

Master of Art in Political Science

About This Program

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.

Competencies

1. Upon graduation, students will be able to identify, formulate, and solve problems relating to political science.
2. Upon completion, students will be able to identify and describe political structures, rules, behaviors and environments which shape political action.
3. Upon completion, students will be able to explain and employ statistical and methodological techniques to analyze information.
4. Upon completion, students will be able to identify, comprehend, and apply comparative, theoretical, or conceptual approaches to actors and their policies.
5. Upon completion, students will be able to develop the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate political phenomena.

Admissions Criteria

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](https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/academicregulations/admissions/graduate/) (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/academicregulations/admissions/graduate/>) 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 graduate admissions, 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 BA or BS 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.

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.

Curriculum

Foundations

POLS 5310	ANALYZING POLITICS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	3
Select at least one course in American Politics and Policymaking from the following:		3
POLS 5300	AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS	
POLS 5301	JUDICIAL POLITICS AND THE U.S. SUPREME COURT	
POLS 5302	BUREAUCRATIC LEADERSHIP	
POLS 5305	TOPICS IN POLITICAL THEORY	
POLS 5311	CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS	
POLS 5312	MAKING PUBLIC POLICY	
POLS 5315	PUBLIC OPINION	
POLS 5316	PUBLIC LEADERSHIP: RACE, ETHNICITY, & GENDER	
POLS 5317	RACE AND ETHNICITY IN AMERICAN POLITICS	
POLS 5318	WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS	
POLS 5319	CONGRESSIONAL BEHAVIOR	
POLS 5320	THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY	
POLS 5321	THE PRESIDENCY AND DOMESTIC POLICY	
POLS 5323	STATE COURT SYSTEMS	
POLS 5324	PUBLIC POLICY: ISSUES AND ANALYSIS	
POLS 5325	STATE POLITICS	
POLS 5327	URBAN POLICYMAKING AND ADMINISTRATION	

POLS 5328	PUBLIC POLICY AND MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES	
POLS 5329	PUBLIC BUDGETING	
POLS 5368	Health Politics and Policy	
POLS 5369	SOCIAL POLICY	
POLS 5380	TOPICS IN U.S. POLITICS	
POLS 5382	TOPICS IN PUBLIC LAW AND JURISPRUDENCE	
POLS 5383	TOPICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY MAKING	
Select at least one course in International Studies form the following:		3
POLS 5303	PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THEORY	
POLS 5332	PARADIGMS AND PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	
POLS 5333	IDENTITY AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST	
POLS 5334	VIOLENCE AND DEPRIVATION IN WORLD POLITICS	
POLS 5335	LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS	
POLS 5337	THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	
POLS 5338	AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY	
POLS 5339	ISRAELI IDENTITY AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT	
POLS 5341	COGNITION, EMOTION, AND EVOLUTION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	
POLS 5342	GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	
POLS 5381	TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS	
POLS 5384	TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	
Select 15 hours in 5000-level POLS courses		15
Completion Options		
Select one of the following:		6-12
Non-Thesis		12
Select an additional course in American Politics and Policymaking from the above-listed options.		
Select an additional course in International Studies from the above-listed options.		
Select 6 additional hours in 5000-level POLS courses.		
Thesis		6
POLS 5698	THESIS	
Total Hours		30-36

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.

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.

Program Completion

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.