

Political Science - Graduate Programs

Overview

The program leading to a Master of Arts degree in Political Science emphasizes a variety of skills in preparation for many different types of employment. Students develop the ability to conduct research and critically analyze complex information, understand decision-making processes, present their findings and conclusions in a succinct and easily-understood manner, think creatively to resolve problems and concerns, and communicate information clearly. These skills are considered valuable in a wide range of jobs and careers, including in: the private sector, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, education, government, research and policy analysis, media, and international affairs. In addition, the Political Science MA is often used as a stepping stone for enrollment in business and law degrees. Finally, the Department of Political Science also endeavors to equip students with the research techniques and substantive background for coursework undertaken beyond the master's level.

Admissions

The program is committed to a holistic admissions approach. As a result, decisions on whether to admit or deny an application include: grade point averages, letters of recommendation, personal statements, advanced degrees, graduate courses taken as a degreed student or in another program, and professional work experience. The major purpose of the admissions criteria is to promote access to our program, but maintain standards that will enable the department to determine if the applicant demonstrates the requisite skill level to master the requirements of the program.

Admission to the MA program in political science is based upon the completion of the general admission requirements of the Graduate School. Applicants are required to submit all official transcripts, a personal statement, and three (3) letters of recommendation. The department will review the application package in its entirety. The package is evaluated to determine if a student has achieved a 3.00 grade point average (GPA) in the last 60 hours of their undergraduate work as calculated by the Graduate School, and meets other admission requirements. If a student has already earned an advanced degree, the department will evaluate the student's academic performance in obtaining that degree equally with the undergraduate performance. International students must meet or exceed the minimum university standard on the TOEFL (550 for paper examination, 213 for computer examination), TOEFL iBT (total score of 79 with sectional scores that meet or exceed 22 for the writing section, 21 for the speaking section, 20 for the reading section, and 16 for the listening section), TSE (40), or the IELTS (6.5).

Several factors matter for a decision to accept or deny an applicant. To this end the department has three categories of acceptance: unconditional admission, probationary admission, and provisional admission.

Application Requirements

All applications must include the following four components. All four will be considered, without specific weights, in the decision to accept or deny.

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited general or specific program. A bachelor's degree in political science, however, is not required.
2. A copy of all university and college transcripts.
3. A written personal statement (200 words) explaining the applicant's interest and motivation in studying for a graduate degree in political science.
4. Three letters of recommendation (including at least two from university/college faculty) that favorably assess the applicant's potential success in a graduate program and in the field of political science. Letters must be mailed directly from the recommenders to the Graduate Adviser of political science.

Unconditional Admission

An applicant may be accepted for unconditional admission if all of the above components of the application package are properly submitted, and all three of the following criteria are met and all three give strong indication of likely success in the program.

1. An undergraduate GPA of 3.00 or greater (as calculated by the Graduate School) in the last 60 credit hours of completing an undergraduate B.A. or B.S. degree from an accredited institution (verified by the Graduate School from official transcripts from each college or university previously attended).
2. Adequate preparation and satisfactory performance in political science courses or courses in related disciplines.
3. Three letters of recommendation (including at least two from university/college faculty) that indicate satisfaction with the applicant's work and demonstrate a strong likelihood for success in the program and in the field of political science.

Probationary Admission

Students who do not qualify for unconditional admission may be considered for probationary admission if they satisfy any two of the three requirements for unconditional admission listed above as well as demonstrate potential for success in line with the necessary application materials. Students with a reported grade point average below 2.70, however, will not be eligible for probationary admission. Being admitted on probationary status means that the student will be able to take graduate level classes, but the student must earn a B or better in the first 12 hours of graduate coursework at UT Arlington. This regulation will be strictly enforced.

Provisional Admission

An applicant unable to supply all required documentation prior to the admission deadline, but otherwise appears to meet admission requirements, may be granted provisional admission. Provisionally admitted students must adequately satisfy any incomplete documentation by the end of the semester in which they are admitted. If the applicant fails to do so, the department may then reclassify the applicant's admission status as probationary or ask the student to leave the program.

Deferral

A deferred decision may be granted when a file is incomplete or when a denial decision is not appropriate.

Denial

An application will be denied if it does not meet the criteria listed above, does not demonstrate potential for success, or the applicant's grade point average is below 2.70.

Fast Track Program

The Fast Track program allows outstanding senior undergraduate Political Science (POLS) students to take two or three graduate courses (5000-level courses) to replace six or nine credit hours of advanced POLS undergraduate courses (3000- or 4000-level courses). The credit hours earned in these graduate courses can then be applied to both the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and to the Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science. Those who successfully complete the program will be automatically admitted to the Graduate School. They will not be required to take any qualifying test, complete an application for admission to the Graduate School, arrange for letters of reference, or pay an application fee. This enables students to complete their MA degree in a shorter time period.

Applying to the POLS Fast Track Program

Undergraduate students apply to the Department of Political Science by completing a Fast Track application form available from the POLS academic adviser. Students will be notified by the Department of their acceptance into the Fast Track program.

Unconditional Admission

1. The student must be within 30 hours of completing a BA in Political Science at UTA.
2. The student must have completed 30 hours of coursework at UTA.
3. The student must have an overall GPA of at least 3.3 in all coursework at all schools and an overall GPA of at least 3.3 in all coursework completed at UTA.
4. The student must have an overall GPA of at least 3.5 in all POLS courses completed at UTA.
5. The student must have completed 12 credit hours of the following specific undergraduate POLS courses, with a GPA of at least 3.5 in these courses. (Courses from other universities or colleges that cover the same or similar material cannot replace any of these specific UTA courses.)
 - POLS 2312 State and Local Government or its equivalent from another institution
 - POLS 3310 Analyzing Politics
 - POLS 3302 Introduction to International Relations, POLS 3303 Introduction to Public Administration, POLS 3304 Introduction to Comparative Politics, POLS 3305 Government in Urban America, POLS 3307 Comparative State and Local Politics, POLS 3311 Public Opinion, POLS 3312 Introduction to Public Policy Analysis, OR POLS 3333 Jurisprudence
 - One substantive 4000-level POLS course from any of the area concentrations (excluding internships and conference or directed readings courses).

Provisional Admission

A student may gain provisional admission if, by the semester in which application is made, he or she has already completed 3 out of the 4 required POLS courses (listed above) with a GPA of at least 3.5 in them, with the 4th course to be completed in the semester of application. All other requirements above must be met. Provisional admission will be changed to unconditional admission upon satisfactory completion of remaining requirements. Students failing to meet all requirements at the end of their semester of application will be removed from the Fast Track program. Any credits earned prior to removal from the program will be applied to the undergraduate degree only. None of the other benefits of the Fast Track program will apply. Provisionally admitted students who have been removed from the program may subsequently apply to graduate programs via the normal application process, paying all fees and meeting all relevant admission criteria. Admission will not be automatic as it will be subject to the normal admission practices of the Department of Political Science and of the Office of Graduate Studies.

Denial

Students who do not meet the requirements set out shall be denied admission to the Fast Track program. They may still apply to the graduate program through the regular application process. Admission will not be automatic as it will be subject to the normal admission practices of the Department of Political Science and of the Office of Graduate Studies.

Good Standing

In order to remain in the Fast Track program, students must meet the following requirements:

1. Students must maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.0 and must earn grades of B or better in all Fast Track-approved graduate courses that will be used to satisfy undergraduate and graduate degree requirements of the Fast Track program.
2. Students must enroll in at least 2 graduate courses prior to receiving their bachelor's degree, and receive at least a B in each course.

Students who, at any time, do not meet these requirements will be obliged to leave the Fast Track program. Any graduate credits earned will be applied only to the undergraduate degree, and none of the other benefits of participation in the Fast Track program will apply. They may apply to the MA program as a regular student after receiving their BA.

Fellowships

Fellowships, when available, will be awarded on a competitive basis. Fellowships are selected on the basis of the following criteria. Please see the Graduate Adviser for more information.

- Candidates must be enrolled full time in the department of political science (at least 9 hours of courses per semester).
- A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.00 in the last 60 undergraduate hours, as calculated by the Graduate School, and unconditional admission status, or a minimum GPA of 3.25 in political science graduate hours completed.
- Transcript of a completed bachelor's degree in political science (or appropriate related field) from an accredited institution.
- Three letters of recommendation. These letters may be the same submitted for admission.
- A written statement explaining the applicant's reasons for graduate study in political science.

Master's Degree Requirements

The non-thesis degree plan requires 36 hours of coursework, including three hours of POLS 5310 ANALYZING POLITICS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS, and a minimum of two courses in each of the first two area concentrations: American Politics and Policymaking, and International Studies.

The thesis degree plan requires 24 hours of coursework, including three hours of POLS 5310 ANALYZING POLITICS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS. Of the remaining 21 hours, a minimum of one course must be taken in each of the first two area concentrations: American Politics and Policymaking, and International Studies.

American Politics and Policymaking

POLS 5300	AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS	3
POLS 5301	JUDICIAL POLITICS AND THE U.S. SUPREME COURT	3
POLS 5302	BUREAUCRATIC LEADERSHIP	3
POLS 5311	CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS	3
POLS 5312	MAKING PUBLIC POLICY	3
POLS 5315	PUBLIC OPINION	3
POLS 5316	PUBLIC LEADERSHIP: RACE, ETHNICITY, & GENDER	3
POLS 5317	RACE AND ETHNICITY IN AMERICAN POLITICS	3
POLS 5318	WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS	3
POLS 5319	CONGRESSIONAL BEHAVIOR	3
POLS 5320	THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY	3
POLS 5321	THE PRESIDENCY AND DOMESTIC POLICY	3
POLS 5323	STATE COURT SYSTEMS	3
POLS 5324	PUBLIC POLICY: ISSUES AND ANALYSIS	3
POLS 5325	STATE POLITICS	3
POLS 5327	URBAN POLICYMAKING AND ADMINISTRATION	3
POLS 5328	PUBLIC POLICY AND MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES	3
POLS 5329	PUBLIC BUDGETING	3
POLS 5368	Health Politics and Policy	3
POLS 5369	SOCIAL POLICY	3

POLS 5380	TOPICS IN U.S. POLITICS	3
POLS 5382	TOPICS IN PUBLIC LAW AND JURISPRUDENCE	3
POLS 5383	TOPICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY MAKING	3
International Studies		
POLS 5303	COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS	3
POLS 5332	PARADIGMS AND PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	3
POLS 5333	IDENTITY AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST	3
POLS 5334	VIOLENCE AND DEPRIVATION IN WORLD POLITICS	3
POLS 5335	LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS	3
POLS 5337	THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	3
POLS 5338	AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY	3
POLS 5339	ISRAELI IDENTITY AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT	3
POLS 5341	COGNITION, EMOTION, AND EVOLUTION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	3
POLS 5342	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	3
POLS 5381	TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS	3
POLS 5384	TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	3
Data Analysis		
POLS 5305	TOPICS IN POLITICAL THEORY	3
POLS 5310	ANALYZING POLITICS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	3

Students should consult the Political Science Graduate Student Handbook for regulations on transfer courses, undergraduate courses, conferences, internships, and special courses. It is recommended that students complete at least one general field seminar (POLS 5300, POLS 5301, POLS 5302, POLS 5303, POLS 5332) prior to taking the topics courses. See the Graduate Advisor for more detail.

All candidates for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in political science must pass a final examination, written, oral, or both written and oral. See the Department of Political Science Graduate Student Handbook or the Graduate Adviser for more details. In the event of failure of the final examination, the student may petition the Committee on Graduate Studies to retake the examination on a date no sooner than 60 days after the first examination. Students will not be permitted more than one reexamination after failure of the initial examination.

International Studies Option

The International Studies option of the Master of Arts program in political science emphasizes the study of comparative politics and international relations within the framework of political science. This option requires 12 hours of coursework in International Studies. Upon satisfying the requirements for this option, students will receive a letter of completion. Completion will not be reflected on student transcripts.

U.S. Political Institutions and Processes Option

The U.S. Political Institutions and Processes option of the Master of Arts program in political science emphasizes political behavior and processes and public law and jurisprudence within the framework of political science. This option requires 12 hours of coursework focused on American politics and/or public law and jurisprudence. Upon satisfying the requirements for this option, students will receive a letter of completion. Completion will not be reflected on student transcripts.

Dual Degree Program

Students in political science may participate in a dual degree program whereby they can earn a Master of Arts in political science and a Master of Arts in another program, such as criminal justice or sociology. By participating in a dual degree program, students can apply a number of semester hours jointly to meet the requirements of both degrees, thus reducing the total number of hours which would be required to earn both degrees separately. The number of hours which may be jointly applied ranges from nine to 18 hours, subject to the approval of Graduate Advisers from both programs. To participate in the dual degree program, students must make separate application to each program and must submit a separate program of work for each degree. Those interested in a dual degree program should consult the appropriate Graduate Adviser(s) for further information on course requirements. See also the statement on "Dual Degree Programs" in the general information section of this catalog.