

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE STATE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO

**Political Science Graduate Handbook**

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# Department of Political Science, University at Buffalo-SUNY

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## I. Admissions

### A. General Information for All Applicants (M.A. and Ph.D.):

Admission to the Master's and Ph.D. programs is open to students who hold a Bachelor's degree. The Bachelor's degree does not have to be in Political Science, specifically. However, applicants must demonstrate a true interest in studying Political Science. Applicants to the Ph.D. program whose qualifications are sufficient for the M.A. program but not for the Ph.D. program will be admitted as M.A. students. Students admitted to the Ph.D. program who do not already hold a Master's will earn the M.A. degree as part of their doctoral studies. U.S. citizens may apply for admission on a part-time basis (however, doctoral students should be aware of the residency requirement and 7-year time limit to achieve the PhD). Students in the Master's program who have completed, or are in the final stage of completing, the M.A. degree at the University at Buffalo, must formally apply for admission to the Ph.D. program in order to pursue the doctoral degree.

Successful applicants will have a combined score of at least 310 on the Verbal and Quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Exam (1200 on old version), and a score of at least 4.5 on the Analytical Section of the same exam. A minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required for admission to the graduate program. A minimum GPA of 3.3 in previous graduate study is required for admission to the Ph.D. program. For International applicants, the University at Buffalo requires international students to have a TOEFL score above 550 on the paper-based test (PBT) or 79 on the internet-based test (iBT), and the Department generally requires higher scores, especially for admission to the Ph.D. program. The Graduate Admissions Committee may waive these requirements if other application materials are deemed sufficient to warrant admission to the graduate program.

All applicants to the M.A. and Ph.D. programs *must* submit the following:

1. Completed online application form;
2. Application fee of \$75.00 (in U.S. currency). This non-refundable fee may be paid online with a credit card or by sending a check or money order made out to "University at Buffalo" directly to the Department of Political Science;
3. Official transcripts (which include your Grade Point Average) from *all* colleges and universities attended. Have each institution mail an official transcript directly to the Department;
4. At least *three confidential* letters of recommendation from persons familiar with your academic record. Have your references mail their letters directly to the Department;
5. Official results of the Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing sections of the Aptitude Test of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Have the testing service mail official scores directly to the Department of Political Science (Institutional code is 2925; Departmental code is 1999);
6. **U.S. Nationals or Permanent Residents** whose native language is not English need to submit official TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores to the Department.

**\*\*Your personal statement on your online application serves as your writing sample. Submitting an additional writing sample is NOT necessary\*\***

It is the responsibility of the APPLICANT to ensure that all materials are received by the posted deadline(s). Applicants can see what materials have been received by the Department by visiting their application status page online. Also, applicants need to check their email, provided on their application, frequently. Any necessary communication from the Department will be done via email.

**International applicants** must also provide the following:

1. Official copy of TOEFL scores. Have the testing service mail official scores directly to the Department of Political Science;
2. A *certified* copy of the International Applicant Financial Statement form (*with applicable supporting documents and signatures*) sent to the Department. You must submit this form showing at least enough funds for one academic year in U.S. dollars. The form can be found at: <http://wings.buffalo.edu/intadmit/formgraduate.htm>

***The Fall admission deadlines for the Department of Political Science to have received ALL completed application materials are: January 15*** for all applicants seeking financial assistance from the Department; ***March 1*** for all other international applicants; and ***August 1*** for all other U.S. applicants.

For those seeking Spring admission, international applicants must have **ALL** completed application materials to the Department of Political Science by **September 1**, while U.S. applicants must have **ALL** completed application materials to the Department by **November 1**.

The Graduate Admissions Committee decides who will be admitted. These decisions are based on the strength of the application materials (GRE scores, undergraduate transcripts, letters of recommendation, personal statement, etc.) submitted by each applicant, from which the Committee assesses the applicant's likelihood of being successful in the graduate program. All admission decisions are final, so appeals to the Director of Graduate Studies (D.G.S.) will have no effect. Similarly, to be fair to all applicants, the Admissions Committee will only consider the information and materials in each applicant's file.

#### B. Applicants to M.A. Program

All of the general admission information presented above holds for M.A. applicants. There are no additional requirements for applicants to the M.A. program.

#### C. Applicants to Ph.D. Program

In addition to the general information above, applicants to the Ph.D. program must also comply with the following restrictions:

1. Applicants who have previously studied at the graduate level must have a cumulative G.P.A. (grade point average) of at least 3.33 (on a 4.0 scale) in their graduate coursework. This requirement applies to all applicants – the Department's own M.A. students as well as applicants from other universities and other graduate programs at the University at Buffalo (UB).
2. Students currently in the Political Science M.A. program wishing to gain admission to the Ph.D. program must apply through the online application system and submit 3 letters of support from faculty members within the Department (the application fee is waived). Other application materials do not need to be submitted. However, some students may want to retake the GRE and submit the new scores to strengthen their application.
3. Completion of an M.A. degree is not required for admission to the Ph.D. program. However, students are expected to complete the M.A. as part of their doctoral studies and will not be

permitted to take the Ph.D. comprehensive exams until they have earned the M.A. degree (either at UB or elsewhere prior to admission).

## II. Program Planning and Advisement

- A. New students are highly encouraged to attend the Department’s orientation session held just prior to the beginning of each Fall semester. Orientation provides students with important information to help them get acclimated to the Graduate Program.
- B. New students who have questions regarding class schedules, what courses to take, which path of study to follow, or general advisement about their educational goals and future career plans, should make an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies (D.G.S).
- C. Students, who are already studying in the Graduate Program, should get to know the faculty members in their field(s) of interest. At some point, these faculty members will serve as committee members for the M.A. student’s project/thesis or for the Ph.D. student’s oral comprehensive exam and dissertation. Once the student finds a major professor to direct their project/thesis or dissertation, this professor will serve as the student’s primary advisor. First- and second-year students who are serving as a Teaching Assistant (T.A.) for the Department will be assigned to assist at least one faculty member. This faculty member may serve as the T.A.’s temporary advisor until the student develops a mentoring relationship with a faculty member in their field of interest.
- D. At any point, an appointment can be made with the D.G.S. for advisement. The D.G.S. serves as the default advisor for students who do not have a major professor or another professor in the Department who they can approach for advice. **The availability of advice does not relieve the student of sole responsibility for completing necessary forms, initiating the formation of committees, honoring deadlines at various points in their graduate studies, and generally satisfying all departmental and Graduate School regulations.** Hence, students should carefully read this Handbook and the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual (available on their website at <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/>).

### Summary of Degree Requirements and Restrictions

Requirement/Restriction	PhD	MA
Total credit hours	72	30
Non-thesis-guidance credit hours	54	24 or 27
Transfer credit hours	24	6
Non-departmental credit hours	15	9
Independent study credit hours	9 (of 54)	6 (of 24)
Field Core courses (503, 504, 505, 561)	3	2
Department Core courses (500, 508, 531, 533/631)	4	2
Residency requirement	2 consecutive semesters at full-time	24 credit hours at UB
Time limit (years)	7	4

### III. General Requirements for All Graduate Students

- A. Course Load: A student must register for 12 credit hours per semester to be considered by the University as having full-time status. Anything less than 12 credit hours is considered part-time. ONLY Teaching Assistants are considered full-time when registered for 9 credit hours. After their first year, other students taking fewer than 12 hours can be certified as full-time based on non-course work for the degree (e.g., writing an M.A. project/thesis), by submitting a Certification of Full-Time Status form (signed by the D.G.S.). This form is available on the Department's website.
- B. Minimum Grade and GPA Requirements: The minimum satisfactory grade in graduate courses is B- such that a course cannot be applied toward the degree requirements if the student received a final grade below this minimum. Students receiving a grade lower than B- in a graduate course earn no credit toward the total required for the degree and must retake the course if it is required. **Master's students must maintain at least a 3.00 GPA** (grade point average) throughout their coursework – at least a 3.00 GPA in both their Political Science courses and their overall program of study for the M.A. **Doctoral students must maintain at least a 3.33 GPA** throughout their coursework – at least a 3.33 in both Political Science and their overall program for the Ph.D. Students failing to maintain their cumulative GPA above the minimum (and students maintaining that minimum but nonetheless experiencing difficulties in the program) will be placed on academic probation at the department level for a period of at least one semester. Students placed on probation will be notified in writing regarding the terms of their probation. Failure to meet the probation terms will result in the student being dropped from the graduate program.
- C. Residency Requirement: Doctoral candidates must complete one year (two consecutive semesters) of continuous registration as a full-time graduate student at the University at Buffalo. That is, two semesters back to back, Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall, at full-time status, consisting of at least 12 credit hours (9 credit hours for Teaching Assistants). The purpose of this University-level requirement is for doctoral students to spend a year as a full-time student so they can engage in the full range of academic activities in the Department that take place outside of formal instruction, such as research workshops and colloquia with visiting scholars. **To satisfy this requirement, M.A. students need to complete 24 of the credit hours applied toward the degree at the University at Buffalo.**
- D. Independent Study: For special needs, the Department has a course, PSC 670, as a supplement to its scheduled seminars. **No more than 6 credit hours of PSC 670 can be applied toward the required total for the M.A. degree and no more than 9 hours of PSC 670 can be applied toward the total for the Ph.D. degree.** Students who wish to take an independent study course must arrange with a professor to serve as the instructor before actually registering for it (under the professor's name). The Independent Study form must be filled out by the student, signed by the faculty instructor, and **then** given to the Graduate Coordinator who will have the D.G.S. sign it. Also, a description of the course (usually a reading list) must be given to the Graduate Coordinator with the Independent Study form. This form can be found on the Political Science website at: [http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/graduate\\_student\\_forms/](http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/graduate_student_forms/)
- E. Non-Departmental Courses: Non-departmental courses covering topics relevant to Political Science may be taken as part of the regular program of study. Such courses **must be approved beforehand** by the Director of Graduate Studies, so interested students should contact the D.G.S. PRIOR to registration. The form for obtaining this approval can be found at the same website location (using the same link) listed above. Also, enrollment in graduate seminars in other departments may require the advance permission of the instructor. **Up to 9 credit hours taken**

**outside of the Department may be applied toward the M.A. degree and up to 15 hours toward the Ph.D.**

- F. Shared Credits: Students who pursue two graduate degrees at UB, either concurrently or sequentially, may be able to “share” some of their credit hours across the two programs. Shared credits are jointly applied toward the total credit-hour requirements of both graduate programs (i.e., the credits are essentially double counted). The maximum number of credit hours that can be shared is 10% of the combined total number of credit hours required for the two graduate degrees. Consider, for example, a doctoral student in Political Science who previously completed an M.A. degree in another social science program at UB that required 30 credit hours in total. University policy would allow this student to share up to 10 credit hours between the two programs, remembering that 72 credit hours are required for the Ph.D. degree (since 10% of the combined total,  $30+72=102$ , is 10.2). Students can only share credits from courses taken in other departments that are approved by the D.G.S. as relevant to graduate study in Political Science. Additionally, students are not allowed to share only part of the credits from a particular course (in the example above, the Ph.D. student would only be able to reach the 10 credit limit if they had taken a 4-credit course along with two 3-credit courses that were acceptable for sharing between the two programs).
- G. Undergraduate Courses: Undergraduate courses CANNOT be taken for graduate credit
- H. Transfer Credit: A student who wishes to receive credit for graduate work taken outside of the University should make this request as soon as possible after they enter the program (preferably within their first year). The decision whether to transfer credits will be made by the D.G.S. in consultation with professors from relevant field committees. A transfer credit form can be found at the same website location list above. Students should submit this form, along with syllabi and transcripts for the courses they want transferred, to the D.G.S. Approved transfer credits must be listed in the appropriate section of the Application to Candidacy form (when the student is required to file it). **In accordance with Graduate School rules, no more than 6 transfer credit hours can be granted toward the M.A. and no more than 24 hours toward the Ph.D.**
- I. Coursework More Than 10 Years Old: Courses applied toward the degree requirements must comply with the following Graduate School policy: “Coursework, whether transfer or UB credits, more than 10 years old that is to be included in a degree program must be petitioned at the time of the student’s admission to the program or at the time the credits are considered by the department. An early decision is to the advantage of both student and program. If these credits have been included in an approved extension of time limit petition, they are valid only until the expiration date of that petition. Accordingly, any further extension of an approved time limit for degree completion will require, concurrently, a re-petition for approval of these older courses.”

Requests for approval of courses more than 10 years old must be petitioned through the Graduate School using the **correct** Graduate School form. Students who want to put forward such a petition must consult with the D.G.S. Note that appropriate justification of how the courses relate to the student’s degree program, and how the student has kept current with the subject matter covered by the courses, must be provided in the petition. **The Graduate School also requires students with a lapse of 5 or more years in their coursework to reapply to and be accepted into their former graduate program.**

- J. Continuous Registration: The University requires graduate students to maintain continuous registration until they confer their degree by registering for at least one credit hour each semester (Fall/Spring). Note though that T.A.’s must always have full-time status. A related and strictly



enforced Graduate School rule is that the MA or PhD degree cannot be conferred if the student's registration is not current. Students must be registered during the semester prior to their graduation/conferral date (excluding the summer). For example, a student wishing to graduate on June 1 (or September 1) must be registered for the preceding Spring semester.

- K. Leave of Absence: If continuous registration cannot be maintained due to unique personal circumstances (health issues, study abroad, family emergencies, etc.), it is possible to petition the Department & the Graduate School for a Leave of Absence. The appropriate petition form is available at the Graduate School website: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/forms/index.php>. This petition must be approved by both the D.G.S. and the Graduate School. Note though that a student cannot be formally on leave during the semester preceding the conferral of their degree. Similarly, being on leave does not stop the clock for resolving incompletes to prevent them from reverting to "F" grades. **Apply for a Leave of Absence well in advance of the semester's start.**
- L. Time Limits: The M.A. degree must be completed within 4 years and the Ph.D. degree must be completed within 7 years of entering the program. Under rare, exceptional circumstances, the Graduate School will approve petitions for extensions of these time limits. Petitions must be submitted using the appropriate Graduate School form (available on their website at the same location listed above) and properly documented with specific reasons given as to why the student is unable to complete the degree within the required time limit. Only formal, approved Leaves of Absence will stop the clock for degree time limits.
- M. Application to Candidacy (A to C): An Application to Candidacy form should be filed with the Department when the student has an expected date for completing the degree requirements. M.A. students should file an A to C by the beginning of their 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of full-time enrollment. Doctoral students should file an A to C no later than 2 months prior to the end of the semester in which they will have completed 54 credit hours. This is usually the semester prior to taking the Ph.D. comprehensive exams. Students seeking certification of full-time status may have to file the A to C earlier than this. In no case should the A to C be filed less than one semester before completion of the degree. The form can be found on the Political Science website at: [http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/graduate\\_student\\_forms/](http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/graduate_student_forms/). Each student is responsible for obtaining the signatures of their committee members on the A to C **before** submitting it to the Graduate Coordinator, who will then give it to the D.G.S. to review and sign.
- N. M-Form: The M-form is filled out at the completion of any M.A. project, M.A. thesis, or Ph.D. dissertation. Its submission is what officially informs the Graduate School that a student is completing the degree and ready to graduate. The student completing the project, thesis, or dissertation should fill out as much of the required information as possible on the M-form in the appropriate sections and then have their committee chair (major professor) sign it where indicated. The M-form can be found on the Political Science website at the same location listed above. This form is due to the Graduate Coordinator as soon as the thesis, project, or dissertation is approved by the student's committee (after a successful oral defense, if applicable), but no later than the Wednesday before the Graduate School's deadline to receive all required materials.

The chart below lists the deadline dates by which the A to C form, the M-form, and all other required materials should be received by the Department/Graduate School. **It is the student's responsibility to make certain that they meet these deadlines**, and failing to meet the final one set by the Graduate School will result in the student's conferral being delayed to the next period (e.g., failing to meet the final deadline for June 1 would delay conferral to September 1). Hence, students should be pro-active about the process by letting the Graduate Coordinator know at least a month before about their intent to graduate at the end of the semester, confirming the specific final deadlines set by the Department and Graduate School for receiving the M-form and all other required materials, and submitting these materials well ahead of those deadlines if possible.

Degree Conferral Date	Department receive A to C	Grad School receive A to C	Department receive M-form	Grad School receive ALL materials by:
February 1	September 1	October 1	Wed. before Spring classes begin	Friday before Spring classes begin
June 1	February 1	March 1	Wed. before last day of Spring exams	Friday before last day of Spring exams
September 1	June 1	July 1	Wed. before Fall classes begin	Friday before Fall classes begin

#### IV. M.A. Program Requirements

- A. Length: The M.A. degree normally takes 3-4 semesters of full-time graduate study to complete, but must be conferred within 4 years of entering the program (unless the Graduate School approves the student's petition for an extension of the time limit, as discussed above).
- B. Credit Hour Requirements: A total of 30 credit hours are required for the M.A. degree. Students can complete either 8 courses (24 credit hours) and an M.A. Thesis (6 credit hours) or 9 courses (27 credit hours) and a Research Project Paper (3 credit hours).
- C. Core Course Requirements: Students in the M.A. program are required to take **two** Department Core courses plus the Core courses in **two** of the four fields (see chart below). It is recommended that PSC 500 and PSC 508 be taken as the Department Core courses, but students may choose to substitute PSC 531 for PSC 508 if they have prior coursework in statistics. Students who intend to write a thesis or project in the area of Public Law are strongly encouraged to take PSC 662 as well as PSC 561.

Department Core Courses (2)	Choose 2 Field Core Courses	Choose Thesis or Project
PSC 500: Intro. to Political Inquiry	PSC 503 for Comparative Politics	M.A. Thesis Guidance (6 hours of PSC 700)
PSC 508: Basic Statistics for Social Science	PSC 504 for International Politics	M.A. Project Guidance (3 hours of PSC 700)
	PSC 505 for American Politics	
	PSC 561 for Public Law	

The rest of the courses taken, adding up to 30 hours in total, are at the discretion of the student. No more than 3 credit hours of PSC 599-Supervised Teaching or PSC 600-Supervised Research may be applied toward the degree.

- D. Thesis/Project: The Master's Thesis or Research Project is written under the direction of two faculty members: one serves as the committee chair (major professor) or first reader, the other serves as a committee member or second reader. The student is responsible for asking faculty members to serve in these roles and to have them sign their Application to Candidacy form (see relevant section below). When appropriate, faculty members from outside of the Department may participate in the guidance of theses and projects. While students are working on their thesis or project, they should register for the section of PSC 700 for which their first reader (major professor) is listed as the instructor.

**Ph.D. students who are earning the M.A. degree as part of their doctoral studies can satisfy the Research Project requirement by writing and successfully defending a dissertation proposal.** This option must be approved by the D.G.S. and the prospective chair of the student's dissertation committee based on an assessment of whether the student's research abilities are sufficient for developing an acceptable dissertation proposal.

When completed, Master's Theses must be defended orally by the student to their committee members. Furthermore, theses must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School and meet other University requirements. For further details, please see the Graduate School's M.A. candidate checklist at: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/masters.php#checklist>. Research projects are usually less substantial in content and scope than theses (but comparable in quality to them) and do not have to be defended orally or to satisfy as many requirements set by the Graduate School.

- E. Certification of Full-Time Status: M.A. students working on their Thesis or Research Project who need to maintain full-time status (e.g., for financial aid reasons) can be certified as full-time while being registered for fewer than 12 credit hours each semester. For each semester in which certification is needed, a Certification of Full-Time Status form must be filled out, signed appropriately, and given to the Graduate Coordinator. Note that an Application to Candidacy form must be filed along with this form. Both forms are available at the Graduate School website: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/forms/index.php>. Master's students studying on a part-time basis do not have to be certified for full-time status.

## V. Ph.D. Program Requirements

- A. Length: The time it takes to complete the Doctoral Program varies in length with the individual student's abilities, drive, educational background, and personal circumstances, but the Ph.D. degree must be conferred within 7 years of entering the program (unless the Graduate School approves the student's petition for an extension of the time limit, as discussed above).
- B. Credit Hour Requirements: A total of 72 credit hours are required for the Ph.D., including up to 18 hours of Dissertation Guidance (PSC 710). More than the minimum 54 hours of regular course credit can be applied toward this 72-hour total, which would simply reduce the number of Dissertation Guidance hours needed. A maximum of 12 credit hours of PSC 710 can be taken in any one semester. Students CANNOT register for PSC 710 until AFTER they have successfully passed their Ph.D. comprehensive exams (and preferably defended their dissertation proposal) and have an approved Application to Candidacy form on file with the Graduate School. Also, no more than 6 credit hours of PSC 599-Supervised Teaching or PSC 600-Supervised Research can count toward the 72-hour total.

- C. Core Course Requirements: Doctoral students are required to take **four** Department Core (Research Methods) courses plus the Core course in **three** fields (see chart below). The four Department Core courses are PSC 500-Introduction to Political Inquiry, PSC 508-Basic Statistics for Social Science, and the student’s choice of two (2) courses among: PSC 531-Intermediate Statistics for Social Science, PSC 533-Formal Political Theory, PSC 631-Advanced Statistics for Social Science, PSC 633-Advanced Topics in Political Inquiry, and PSC 639-Model Building & Simulation. The fourth course for the Department Core requirement can be satisfied in two other ways: 1) a Geographic Information Systems course in Geography, an advanced econometrics course in Economics, or another non-PSC research methods course approved in advance by the DGS; or 2) preparing a seminar research paper that applies advanced statistical methods or game theory for a 600- or 700-level substantive course with approval granted by the course instructor or the D.G.S. using the Department Core Requirement Form, which is available on the Department’s website.

The Field Core courses are PSC 503-Comparative Politics, PSC 504-International Politics, PSC 505-American Politics, and PSC 561-Constitutional Law (for the Public Law field). With the approval of the Public Law committee chair, PSC 561 can be replaced with PSC 662-Judicial Process for students who are not taking the Ph.D. comprehensive exam in Public Law. Ph.D. students “comping” in Public Law are required to complete both PSC 561 and PSC 662.

Required Department Core (2)	Choose 2 Advanced Methods	Choose 3 Field Core Courses
PSC 500: Intro to Political Inquiry	PSC 531 Intermediate Statistics	PSC 503 for Comparative Politics
PSC 508: Basic Statistics	PSC 533 Formal Political Theory	PSC 504 for International Politics
	PSC 631 Advanced Statistics	PSC 505 for American Politics
	PSC 633 Advanced Pol. Inquiry	PSC 561 for Public Law

- D. Comprehensive Examinations: Students present themselves for examination in two (2) fields. These comprehensive exams consist of a written test in each field followed by an oral exam covering both fields. Students are expected to demonstrate both broad knowledge of the field and in-depth command of some aspects of it. Students should familiarize themselves with the course requirements for taking the comprehensive exam in each of their chosen fields (see below). Any special arrangements that amend the rules stated below for a particular student are subject to approval of the D.G.S. and should be recorded in writing and placed in the student’s file.
- a. Fields of Concentration, Exam Committees, & Scheduling: Four subject areas are regularly offered as fields in which the Ph.D. comprehensive examinations may be taken: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Politics, and Public Law. The other subject area in which exams are offered, Methods of Inquiry, requires that the student make special arrangements well in advance by meeting with the D.G.S. and the Chair of the Methods Field Committee to plan a program of study that will adequately prepare the student.
- i. Preparation and evaluation of Ph.D. comprehensive exams are the responsibility of Field Committees composed of three faculty members who teach in the field, appointed annually by the D.G.S. in consultation with the Department Chair. If necessary, faculty members from other fields (including those from outside of the Department) who are knowledgeable about particular subfields to be covered by the exam may be asked to help draft questions and evaluate answers. All exam answers are evaluated by at least two faculty members.

- ii. Normally, the comprehensive exams are scheduled in October and March of each year. Full-time students (entering the program in the Fall) should plan on taking them during the Spring semester of their third year and no later than the Fall semester of their fourth year of study in the program. Students who entered the program with an M.A. degree should plan to take the exams sooner than this.
  - iii. The Department Core Course requirement (see above) PLUS all course requirements for both fields must be completed by the end of the semester **prior** to the semester in which the comprehensive exams are taken. Students can petition the D.G.S. and the appropriate Field Committee chair(s) to be allowed to take the exams in the semester in which they are completing the field requirements as long as they have completed at least 45 credit hours in total and four courses in each comprehensive exam field, including any required courses (e.g., PSC 641 and PSC 645 for International Politics), and are registered for enough credit hours to complete 54 in total by the end of the semester. Approval of the petition would depend upon whether the student was assessed to be well-prepared to progress to the comprehensive exam stage. Students seeking such petitions should be aware that ABD status is only granted after completion of all course and field requirements in addition to passing the comprehensive exams.
  - iv. The oral exam committee consists of 5 faculty members – 4 of these must be currently serving on the Field Committees of the two fields in which the student is taking the comprehensive exams. Students nominate the members of their oral exam committee by selecting two faculty members from each relevant Field Committee and a fifth member from one of their fields, preferably the one in which the student plans to write a dissertation. **This fifth committee member does not have to be on one of the current Field Committees** and, with D.G.S. approval, can be from outside the Department or the University. Based on the student’s recommendation, one member of the oral exam committee will be designated by the D.G.S. to serve as the chair. The committee chair will be responsible for scheduling and presiding over the oral exam. If the D.G.S. decides that replacing one of the student’s nominees is necessary, the student will be invited to propose a substitute member.
  - v. In preparing for the comprehensive exams, students can consult previous exam questions, which are available on a limited basis from the D.G.S. Some fields have a reading list designed to assist students with preparing for the exam.
- b. Eligibility: Students are responsible for meeting with the D.G.S. and the chairs of the relevant Field Committees to determine their eligibility to take the comprehensive exams. This should be done at least 6 months prior to when the student plans to take the exams. At this time, the student should tell the D.G.S. their subfields in any fields that take this into account when preparing the written exam.
  - c. Field Requirements: The standard course requirement for taking the comprehensive exams is that the student has completed five courses, including the Core course, in each of their two fields. The chairs of the Field Committees can grant exemptions to this requirement, allowing a student to take the exam after completing only four courses, if they deem the student to be adequately prepared. Such exemptions are granted on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the D.G.S. Due to the limited availability of some courses, students sometimes have to take PSC 670-Independent Study, focusing on a particular subfield or covering the material in a required course, to prepare for the comprehension exam. Before doing this, though, the student should consult with the chair of the relevant Field Committee to obtain

approval for using PSC 670 to satisfy the course requirements for the field. Additional field-specific requirements and restrictions are stated below for each field.

- i. American Politics: Students taking the American Politics comprehensive exam must choose two of the following three subfields: 1) Institutions and Processes (the Presidency, Congress, National Administration); 2) Political Behavior (Parties, Interest Groups, Public Opinion, Electoral Behavior); and 3) Public Policy, Subnational Government and Politics (Intergovernmental Relations, State and Local Politics). Given that two of the questions on the comprehensive exam will be subfield-specific, students want to take courses in the two subfields that they plan to choose (to the extent that the course schedule allows).
- ii. Comparative Politics: Students taking the Comparative Politics comprehensive exam must choose two of the following eight subfields (or functional areas): 1) Political Institutions; 2) Civil-Military Relations; 3) Human Rights; 4) Political Change and Development; 5) Political Parties, Party Systems, and Groups; 6) Political Geography; and 7) Political Economy; and 8) Canadian Politics. See the Comparative Politics reading list for more information about these subfields and the general format of the comprehensive exam. Given that two of the questions on the exam will be subfield-specific, students want to take courses in the two subfields that they plan to choose (to the extent that the course schedule allows). Students may also petition the Field Committee to be allowed to test in a special subfield. Such petitions should be put forward at least three months prior to the start of the semester in which the exam will be taken.
- iii. International Politics: Students must complete PSC 641-International Economic Relations and PSC 645-Conflict Processes before taking the comprehensive exam in International Politics. Students are strongly encouraged to complete PSC 504 before taking other courses in the field. Preparation for the comprehensive exam should involve independent reading as well as completion of required and elective courses in the field. Students should develop their own reading lists for the exam by consulting with appropriate faculty members in the field at least six months prior to taking it.
- iv. Public Law: Students must complete both PSC 561 and PSC 662 before taking the comprehensive exam in Public Law. While the Department expects to regularly offer other Public Law courses (i.e., PSC 560, PSC 562, and PSC 751), the course requirement can also be satisfied with Law 848-Law and the Social Process and courses in other fields that relate to Public Law, e.g., PSC 540-International Law and PSC 650-International Protection of Human Rights. Note that a course can only be used to satisfy the requirements for one field (e.g., if PSC 540 were counted toward the course requirement for Public Law, it could not also be used to satisfy the course requirement for International Politics). Additionally, under special circumstances, the Field Committee chair may allow a student to satisfy the course requirement with Law School courses other than Law 848. Students should consult with the chair of the Field Committee to confirm that their program of study will adequately prepare them for taking the comprehensive exam.
- v. Methods of Inquiry: The standard course requirement for Methods consists of three courses in addition to the four taken to satisfy the Department Core requirement. The Department only offers upper-level Methods courses periodically, so students wanting to take the comprehensive exam in this field must design a program of study in consultation with the D.G.S. and the chair of the Field Committee. Before taking the Methods exam, students must complete both PSC 531 and PSC 533 and either PSC 631: Advanced Statistics for Social Science or PSC 633: Advanced Topics in Political Inquiry (if not both). With the approval of the Field Committee chair and the D.G.S., students may satisfy the

field requirements with courses taken in other departments at UB or at other universities (e.g., in the summer methods programs run by the University of Michigan and the University of Essex).

- d. Qualifying Paper: At least four weeks prior to the start of the written examination period, students are required to submit a Qualifying Paper. Qualifying papers must be solo-authored and of professional quality, demonstrate both original thought and analytic ability, and have the potential to be published in a revised form in a refereed journal. The paper must be approved by the D.G.S. before the student can proceed to the comprehensive exam stage. A seminar paper written for a course taught by one of the Department's faculty members can be used to satisfy the requirement if the instructor attests in writing to the D.G.S. that the paper meets the Qualifying Paper standard. This should be done as soon as possible after the course is completed using the Qualifying Paper form posted on the Political Science website at: [http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/graduate\\_student\\_forms/](http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/graduate_student_forms/) (the form is also available from the D.G.S.). Department faculty members can also attest to the Qualifying Paper quality of conference or working papers that they have reviewed.
- e. Standards and Outcomes: Comprehensive exams are in fields NOT courses. Thus, adequate preparation demands considerable reading beyond course assignments. Performing well on the exams will require an understanding of the major theories, methodologies, and facts in a field, knowledge of basic literature, and a capacity for disciplined analysis, comparison, and creative thought.
- i. There are three possible outcomes/grades on the comprehensive exam: pass with distinction, pass, and fail. In the case of failure, there is no guarantee of a second try, but the committee may permit one if the student's deficiencies are correctable. The decision to allow a second exam is at the discretion of the oral exam committee (in consultation with the D.G.S.). No student is allowed more than two attempts to pass the exams (unless unique circumstances warrant special consideration). Candidates may pass in one field and fail in the other; in this case, they are usually granted a second try in the failed field at the next examination period. However, it is not possible under Department rules for a candidate to fail the written exam but pass the orals, or vice versa. Hence, a retake of the comprehensive exam in a field must include both the written and oral parts.
  - ii. Approximately one week after administration of the written exam, students may consult with the Field Committee chairs concerning their performance on the written exams. The chairs are not required to provide feedback, but any they provide should communicate the results ONLY IN GENERAL TERMS – only indicating areas of strength and weakness. **In no case**, should any of the following be communicated to the student: grades for individual questions or summaries of grades, individual faculty comments on written answers, or attributions to grades or comments of individual faculty. Most importantly, evaluations are for use only by the field and oral exam committees, and should NOT be made available to students under any circumstances.
- f. Examination Procedures: Written comprehensive exams are ordinarily scheduled consecutively over a 2-3 week period. Although each one is scheduled for a 48 hour time period, the format of the exam should permit successful completion in less time. To encourage brevity of expression, the completed written exam in each field shall be limited to twenty, double-spaced, typed pages. Students will have access to books and notes while answering the exam questions. Students should submit their exams electronically to the D.G.S. in PDF format (if possible, if not, it should be submitted in Microsoft Word) by the given deadline. The 2-hour (maximum) oral examination is usually scheduled approximately

2 weeks after the written exam period. The oral exam committee decides upon a grade for the overall comprehensive exam immediately after the oral part is completed.

- E. Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense: Students should defend their dissertation proposal by the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> month following the end of the semester in which the Ph.D. comprehensive exams were passed. Students passing the exams in the Fall semester must defend by the following May 15<sup>th</sup>; students passing in the Spring must defend by the following October 15<sup>th</sup>. Students who fail to meet this deadline will not be in good standing and may be placed on academic probation at the department level. Students may complete an Independent Study (PSC670) course directed by their major professor in which they develop a dissertation proposal. Students may also register for Dissertation Guidance (PSC 710) in the semester during which they will defend their dissertation proposal.

It is the responsibility of the Dissertation Committee Chair to schedule the dissertation proposal defense. If the proposal defense is successful, the dissertation committee members sign the Dissertation Proposal Approval Form (available on the Political Science website at the same location listed above). This form is then given to the D.G.S. to sign (via the Graduate Coordinator), after which it is placed in the student's file. Passage of the proposal defense constitutes permission to proceed with work on the dissertation.

- F. Doctoral Dissertation: The Doctoral Dissertation is a substantial, original work of professional quality required of all Ph.D. students.
- a. Dissertation Committee: The dissertation committee is responsible for (a) supervising the research and writing of the dissertation and (b) conducting the oral exam on the completed work. The student is responsible for asking faculty members to serve on their dissertation committee and informing the DGS about the membership of the committee (including changes). Though the chair of the dissertation committee usually works most closely with the student, other members should be kept fully informed as the dissertation progresses and should have an opportunity to make their views known well before a final draft is done. Both the chair and the student are responsible for involving other committee members.

The dissertation committee must have at least three members from within the Department, all holding the rank of assistant professor or higher, and must be chaired by a department member of the Graduate Faculty. Additional members beyond the required three can be from other departments at UB or from other universities.

Faculty committee members who have left UB: A faculty member who has left UB for retirement or career reasons but has committed to serving on a student's dissertation committee, as a member or the chair, can serve on the committee for 1 year after his/her departure. There are cases where the departed faculty member served for more time; however, there must be an agreement setting a time limit on this commitment among the student, the departed faculty member, the D.G.S., and the Department Chair. Any student in this situation should contact the D.G.S. for advice.

- b. Dissertation Preparation and Defense: Research and writing of the dissertation should require no more than one year of full-time work. Students should choose and design projects with this in mind. Continuous registration for at least one credit hour of PSC 710 per semester is required during the regular academic year until the dissertation is completed and successfully defended.

The oral defense of the dissertation should be scheduled when the dissertation committee members agree that the student is ready on the basis of a sufficiently completed draft. All



members of the dissertation committee (as listed on the Application to Candidacy form) must participate in the oral defense. If someone cannot be present but participates by speaker phone, they need to prepare a written statement that they heard the oral defense and approve the dissertation. This statement must be signed and attached to the M-form (scanned or faxed copies are acceptable), which substitutes for them actually signing the M-form at the end of the oral defense.

The Graduate School requires that the oral defense be a public event scheduled by the Department. The defense will be announced to the Department faculty and graduate students. The defense will begin with a presentation by the student summarizing their dissertation research. At the end of this presentation (and any subsequent question and answer), the dissertation committee will deliberate on whether the dissertation is acceptable. Only committee members are allowed to participate in this deliberation, which will generally involve additional questions posed to the student. If the dissertation requires some changes, the committee must specify these clearly, and give its approval (by signing the M-form) only after these alterations have been satisfactorily made.

**It is the student's responsibility to satisfy all Graduate School requirements for completion of the Ph.D., including proper formatting and submission of the dissertation.** The student should consult the Ph.D. Graduation Checklist on the Graduate School website (<http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/phd.php>). The Department requests one bound copy of the dissertation for its library.

- G. Teaching Requirement: All students in the Ph.D. program are required to teach an undergraduate course in a field in which they are qualified. This requirement applies whether or not the student is funded. Normally, this requirement is fulfilled after a student has successfully passed the comprehensive exams, but exceptions are made for qualified students based on student wishes and Department teaching schedules.

In fulfilling this requirement, students will assume full responsibility, under faculty supervision, for all phases of the preparation, instruction, and grading of the course. With the approval of the D.G.S., this requirement can be satisfied based on prior experience in college-level teaching or service as an adjunct instructor at another college or university while a student in our program. **Students whose native language is NOT English should recognize that University policy requires that they satisfy the English Language Requirement (see below) before they can teach an undergraduate course at UB to satisfy the Department's Teaching Requirement.**

Faculty Monitoring of Graduate Student Teaching:

General: It is University policy that professorial faculty directly monitor and supervise all graduate students in their department who are teaching. In order to comply with this policy, the D.G.S. will assign a faculty supervisor to each graduate instructor. It is the responsibility of the graduate student instructor to meet with the faculty supervisor on a regular basis, beginning with the semester prior to teaching the course. The course's textbook should not be assigned and the course's syllabus should not be distributed until after they are approved by the faculty mentor (or the D.G.S.).

Teaching Assistants: Prior to the beginning of each semester, the D.G.S. assigns each T.A. to assist a faculty member (or two) with their teaching and research. This faculty member is responsible for mentoring and providing feedback on the T.A.'s performance on any teaching-related tasks. If the T.A. is assigned to teach their own undergraduate course, the

D.G.S. will appoint a faculty member to mentor them and evaluate their teaching performance. The faculty mentor is expected to visit the T.A.'s class at least once during the semester, on an announced basis. After each visit, the faculty mentor will meet informally with the T.A. to provide constructive feedback. At the end of the semester, the mentor will provide the D.G.S. with a summary assessment of the student's teaching effectiveness.

- H. English Language Requirement: University policy requires that all international students from non-English-speaking countries must demonstrate proficiency in spoken English in order to hold a teaching assistantship or teach an undergraduate course. Given that Ph.D. students must teach at least one undergraduate course as part of the degree requirements, **ALL international students from non-English-speaking countries and U.S. Nationals whose native language is NOT English must pass the UB SPEAK Test no later than the end of their first year of study in the doctoral program.** Hence, all such students are urged to take the SPEAK Test as soon after their arrival at the University as possible. The SPEAK Test is passed with a score of 55 or 60. Students who receive a score of 50 can petition for a chance to demonstrate their English language proficiency in a teaching presentation before representatives of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program and the Department. Students who receive a score of 45 or lower must retake the SPEAK Test. It is strongly recommended that such students complete ESL 512 or ESL 411/412 prior to retaking the SPEAK Test.

Students who have not passed the UB SPEAK Test prior to the beginning of their second year of study in the Doctoral Program will be placed on academic probation at the department level and potentially barred from registering for Political Science courses until they pass the test. **Funded students who have not satisfied this requirement by the end of their first year of study will not have their funding renewed.** All students whose first or dominant language is not English will have their language proficiency reviewed as part of the Semi-Annual Review. Such students will be expected to demonstrate increasing fluency in both written and spoken English during their academic studies. Failure to achieve English proficiency in a reasonable period of time may result in the student being dropped from the graduate program.

- I. Certification of Full-time Status: Ph.D. students preparing for their comprehensive exams or working on their dissertation who need to maintain full-time status (e.g., for financial aid reasons) can be certified as full-time while being registered for fewer than 12 credit hours (or 9 hours if the student is a TA). For each semester in which certification is needed, a Certification of Full-Time Status form must be filled out, signed appropriately, and given to the Graduate Coordinator. Note that an Application to Candidacy form must be filed along with this form. Both forms are available at the Graduate School website: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/forms/index.php>. Doctoral students studying on a part-time basis do not have to be certified for full-time status.

## **VI. Additional Rules and Restrictions for J.D./M.A. and J.D./Ph.D. Students**

Students pursuing both the J.D. (Juris Doctorate, degree awarded by the Law School) and the M.A. or Ph.D. must follow the requirements and rules for each program separately, as if they were only pursuing one degree. That is, dual-degree students pursuing a J.D. and an M.A. or Ph.D. must follow the guidelines for the J.D. program as well as the guidelines for the M.A. or Ph.D. Students apply to each program separately, following the admission requirements of each program.

Students must matriculate into the Law program in order for courses taken in the Law School to count toward their J.D. requirements. This is a Law School rule so students should seek the advice of Law School administrators for further details (e.g., some elective courses may be exempt from this rule).

Consequently, dual-degree students must switch their official matriculation between the College of Liberal Arts (CAS) and the Law School as they progress through the two programs. The Graduate Coordinator should be kept apprised of these changes in enrollment status so that students matriculated in the Law program are not treated by the Graduate School as having dropped out of the Political Science M.A. or Ph.D. program. Also, when students are matriculated in the Law program, they must be “force” registered into any Political Science (PSC) courses that they may want to take. Hence, such students must tell the Graduate Coordinator what PSC courses they would like to register for PRIOR to the start of the semester. Registration cannot occur until all of the registration windows have expired, but JD/MA and JD/PhD students should communicate their desired schedules to the Graduate Coordinator by the end of October for Spring registration and the end of March for Fall registration.

- A. Shared Courses: Political Science works collaboratively with the Law School, allowing dual-degree students to “share” courses across the two programs. Hence, each program accepts a certain number of credit hours taken in the other’s program such that the “shared” hours are applied jointly to satisfy the total credit-hour requirements for both degrees. Students who want to apply credit hours from Law School courses toward the M.A. or Ph.D. must receive approval from the D.G.S., who will consult with Public Law faculty to determine whether the Law courses are sufficiently relevant to Political Science. Similarly, the appropriate Law School administrator should be consulted about applying particular Political Science courses toward the J.D. degree.

A maximum of 9 credit hours taken within Political Science (i.e., courses listed solely as PSC) can be applied toward the J.D. requirements. Similarly, Political Science permits up to 6 credit hours taken in the Law School to be applied toward the M.A. degree and up to 15 credit hours toward the Ph.D. However, the credit hours from PSC courses that will be counted toward the J.D. must be subtracted from the number of Law School credits that Political Science is permitted to accept toward the M.A. or Ph.D. If a JD/PhD student, for example, has received permission from the Law School to apply three 3-credit hour PSC courses ( $3 \times 3 = 9$ ) toward the J.D., then Political Science can only accept 6 credits of Law courses toward the Ph.D. ( $15 - 9 = 6$ ). The opposite also applies. If a JD/PhD student, for example, wishes to apply 9 credit hours of Law courses toward the Ph.D., then he/she can only apply 6 hours of PSC courses toward the J.D. degree ( $15 - 9 = 6$ ).

For JD/MA students, slightly different rules apply and the calculations are more complicated. JD/MA students can only apply two 3-credit hour courses, for a maximum of 6 hours, taken in the Law School toward the Political Science M.A. As with JD/PhD students, up to 9 credit hours of PSC courses can be applied toward the J.D. However, in any combination, no more than 12 credit hours can be shared. If a JD/MA student, for example, petitions the Law School for three 3-credit hour PSC courses ( $3 \times 3 = 9$ ) to be applied toward the J.D., then only 3 hours of Law School courses can be applied toward the M.A. ( $12 - 9 = 3$ ). Similarly, if a JD/MA student has been approved to apply 6 credit hours of Law courses toward the M.A., then the student can only petition the Law School to apply 6 hours of PSC classes toward the J.D. ( $6 + 6 = 12$ ). In no case, can a student apply 6 credits of Law courses toward the M.A. and 9 credits of PSC classes toward the J.D. simultaneously ( $6 + 9 = 15$ ) since this would exceed the 12-credit limit on shared courses. The table below summarizes possible shared-credit combinations.

When a course is cross-listed, JD/PhD and JD/MA students are generally better off taking it under the Law School registration number. This way, the credits will count toward the Law School residency requirement but can still be applied toward the Ph.D. or M.A. as a shared course.

PSC to Law	M.A.		Ph.D.	
	Law to PSC	Total Shared	Law to PSC	Total Shared
0	6	6	15	15
3	6	9	12	15
6	6	12	9	15
9	3	12	6	15

- B. Funding: Dual-degree students are eligible for Teaching Assistantships in Political Science, but Law School regulations complicate the administration of this CAS funding. When a student is matriculated in the Law School, he/she cannot serve as a T.A. in the CAS and hence cannot receive a stipend during those semesters. The student must also petition the Graduate School (via the D.G.S.) to suspend rather than permanently cancel any University-level scholarships associated with their TA-ship in Political Science. Additionally, funding from the CAS can only be used to cover the cost of courses that will be applied toward the Political Science M.A. or Ph.D. Hence, the student must secure separate funding to cover the cost of courses taken in the Law School that will only be applied toward the J.D.

## VII. Grades and Evaluations of Student Performance

- A. Minimum Grade Requirement: As stated above, the grade of B- is considered the minimal satisfactory grade in graduate courses. Students receiving a grade lower than B- in a graduate course will earn no credit and must retake the course if it is required.
- B. Incompletes (“IU” Grades): Students are expected to complete coursework ON TIME. A grade of Incomplete may be given ONLY in rare instances in which the student has not been able to complete all of the assigned coursework due to illness or other unforeseeable and compelling circumstances. Whether incompletes are given at all, and what deadline is set for finishing the missing/late coursework is at the prerogative of the instructor to the extent that the conditions set comply with the general rules of the University, Graduate School, and Department. Faculty members should make their policy on Incompletes clear at the beginning of each semester, preferably on the course syllabus.

The University allows students two semesters (beyond the semester during which the course was taken) to resolve an Incomplete. For example, students who received an Incomplete in a course taken in Fall 2009 would have no longer than the end of the Fall 2010 semester (December 31st) to complete all missing/late coursework required by the instructor for a final grade. But note that the instructor may choose a shorter time period for completing this coursework. If course requirements are not completed by the instructor’s or University’s deadline, the Incomplete will automatically be changed to an Unsatisfactory (“U”) grade. Once an Incomplete is changed to a “U” grade, the course, if offered again, may be repeated for credit.

**For students who are receiving aid from the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), financial support may be endangered if coursework is not completed on time. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid for TAP regulations concerning Incompletes.**

- C. Evaluations and Reviews: All students are evaluated on their performance in every course taken in

the Political Science program (including PSC 599-Supervised Teaching and PSC 600- Supervised Research when appropriate). Evaluations are prepared by each instructor and submitted to the D.G.S. to supplement students' letter grades. These evaluations are based on the student's oral and written performance in the course and may include: 1) suggestions for strengthening any weaknesses or filling gaps in knowledge which may exist, and 2) observations on capability to complete the degree objective. The D.G.S. reads these evaluations each semester and summarizes the comments in the overall performance review(s) provided to each student.

Students in their first or second year in the program are generally evaluated after the end of each semester. Students beyond their second year in the program are evaluated at the end of each academic year unless their performance is unsatisfactory in which case they are evaluated on a semi-annual basis. These annual and semi-annual reviews take into account grades (including Incompletes), course evaluations by instructors, progress toward degree completion, and, when relevant, performance as a teaching assistant. Full-time doctoral students are expected to pass their Ph.D. comprehensive exams by the end of the first semester of their fourth year in the program. Failure to achieve this will be treated as unsatisfactory progress toward completion of the degree requirements.

Each review provides an overall performance rating of outstanding, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. The review will also provide feedback on the student's strengths and weaknesses, assessing their ability to complete the degree and, if appropriate, their potential as a Ph.D. candidate or for a successful academic career. In the case of unsatisfactory performance, the D.G.S. consults with the Graduate Studies Committee on whether the student should be placed on academic probation and, if funded, whether their teaching assistantship should be rescinded (not renewed). Once a student is placed on academic probation, future unsatisfactory reviews may result in the student being dropped from the graduate program or terminated as a Ph.D. candidate at the M.A. degree.

- D. "J" Grades: If a student notices a "J" on their grade report, this should be brought to the attention of the course instructor promptly to get the grade changed to what it should be. These invalid grades are assigned automatically when no grade is submitted for a student enrolled in a particular course and semester. "J" grades default to "F" grades in a short period of time, thereby lowering a student's G.P.A. and threatening their academic standing.
- E. "L" Grades: "L" grades are given to show continuation of a course. They may be used in place of an "S" grade for Dissertation Guidance (PSC 710) or Master's Thesis/Project Guidance (PSC 700).  
Once a student's degree is conferred, the "L" grades will default to "S" grades. Thus, an "L" grade should not be assigned unless it is the equivalent of an "S" grade.
- F. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grades: Satisfactory ("S") grades indicate credit earned for a course; whereas, Unsatisfactory ("U") grades indicate no credit earned. That is, an "S" can only be awarded in place of a passing mark. For Political Science, a passing mark is a "B-." Therefore, a "U" is the equivalent of any grade less than B- (C+ and below). Neither "S" nor "U" grades are calculated in a student's G.P.A. However, both do appear on a student's transcript. Also, "S" and "U" grades will be considered when determining a student's academic standing. Thus, the presence of "U" grades can be used to place a student on academic probation (e.g., for failing to maintain the minimum GPA required for their degree). This rule also applies to "U" grades that were received as a result of a defaulted Incomplete. Students who previously received a "U" in a course that is offered again can take the course over for credit.

S/U grading is typically used for PSC 700 and PSC 710. They may also be used for informal courses conducted as Independent Study (PSC 670), Supervised Teaching (PSC 599), or Supervised Research (PSC 600). Taking other classes as S/U is not recommended, but, under special circumstances, the D.G.S. may grant an exception. This exception must be approved by the D.G.S.

and the faculty instructor prior to the start of the course. All faculty members should make their policy on S/U grading known at the beginning of each semester, preferably in their course syllabi.

“S” grades are not included in the calculation of a student’s overall G.P.A., but the credits earned may count toward the required hours for the degree (i.e., 30 for the M.A. and 72 for the Ph.D.). Outside of Dissertation and Thesis Guidance credits, the Department limits M.A. students to a maximum of two 3-credit hour courses graded as S/U and Ph.D. students to a maximum of four 3-credit courses as S/U. Any questions regarding this rule should be addressed to the D.G.S.

### **VIII. Assistantships and Fellowships**

Funded students will be assigned primarily as teaching assistants (T.A.). Students receiving a teaching or graduate assistantship (G.A.) must be full-time students and are expected to work 15-20 hrs/week on their T.A./G.A. duties. Full-time status for students with assistantships is 9 credit hours. As discussed above, students studying for comprehensive exams or working on a project, thesis, or dissertation can be certified as full-time even if they are registered for less than 9 hours in a semester.

In order to be considered for a third or fourth year of support from the Department, students must demonstrate that they have completed (or will have completed by the beginning of their third year of support) the requirements for teaching an independent course in the Department. Additionally, as noted above, full-time Ph.D. students are expected to pass their comprehensive exams by the end of the first semester of their fourth year in the program or else they will no longer be treated as making satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

All T.A./G.A. appointments are on an annual basis. Assistantships are awarded competitively to two categories of students: incoming and continuing. Awards to incoming students are based on a variety of factors associated with their admission materials, including but not limited to: GRE scores, performance in undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) coursework, letters of recommendation, research interests, personal statement, and TOEFL scores (if applicable). Awards to continuing students are based on overall academic performance, including course grades, performance of assistantship duties, progress toward completing degree requirements, and availability of funds to the Department.

Students receiving assistantships will be eligible for a maximum of 4 years or 8 semesters of Departmental funding. In addition, a student can only be funded for a maximum of 72 credit hours (the number of credit hours required to obtain the Ph.D.). Each semester of funding, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) will pay for up to 12 credit hours of tuition assistance. Although taking 9 credit hours is considered full-time for TAs, it is to his/her financial advantage to take 12 credit hours when practical.

The CAS pays per credit hour. They do not pay one price for full-time tuition. Therefore, it is vital for T.A.s to tell the Graduate Coordinator how many credit hours they are actually registered for each semester. The Graduate Coordinator manually enters the amount of credit hours each T.A. is registered for into the University computer system, thereby notifying the CAS how much they have to pay for each T.A.’s tuition. A T.A. can change his/her schedule by adding or deleting courses (credit hours) as long as the change takes place within the appropriate add/drop period and the Graduate Coordinator is notified of the change immediately. In other words, the action of dropping a class from or adding a class to one’s schedule must be done before the penalty period begins (during the first week of classes). In addition, T.A.s cannot be (re)appointed unless they are registered for classes. Therefore, a student cannot legally work for UB (i.e., cannot receive a paycheck) unless he/she is registered for classes. Registering in a timely manner is pertinent.

All Teaching Assistants except international students are required to apply for New York State (NYS) Residency, if they are not already a New York State resident, after their first semester of their

assistantships. However, the process of establishing NYS residency actually begins as soon as the student begins their studies at UB. Please visit the Student Response Center's website for the appropriate steps to take at: <http://studentaccounts.buffalo.edu/policies/residency.php>. The form for establishing NYS residency can be found at: <http://studentaccounts.buffalo.edu/pdfs/NYSResidencyApplication.pdf> Also, all T.A.s except international students are required to apply for TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) through New York State. Some T.A.s will not qualify for TAP because of their current residency status or if their income exceeds the limits established by NYS. If a T.A. is denied TAP due to income, a TAP excess income form should be filled out for the whole academic year and returned to the Political Science Department upon its completion (the form will be forwarded appropriately).

### **IX. Outside Employment and Non-Departmental Assistantships**

Students holding assistantships are required to take a full-time course load and normally will not have sufficient time for employment beyond assistantship responsibilities. Other students may find university employment through a work-study program administered by the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Some Political Science students may qualify for assistantships outside of the Department in certain specialized programs. Wherever feasible, qualified students are encouraged to apply for those positions. However, these positions are generally sought independently by interested students.

Advanced graduate students are encouraged to pursue opportunities for external grants and fellowships in aid of dissertation research, and to seek other means through which they may combine financial support for the latter stages of the program with activities useful in their dissertation research and appropriate to their long-term career interests. Notices of such opportunities can be posted or otherwise brought to students' attention; however, further initiatives normally lie with the individual student.

### **X. Placement Files**

Placement files are sent out to prospective employers as a courtesy to our Ph.D. students that have recently conferred their degree or are close to finishing their degree. Students who meet the criteria may obtain a copy of the Department's written procedures for placement files from the Graduate Coordinator. Any questions related to placement files should be directed to the Graduate Coordinator.

### **XI. Grievance Procedures**

Under procedures established by the Department and the Graduate School, prompt and informal resolutions of grievances are sought. At the Department level, informal discussions between the disputants should resolve most issues; students may wish to seek prior advice from their Faculty Advisor, the D.G.S., or the Chair. If a formal review is necessary, a written statement of the grievance and grounds for it should be given to the Chair, who will act upon it in accordance with the By-laws of the Department and the regulations of the Graduate School. Appeals from departmental determinations may be lodged with the Divisional Grievance Committee of the Graduate School.

## **XII. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of employees and students, as defined below, is contrary to University policy and is a violation of federal and state laws and regulations.

Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement, 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual, 3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

No University employee of either sex shall impose a requirement of sexual cooperation as a condition of employment or academic advancement, or in any way contribute to or support unwelcomed physical or verbal sexual behavior. Any member of the University community who requires additional information, wishes to make a complaint or to receive a copy of the University procedures to be followed for complaints arising from matters related to the policies outlined above, should contact the office of Equity, Diversity, and Affirmative Action Administration (EDAAA) located in 406 Capen Hall, at 645-2266 or through their website at <http://affirmativeaction.buffalo.edu/home.htm>

## **XIII. Non-Discrimination**

The Department of Political Science follows the University's policies of non-discrimination. These policies can be found on the EDAAA's website at:

[http://affirmativeaction.buffalo.edu/university\\_policies.htm](http://affirmativeaction.buffalo.edu/university_policies.htm)



## **Abbreviations and Definitions**

**Academic Year:** begins with the Fall semester: Fall to Spring (and may include the Summer)

**A to C:** Application to Candidacy

**CAS:** College of Arts and Sciences

**Comps:** Comprehensive Exams

**D.G.S.:** Director of Graduate Studies

**G. A.:** Graduate Assistant

**G.P.A.:** Grade Point Average

**GRE:** Graduate Record Exam

**J.D.:** Juris Doctorate (Law School's terminal degree)

**M.A.:** Master of Arts

**NYS:** New York State

**Ph.D.:** Doctor of Philosophy

**PSC:** Political Science

**“S ” G rade :** Satisfactory

**SRC:** Student Response Center

**T.A.:** Teaching Assistant

**TAP:** Tuition Assistance Program (through New York State).

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language

**“U” G rade:** Unsatisfactory

**UB:** University at Buffalo (State University of New York at Buffalo)

### **Helpful Websites**

Political Science Department's website: <http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/>

Political Science Department's Graduate website: <http://www.polsci.buffalo.edu/graduate/>

Admissions Application to Political Science:

<https://www.gradmit.buffalo.edu/etw/ets/et.asp?nxappid=GRA&nxmlid=GetApplication>

Graduate School's website: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/>

Graduate School Forms: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/forms/index.php>

Graduate School's M.A. Graduation Checklist:

<http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/masters.php#checklist>

Graduate School's Ph.D. Graduation Checklist: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/phd.php#checklist>

Student Response Center: <http://src.buffalo.edu/>

### **Listing of Graduate Courses (By Field)**

(All courses are 3 credit hours unless indicated otherwise)

#### METHODS OF INQUIRY

500 Introduction to Political Inquiry  
502 Graduate Research Methods  
508 Basic Statistics for Social Science  
531 Intermediate Statistics for Social Science  
532 Philosophy of Social Science  
533 Formal Theory  
631 Advanced Statistics for Social Science  
632 Field Research Methods in Social Science  
633 Advanced Topics in Political Inquiry  
639 Model Building & Simulation  
731 Empirical Political Frontiers

#### AMERICAN POLITICS

505 American Politics  
506 Policy-Making Process  
517 American Political Economy  
563 Political Parties  
565 Administrative Process  
567 Urban Politics  
568 State Politics  
569 American Federalism  
634 Psychological Theories of Politics  
636 Organization Theory  
660 The Separation of Powers  
663 Legislative Process  
664 Executive Process  
665 Voting & Public Opinion  
666 Environmental Politics  
668 Public Policy Problems  
672 Policy Evaluation  
673 Budgeting & Political Process  
674 Policy Analysis  
675 Implementing Civil Rights  
761 American Politics Frontiers  
771 Public Policy Frontiers

#### PUBLIC LAW

521 Courts & Social Change  
540 International Law  
560 Constitutionalism and Constitutional Theory  
561 Constitutional Law  
562 Constitutional Law II  
650 International Protection of Human Rights  
662 Judicial Process  
751 Public Law Frontiers

#### COMPARATIVE POLITICS

503 Comparative Politics  
520 Topics in Major Political Systems  
521 Topics in Major Political Systems  
522 Comparative Parties & Groups  
526 Post-Communist Political Systems  
529 Building Democracies  
620 Political Culture  
621 Political Geography  
622 Comparative Political Behavior  
623 Political Socialization  
624 Political Sociology  
625 Political Change  
626 Post-Soviet Russia  
627 Elites & Political Leadership  
628 Comparative Bureaucracies  
646 Civil-Military Relations  
650 International Protection of Human Rights  
681 Politics of Technology & Culture  
721 Comparative Politics Frontiers

#### INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

504 International Politics  
540 International Law  
541 American Foreign Policy  
542 Comparative Foreign Policy  
543 Foreign Policy Formulation  
544 International Theory  
545 Morality & International Politics  
546 Russian Foreign Policy  
641 International Economic Relations  
643 International Security  
644 International Systems Evolution  
645 Conflict Processes  
647 International Organization  
648 Research in International Politics  
741 International Politics Frontiers

#### OTHER COURSES

590 Selected Topics: Readings (1-3 credits)  
599 Supervised Teaching (1-3 credits)  
600 Supervised Research (1-3 credits)  
670 Independent Study (1-3 credits)  
699 Teaching Political Science  
700 M.A. Project/Thesis Guidance (1-6 credits)  
710 Ph.D. Dissertation Guidance (1-12 credits)