting papers or posters at the annual conference of the Kentucky Political Science Association (KPSA) or at UofL graduate student conferences
- Presenting papers or posters at other political science conferences (e.g., APSA, SPSA, MPSA, ISA)
- Interning with the Kentucky General Assembly, the Louisville Metro government, political campaigns, or local non-profit organizations

D. GRADUATE STUDENT HONORS

Students demonstrating superior academic accomplishment during their graduate studies may be recommended by the Department of Political Science for a Graduate Dean's Citation. Typically, the Department recommends one or two students each year for the Citation. Nominees are reviewed by a committee in the Graduate School. Criteria for selection include an outstanding academic record and a significant record of accomplishment beyond the required coursework. Students may not nominate themselves.

E. PARENTAL/FAMILY LEAVE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Department supports students who need to take family, parental, or medical leave. Please see the Graduate School Policies for leave and petition for part-time enrollment status [here](#), and contact the Graduate Advisor if you wish to take advantage of these options.

F. UNIVERSITY SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

At University of Louisville, we take sexual misconduct, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and all forms of sex discrimination seriously and are very concerned if it happens to someone in our community. The Department is committed to providing a welcoming, supportive environment for all students.

Please note that faculty are considered mandatory reporters under Title IX and, under penalty of law, must inform the Title IX Coordinator of allegations of sexual misconduct or discrimination. There are campus resources in the Sexual Misconduct Resource guide (linked below) that can provide confidential support and discuss options with you or the alleged victim. https://louisville.edu/titleix/sexual_misconduct_resource_guide.pdf

- For complaints against students, contact the Dean of Students Office at 502-852-5787.
- For complaints against employees, contact Human Resources at 502-852-6688.
- For complaints against an University visitor, contact University Police at 502-852- 6111.