Welcome to the Master of Arts degree program in the Department of Political Science at California State University, Los Angeles. This guide is meant to answer many of the questions you may have about the MA program in Political Science. It covers basic requirements, procedures, expectations, and student responsibilities, so please read this guide carefully and completely.

GETTING STARTED

Meeting with the MA Advisor
Once you are admitted into the MA program, it is important that you meet with the MA advisor—currently Professor Timothy Lim—as soon as possible. Dr. Lim will advise about specific classes, and, more importantly, work with you to set up your MA program, which needs to be filed with the Dean’s Office for the College of Natural and Social Sciences (NSS). Please call the department office to make an appointment: (323) 323-2230. If you are unable to meet in person with Dr. Lim, you can contact him by e-mail at tclim@calstatela.edu or call him by phone during his office hours at (323) 343-2242 (NOTE: To ensure Dr. Lim has adequate time to talk with you, you should set up a phone appointment as you would an in-person appointment).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Master of Arts Degree in Political Science
Our program is built on the foundation of an undergraduate government or political science major and is designed to provide systematic introduction to study in political science and related fields at an advanced level. The degree program, moreover, is meant to serve the diverse needs of our students and prepare them for a number of academic and professional careers. Some of our graduates, for example, go on to pursue a Ph.D. in Political Science or related fields, while others go on to earn a law degree. Others teach at the community college level, or in high schools. And some seek careers in government, politics, business and the non-profit sector. Students interested in learning more should read the American Political Science Association’s (APSA) Careers and the Study of Political Science: A Guide for Undergraduates, which is available for purchase online. A copy is also available on reserve in our library (check under POLS 150 N. Koch), and the department office may have a limited number of free copies available).

Departmental Requirements for Admission
In addition to university requirements for admission to graduate study, applicants must have a B (3.0) grade point average in the last 90 quarter units attempted, either at the

* This is a draft version. Please report any errors or problems to Prof. Timothy Lim
undergraduate or graduate level. (NOTE: Be advised that admission into the university does not guarantee or imply admission into the department. The Department of Political Science and the University have different criteria and a separate process for admissions).

Applicants who have not completed an undergraduate major in political science and/or whose grade point average is below that required for regular admission may be admitted at the discretion of the department’s graduate admissions committee, but only after completing a minimum of four (4) prerequisite courses. Prerequisite courses must be chosen in consultation with and approved by the MA advisor. In general, though, all 300-level “Foundation” courses and most 400-level courses (except public administration courses) will satisfy the prerequisite requirement. A grade point average of 3.0 or above is required for the four prerequisite courses in order to be considered for admission into the MA program. (If the GPA requirement is not met, additional courses may be required, but applicants may also be denied admission.)

Prerequisites do not count towards the 45.0 units required in the MA program. No exceptions will be made to this rule!

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Important Note! Be advised that you are primarily responsible for completing the requirements of the MA degree in Political Science. Neither the MA advisor nor the department staff have the responsibility of making sure you complete the required courses or units and complete all requirements for the degree.

Recommended Courses
All students are expected to have successfully completed the following courses (or their equivalents) before enrolling in graduate level seminars: POLS 281 Quantitative Methods for Political Science, POLS 371 Foundations of American Politics, POLS 372 Foundations of Political Theory, POLS 373 Foundations of Comparative Politics, and POLS 374 Foundations of Global Politics. All MA students are responsible for mastering the subject material covered in all of the aforementioned courses. Be advised that 200- and 300-level coursework cannot count for graduate credit.

Course Requirements for the MA Degree in Political Science (45 units)
A minimum of 45 units is required, with at least 24.0 units in 500-level courses. Specifically, the department requires all students to complete six (6) graduate seminars in the department, a minimum of four (4) “elective” courses, and 5.0 units of independent study coursework. In addition, all students must successfully pass the department’s comprehensive examination OR thesis (NOTE: students who elect to write a thesis are not required to complete the 5.0 unit independent study/graduate research).

The six graduate seminars (24 units) are as follows:

- POLS 505 American Politics*
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• POLS 509 Foundations of Empirical Political Theory
• POLS 510 Political Theory
• POLS 527 International Relations (OR POLS 526 International Political Economy)
• POLS 550 Comparative Politics

* POLS 505 is offered twice a year, each covering different topics in American Politics. Students are required to complete 8.0 units of POLS 505.
† POLS 526 is offered only on an occasional basis, usually in response to specific request from students.

Concentrations (16 units)
In addition to the six 500-level seminars listed above, all students are required to select a concentration in one of three fields: American Politics, Political Theory, and Global Politics. Each concentration is composed of 16 “elective” units, with courses coming primarily from the undergraduate curriculum in Political Science.

A. American Politics Concentration
CHOOSE FOUR COURSES FROM THE FOLLOWING: POLS 400, 404, 406, 408, 409, 414, 418, 425 OR 598.

B. Political Theory Concentration
CHOOSE FOUR COURSES FROM THE FOLLOWING: POLS 431, 433, 435, 437 OR 598. STUDENTS MAY TAKE ONE COURSE FROM THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT, AS FOLLOWS: PHL 410, 413, 447 OR 574

C. Global Politics Concentration
  **International Relations**
  **Comparative Politics**:
  CHOOSE 2 COURSES FROM THE FOLLOWING: POLS 446, 451, 452, 453, 455, 459, 531, OR 598.

Course Sequence
There is no strict requirement that 400-level courses be completed prior to enrolling in 500-level seminars. However, the department strongly recommends that students complete their 400-level coursework first. This is particularly important for students who have little or no background in one or more the required fields.

Graduate Research/Practicum (5.0 units)
Students not writing an MA thesis are required to complete 5.0 units of graduate research or a Political Science practicum. Ideally, this should be done after completing all other coursework. To enroll in an independent study, you must first consult with one of the department’s full-time faculty, and preferably one of the “core” MA faculty members—i.e., Drs. Bowman, Koch, Lim, McLendon, or Siler. In your consultation with the faculty member, you will need to discuss and agree upon a topic and specify the requirements. To register, you must complete an independent study form (available from
the department office), which requires the signature of the supervising faculty member and the department chair.

Comprehensive Examination
Presently, the comprehensive examination is held over three (non-consecutive) days, and is generally scheduled to begin the fifth week of fall and spring quarters (the comprehensive exam is not given in winter quarter). You must register for the examination—which is designated as POLS 596—in the quarter you plan to take it. Failure to register means you will not be allowed to sit for the exam. Conversely, if you register but later decide to postpone taking the exam, you must remember to officially drop the course, otherwise it will count as an “attempt.”

The exam is divided into three sections, covering American Politics, Political Theory and Global Politics. You must pass all three sections of the examination to receive credit. You have two chances to do so. If you do not pass all three sections after your second attempt, you will not receive your degree.

Preparing for the comprehensive examination. Once you decide to take the examination, there are several steps you should take. First, review questions from past examinations, which are on reserve in the library. Second, schedule an appointment with ALL the faculty members in the MA program. In your appointment, discuss the general and specific requirements for which you will be held responsible. Third, give yourself adequate time to prepare. Most students take an entire quarter, during which they have no other academic responsibilities, to prepare for the exam.

Be advised, too, that it is your responsibility to make sure you are adequately prepared for the exam. Faculty members, including the MA advisor, are not responsible for ensuring you take the necessary steps. It is also important to understand that most faculty members are off-duty during the summer months, which means that students intending to take the exam in fall must make sure to meet with the appropriate faculty members before the end of spring quarter.

Format of the MA comprehensive examination. The department is currently experimenting with the format of the comprehensive exam. In fall 2003 and spring 2004, we implemented a “take-home” format, in which the questions are distributed via e-mail on the day of the exam. Students then have the full day to work on their responses, but are required to turn in a hard-copy to the department office the following day. It is likely that we will retain this format, but we reserve the right to make changes at any time.

Thesis
A thesis, in lieu of the written comprehensive examination (and POLS 597/598), may be authorized for exceptional students who present a proposal the department deems worthy of study. POLS 599 is required of all students authorized to submit a thesis. Students who have made one attempt on the comprehensive examinations may not change to the thesis option, and students who have taken POLS 599 units may not change to the comprehensive examination option.
If you are interested in writing a thesis, please talk to the MA advisor and/or relevant member(s) of the MA faculty before you begin writing a proposal. Remember, there is no guarantee you will be authorized to write a thesis.

PROCEDURES AND MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

MA Program Form
As noted above, you are required to complete an MA program form before you can be formally classified as a graduate student in the Department of Political Science. To complete the MA program, you must meet with the MA advisor, Dr. Timothy Lim. Once the program is completed and filed with Dean’s Office in the College of Natural and Social Sciences, it becomes your degree “contract,” which means that you are obligated to fulfill the specific course requirements listed on the program in order to receive your degree.

Registering for Graduate Seminars
A permit is required to register for graduate seminars (500-level courses). To receive a permit, you should contact the MA advisor directly (the best method is via e-mail at tclim@calstatela.edu). The advisor will check your status and the enrollment level in the course before having a permit issued. Generally, classified (non-conditional) graduate students will be automatically given a permit; however if the course is at or close to the maximum enrollment level (15 students), it will be up to the instructor of the course to issue a permit. The instructor has no obligation to do so. In cases where a graduate seminar is at or near full-enrollment, moreover, students who have completed all their elective requirements will be given priority. Otherwise, enrollment is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Early registration is also advisable in cases were class enrollment is low. In past years, seminars have been cancelled due to lack of enrollment. To help avoid this situation, you should register for seminars as early as possible.

“Normal” Course Load
Two graduate seminars is considered a normal or full course load for full-time students. For students taking upper-division electives only, 12.0 units (or three courses) is considered a full course load.

Substitutions
Substitutions for any of the six required graduate seminars are strongly discouraged. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis, and only with a compelling reason and a comparable replacement course. Be advised, too, that certain sections or questions in the comprehensive exam will be extremely difficult to pass if you do not take the corresponding graduate seminar. In recent years, for example, students who have not taken POLS 550 Comparative Politics have routinely failed the comparative politics section of the comprehensive examination.
**Grading Standards**
The department faculty members adhere to high, but fair, standards of evaluation. In all classes, you are expected to demonstrate mastery of course material and an ability to communicate effectively and professionally, both orally and in writing. Inadequate mastery of the course material and/or poor communication skills—especially written skills—can easily result in a grade of B, C or lower. Understand, too, that you are as responsible for the quality and depth of your education as is the faculty. Moreover, while the faculty are sympathetic to students with competing responsibilities and outside commitments, it is still your responsibility to meet the standards set by the department.

Students are required to maintain a 3.0 (B) grade point average for all classes on their MA program. Students who fail to maintain an average of 3.0 or above will be placed on academic probation. Students who fail to earn a GPA of 3.0 or above in all of their required classes will not receive a degree. A grade of C is allowed on the program; however, any grade below C, including C-, requires that the course be repeated with both grades computed in the grade point average.

**Graduation**
To receive your degree, you must file for graduation. Please see Erwin Delgado, the Graduate Coordinator (tel.: 323.343.2230 or EDelgad@cslanet.calstatela.edu), for details.

Application for graduation (degree check) is made on a form that is available in the academic department/division offices, college-based advisement centers, or in Administration 146 beginning five days prior to the application filing period. A downloadable application is also available on the Graduation Office web site: www.calstatela.edu/academic/registrar/grad_off.htm

Candidates must be granted permission to apply for graduation by their major department/division or college-based advisement center before they may submit the completed application and required fee to the Cashiers' Office for fee payment.

**Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)**
All CSU students must demonstrate competence in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. All Cal State L.A. graduate students who entered Cal State L.A. summer 1984 or later and who are pursuing a graduate degree or a credential are required to satisfy this requirement in one of the following ways:

• Pass the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE) required for the Cal State L.A. baccalaureate. Postbaccalaureate students who select this option must register for the WPE (listed as UNIV 400 in the Schedule of Classes) no later than the add deadline for the first quarter they are enrolled in a graduate or credential program. Failure to register for the WPE will void enrollment for that quarter; or
• Postbaccalaureate students who have passed a writing proficiency examination or a graduation writing assessment examination in English at any accredited college or
university where the primary language of instruction is English may petition to substitute such a result for passing the WPE at Cal State L.A.

Students who receive a No Credit (NC) grade on the WPE must meet with a WPE consultant in the University Writing Center to discuss deficiencies identified by the exam and receive recommendations of activities to correct these deficiencies. Based on the recommendations from the WPE consultant, students may retake the WPE or enroll in UNIV 401, the upper division writing proficiency course.
SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MA PROGRAM

I. REQUIRED COURSES (24 UNITS)

POLS 504  POLITICAL BEHAVIOR SEMINAR (4)
POLS 505  AMERICAN POLITICS SEMINAR (recommended “prerequisite” POLS 504) (4)
POLS 509  FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL POLITICAL THEORY SEMINAR (4)
POLS 510  POLITICAL THEORY SEMINAR (4)
POLS 527  INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SEMINAR (4)
POLS 550  COMPARATIVE POLITICS SEMINAR (4)

II. CONCENTRATIONS (16 UNITS)

A. AMERICAN POLITICS CONCENTRATION
   CHOOSE 4 COURSES FROM THE FOLLOWING:  POLS 400, 404, 406, 408, 409, 414, 418, 425 OR 598.

B. POLITICAL THEORY CONCENTRATION
   CHOOSE 4 COURSES FROM THE FOLLOWING:  POLS 431, 433, 435, 437 OR 598. STUDENTS MAY TAKE ONE COURSE FROM THE FOLLOWING FROM THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT: PHL 410, 413, 447 OR 574.

C. GLOBAL POLITICS CONCENTRATION
   COMPARATIVE POLITICS, CHOOSE 2 COURSES FROM THE FOLLOWING:  POLS 446, 451, 452, 453, 455, 459, 531, OR 598.

III. CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING (5 UNITS)

A. POLS 594 POLITICAL SCIENCE PRACTICUM – Independent supervised field experience in a political organization, non-profit, or public agency. Requires completion of a major report or paper.

   OR

B. POLS 597 GRADUATE RESEARCH IN POLITICAL SCIENCE – Completion of a major research project under the supervision of a full-time faculty member.

   OR

C. POLS 599 THESIS OPTION

IV. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM OR THESIS (0-5 UNITS)

- POLS 596 COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (0 UNITS)

   OR

- POLS 599 THESIS (5 UNITS)
Core MA Faculty

“Core” MA faculty members regularly teach graduate seminars and related undergraduate courses in the MA program, supervise independent studies and theses for MA students, and participate in the preparation and evaluation of the MA comprehensive examinations.

Dr. Scott Bowman, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles) • Main Field(s): Political Theory, Public Law • E-mail: sbowman@calstatela.edu • Phone: 323-343-2249

Dr. Nadine Koch, Professor (Ph.D., Ohio State University) • Main Field(s): American Politics • E-mail: nkoch@calstatela.edu • Phone: 323-343-2233

Dr. Timothy Lim, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Hawaii at Manoa) • Main Field(s): Comparative Politics, International Relations • E-mail: tclim@calstatela.edu • Phone: 323-343-2242

Dr. Michael McLendon, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of Texas, Austin) • Main Field(s): Political Theory, American Politics • E-mail: michaelmclendon@hotmail.com

Dr. Michael Siler, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Southern California) • Main Field(s): International Relations • E-mail: msiler@calstatela.edu • Phone: 323-343-2246

Other Faculty

Other faculty members in the department also regularly or occasionally participate in the MA program, although they normally do not teach the graduate seminars.

Dr. J. Theodore Anagnoson, Professor (University of Rochester) • Main Fields: Public Policy and American Politics • E-mail: tanagno@calstatela.edu

Dr. Greg Andranovich, Professor (University of California, Riverside) • Main Fields: Public Administration, Public Policy • E-mail: gandran@calstatela.edu

Dr. Donald Bray, Professor, emeritus (Stanford University) • Main Fields: Comparative Politics, Latin American Politics • E-mail: dbray@calstatela.edu

Dr. Naomi J. Caiden, Professor of Political Science (University of Southern California) • Main Fields: Public Administration, Public Policy • E-mail: ncaiden@calstatela.edu
Dr. Siegrun F. Freyss Professor of Political Science (Claremont Graduate School) • Main Fields: Public Administration • E-mail: sfreyss@calstatela.edu

Dr. Todd Kunioka, Assistant Professor (University of Rochester) • Main Fields: Public Administration, Public Policy • E-mail: tkuniok@calstatela.edu

Dr. Stephen K. Ma Professor (University of Alberta) • Main Fields: Public Administration, Comparative Politics • E-mail: sma@calstatela.edu

Staff

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