

Master of Arts in Political Science

Why study political science?

Because political science advances our understanding of politics, power, governance, and public policy in the United States and across the globe. In the broadest sense, political science is the study of governments and governmental procedures. Political science is as old as civilization, because people always have been interested in their government and in their leaders. But political science as it is thought of today, as one of the social sciences, is a comparatively new discipline. It developed in the United States during the last century as political scientists developed an ability to make increasingly scientific observations of government. Political scientists are concerned with the origins and sources of governmental organizations, their growth, and their decline, as well as with the processes and structure of government.

What's special about the Political Science graduate program?

Our medium size allows faculty to teach seminars on a variety of topics with individualized mentoring in and out of the classroom. Graduate students work closely with faculty on research and themselves publish independent papers and win fellowships and awards. This productivity is complemented by a diverse group of students, many coming from around the world. In addition, by the time of graduation most of our graduate students will teach their own classes. We believe teaching is an important part of a graduate education and serves our students well in an increasingly competitive job market. Our unique Thompson Summer Scholarship Research Program offers students the opportunity to engage in a genuine collaborative research project with selected faculty. Working with faculty on a variety of research topics, students maximize their potential by earning a competitive stipend and sharpening their research skills across the summer months. The program has generated many conference papers and publications as well. Our department therefore offers unparalleled access to our faculty and valuable opportunities in both research and teaching.

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Graduate Admission

The MA program in Political Science accepts applications for the fall semester only. Applications and all required supplemental materials must be submitted by the deadlines listed on the program's website (<https://kups.ku.edu/admissions/>) to be considered for admission.

Application Materials

Applicants should upload the supporting application documents listed below to the online application (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). There is no need to send copies of application materials directly to the Department of Political Science.

- Copy of official transcripts (<http://graduate.ku.edu/transcripts/>) from all colleges or universities attended
- Statement of purpose (no longer than two pages, single spaced)
- Resume or CV
- Official GRE score report no more than five years old (this requirement is waived for applicants who will hold an MA from an institution which conducts all instruction entirely in English by the beginning of their first term in the program)
- Three letters of recommendation (preferably from faculty members)

Non-native speakers of English must meet KU's English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) requirements.

Contact

Visit the Admissions (<https://kups.ku.edu/admissions/>) page on the Department of Political Science website for detailed information about the application process.

M.A. Degree Requirements

All candidates for the M.A. degree must complete, at a satisfactory level,

1. 30 semester hours of graduate credit, 21 of which must be earned in courses at the 700 level or above;
2. Research methods through POLS 706; and
3. A comprehensive master's oral examination.

The student selects a principal advisor from the Graduate Faculty by the end of the first year to choose courses and prepare for the comprehensive examination. The examination is administered by a 3-person M.A. committee that includes the student's principal advisor and 2 other members of the KU Graduate Faculty selected by the student in consultation with the principal advisor. One member of the committee may be from another department (including Special Status members of the Graduate Faculty).

Directed readings courses in excess of 5 hours cannot be counted toward the 30 hours required for the degree. With prior written approval, candidates may count up to 6 graduate hours taken outside the department (either at KU or at another institution accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools) toward the 30 hours required for the degree.

Applicants who have not completed at least 15 undergraduate credit hours in political science may be admitted with the provision that they complete additional hours of course work.

All candidates must fulfill the requirements of either the thesis or the non-thesis option for the Master of Arts degree.

Thesis Option

Upon completion and certification of an acceptable thesis, candidates may count 6 credit hours of thesis enrollment toward the 30 credit hours required for the M.A. degree.

Non-thesis Option

Candidates may substitute a minimum of two 800- or 900-level research courses plus satisfactory performance on a comprehensive written examination administered by the three-person M.A. committee before the oral examination.