



Graduate Program Guide

2026-2027

August 31, 2026

Welcome to Michigan!

We are excited to have you join us in our department. This guide explains the main policies of the doctoral program, as well as the various resources that the department offers. For additional information, please consult the [Rackham Graduate School requirements](#).

The policies described herein apply to all doctoral students admitted since 2018. Students admitted prior to 2018 can choose to abide by these rules, or can consult the guide that was current in the year in which they were admitted.

You can stay abreast of departmental workshops and events via this [calendar](#).

Have an excellent first year, and Go Blue!

Mark Dincecco

Mark Dincecco
Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

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Program Overview

Graduate education differs qualitatively from undergraduate study. In the first few years, graduate work is dedicated to the acquisition of tools, abilities, and knowledge that will qualify one to teach, carry out research, and perform as a professional political scientist. Once students become candidates, they increasingly rely on creativity and self-discipline as they carve out an independent research project.

As a general rule, students take at least four years to earn a Ph.D. degree, with most finishing within seven years. The length of time required to satisfy their requirements varies, depending upon whether the entering student already has an MA degree, the number of terms the student carries a reduced program because of a GSI (graduate student instructor) or GSRA (graduate student research assistant) position, and the particular requirements of the student's subfield and dissertation. A program requiring extensive language training, for example, will take longer to complete if language study begins as a graduate student rather than earlier.

The Components

The graduate program is divided into two phases. During the first phase, when students are actively taking a full course load, they are considered *pre-candidates*. Coursework, teaching, and independent research and study prepare students to participate as research scholars in particular subfields within political science. Once students demonstrate mastery of these subfields, they become *candidates*. During candidacy, the student plans, executes, and defends the doctoral dissertation.

While a pre-candidate, students focus on two subfields. One becomes the major subfield and the second the minor. Courses at the University of Michigan run for full semesters, about 13 or 14 weeks. Over the first two to two and a half years, students ordinarily take four or five courses in their major subfield and three or four in their minor. These are rough estimates; each subfield sets its own requirements or guidelines for preparatory coursework. Students complete the major subfield and the first minor by passing a preliminary exam in each.

In addition, all students must complete a "cognate" required by Rackham that consists of four credit hours in approved graduate-level courses in a subfield outside their Major and Minor. Usually these credits will come from the same department, but a student may combine courses from different departments. For example, to learn more about health care policy, a student might take one course in the School of Public Policy and another in the School of Public Health. Students whose cognate credits come from two different departments should send a memo to the DGS describing how they are connected. The memo and the DGS's approval will be entered

into the student's academic file. In some cases, the cognate requirement may be satisfied with coursework taken earlier in pursuit of a master's degree (consult the DGS). A student enters the candidacy phase only after successful completion of the major and minor subfields and the cognate, as well as the resolution of any incompletes on their transcript. Typically, students must become candidates by the end of their third year.

Following the achievement of candidacy, students typically take a year to write and defend a plan for their dissertation (or "prospectus"). With this plan in hand, and with regular feedback from a dissertation advisor, students research and write the dissertation. In the summer before the final year of graduate school, students seeking an academic job prepare materials for their applications, and that fall is "on the market." The dissertation defense ordinarily occurs during this final year.

The Subfields

In our department, Political Science is divided into the following subfields (listed with their coordinators for 2026-2027):

- American Government and Politics (Ted Brader)
- Comparative Politics (Brian Min)
- International Relations and World Politics (Iain Osgood)
- Law, Courts, and Politics (Mariah Zeisberg)
- Political Theory (David Temin)
- Research Methods (Walter Mebane)

While students must select one of the above subfields for their major subfield, they may either choose a second one from this list *or* design their own to serve as their minor subfield. The student-designed minor must be in a recognized area within political science; students might look at the list of [APSA's Organized Sections](#) as a guide. There is more flexibility in designing a second minor, although it must still be an active research area within political science. Some examples of designed subfields include:

- Public Policy and Administration
- Gender and Politics
- Organizational Theory
- Political Development
- Political Economy
- Positive Political Theory
- Race, Ethnicity and Politics
- Urban Politics

This list does not preclude the possibility of a student following a program including other subfields, based on problem-oriented, interdisciplinary, or other types of interests. Proposals must include a set of courses and a justification for how the subject represents a subfield of political science. Designed minors require the support of two faculty members, and must include a description of the planned preliminary exam format. All proposals must be approved by the DGS.

The major subfields and their current preliminary exam procedures are described in more detail in chapter 5 of this guide. Students are encouraged to consult the subfield coordinator for more information.

Double Major

Students may choose to major in two subfields. In this case, the second major replaces the minor. Students are still expected to fulfill the cognate requirement.

Joint Degree Students

Some students enter the program as joint degree students. The student's joint program replaces the minor requirement for the joint program. Students in the joint program must still complete the cognate requirement of at least 4 credit hours. These credits can come from outside of the student's major and minor field or outside of the Political Science department. **Please refer to the note on page 48 for further clarification on this change. Dissertation committees must comprise two regular faculty members from each department.

Student Initiated Degree Program (SIDP/IIDP)

Students may design their own doctoral program, blending aspects of two degree-granting programs. Students are admitted to one program first, and, after completing at least one term of coursework, request a modification of their degree plan. Our department's practice has been to design an SIDP program to mirror the joint degree program: students would be expected to fulfill a major in Political Science, while work for their other program would substitute for the minor and cognate. Dissertation committees must comprise two regular faculty members from each department. For more information, see [the department website](#) and consult the DGS.

Dual Degree Students

Students may also pursue two degrees simultaneously. See the [Rackham website](#) for more information (and perhaps consult a spiritual adviser, therapist, or life coach).

Department Personnel

A number of faculty and staff serve in positions related to the graduate program.

Graduate Program Staff

Graduate Program Coordinator: Elizabeth Garduño, garduno@umich.edu (5735 Haven Hall)

Academic Program Manager: Megan Gosling, goslingm@umich.edu (5727 Haven Hall)

The graduate program coordinator is generally the first person to contact with questions about the program, although any of us will do our best to answer your question.

Graduate Affairs Committee

Director of Graduate Studies: Mark Dincecco, dincecco@umich.edu

Director of Admissions: Vincent Hutchings, vincenth@umich.edu

Director of Placement: Iain Osgood, iosgood@umich.edu

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Climate Liaison

Vincent Hutchings, vincenth@umich.edu

Ragnhild Nordås, rnordas@umich.edu

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Diversity Ally Committee

Vincent Hutchings, Committee Chair,

vincenth@umich.edu

Ragnhild Nordås, rnordas@umich.edu

Subfield Coordinators

American: Ted Brader, tbrader@umich.edu

Comparative: Brian Min, brianmin@umich.edu

IR/WP: Iain Osgood, iosgood@umich.edu

Law, Courts, Politics: Mariah Zeisberg, zeisberg@umich.edu

Methods: Walter Mebane, wmebane@umich.edu

Theory: David Temin, dtemin@umich.edu

Program Subfields

American Government and Politics

The study of American politics at the University of Michigan embodies a storied past and a vibrant present. From the survey research of Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes and as a leading force in the behavioral revolution in political science, the department has grown to encompass many approaches to and views on the study of politics in the United States. Today, the research of our diverse faculty spans the study of national and local political institutions, the mass media, public opinion, campaigns and elections, political participation, gender, group identity and racial politics, public policy, interest groups and political parties, constitutional law, and political development. Teaching and research in the department also touch on a wide array of important issues, including health care, economic development, immigration, poverty, crime, education, discrimination and affirmative action, civil rights, the environment, taxation, globalization, terrorism, and war.

Each fall, the department offers the American politics core course, POLSCI 611. It is designed to give students a broad and deep introduction to fundamental research in both American political institutions and political behavior, and its syllabus is extensive. In the winter semester, the department offers POLSCI 629 (American Political Institutions) and POLSCI 630 (Proseminar in Political Behavior). All students taking a preliminary exam in American politics are encouraged to take these three courses, but are not required to do so. It is expected that they will complete the courses with course grades of B+ or better.

Comparative Politics

Comparative politics is the empirical study of political phenomena across polities (both national and, increasingly, subnational); it applies concepts and theories that are applicable across space and time. The work of Michigan comparativists covers the gamut of questions involving political institutions, elite behavior, and mass politics. The faculty has strong regional expertise in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and much of Europe and Eurasia. They employ a broad range of methodological approaches. Our graduate students bring a wonderfully diverse assortment of experiences and interests to their study, research, and teaching, as well.

Comparative Politics Subfield Core Areas

1. State Formation (offered by both comparative and world faculty)
2. Political Economy of Development
3. Elections and Distribution (comparative political behavior)

4. Institutions
5. Social Movements and Contentious Politics (including repression and political violence)
6. Identity and Politics (including ethnicity, religion, and political culture)
7. Regimes and Regime Transition (including authoritarian regimes, democratization, and democratic backsliding)

World Politics (International Relations)

The study of international relations and world politics at U-M cuts across many areas of study, including formal and game theoretic models of human behavior, macroeconomic policy, institutional design, and the quantitative study of conflict (pioneered by the department in the 1960s). Here, the primary focus is understanding why states interact the way they do in economic, legal, and military domains. Graduate and undergraduate courses range widely across the theories of the study of international politics, covering international organizations, open conflict, the domestic politics of foreign relations, foreign economic policies and law, and peace and security affairs. The university's commitment to interdisciplinary study supports strong creative relationships between students in the department and faculty in other departments throughout the institution as well. Relatedly, the department boasts of a unique, and large, group of scholars cutting across Comparative Politics and World Politics who focus on [political conflict, violence, and peace](#).

The 4 core modules for World Politics are: 1) political violence/conflict and security; 2) international institutions and law; 3) international political economy; 4) the state (including historical state development, human rights, and state-society relations).

Law, Courts, and Politics

Law, Courts, and Politics is an expansive and methodologically diverse subfield that includes constitutional theory, philosophy of law, judicial politics, American constitutional development, comparative constitutional politics, international law, and law and society. Associated faculty conduct research that cuts across subfields and disciplines, and students have the opportunity to explore a wide range of issues pertaining to law, courts, and constitutional institutions. What are the important features of legal and constitutional institutions and how do they develop and function over time? Are constitutions working as expected, and what might be done to maintain or improve their performance? How do constitutional values and jurisprudential traditions intersect with political behavior outside of the courts? Students are encouraged to forge intellectual connections with faculty and programs outside the department, while also benefiting from the wide-ranging interests in law held by faculty members in other subfields.

Students can elect POLSCI 612 or 613 as a beginning course in Law, Courts, and Politics. Students should also plan to present their papers and dissertation research in at least one of the ongoing graduate student workshops.

Research Methods

Political methodologists develop tools in order to improve the descriptive and causal inferences made by empirical political scientists. Coursework at Michigan parallels the ways in which research methods are applied within the department, including classes in inferential statistics, formal modelling, survey experiments, machine learning, measurement, sampling, research design, and qualitative methods.

Some students interested in contributing to the discipline's burgeoning toolkit choose Methods as their major subfield, while many others seeking to combine a substantive research interest with a strong methods background choose Methods as their minor subfield. Typically, first-year students who plan to elect Methods as their major or minor subfield take two-course sequences in formal modelling (POLSCI 598, 681) and inferential statistics (POLSCI 599, 699). In their second year, they pursue more advanced coursework in these and other areas. Many methods students also pursue coursework in UM's Statistics and Economics departments and the School of Information. The faculty as a whole encourages all students, regardless of major, to invest significant time and energy in developing a portfolio of methodological expertise.

Political Theory

Political Theory at Michigan is committed to interpretive inquiry grounded in richly empirical studies of historical phenomena and events, textual analysis, literary theory, and/or archival investigation. Our course offerings enable students to develop a strong background in the history of political thought and to school themselves in a variety of modes of inquiry (see chapter 5's discussion of the guided constructed minor of the same title under "Student- Designed Minors"). Students work with faculty to draw on the classical texts of political theory; to engage central questions concerning democracy, citizenship, power, legitimacy, responsibility, justice, and the foundations of political thought and civic life; to explore social change, asking how it undoes old political solutions and creates new problems; and to pose questions at the intersection of social and political theory, informed by a keen interest in the narrative, rhetorical, and other literary dimensions of political speech and communication. We offer seminars on a range of topics, including democratic theory, gender and sexuality studies, reception studies, the politics of language, and social theory. We encourage students to take advantage of the

methodological diversity of the theory/law faculty, as well as to pursue interdisciplinary methodological training outside the department.

Courses on the history of political thought, such as POLSCI 603, provide an excellent foundation for research and teaching in political theory. Students majoring in theory or considering a minor in the subfield are strongly encouraged to take POLSCI 702 (“Modes of Inquiry”), a collectively-taught course which presents various modes of inquiry involved in some of the textual, historical and interpretive approaches that are requisite to conceive and execute dissertation research in political theory and public law. Students are also strongly encouraged to participate regularly in the Political Theory Workshop, held approximately every two weeks, where both graduate students and faculty present work in progress.

The First Year

Choosing Courses

Students must register for courses before they arrive on campus in September. While selections are not set in stone---adjustments are possible through the third week of classes---students should spend some time thinking about their first semester’s choices. Students should seek advice from their first-year faculty mentor, the DGS, subfield faculty coordinators, and from the graduate students whom they met during recruitment weekend or on other campus visits.

As a part of the admissions process all students write a research statement. This description of research interests was elicited only to aid the admissions committee to learn how the applicant thought about the discipline. It is not a contract! A student’s standing in the program is completely unrelated to remaining true to this statement. It is not uncommon for students to change their research focus and area of specialization once they begin graduate coursework. Given the likelihood of changing research interests, the department highly encourages students to take courses outside of their immediate research interests.

Most subfields have core courses that lay the foundations for work in the area. Some subfields recommend that students take the core course immediately (American Politics is one), while others, like Comparative Politics, suggest taking the core in either the first or second year. Methods has course sequences in formal modelling and inferential statistics that require planning ahead.

In general, students take three or four courses towards their major or minor in semesters when they are supported by a fellowship (as all incoming students are) and two or three courses when they are serving as a graduate student instructor. For instance, first-year students who take

POLSCI 598 and 599 typically take 1-2 additional courses in the fall semester. This choice depends in large part on their preparedness for methods courses.

In reviewing the course guide (available online through Wolverine Access), it is helpful to know how the university assigns course numbers. Courses at the 600 or pro-seminar level are designed for graduate students, and provide a comprehensive survey of the literature as well as of the concepts, problems, and schools of thought within a given area. Pro-seminars are not intended as advanced research courses. Courses at the 700-900 level are research seminars in which primary emphasis is placed upon intensive training in the design, writing, and presentation of individual or group research papers, or initial work on doctoral dissertations.

Graduate students will normally elect courses at the 600-900 levels. Courses at the 400-500 levels may be chosen only when these are of substantial importance to the student's program. Graduate students in courses numbered below 600 are expected to perform at an appreciably higher level than undergraduate students in the same course.

Math Camp

In the three weeks prior to the start of classes, the Department offers a math refresher camp reviewing functions, calculus, linear algebra, probability theory, and other tools used in the methods courses. The program is open to all political science doctoral students. Attendance is not obligatory, but it is highly recommended for those students who plan to take methods courses, as it is assumed in POLSCI 598 and 599 that students have knowledge of the content covered in math camp. Information about the camp will be sent to all incoming students in midsummer. Students may also choose to attend math camp at the start of their second year.

Mentoring

Before the fall semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will assign a member of the faculty to serve as a student's first-year mentor. The mentor can give suggestions about course selection and resources on campus. At the end of the first year, and again at the end of the second year, students are reviewed. The mentor normally chairs the review, and students select one (if at the end of the first year) or two (at the end of the second year) additional members of the faculty to participate. (For more information about the review, see chapter 4 in this guide on assessment.) Aside from this formal role, students can make as little or as much of the mentoring relationship as they like.

Students may switch their mentors as they develop relationships with other faculty through coursework and departmental activities. Students in pre-candidacy are free to change their faculty mentor at any time. To do so, they should submit a formal request via email to the Director of Graduate Studies, who must approve this change. When possible, the student will

first have conversations about changing advisors with their potential new advisor, as well as their current advisor, before submitting their request. When in doubt, please discuss the situation with the Director of Graduate Studies before having conversations with the advisors in question.

Students are also encouraged to meet with the DGS during their first semester. The DGS has set office hours, and is also available by appointment.

Getting Involved Outside the Classroom

To develop familiarity with research in their chosen subfield, students should plan to attend at least one research workshop regularly; make it a firm commitment on your calendar.

In addition, numerous student organizations within the department, at the Rackham Graduate School, and across campus provide a wide array of opportunities to get involved. See chapter 10 of this guide for descriptions of student organizations. In addition to these formal organizations, cohorts often develop strong bonds, and students may decide to create a group to facilitate interaction or exchange research ideas. If you would like to take part in one of these service opportunities to help your fellow students and the department (such as hosting a student during recruitment weekend), please do not hesitate to contact the DGS or Graduate Program Coordinator and they will let you know how you can help. These activities can be very rewarding and help you get integrated into the department, so please lend a hand if you can!

Assessment of Graduate Students

The doctoral program is designed to provide feedback to each student through annual evaluations. We place a strong emphasis on face-to-face conferences between relevant faculty committees and each student. Minimally, every student will have six personal conferences with a committee of faculty during the program: the first- and second year-mentor meetings, two oral preliminary exams, the prospectus defense, and the dissertation defense. These conferences are designed to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress and that continuation in the program is in the best interests of the student and the department. They also offer an excellent opportunity for students to get personal feedback at each stage of development and to ask questions about future direction. They often become collaborative moments where research ideas are batted about---yes, even in the preliminary exam!

In addition to these face-to-face meetings, the DGS also undertakes a detailed audit of each student's progress in the program each year. These are based on faculty feedback and on self-evaluations by students, which are mandatory. At the end of this audit, an email message is

sent to the student and the advisor(s). The goal of these annual assessments is to keep the student and mentoring team on the same page with the department, the College of LSA, and Rackham regarding funding and academic milestones. The DGS is always available to discuss and clarify anything in the assessment.

Pre-Candidate Assessment

The assessment of pre-candidates has three components: (a) the first-year mentoring meeting, (b) the second-year mentoring meeting, and (c) the preliminary examinations. The evaluations are used to determine as early as is fair and practical the suitability of each student to continue in the doctoral program, and to provide students with feedback from the faculty about their performance. The purpose of the preliminary examinations is to determine both the extent to which the students have mastered the subfields that they have studied, as well as their qualifications for pursuing advanced research in the form of a doctoral dissertation.

At the end of each of the first two years, students are reviewed by a committee of faculty that the student chooses. The First-Year Mentoring Meeting features the student plus two political science faculty members. For the Second-Year Mentoring Meeting, three faculty members join the student.

These reviews are an opportunity for the faculty to assess the student's progress in the program. The student also lays out a plan for attaining candidacy. The student may also use this time as an opportunity to get feedback about their research plans. Students may find it helpful to use a planning sheet to help them chart out their coursework (available from the graduate coordinator). All students are required to maintain a grade point average (GPA) of "B+" or better in Political Science courses. Students failing to do so will not be permitted to proceed further in the program. A student should not accumulate a pattern of incompletes or fail to meet expectations for passing preliminary examinations and achieving candidacy. If it appears that the student may have difficulty completing the Ph.D. program, counseling may be provided, which might include a recommendation for dismissal from the program (see below).

First-Year Mentoring Meeting

The First-Year Mentoring Meeting takes place toward the end of the student's first academic year. We generally recommend that the evaluation take place in April. The First-Year Mentoring Meeting Committee consists of the student, the student's current advisor, and one other faculty member chosen by the student. In making its evaluation, the committee will take the following information into account.

- The student's grade record and a list of winter courses and proposed fall term courses.

- A seminar paper or other piece of work selected by the student as their best work so far. This paper may have been prepared prior to admission to the graduate program.

After reviewing these materials, the committee will meet with the student and discuss the student's progress in the program. The committee will make a formal report. This report will identify the degree to which the student has mastered scholarly tools, accumulated substantive knowledge, and become acquainted with the relevant literature. The scholarly tools desired include a clear written and oral expository style, burgeoning methodological skills, and a foreign language if appropriate. Deficiencies, if any, that the student is expected to correct will also be identified. The report will contain an overall evaluation of the progress that the student has made since entering the department and of the student's prospects for obtaining a Ph.D. A copy of the committee's report will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and retained in the student's academic folder. It is available to the student.

Second-Year Mentoring Meeting

A follow-up evaluation will be conducted toward the end of the student's fourth term in residence. We recommend that these evaluations take place in March or April. The committee will consist of three faculty members familiar with the student's performance in the program. Ordinarily the committee includes the student's dissertation advisor, if known, or the student's current faculty mentor (if different). One of the additional faculty members should be from the student's major subfield; the other from the student's first minor subfield.

In making its evaluation, the committee will examine the same material used in the first-year meeting, but the portfolio should include a piece of written work that the student completed during the second year. In addition, the student is required to submit a written plan of coursework for achieving candidacy. The committee will also assess how well the student has addressed any deficiencies noted during the first-year evaluation.

At the conclusion of this meeting, the student will be given one of the following evaluations: encouraged to proceed towards the Ph.D., eligible to proceed, or not allowed to continue in the program. The evaluation form will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and retained in the student's academic folder. It is available to the student. Students who are not allowed to continue in the program may appeal this decision to the Director of Graduate Studies, in writing, within one week of the evaluation. Students who appeal will be reevaluated within two weeks of the date of their appeal by a new committee consisting of the Director of Graduate Studies as Chairperson, the coordinator of the student's major subfield (or designate), and a third member from the department selected by the student. The decision of this second evaluation committee will be final.

Preliminary Exams

Usually in the third year, but often earlier, each student completes two preliminary exams. Part of the examining committee's deliberation and report includes an assessment of the suitability of the student's continuing in the program. More information about the preliminary exams can be found in the next chapter ("Achieving Candidacy"). Subfields differ with respect to whether and which courses must be completed before an exam can be taken. The decision about exactly when to take the exam, as long as it is completed before the end of the third year, is made by the student in consultation with the prelim committee chosen for a given subfield. Students are strongly encouraged to move to and through the prelim stage as efficiently as possible. Some students will opt to take 5 courses in their major subfield before they take their prelim, but others will be ready after only 4 and possibly fewer courses depending on their experience.

Adequate Progress in Candidacy

Once a student achieves candidacy and until the student files the dissertation, the student's dissertation advisor enters an annual assessment of the student's progress toward completion of the dissertation. These annual assessments are due each June 1st. The DGS will also audit the student's file to be sure that the student has achieved the remaining milestone of defending the dissertation prospectus by the end of the student's fourth year in the program. With a positive assessment of progress, the student is deemed to be in "good standing" and is eligible for departmental funding, including the LSA tuition fellowship. Students who are not making sufficient progress may recover their good standing status for the winter semester if the advisor determines that the student is making adequate progress by December 1st. Students forfeit any funding commitment from the department during periods when they are not in good standing. The Director of Graduate Studies, with the support of the student's advisor, can modify departmental guidelines in cases of personal or family illness, childbearing, family and dependent care, or other important and relevant circumstances.

Policy on Transfer Students

In accordance with Rackham's policy, credits earned at other institutions may not be directly transferred into the doctoral program. Transfer students must enroll and complete all core courses within their major and minor subfields, as well as the 3-module professionalization sequence. Students may petition the DGS and the relevant subfield coordinator to waive enrollment in a course required for the preliminary examination if they believe that a substantially equivalent course was completed at their previous institution and program (i.e. MA or PhD). Petitions must include documentation substantiating PhD course equivalency. Determinations regarding course equivalency and waivers for degree requirements are final and

made solely at the discretion of the DGS and the subfield coordinator, who both must agree on the course waiver for it to be valid. If a waiver is granted, then the approved course equivalency will be recognized internally to satisfy program requirements and the associated credits will not appear on the student's transcript.

Program Guidelines for Students to Change Advisors

The Director of Graduate Studies will assign each new student to an initial faculty member according to the student's research interests. The faculty mentor can give advice about course selection, professional development, and resources on campus. Ordinarily, the faculty mentor will chair the student's first- and second-year assessments until the student chooses a dissertation advisor. Students should meet with their faculty mentor at least once per semester to discuss their academic development.

Change of Advisor Process

Students in pre-candidacy are free to change their faculty mentor at any time. To do so, they should submit a formal request via email to the Director of Graduate Studies, who must approve this change. When possible, the student will first have conversations about changing advisors with their potential new advisor, as well as their current advisor, before submitting their request. When in doubt, please first discuss the situation with the Director of Graduate Studies before having conversations with the advisors in question.

Students who have reached candidacy and are in the dissertation-writing phase should arrange a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies if they want to change dissertation advisors. This meeting will provide an opportunity to review the situation, provide clarification, discuss best practices for identifying new advisors, and address any additional questions prior to submitting a formal request via email to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval.

For candidates, any change in advisor must be confirmed via email by the Director of Graduate Studies, who will inform both the new and previous advisors about the transition.

Until the transition is confirmed, candidates will retain their current advisor as the advisor of record. The department strongly encourages candidates to complete the advisor change process prior to the commencement of the subsequent semester. Candidates will have a maximum of one full semester to identify and secure a new advisor.

For those on academic probation, a minimum time frame of two months will be allocated to finalize this process, in accordance with Rackham's policy. Barring exceptional circumstances,

candidates are not permitted to change advisors within the six months leading up to the dissertation defense. Please notify the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible if exceptional circumstances prevail.

Funding and Academic Milestones During the Change of Advisor Process

The process of transitioning to a new advisor may have implications for a student's trajectory toward degree completion, including key milestones such as the prospectus defense, dissertation chapter approvals, and preliminary exams. It is important to note that the department does not provide a guarantee of funding for any additional terms that may be required in order to complete the program. Students who initiate the advisor change process will continue to adhere to the funding conditions established in their original offer letters.

Graduate Student Support During the Process

Changing advisors can be stressful, and can cause students anxiety, which can also affect academic progress. Situations between students and faculty that involve unresolved conflict may benefit from support from program leadership. Students may also have concerns such as retaliation and the status of their visas. In such cases, students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies. Rackham's [Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services \(GSPCS\) team](#) is also available to support programs, faculty, and students. Rackham has an embedded [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) counselor available to support student mental health and well-being as students navigate this process.

Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy

The policy on probation and dismissal from the program is meant to be implemented rarely; it is our goal to provide students ample opportunity to correct any issues before either probation or dismissal policies are invoked. Students who have questions or concerns about their academic standing, or about this policy are encouraged to speak with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Academic probation and possible dismissal from the Political Science PhD program can be the result of a number of academic issues, including (but not limited to):

- Poor academic performance, final grades
- Failure to meet department program benchmarks
- Poor annual evaluations
- Failure to make good progress to degree completion

Students who fail both a preliminary exam as well as a second try (as stipulated) may be dismissed from the program without a probationary period.

Academic issues of any kind will be discussed with the student as soon as possible in order to encourage and provide time for correction before a probationary period is set. In the event issues have not been resolved in a timely manner, the student can be placed on a probationary period before a decision to dismiss can be made. Placing a student on academic probation will be the decision of the Graduate Affairs Committee as well as the student's primary academic advisor. The Graduate Affairs Committee is a faculty panel comprised of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Placement Director, and the Director of Admissions. The Rackham Graduate School will also be notified when a student being placed on probation.

Probationary periods will be for no less than two months. Students placed on probation within two months of the end of a regular term will have probation extended into the next term. Most probationary periods in Political Science will be for no less than one full term and no more than one calendar year. Students can request a leave of absence (see Rackham's [leave of absence policy](#)) during the probationary period. In such a case, the probation clock will stop during the leave of absence and resume upon the student's return to active status. Students placed on probation will receive a formal letter from the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the start of the probationary period. This letter details the reasons for probation, conditions for returning to good standing, start and end dates of the probation, funding support available, and options for appeal.

Students on probation will have access to the same funding sources available to them prior to the implementation of the probation. Thus, students with guaranteed funding remaining will still be able to access those terms of funding while on probation. This policy may be subject to change in the future. Students with questions about funding during probation should contact the Academic Program Manager. Students who wish to appeal the probation decision can do so by writing a letter to the three-faculty member appeal committee. This committee will be comprised of the Department Chair, Associate Chair, and one additional faculty member from the Department Executive Committee.

At the end of the probationary period, the student will either be dismissed or returned to good academic standing by recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies with the approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee and the Rackham Graduate School. Students failing to meet the conditions of their probation as outlined in the probation letter will be dismissed from the program. Students will be allowed to appeal a dismissal decision by writing a letter to the three faculty member appeal committee (under the same terms as the probation appeal committee above).

Students who fail to meet the standards of academic or professional integrity, or who have been found responsible for violations of other University standards of conduct, may be dismissed in accordance with separate procedures described in the [Rackham Academic and Professional Integrity Policy](#).

Appeals Process

A student may appeal any decision of any counselor, guidance committee, or evaluation committee to the Director of Graduate Studies. A student may also appeal a decision of the Director of Graduate Studies to the Department's Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC). In case of such an appeal, a faculty member designated by the department chairperson will replace the Director of Graduate Studies as chairperson of GAC for the consideration of the appeal. The decision of the GAC is final.

Reinstatement to the Program

Reinstatement to the program is open only to students who withdrew or were dismissed from the program in good standing. Students who fail to enroll for any fall or winter semester will be considered "inactive" and dismissed from the program (see the chapter on Rackham policies, below). Inactive students will only rarely be reinstated.

Inactive students who withdrew or were dismissed from the program in good standing may seek reinstatement by application through the Rackham Graduate School. In addition to the Rackham requirements, students must meet the current admissions standards of the department, write a plan for research at the forefront of current political science, and provide a timeline for completion of the degree that is both feasible and complete. Students seeking reinstatement are required to confer with the DGS before preparing a formal application. The DGS, in consultation with the Director of Admissions and faculty members who have worked with (or are likely to work with) the student, will decide whether to recommend that the student apply for reinstatement. Students are strongly advised to follow that recommendation in considering whether to proceed with the application.

Applications for reinstatement must be approved by the Rackham Graduate School and by the Director of Graduate Studies, who will consult with the department's Admissions Director and the student's advisors. Reinstated students may apply for financial support, including GSI and grader positions, and are eligible to receive the college's tuition fellowship as long as they remain in good standing. Reinstated students must continue to meet every condition of their plan or they will be dismissed.

Students who discontinue their enrollment in any semester after winter 2012 are required to pay a reinstatement fee equal to one quarter of the prevailing candidacy tuition rate for each fall and winter semester that the student was not registered, up to a maximum of eight semesters. This fee will be shared equally by the student seeking reinstatement and the Department of Political Science. For joint degree students, the department's costs will be shared equally between the two programs.

Students who have been dismissed due to a failure to make adequate progress or who have failed their preliminary exams twice will not be reinstated in the program.

Achieving Candidacy

When a student has satisfied all the requirements for the Ph.D. degree except the dissertation, the student is officially admitted to candidacy. The requirements for admission to candidacy include the following:

1. Satisfaction of the cognate subfield requirements.
2. Qualification in the major subfield by preliminary examination.
3. Qualification in the minor subfield by preliminary examination.
4. Clearing all incompletes.

Rackham requires students to advance to candidacy by the start of the fall term of their fourth year. To remain in good standing and be eligible for fall term funding, the Department requires students to achieve candidacy by July 1 after their third year in the program. This deadline is especially crucial for students who will be on departmental funding, including GSI positions, because the department must report to Rackham that all students receiving these positions are in good standing. These reports are written in June and July.

Only rarely will exceptions to the three-year deadline be allowed; requests for extensions of this deadline should be made by the end of the winter semester of the student's third year. They will be considered by the student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students not securing such extensions who fail to achieve candidacy on time will forfeit the Department's financial aid commitment for the first semester of the fourth year. They will also be placed on academic probation by the Rackham. Provided they achieve candidacy by November 1 (the start of the GSI assignment process for Winter), their funding can be reinstated with DGS approval. The DGS makes this determination in consultation with the student's advisor. Students who do not achieve candidacy by the end of their extension will be declared

inactive and will not be allowed to continue in the program. Students without extensions who do not achieve candidacy by the end of their first term on probation will be declared inactive and will not be allowed to continue in the program.

Students may be advanced to candidacy with one incomplete remaining on their transcript provided they have a plan in place to complete it within a semester, approved by both the instructor and the DGS and filed with the DGS. If the student does not complete it within a semester, then the consequences described above regarding extensions will go into effect.

The Cognate Requirement

A student satisfies the department's cognate requirement by taking four credit hours of coursework in approved graduate-level courses in a subfield differing from their Major and Minor subfields.

Credit hours may be taken inside the Political Science Department for a grade of B or better, provided that the course material is in a subfield different from the student's major and minor subfields, or outside the Political Science Department for a grade of B- or better. Cross-listed courses taught by Political Science faculty may be used to satisfy this requirement. Cognate coursework is approved by the DGS and the student's advisor, with final approval by Rackham.

Candidacy Expiration

Candidacy expires after five years. Any student who does not file the dissertation within five years of achieving candidacy may need to retake the major preliminary exam. This rule applies to students who have been active as well as those who have been granted a leave by Rackham.

Joint Degree Students

Students enrolled in our joint program (with Public Policy) satisfy their political science program requirements through one major subfield. The student's coursework in the joint program subfield substitutes for the minor. Students in the joint program must still complete the cognate requirement of at least 4 credit hours.

Preliminary Exams

Students take preliminary exams in both their major and minor subfields. The exams are designed by each subfield. The purpose of the prelim in the major subfield is to allow the examination committee to determine whether the student is adequately prepared to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in the subfield. In addition, for the major exam, the committee will assess whether the student is prepared to conduct advanced scholarly research

in that subfield. Such preparation for research includes, but is not exhausted by, mastery of a substantial body of knowledge in the subfield.

Preliminary examinations in both the major and minor subfields should be seen as an opportunity for students to develop their own thoughts in written or scholarly discussion. Students are expected to be familiar with principal literatures and major debates in the subfield, as well as trends in empirical findings and methodological approaches. They will be expected to organize and classify information, to discuss relationships between ideas and phenomena, and to generalize on the basis of relevant evidence about central issues within the subfield. The examination committee will look for originality and creativity above and beyond familiarity, understanding and mastery. For the major subfield, students must not only display mastery of a substantial body of knowledge, but must be conversant in particular with research at the cutting edge. They should be able to identify major unsolved problems and should be familiar with how research is conducted within the subfield. The major exam is not a preliminary discussion of the student's proposed dissertation; rather, it is designed to determine whether the student is qualified to undertake dissertation research.

Across the subfields, the content of the exam differs, and the exam is often individuated for each student. Some subfields have a core reading list, while others require the student to supplement a core reading with other texts. Some subfields suggest that the student write potential exam questions. As a result, content varies greatly in scope and specificity. Students often have considerable responsibility for defining the topics and the readings that will be covered in the exams.

Despite the individuality of many exams, every exam should be fairly wide-ranging. It should not be confined to just one topic such as "the government and politics of Russia and its successor states." Fairness requires agreement between student and committee, typically in the form of a reading list, as to what constitutes the subfield to be covered by the exam. In order to assist the department in arriving at and maintaining reasonable consistency across subfields in the conduct of prelims, the Director of Graduate Studies reads all faculty reports of performance on major and minor prelims.

All subfields require an oral examination, and some also require a written component. Some subfields offer the exam only at designated periods during the academic year, while others permit students to schedule the exam at any point. Oral examination committees are composed as follows:

- For a major prelim: three faculty members in the major subfield and one person chosen at random from faculty outside that subfield. The graduate coordinator assigns the random member of the examining committee.
- For a minor prelim: two faculty members from the minor subfield.
- Only faculty with voting rights in Political Science may chair major prelims. Faculty with voting rights or courtesy appointments in Political Science may chair minor prelims.

The oral examining committees must be approved by the subfield coordinator or Director of Graduate Studies in the case of student-designed minors. Except in unusual circumstances, the core membership of the major and minor prelim committees may not overlap; the three faculty members from the subfield of the major prelim and the two members from the subfield of the minor prelim must be different people. However, one or more of the core members of one preliminary examination committee may also participate in the other examination committee, if the student so requests, provided that the membership of the committee in which there is overlapping membership is enlarged correspondingly by one or more members of the faculty from the subfield under examination.

In subfields that permit exams at any point, students are responsible for scheduling the faculty examining committee and reserving the room. Random members should be included in the scheduling process from the very start. On the day of the exam, students should pick up a prelim exam form from the graduate coordinator's office, as well as the student's academic file. The examining committee will fill out the examination form, which the student should return promptly to the graduate coordinator, along with the academic file.

Evaluation of Preliminary Exams

The exams are graded on the scale of Honors Pass/Pass/Fail. Three favorable votes are sufficient to pass the major preliminary examination. Students who fail are entitled to be examined a second time. On a retake, the examination committee should consist of five department members (four from the subfield, one outside it), and the support of four faculty is necessary to receive a grade of Pass. Of the original four who attended the first examination, three members, one of whom must be the chair, should return for the second examination. If there is a need to replace a member other than the original random member, the replacement will be nominated by the student and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the chair of the committee. The student, in consultation with the advisor, may request assignment of a new random member. The faculty member assigned at random to serve on the original committee may decline to serve on the re-examination.

To pass the minor prelim requires favorable votes from both examining faculty members. If students fail the minor examination, they may request a reexamination. On the second round, the panel should consist of three departmental members from the subfield, including at least one member from the first round; a unanimous vote is necessary to pass.

Failing the second attempt of either the major or minor exam terminates the student's pre-candidacy status, and results in the student's dismissal from the program. Students may appeal the grade awarded in a prelim; see the section entitled "Appeals Process" in the previous chapter.

Subfield Qualifying Criteria

American Politics

Preliminary exams in American Politics are oral with no written component. The exam is based on a reading list drawn from the syllabi for POLSCI 611, 629, and 630, which students are strongly encouraged to take. The American politics core course, POLSCI 611, is offered every fall semester and consists of a broad introduction to the study of American Politics. This course features a mix of classic works and cutting-edge research. Each winter semester, the department offers two courses designed to build on 611: a proseminar on political institutions (POLSCI 629), and a proseminar on political behavior (POLSC 630).

The American Politics preliminary exam usually takes place in early fall of each year. The exam format will be oral with no written component. Students must demonstrate knowledge of research literature across all facets of American politics (e.g., behavior, institutions, etc.). Students majoring in American politics are expected to take this exam at the start of their second year after studying for the exam during the summer. However, students may choose to take the exam in the winter semester of their second year. The subfield coordinator will select the faculty administering the exam. Faculty members will be selected to administer the exam at the beginning of every academic year, and are ineligible to serve in subsequent years until all eligible faculty in the subfield have taken a turn on this committee.

Comparative Politics

Instead of offering one proseminar, core topics in comparative politics are taught through half-semester (i.e. 7-week) course modules. The core topics are: state formation, political economy of development, institutions, elections and redistribution (i.e. comparative political behavior), contentious politics, political identity, and regimes/regime transition.

- a) At least 4 modules will be offered each year, one each half-semester. Modules not offered in that year will be offered the following year.
- b) **Comparative major students must take four courses in comparative politics, of which three must be one of these core modules.** Other courses to take for the requirement beyond the modules include regular comparative courses, courses on specific regions or countries, and comparative method/research design/qualitative methods. Courses beyond this must be approved by the subfield coordinator. (For example, a related course in American or World or in another department like economics, history, or sociology.) The fourth course may be another module or a full semester course.
- c) **Comparative minor students must take three comparative courses. 2 must be from the core modules.** The third course should be drawn from other comparative courses, courses on specific regions or countries, or comparative method/research design/qualitative methods course. The course on state formation may count toward both the comparative minor and the world major.
- d) The preliminary exam is structured by the syllabi of the core modules, though each prelim list should be tailored to fit the specific interests of the student, guided by their faculty advisors.

Comparative Politics Subfield Core Areas:

1. State Formation (offered by both comparative and world faculty)
2. Political Economy of Development
3. Elections and Distribution (comparative political behavior)
4. Institutions
5. Social Movements and Contentious Politics (including repression and political violence)
6. Identity and Politics (including ethnicity, religion, and political culture)
7. Regimes and Regime Transition (including authoritarian regimes, democratization, and democratic backsliding)

The preliminary exam in comparative politics is a two-hour oral examination based upon three questions and a reading list. These will be constructed by the student in consultation with the committee, and must be approved by all members of the committee. The faculty will select at least one of the questions submitted by the student to begin the exam. For the major prelim, the examining committee will be composed of three faculty from the subfield, selected by the student with the approval of the subfield coordinator, and one random outside member assigned by the graduate coordinator. For the minor prelim, the committee will comprise two faculty from the subfield selected by the student with the approval of the subfield coordinator.

The prelim should be structured by the syllabi of the core modules, though each prelim list should be tailored to fit the specific interests of the student, guided by faculty advisors. The reading list must allow the student to address the three questions and, in doing so, to demonstrate both a broad command of the material and the promise of making intellectual contributions to relevant scholarly literature. While one portion of the reading list may focus on the student's area of special interest, the reading list must be extensive enough for the student to demonstrate the ability to think critically about a broader cross-section of the comparative politics subfield. The subfield will maintain a repository of graduate course syllabi that students may consult to construct their reading lists.

Students should plan to take the comparative prelim before the end of their second year. The exam is offered during three windows each year: the second and third weeks of January, the last two weeks of April, and the last two weeks of August. Students should plan well in advance to form their committees, to generate their reading list and questions, and to coordinate a schedule that works for the student and all members of the prelim committee. There are no requirements regarding how many courses students should take prior to the exam.

Minors may take the exam after taking three comparative courses. Two courses must be from the core modules. The third course should be drawn from other comparative courses, courses on specific regions, countries, or comparative method/research design/qualitative methods course. The course on state formation may count toward both the Comparative minor and the World major. The oral exam can be shorter in length (e.g. 1.5 hours).

International Relations and World Politics

The preliminary examination is an oral examination based on a reading list assembled by the candidate and approved by their committee. There is no written component. For a major prelim, a committee of three faculty in the world politics subfield with a randomly assigned outside member administers a two-hour oral exam; a minor requires a committee of two and a one-hour exam. The basis for the reading list are the syllabi from the half-semester field seminars: POLSCI 661, 662, 663, and 664. The 4 core modules are: 1) political violence/conflict and security; 2) international institutions and law; 3) international political economy; 4) the state (including historical state development, human rights, and state-society relations). The subfield would strongly prefer students to take all four field seminars before the exam, but do not necessarily require it at this time because some field seminars have not been taught in all years. It can also include readings from other courses the student has taken. The reading list needs to cover some material from all perspectives within world politics. It can emphasize particular topics of interest to the candidate. After compiling the list, the student needs to submit it to the three members of their prelim committee for approval and revision well in advance of the exam. The student should contact the three faculty members they would like to have on their committee months before the

exam to ensure their agreement to serve and their availability. The prelim is commonly administered at the end of the student's second year or in the beginning of the third year.

For more details concerning the major or minor prelim in International Relations and World Politics, consult with the subfield coordinator.

Law, Courts, and Politics

The preliminary examination in Law, Courts, and Politics contains both written and oral components and is offered twice a year. It is based on a reading list which covers basic debates and issues in the subfield. Students are also invited to generate a subsection of the list covering their own particular research interests. All students planning to take an exam in Law, Courts, and Politics should contact the subfield coordinator for a copy of the reading list.

The fall exam is two weeks after the beginning of the Fall semester and the spring exam is two weeks after the end of the Winter semester (approximately September 15 and April 30).

The Exam Structure

Students submit three proposed exam questions two weeks prior to the date of the written exam. The written component is comprised of five questions from which a student selects three questions. Questions may cover themes in any of the categories on this list, and there is no guarantee that all sections will be covered. If a student composes a subsection of the list that relates to their research interests there will be a corresponding question on the exam.

Approximately one week later, the oral portion of the exam takes place. This oral portion may cover the written exam that the student has submitted, as well as materials from sections on the reading list that were not covered in exam questions. Please note that exam dates must be scheduled well in advance.

For a major prelim, a committee of three faculty members administers the exam. Majors will generally take their prelim at the end of their second year or in September of their third year. For a minor prelim, a committee of two faculty members administers the exam. Minors should take their prelim at the beginning of their third year, and certainly by the end of their third year. In forming a preliminary exam committee, students should consult with their major advisors, as well as faculty with whom they have worked.

Research Methods

Students may choose Political Methodology as a primary focus of their intellectual activity. Students who intend to write a dissertation in methods and to engage in research and teaching aimed at improving our understanding of research methods choose Methods as their major subfield. Students who desire to combine a strong interest in a substantive subfield with a strong methods background are invited to seek a minor in Methods.

There are five core methods courses:

- Behavioral Research Methods, POLSCI 680
- Introduction to Formal Modeling, POLSCI 698
- Field Experiments, POLSCI 689
- Qualitative Methods, POLSCI 694
- Quantitative Empirical Methods, POLSCI 699

Requirements for the Methods Major and Minor are as follows.

Requirements for a Major:

- Three or more advanced courses within the subfield (i.e., courses beyond the core courses 680, 698, 689, 694 and 699); students pursuing the MA in Statistics may substitute the advanced electives taken for that program for two of these three courses
- Appropriate coursework in mathematics or related disciplines, or equivalent knowledge
- A major preliminary examination

The scope and format for the major exam is determined in consultation with a prelim committee. The major exam should evaluate the student's grasp of core material from the student's areas. The major exam usually involves the student's submission of an original research paper that works expertly at, or positively advances, the frontier in some area(s) of methods. The exam typically explores the topics in and related to the paper deeply and surveys and evaluates the student's broader knowledge and comfortable familiarity across the areas of research methods. It is also important for the student to demonstrate an ability to relate their methodological work to substantive (domain-specific) work in political science.

Students planning to take the Major exam are strongly encouraged to identify the chair of their exam committee and to begin conferring with the exam committee chair about their exam at least six months prior to the student's intended exam date. It is especially important that the student receive feedback on the proposed research paper. In particular, the exam committee chair should

let the student know as early as possible whether the proposed research paper satisfies the requirements for use in the Methods Major exam.

Requirements for a Minor:

Students who successfully complete a minor in methods will have the background necessary for conducting rigorous research in their areas of substantive expertise, as well as be prepared to teach introductory methods courses. The requirement for a methods minor is a successful preliminary exam. Preparation for the preliminary exam normally consists of:

- Coursework in three of the five core methods areas (i.e., three of the core courses 680, 698, 689, 694 and 699), including at least one of either POLSCI 698 or POLSCI 699
- At least one advanced course in at least one area
- A prelim paper.

The content of the paper and the scope and format of the exam are determined in consultation with a prelim committee. The paper should demonstrate that the student has a firm grasp of the core and advanced material, can integrate the material from different methods areas, and can apply this material well to a substantive research question. This paper serves as a starting point for the oral exam. The examination as a whole, however, will have more general coverage than merely referring to the paper. The examination will span three of five broad methodological areas chosen by the student.

Students planning to take the Minor exam are strongly encouraged to identify the chair of their exam committee and to begin conferring with the exam committee chair about their exam at least four months prior to the student's intended exam date. It is especially important that the student receive feedback on the proposed research paper and its suitability for the exam.

Co-Authored Papers:

A student who wants to use a paper co-authored with a faculty member for a methods prelim exam (Major or Minor), must have the faculty co-author affirm to the exam committee that the student made a sufficiently large contribution to the methodological content of the paper. What constitutes "sufficiently large" is left to the discretion of the exam committee. The exam committee is encouraged to ask the faculty co-author for details well before the exam is scheduled. If the exam committee is convinced that the student's contribution is sufficient, the paper can be used for the exam. If the exam committee is not convinced the student made a sufficient contribution, the committee should inform the student that a different paper will have to be used for the exam. This

should obviously happen well before the exam is scheduled—at least six months prior to a Major exam and at least four months prior to a Minor exam.

A faculty member who is a co-author of a paper used for a methods prelim exam may not serve on the exam committee. Such a faculty member could serve on the exam committee if the student decides to use a paper that is not co-written with that faculty member. Students should be advised of this as well as the pros and cons of each option.

A student who wants to use a paper co-authored with another student for a methods prelim exam (Major or Minor), must seek and receive permission for this from the exam committee. The key consideration is whether the student taking the exam made a sufficiently large contribution to the methodological content of the paper. There may be some instances where two or more students could be allowed to use the same, co-authored paper for each of their exams. However, this would only be allowed for Major exams if the students each made sufficiently large and non-overlapping contributions to the methodological content of the paper. One way this could occur is if one student worked on a novel formal model while the other student developed a novel statistical model to test the theory.

For more details concerning prelims in methods, please consult the subfield coordinator.

Political Theory

The preliminary examination in political theory includes written and oral components. The exam is offered twice each year, in September and January.

Guidelines

Students majoring in political theory will typically take their theory prelim in September of their third year, depending on individual circumstance, January of the second year might also be considered as a possibility. Only in unusual cases will a theory major be allowed to take the exam earlier or later than these two specified options. If students fail the exam in September, they must retake it in the following January.

Students minoring in political theory may take the exam in September or January of their third year. If students are facing institutional deadlines and need to pass the exam before September 1, they should consult with the subfield coordinator to explore the possibility of taking the exam out of season.

All students who intend to schedule a theory examination should work with member(s) of the theory faculty well before the term during which students intend to take the exam. Several months before the planned exam, they must contact the faculty who they would like to serve on

the exam committee. At this point, the student and faculty discuss the initial reading list and the student's interests in order to shape their proposed part B questions (see #5 below).

In the weeks prior to the exam, students must work closely with their committee members to finalize their reading list and proposed questions. Students must submit topics, questions, and/or particular points of concentration no later than the first day of classes of the term during which they plan to take the exam.

The written exam is a combination of questions written by the faculty and questions submitted by the student. It consists of two parts. Part A is composed of 2 or 3 questions which address broad themes and issues from the history of political theory. All students will answer one of these questions. Part B is composed of 3 or 4 questions per each student taking the exam. These address the students' planned research interests. The questions are based on the questions submitted by students, sometimes replicating them directly, but usually edited for focus and feasibility. The questions ask for a more particular focus on texts, authors, or historical periods. Theory majors will answer 2, minors will answer 1.

Students are expected to consult their books and notes as they think through the questions, although they may not work with other students once they have received the questions. Written responses are limited to 2,000 words for Part A and 1,250 words for each question in Part B. On the second Thursday after classes begin, questions pertaining to the written portion of the exam will be available for students electronically at 1 p.m. Written essays are due back electronically by 5 p.m. the following Monday.

The oral portion of the exam will be given within two weeks. Students should coordinate the scheduling with the exam committee members and with the graduate coordinator well in advance of the written exam. The oral examination will work off of the written portion, using the student's responses as an entree into discussions and follow-up questions. Oral exam questions are not, however, limited to the substance/subject matter of the written portion. Students may obtain reading lists from the subfield coordinator and their committee members.

Student-Designed Minors

Student-designed minors (e.g., Political Economy, Women and Politics, or Racial and Ethnic Politics) can be an excellent way for students to tailor their coursework to fit the specific needs of their dissertation research, to integrate into their Program approaches and methodologies for political research from outside the Political Science Department or to build on intellectual strengths within the Department that cut across the subfields. To design a minor, students should form a committee of two faculty who work within the subfield that the student proposes

to design. The student and faculty together, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (who approves all student designed minors), should select courses for the proposed minor and decide the format of the preliminary exam. All prelims must have an oral component, but the student and faculty may decide to add a written component. The student must receive approval from the committee for the examination reading list.

Modes of Inquiry Minor

The Modes of Inquiry Minor is a “guided” student-designed minor that aims to serve students who want to develop skills of problem-posing and analysis so as to be able to successfully frame a dissertation using approaches not covered by the Methods minor nor by POLSCI 680. As with any student designed minor, courses for the Modes of Inquiry minor and the design of the prelim are chosen by the student and a committee of two faculty members, one of whom must be a member of the Political Theory or Law, Courts, and Politics subfields, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (who approves all student designed minors).

The “Modes of Inquiry” minor would involve different configurations of courses depending on the student’s particular interests and area of specialization.

It will most likely involve training in analytic approaches specific to students’ research projects, which may be fulfilled by existing offerings in Political Science (e.g. qualitative methods, measurement, statistics), or by options outside the department (e.g., in Communication Studies; Women’s Studies; Screen Arts and Cultures; History; Sociology).

Law, Courts, and Politics and Political Theory students may wish to structure the minor to enable them to take additional seminars in the subfields of law/political theory, specifically those of our existing offerings that focus on current debates in the subfields of law and political theory with an emphasis on reading and analysis of secondary literature plus formulating/situating questions that engage ongoing debates. Every student who opts for the Modes of Inquiry minor is strongly encouraged to take POLSCI 702 “Modes of Inquiry,” a collectively-taught course which presents various modes of inquiry involved in some of the textual, historical and interpretive approaches that are requisite to conceive and execute dissertation research in political theory and law.

The Dissertation Stage

Once a student enters candidacy, the experience in the program changes dramatically. While students may continue to register for one course per semester and may serve as a GSI or hold a compensated research assistantship, the bulk of their time is dedicated to independent research. Many find the stretches of unstructured time disorienting. It is a good idea to establish a daily

routine, set intermediate goals, participate in formal or informal research workshops, and keep in close contact with the dissertation advisor.

Coursework

All candidates should register for POLSCI 995 (Dissertation/Candidate) with their dissertation advisor. Candidates may enroll in one additional course up to four credits per semester. If a course is only offered once per year, students may “bank” their course, taking two courses (up to eight credits) in the next semester. Students may only bank courses for one semester.

Dissertation Committee

Choosing a Dissertation Chair

During the third year (or sooner), the student should select a dissertation advisor and file the request with the graduate coordinator. The dissertation chair must be a regular member of the Department of Political Science. Students may select two advisors to co-chair the committee; in this case, one of the members may come from outside of the department. Selection of the dissertation advisor is entirely up to the student, and the student may alter the selection at any point during candidacy. Any alterations should be filed with the graduate coordinator.

Committee Composition

By the end of the fourth year, and no later than the end of the fifth year, the student should formulate the full committee, and file the committee with the graduate coordinator, who in turn files the committee with Rackham. A dissertation committee normally consists of three faculty members from the Department of Political Science and one cognate faculty member who holds at least a .50 appointment in another Rackham doctoral program. However, the student may form a committee with as few as two members from Political Science. Faculty holding a courtesy appointment in Political Science may serve either as an internal or cognate member of the committee. Faculty from other universities may participate on the committee, but not as the sole dissertation chair or as the cognate member of the committee. These faculty members are considered “special members,” and students must submit to the DGS a memo (along with each outside faculty member’s CV) that explains the expertise this person brings to the committee. Full guidelines for dissertation committee composition and eligibility are available on the [Rackham website](#).

Dissertation Prospectus

In a prospectus, doctoral candidates lay out their intended dissertation research. It is a form of a commitment to a research project that will consume the student for the next *n* years, and often

will lay the foundation for a career. The prospectus defines the student's dissertation research question by assessing the existing literature and noting the gap---and its significance--- that the student intends to fill. The prospectus also includes a plan for filling the gap: the methods to be employed, the theory to be constructed, and the data or evidence needed to evaluate it. The precise format and content of the prospectus varies between subfields and topics. Students should discuss expectations with their advisor.

Writing a prospectus is a process that generally involves multiple meetings with one's advisor and sometimes the full committee. It is expected that students will submit a dissertation prospectus and convene a meeting with the members of the dissertation committee at which they successfully defend the document no later than the end of the fourth year or within one year of achieving candidacy, whichever comes first. Students who fail to meet this milestone risk falling out of good standing, and should consult with the DGS well before this deadline is missed. A successful prospectus defense requires at minimum 3 out of the 4 members of the dissertation committee to be in attendance (virtual participation counts as attendance). This must include the chair or co-chairs, and two attending members must hold appointments in the Political Science Department. The cognate member need not be present, although students are encouraged to include their cognate member at this stage. When the prospectus is successfully defended, a copy of the prospectus defense form (available from the graduate coordinator) must be filed in the student's academic file.

Students who have not had a dissertation prospectus approved and have not set up an official dissertation committee with Rackham within two years of achieving candidacy may be declared inactive and will not be allowed to continue in the program.

The Dissertation

The final requirement for the Ph.D. is the doctoral dissertation itself. The dissertation must be original scholarly research conducted by the student that makes a contribution of substantial merit and value to the discipline. Dissertations normally take one of two forms: a book-like project or three relatively independent essays, each of publishable quality as a stand-alone article. Different topics lend themselves better to one format or the other, and each has its merits.

The final copies of the dissertation must be prepared in conformity with the requirements of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, and it must be successfully defended before the student's dissertation committee, which normally consists of three faculty members from the department and one faculty member from outside the department.

A student has five years to finish the dissertation after achieving candidacy or seven years after admission to the Ph.D. program, whichever comes sooner. These deadlines are set by the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. Those not completing the dissertation within five years of achieving candidacy will be required to retake and pass a preliminary examination in their major subfield.

Master's Degrees and Program Certificates

For Political Science Doctoral Students

While the Department of Political Science does not offer a terminal master's degree and does not admit students who seek only a master's degree, doctoral students may elect to earn a master's degree in the course of their study. Requirements for a general M.A. in Political Science include:

- 24 hours of graduate level course work (course numbers 500 and above), including
 - 18 hours of graduate level political science coursework
 - 6 hours of work in cognate courses
- a grade of B or better in all courses
- certification of the preparation of an M.A. thesis by a faculty member.

The master's thesis should be a substantial piece of original research prepared for a graduate course in the department or prepared especially for the M.A. degree. As a general rule of thumb, the thesis should be of a quality suitable for submission to a political science journal. A member of the political science faculty must approve the thesis.

Students who want to get a master's degree should contact the graduate coordinator during the term. The students are then prompted to "apply for graduation" BEFORE the term ends. Once approved, the master's degree will appear on the student's transcript for that term.

Political science doctoral students may be interested in earning a master's degree in another Rackham program. Students should consult the graduate program guidelines of the other department to learn of that department's particular requirements.

For Doctoral Students from other Rackham Programs

Students from other Rackham programs may earn a master's degree in Political Science with the same requirements as internal students with one addition: students must defend the thesis orally before a committee of two members of the political science faculty.

JD/MA in World Politics

The Department of Political Science and the College of Law have collaborated to offer dual degrees in law and political science, with an emphasis in world politics. Students secure admission to the law school first, and during their first or second year apply to the department political science master's program. Entry to the program requires the completion of POLSCI 660 and recommendation of the instructor to admit the student. Master's degree criteria are the same as for all other students outside of the political science doctoral program. Specifically:

- 24 hours of graduate level course work (course numbers 500 and above), including
 - 18 hours of graduate level political science coursework
 - 6 hours of work in cognate courses
- a grade of B or better in all courses
- preparation of an M.A. thesis
- successful defense of the thesis before two political science faculty.

Students should take courses in world or comparative politics, with at least one-half of the required hours coming from world politics.

The process of standardizing language regarding funding is currently ongoing and will be updated in due course. However, please note that LSA funding is exclusively available for PhD studies and cannot be applied to other professional degrees, such as a JD from the Law School. While students may apply for Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) positions while registered at the Law School, there is no guarantee that they will receive a GSI spot.

Law students with interests in other political science subfields should contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

Program Certificates

Some campus programs offer certificates that can testify to your mastery of the program's material. For example, the Program in Survey Methodology and the Center for the Study of Complex Systems each offer a certificate program. Contact the program for more information.

Rackham and University Policies

Continuous Enrollment

Effective since the fall semester of 2010, Rackham requires that all graduate students enroll continuously in each fall and winter semester from the time that they matriculate until they

graduate. Leaves of absence are available for medical purposes and personal reasons. See the Rackham website for more information about leaves.

Students must be enrolled if only for one hour of credit (which carries a minimum enrollment fee) when they take preliminary exams (except in the summer). Students must be enrolled full-time during the term in which they take the final oral defense of the dissertation, including the spring/summer term.

The Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies defines full-time enrollment as 9 credit hours per term as a pre-candidate and 8 credit hours per term as a candidate. Students who are enrolled half-time may not take more than six hours of courses. Students who enroll half-time for one or more terms must enroll for more than the eight-term minimum referred to above (or pay equivalent fees).

Leave of Absence

Ph.D. students may request a leave of absence when certain life events prevent continued active participation in their degree program. [Rackham's Leave of Absence Policy](#) enables students to officially suspend work toward their degree for a limited time.

Students may request a leave of absence as early as six months prior to the term the leave is to start. A leave will be granted to students for illness (either physical or mental) or injury, to enable them to provide care or assistance for family or dependents, to allow them to meet military service obligations, or for other personal reasons.

Students are required to meet with the DGS to plan for a leave of absence and also discuss possible alternatives to a leave of absence. The student is not required to disclose details about the leave. Once a student decides that he or she needs to take a leave and has discussed the leave with his or her graduate program, the student submits a request for a leave in Rackham's [Leave of Absence system](#), providing basic information about the dates of the leave as well as the type of leave. Supplemental information is required for leaves of absence for medical reasons, military service and family necessity/dependent care.

Students are encouraged to develop a re-entry plan when they request a leave of absence. The purpose of a re-entry plan is to provide a record of the student's progress in the graduate program, remaining funding commitment, as well as a clear understanding about next academic steps once the student returns from the leave of absence. This document can be helpful if there is a change in graduate program leadership while a student is on a leave of

absence. An example of [a tentative re-entry plan is available](#). Rackham does not collect a copy of the re-entry plan, but rather a copy should be kept in the student's file in the graduate program.

Students can find more information, and request a leave for absence on Rackham's website: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/registration/leave-of-absence#types>

Time to Degree

A student has seven years to complete all requirements for the Ph.D. program. The Graduate School may permit an additional calendar year if a student files for a time extension. Students who anticipate taking longer than seven years must file for a time extension six months before exceeding this deadline. In exceptional cases, the Graduate School may allow up to 24 months beyond the seven-year rule.

The Graduate School reserves the right to rescind candidacy for those exceeding seven years. Those who have not met all the requirements for the degree within seven years and who have not had a formal extension approved by the Graduate School may be declared inactive and will not be allowed to continue in the program.

Ten Term Rule

Graduate Students are limited to ten terms of support that come from College General Funds (e.g. employment as a GSI). Tuition-only fellowships, Departmental Fellowships and most GSRA positions do not count toward the ten terms. This rule imposes a cap on employment; it is not a guarantee of ten terms of employment. Students should consult their offer letters to see what is guaranteed to them. For more information on exceptions to and calculation of the ten term rule, see <http://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/faculty-staff/graduate-education/policies/the-ten-term-rule.html>.

Resources

Financing your Education

Graduate school is an expensive undertaking, requiring a significant investment of time and financial resources. The University of Michigan, through a combination of college, departmental, and graduate school resources, is happy to share in that investment, significantly reducing the financial burden on our doctoral students.

At present, new doctoral students admitted through the regular admissions process enter the program with a funding package sufficient to cover tuition, insurance, and modest living expenses for the first five years of study. This section describes additional resources, beyond the department's funding package, that are available to every student.

Most students are admitted to the doctoral program during the annual cycle. In rare instances students will be considered off-cycle. However, no student admitted off-cycle will be awarded departmental funding.

A Typical Path

Years 1 to 5:

Students should refer to their offer letters for funding commitments from the department. Support combines fellowship (ordinarily during the first year) and teaching positions as laid out in the student's offer of admission. Students often pursue other sources of funding to reduce teaching loads or gain stipend support that is higher than the departmental fellowship. Note that any outside funding replaces the department's funding; the departmental commitment cannot be deferred.

Most students who do not obtain outside funding teach for three or four years, two semesters per year. Please reach out to the graduate program staff with funding questions.

POLSCI 992, 993 and 994

Graduate students are required to take a sequence of 3 half-term modules on professionalization over their first 3 years.

In the Winter term of Year 1, students will take POLISCI 992 "Introduction to the Political Science Profession." This module emphasizes the hidden curriculum – the set of skills and practices that are informally expected as members of the political science discipline, but are typically not programmatically instructed. In addition, it includes guest speakers from the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and Rackham's Professional Development and Engagement Program.

In the Fall term of Year 2, students will take POLISCI 993 "Graduate Student Instructor Training." This module will commence with a 2-hour introductory workshop led by CRLT during the Winter term of students' first year. Following this, there will be a half-day workshop led by CRLT for new GSIs (i.e. second-year students) just prior to the start of the Fall term (i.e., in late August). In addition, there will be 4 meetings of POLISCI 993 during the first half of the Fall term to

complement the pre-term workshop. These meetings will focus on just-in-time training, as well as a range of pedagogical topics.

In the Fall term of Year 3, students will take POLISCI 994 “Research and Dissertation Development.” The goal of this module is to help students move forward in producing a PhD prospectus, dissertation chapter, and/or working paper. The 3rd-year conference will act as a culminating event for this (i.e., in late January or early February).

ELI 994 – College Teaching in the US: Pedagogy, Culture, and Language

The English Language Institute (ELI) collaborates with the LSA to help students prepare for teaching responsibilities. Part of this training includes English language preparation for students. Prospective GSIs must take the GSI Oral English Test (OET) in order to be appointed to be a GSI for the Fall term and later. ***Prospective GSIs are required to take the GSI OET UNLESS they hold a four-year undergraduate degree from:***

- a U.S. college or university; -- **OR**--
- an institution where English was the exclusive medium of instruction.

Students who meet the criteria above are exempt from taking the OET.

Those who do not meet the above requirements **must** register to take the English Language Institute (ELI 944) GSI Training Course in Winter before they start teaching and plan to complete the OET in the Spring.

Year 6 and beyond:

It is not uncommon for students to take more than five years to complete their degree. Currently, the national average time to degree is 6.7 years and students in our program average just under 7 years.

Funding beyond the fifth year is not guaranteed, please refer to your offer letter for any funding past year five. As long as a student remains in good standing within the program, LSA offers a tuition fellowship for tuition and insurance expenses in the fall and winter semesters. (See Below: The LSA tuition fellowship cannot be used in the semester when a student files the dissertation). Students remain responsible for registration fees and their living expenses. Many students obtain external sources of support.

Students who have not obtained an external source of support, and who have not hit their 10-term limit, may apply for a teaching position within the department. Teaching positions are limited and students in their first five years of study have priority for assignments.

The final semester:

LSA Tuition fellowships, which cover tuition expenses for candidates, cannot be used for the semester in which the student files the dissertation. Forms of support that may be used to cover tuition include: a GSRA, a Rackham One-Term award, or external awards. Rackham One-Term Fellowships are only awarded for the Fall and Winter semesters. As these sorts of resources are scarce and awarded competitively, students are strongly encouraged to plan for their funding in the final term well in advance.

Students defending in the Spring/Summer semester, outside of the grace period, will need to work with Academic Program manager and DGS on funding options.

LSA Tuition Fellowship

As described above, once students achieve candidacy, and as long as they remain in good standing, they are eligible for a tuition fellowship. The LSA tuition fellowship covers a student's full Rackham candidacy tuition for fall and winter semesters, plus health insurance. Students who fall out of good standing in the program (see chapter 4) cannot receive the tuition support. LSA introduced the tuition fellowship when Rackham introduced the continuous enrollment requirement to offset the costs associated with that requirement. It was not intended and cannot be used to cover tuition costs in the final semester of registration. Students should plan ahead to cover tuition through other sources for this semester.

Departmental Supplemental Support

At the start of each academic year, the Director of Graduate Studies circulates a list of all departmental supplemental funding opportunities and any Rackham funds that require departmental nomination or assessment. Some funding opportunities are competitive and some are merit-based awards. The department's merit-based awards are determined by the faculty Graduate Affairs Committee, composed of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Director of Admissions, and the Director of Placement. The program coordinator regularly advertises opportunities.

Other Resources

Graduate Student Research Assistants (GSRA)

Many of our faculty have research grants that enable them to hire graduate students as research assistants for a semester or more. In most cases a GSRA position will cover the

student's tuition, health care, and a stipend. Often sponsor constraints mean that GSRA positions cannot be offered to students who have not achieved candidacy. Faculty do not generally advertise GSRA positions. We encourage students to ask faculty about position availability.

Rackham Funding

Rackham sponsors a variety of fellowships and resources to help defray research expenses, travel costs, tuition and stipend support, and emergency costs. Please see the appendix for information on Rackham funding as well as the Rackham website.

Rackham Emergency Funding

The [Rackham Graduate Student Emergency Fund](#) is intended to help meet the financial needs of Rackham graduate students who encounter an emergency situation or one-time, unusual, or unforeseen expenses during their degree program. This includes medical, dental, or mental health emergencies, major accidents and events such as fire and natural disasters, and expenses related to the death of an immediate family member.

Rackham's [Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services \(GSPCS\)](#) team is available to support and guide students on accessing emergency funds. GSPCS can assist in framing your application and connecting you to other resources if your needs extend beyond the grant's scope or you require additional resources.

Infrastructure

Computing Lab

The Department of Political Science houses a computing lab on the seven floor of Haven Hall. The CAP lab contains computers loaded with a variety of software used most often in our program. Graduate students can access the lab by swiping their M-Card. The University of Michigan supports Linux, Microsoft Windows, and Mac OS X operating systems.

Office Space

As space permits, students are allocated shared office space. Students who are writing their dissertations may also inquire at the circulation desk of the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library for a locked study carrel. Carrels are located on the third through sixth floors of the graduate library. Carrels may be shared by up to three students.

Student Files

Student academic files are maintained in the Office of the Graduate Program Coordinator. Students are free to review their file. The academic file contains reports from all annual and preliminary exam assessments.

Counseling System**Director of Graduate Studies**

The director of graduate studies is available to students to provide advice and answer questions about the program.

Initial Faculty Mentor

The Director of Graduate Studies will assign each new student to an initial faculty member according to the student's research interests. The faculty mentor can give advice about course selection, professional development, and resources on campus. Students are free to change their faculty mentor at any time, but should let the graduate coordinator know of the change.

Ordinarily the faculty mentor will chair the student's first and second year assessments until the student chooses a dissertation advisor. Students should meet with their faculty mentor at least once per term to discuss their academic development.

Dissertation Committee

As the student progresses through the program and focuses individual research interests, the student will compose a dissertation committee. The dissertation advisor will assume the role of the student's primary mentor, but the student will find that periodic contact with other dissertation committee members will be useful.

Discrimination and Harassment Counseling

The Department of Political Science is committed to a climate of mutual respect. If any student has experienced discrimination or harassment in any form, there are resources available within the department as well as in multiple venues across campus. Students should feel free to contact the Faculty Allies for Diversity for advice and further resources.

Rackham Resources

The Rackham Graduate School offers a variety of resources to help students with the academic as well as non-academic aspects of being a graduate student. Resources include how to build an effective mentoring relationship with your advisor; dispute resolution; advice for those who have experienced harassment or discrimination; new parent accommodation; and health and wellness counseling. See the Rackham website for more information.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The University of Michigan supports its educational mission by fostering a community based on civility, dignity, diversity, inclusivity, education, freedom, honesty, and safety.

Questions or concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion within the department can be communicated directly in oral or written form to the Political Science faculty member(s) serving as our department's Rackham Faculty Diversity Ally (Vince Hutchings, vincenth@umich.edu).

Students may also seek confidential consultation with the following resources beyond the department:

Rackham Resolution Officer

The [Rackham Resolution Officer](#) provides information about Rackham Graduate School and University policies and procedures, makes referrals, and offers resources when appropriate. She also provides a safe and confidential environment to discuss a wide range of academic and personal concerns, and advises students on matters related to emergencies, crisis situations, disputes, and student conduct violations. Graduate students can email RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu or call (734) 764-4400 to make an appointment.

Student Conflict Resolution

The [Office of Student Conflict Resolution](#) (OSCR) offers a spectrum of conflict resolution pathways that are educationally focused, student-driven, community owned, and restorative in nature, which are adaptable to meet the needs of individuals experiencing conflict. OSCR is located in the Student Activities Building (Suite 100).

Office of the Ombuds

The [University Ombuds office](#) is a safe place where student questions, complaints, and concerns about the functioning of the University can be discussed confidentially. Rather than being an advocate for either side in a dispute, the Office of the Ombuds serves as an impartial advocate for fair and consistent treatment. Through informal dispute resolution services, resources, referrals, and discussion of available options, the work of the Ombuds office may supplement conflict

resolution processes within the department. Students can call (734) 763-3545 or go to the Ombuds Office at 6015 Fleming Building.

Students may also wish to report concerns using [Campus Climate Support](#). The Campus Climate Support (CCS) staff is committed to providing support for those who may have been targets of or affected by campus climate concerns. CCS works to ensure that appropriate University resources and expertise are made available to anyone who feels they have been harmed or negatively impacted. Anyone who feels they have been affected by a campus climate concern is encouraged to make a report to CCS, so the University can offer assistance. CCS is not a disciplinary body, cannot impose discipline, and does not require participation in any aspect of CCS's work. CCS's purpose is to support students, faculty or staff connect to resources. The hope is that over time these efforts contribute to the maintenance of respect and understanding among members of the University community.

Sexual & Gender Based Misconduct & Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence

The University is committed to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living and working environment for all members of the university community, and does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs or activities. The University has established [Policy & Procedures on Student Sexual & Gender Based Misconduct & Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Persons connected with the University who believe they have experienced discrimination, harassment, or retaliation may bring their concerns directly to the [Office of Institutional Equity](#)(OIE). Please note, there is a distinction between making a report to OIE and seeking confidential assistance through confidential resources. Staff and faculty in administrative roles (in the Department of Political Science, this includes the Chief Administrator, Department Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, and Director of Undergraduate Studies) are designated “responsible employees” and therefore required to report concerns about possible misconduct to OIE. Resources available to students for confidential consultation (without reporting to OIE) include the [Rackham Resolution Officer](#), the [Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center](#) (SAPAC), [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS), and the [University Ombuds](#).

Job Placement Resources

Each year a faculty member serves as the Director of Placement. The director of placement advises students on all aspects of the job market, including timing, preparation of the curriculum vitae, the cover letter, packet materials, and where to apply. Once a student is offered a job talk, the placement director can complement the dissertation advisor to give advice about the job talk. Students should contact the placement director in the winter or spring before they plan to go on the market.

The department also offers administrative support to students. A staff member will provide the student the information for creating an Interfolio account. The student will then be able to organize all of their letters and information in one place to send out to prospective jobs.

Our program is designed to prepare students for a career as an academic political scientist, and most of our students pursue an academic position. However, the training that we offer prepares students for a variety of positions demanding well-developed analytical skills. Recent graduates have obtained positions at think tanks including the Rand Corporation and Brookings, as well as consulting firms.

International Student Resources

The University of Michigan's International Center is dedicated to assisting international students with their transition to Michigan as well as aiding them while they complete their studies here. Visit their website at <http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu> for more information.

Workshops and Student Organizations

Research Workshops

The department sponsors a number of formal workshops, and students often organize additional informal workshops. Some of the related workshops are:

Interdisciplinary Workshop on Comparative Politics (IWCP)

This workshop consists of both student presentations and external speakers focusing on comparative politics broadly defined. IWCP is a Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop that provides a platform for sharing and improving research projects that use a comparative approach to study the causes and effects of political and economic processes. It welcomes a wide range of approaches and topics, and emphasize works in progress. The goal is to constructively critique and improve the research of graduate students, and to also provide an opportunity to present, discuss, and meet prominent speakers. For the student sessions, participants read the presenter's paper/ chapter/ prospectus/ memo ahead of time, and then a graduate student and a faculty member each comment on the paper. For the external speakers, after the speaker's presentation and a broad discussion, the graduates students take out the speaker for lunch. IWCP usually meets in

the Pre-Function Room on the 5th floor of Haven Hall on Fridays from 1:00-2:30. The default presentation format is to have 15 minute presentations followed by comments by two discussants and then comments from the audience. The Call for Presenters is for graduate students, post-doctoral students, and faculty from all disciplines. Contact the organizers to request a slot as a presenter. Requests that cannot be accommodated this semester will be given preference for slots in the Winter semester. For more information, please contact the faculty coordinators Anne Pitcher (pitchera@umich.edu) and Jean Hong (jeanhong@umich.edu).

Interdisciplinary Seminar in Quantitative Methods (ISQM)

The goal of the Interdisciplinary Seminar in Quantitative Methods is to provide an interdisciplinary environment where researchers can present and discuss cutting-edge research in quantitative methodology. The talks will be aimed at a broad audience, with more emphasis on conceptual than technical issues. The research presented will be varied, ranging from new methodological developments to applied empirical papers that use methodology in an innovative way. We welcome speakers and audiences from all subfields in the social, natural, and behavioral sciences. To be added to the ISQM email list please contact us at isqm-subscribe@umich.edu. For additional information, including the complete list of speakers, go to <http://www.isr.umich.edu/cps/events/isqm/>.

Interdisciplinary Workshop on American Politics (IWAP)

IWAP consists of both student presentations and speakers focusing broadly on American Politics. This may take the format of discussing a student paper, work-in-progress, or idea or may involve guest speakers. You can contact the IWAP coordinators at iwap.coordinators@umich.edu.

Political Economy Workshop

The Political Economy Workshop (PEW) is a weekly interdisciplinary research workshop and forum for discussion on research at the intersection of political science, economics and the other social sciences. PEW provides a space for presentation of work by doctoral students, faculty and outside speakers who study topics relevant to political science and economics. More details about the presentation schedule and contact information is available in the workshop's website, at <https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/political-economy-group/>.

Political Theory Workshop

Political Theory Workshop will focus on any writing/research in the area of political theory (very broadly conceived, to include among other things, public law). The Political Theory Workshop typically meets to discuss pre-circulated papers (dissertation chapters, article drafts, conference presentations, etc.). The workshop opens with prepared comments from a designated

discussion, followed by open conversation. Both faculty and students are welcome to present their work (if scheduling conflicts arise, priority is given to students). If you are interested in being added to the workshop email list, please contact Lisa Disch (ldisch@umich.edu).

Conflict & Peace, Research & Development Workshop

The Conflict & Peace, Research & Development (C&P, R&D or CPRD) group comprises individuals and activities broadly concerned with political conflict (e.g., genocide, civil war, human rights violation, terrorism, protest, torture, domestic spying and everyday resistance) and peace (e.g., community building, inter-group relations and negotiation). The range of topics is purposefully conceived in as encompassing a manner as possible. This is a Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop. More information is available in the workshop's website: <http://cprd.weebly.com/>

Other opportunities exist. Students are encouraged to attend at least one workshop regularly.

Graduate Student Organizations

Graduate Association of Political Scientists (GAPS)

The Graduate Association of Political Scientists (GAPS) advances the professional and social needs of the community of graduate students within the political science department. Its primary goals are to foster relationships among graduate students, faculty and staff and to provide an avenue through which the diverse needs of graduate students can be met. GAPS works with other student organizations to promote a department environment that encourages both a strong sense of community and, ultimately, professional success. Email: gapspresidents@umich.edu

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee is appointed by GAPS to organize workshops and other activities conducive to the professional development of political science students. The committee usually organizes several workshops annually. Programming often targets specific groups, such as through a dissertation prospectus workshop, making the most of subfield work, or how to spend the summer. At least once per year the committee hosts subfield lunches.

Political Scientists of Color (PSOC)

The purpose of Political Scientists of Color (PSOC) is to provide a network of political scientists – students and alumni – interested in creating and maintaining a supportive academic and professional environment in the University of Michigan regardless of race or ethnic background. PSOC also seeks to foster a sense of community among political science graduate students of color and to advocate for their concerns and interests to the Department of Political Science and the graduate student community at large. Email: psoc-exec@umich.edu

Women's Caucus

The Political Science Women's Caucus is an important component of the political science graduate student community. The leadership of the Women's Caucus is looking forward to providing a social and intellectual space for graduate students. Our primary goals are to engage with departmental gender and climate issues and to provide a forum for students and faculty to discuss new research related to gender issues. Email: polsciwomenscaucus@umich.edu

Community of Queer Political Scientists (CQPS)

CQPS is a newly formed group that meets to discuss various issues and to sponsor professional development. Each year, outside speakers are brought in to give talks and to meet with CQPS students about being LGBTQ in the discipline.

Graduate Employees Organization (GEO)

Graduate student instructors and graduate student staff assistants are collectively represented by a labor union, the Graduate Employees Organization, or GEO. The GEO negotiates all GSI and GSSA contracts with the university. See [geo3550](#) for more information.

Roles of Graduate Students on Admissions Committee

To serve on the Admissions Committee, graduate students must be in the third year or above of the PhD program. Priority will be given to graduate students who have not yet served, and to have graduate student representation for each subfield (at a level reflecting the typical size of the applicant pools in each). Typically, 4, and no more than 5, graduate students in total will serve in a given year.

Selection Process

- The department will issue a department-wide call for graduate students to serve on Admissions. Any and all students may volunteer to serve (i.e. subject to meeting the above requirements).
- After verifying that the graduate student volunteers have met the above requirements, the department will offer the department's graduate student affinity groups the opportunity to provide feedback on the list of volunteers.
- The Chair of Admissions will select the 4-5 graduate students to serve, taking into account any feedback provided by the department's graduate student affinity groups, as well as the faculty committee members.

Graduate Student Committee Roles

- The role of all graduate student members on Admissions will be uniform across subfields. This role involves reviewing the application files and providing feedback about the applicants to the faculty committee members in the relevant subfield.
- It is not expected that faculty committee members and graduate student members will necessarily reach agreement on the final ranking of candidates in each subfield. The relevant faculty committee member has the final say over candidate rankings
- Graduate student members can participate in discussions regarding the candidates, but do not have a formal vote on the selection of candidates to be admitted
- The Chair of Admissions and the faculty committee members will, in collaboration, select the final list of candidates to whom to offer admission. As described above, any feedback by the graduate student members should be incorporated into the relevant subfield faculty committee member's recommendations, at that faculty member's discretion.

Roles of Graduate Students on Departmental Faculty Search Committees

To serve, graduate students must be in the third year or above of the PhD program, and must have a major field that aligns with the area of the search. Priority will be given to graduate students who have not yet served, and to students who are making normal progress toward their degrees.

Selection Process

- The department will issue a call for graduate students to serve on hiring committees. Any and all students may volunteer to serve (i.e. subject to meeting the above requirements)
- The search committee chair will select the graduate student to serve on the committee, taking into account any feedback provided by the committee's faculty members

Graduate Student Committee Roles

- The role of the graduate student member on the committee will involve reviewing the application files, providing feedback about the applicants to the committee members, and organizing the graduate student sessions with candidates during their campus visits.

- It is not expected that faculty committee members and graduate student members will necessarily reach agreement on the final ranking of candidates in each subfield. The faculty committee members have the final say over candidate rankings
- Graduate student members are encouraged to participate in discussions regarding the candidates, but do not have a formal vote on the selection of candidates to be invited to campus.

History of Revisions

This guide was significantly reorganized in July 2011 by Jenna Bednar. The content is consistent with the guide last revised in 2008 except that the current guide is updated to reflect Rackham's policy of continuous enrollment, to incorporate the preliminary exam requirements by subfield, and to make clear the master's degree requirements.

July 2012 (Bednar): minor language adjustments and clarification that new admissions with financial aid offers occur on-cycle only.

May 2013 (Bednar): (1) Reduced the departmental subfield coursework expectations: we recommend a minimum of four courses in the major and three courses in the first minor, down one course each from the previous recommendations. Subfields retain the right to require more courses in preparation for the preliminary exam. (2) Clarification of the student-designed first and second minor. (3) Added description of the joint, SIDP, and dual degree programs. (4) Clarification of the cognate and second minor course distribution swap.

July 2014 (Valentino): Changed the description of the Comparative prelim to reflect the new guidelines. Updated requirements for JD/MA in World Politics.

July 2015 (Disch): (1) Clarification of reinstatement process, adding initial recommendation from DGS prior to application with Rackham; (2) Methods subfield qualifying criteria updated to reflect new guidelines; (3) added description of guided Modes of Inquiry minor; (4) added Ten Term Rule to Rackham and University Policies.

July 2016: Major language changes throughout to reflect restructuring of the Graduate Program to eliminate the second minor requirement.

August 2017 (Disch): (1) Change to policy regarding penalty for failing to achieve candidacy to reflect GAC consensus that students should lose only their Fall Term funding; clarification of process for restoring funding and/or being dismissed from the program; (2) American Politics subfield preliminary exam criteria updated to reflect new curriculum and guidelines; (3) clarification of July 1 deadline for achieving candidacy.

August 2018: Updated new administration (GAC membership); updates to Theory pre-lims; clarification that prospectus defense requires a minimum of 3 out of 4 members of dissertation committee; non UM faculty members are considered “special member” and require a CV and memo. Banking 4 or 8 credits, as opposed to one or two classes. Leave of Absence, student must work with DGS/GC to submit re-entry plan.

August 2019 (Mickey): updated probation and dismissal policy; updated theory and American major prelim details; included leave of absence policy.

August 2020 (Gosling): Updated committees, added the DEI to the resources section of the document, added subfield coordinators email contacts to committees, removed section about adding LOA-section was added but this was not removed, updated email addresses, edited the Job Placement section to new process.

August 2021 (Gosling): Updated committees available, updated the Methods Prelim guidelines, new DGS introduction.

January 2022 (Gosling): Made updates to the Comparative Politics Minor requirements.

May 2022 (Gosling): (1) Updated Comparative Politics Minor requirements under prelims; (2) removed Comparative Politics PS 641 pro-seminar requirement; (3) updated Comparative Politics on Page 8. Edits pulled from the changes provided by Mary Gallagher.

June 2023 (Gosling): (1) Updated the Joint Program section. Section originally stated that joint students did not need to complete a minor or a cognate. Joint students are required to complete cognate course work. Students who reached candidacy prior to June 2023 can waive this requirement; (2) Social Work removed from joint programs listing.

July 2023 (Garduno): (1) Updated committees and subfield coordinators; (2) updated requirements for the CP Major and Minor Field; (3) updated requirements for the Methods major and minor field.

August 2023 (Garduno): (1) Updated professionalization sequence for POLSCI 992, 993 and 994; (2) removed Social Work as a joint program; (3) edited and updated funding section: funding past the fifth year and Rackham One Term Fellowship term eligibility.

August 2023 (Dincecco): Edits to the welcome letter, Comparative Politics and Methods requirements.

January 2024 (Garduno): Updated link to SIDP policy. Corrected Methods sequence and WP/IR prelim guidelines.

January 2025 (Garduno): (1) Added program guidelines for students to change advisors; (2) listed the four core modules for World Politics; (3) added information on Rackham's emergency funding and GSPCS services.

May 2025 (Garduno): Added Requirements, Selection, and Roles of Graduate Students on Admissions.

July 2025 (Garduno): Added requirements, selection, and roles of graduate students on departmental faculty search committees.

June 2026 (Garduno): Added policy on transfer students.