

Doctor of Philosophy 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 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 PhD 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/political-science-graduate-program/>) 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
- 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.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

Students who complete the Master of Arts degree may be eligible to pursue the PhD degree. Students must complete coursework in two major subfields, one minor subfield, and research methods.

Major Subfields

The major subfields must be drawn from the four subfields listed below (American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Public Policy). Before their first attempt at the written preliminary examination in any subfield, all doctoral students must complete at least four graduate level courses in that field, three of which are at the 700 level or above. Enrollment in directed research covering a particular subfield may be substituted for one of the four courses/seminars. Students should consult their faculty advisor to plan a schedule of courses in each of their major subfields to provide adequate preparation for the written preliminary examination based on the requirements outlined below.

American Politics

Code	Title	Hours
POLS 810	American Politics	3
3 elective courses selected in consultation with faculty advisor		

Comparative Politics

Code	Title	Hours
POLS 850	Introduction to Comparative Politics	3
POLS 851	Comparative Institutions and Government	3
POLS 957	Comparative Political Behavior	3
one elective course selected in consultation with faculty advisor		

International Relations

Code	Title	Hours
POLS 870	International Relations	3
POLS 972	Theories of International Conflict	3

POLS 973	International Political Economy	3
one elective course selected in consultation with faculty advisor		

Public Policy

Code	Title	Hours
POLS 720	The Scope of Public Policy	3
POLS 820	Policy Formulation and Adoption	3

two elective courses selected in consultation with faculty advisor

Minor Subfield

The minor subfield may be another of the major subfields, a related field from an outside department, or an interdisciplinary program. If the choice is not an additional major subfield, the student must obtain written approval of their faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students must complete at least four graduate level courses in the minor subfield, three of which are at the 700 level or above. Enrollment in directed research covering a particular subfield may be substituted for one of the four courses. Students should select courses for their minor subfield in consultation with their faculty advisor. Courses for the minor subfield may not be applied to another examination field.

Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship

Doctoral students must complete the three courses listed below to meet the Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship requirement.

Research Methods

Code	Title	Hours
POLS 705	Research Design for Political Science	3
POLS 706	Research Methods I	3
POLS 707	Research Methods II	3

Additionally, doctoral students must supplement this coursework with one of the following options, to be approved at any time prior to registering for written preliminary examinations:

- An additional research methods course selected in consultation with their faculty advisor
- Proficiency in a foreign language approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies as demonstrated by one of the following options
 - Two semesters of a single foreign language completed no more than five years prior to the time of approval
 - Native speaker of a foreign language

Written Preliminary Examinations

All doctoral students are required to complete written preliminary examinations in their two major subfields prior to completing their comprehensive oral examination. Students must complete all courses in their major subfields, the research skills and responsible scholarship requirement, the doctoral residency requirement, and resolve any grades of Incomplete before registering for the written preliminary examinations.

Comprehensive Oral Examination

To become a doctoral candidate, the student must satisfactorily complete a comprehensive oral examination. No student may attempt the comprehensive oral examination until they have passed the two written preliminary examinations.

Dissertation

After passing the comprehensive oral examination, the doctoral candidate must write a dissertation approved by a departmental dissertation committee and pass a final oral defense of the dissertation to qualify for the doctoral degree.

Additional Information

Additional information about course and degree requirements for the Political Science doctoral program is located in the department's graduate student handbook (<https://kups.ku.edu/political-science-graduate-student-handbook/>) for reference.