Political Science PhD

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Learn more about the Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

About the Program

The primary mission of the Political Science Department's graduate program is to prepare students for careers in academia. The department gives equal emphasis to training students for both the research and teaching sides of such a career. Many of our graduates also successfully apply their political science training to non-academic careers. The PhD program offers study in four broadly defined fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations and Political Theory. The PhD program seeks primarily to develop the research skills and substantive knowledge necessary for successful completion of a dissertation.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 7 years

Campus Location: Main

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: Students complete the degree program through classes offered after 3:00 p.m. The degree program can be completed on a full- or part-time basis.

Areas of Specialization: We offer courses in American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory, as well as methodology. We typically accept students wishing to specialize in American Politics, Comparative Politics or International Relations.

Job Prospects: Most PhD students are preparing for college teaching careers, and a good number secure teaching positions at colleges and universities. Others pursue careers in government or other non-academic research positions.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Prior to applying for admission, students sometimes want to take courses as non-degree students. Those who wish to do so must first obtain the approval of the Graduate Chair in the Political Science Department to determine if the individual stands a reasonable chance for admission to the MA or PhD program. Then, to be enrolled in coursework, the prospective student must visit the Office of Continuing Studies with transcripts from all institutions attended, including the one that conferred the undergraduate degree.

Financing Opportunities:
Departmental Support:
The department typically supports a portion of its graduate students as Teaching or Research Assistants. Students may not only assist professors in research and teaching, but also may teach courses on their own. Assistantships include full tuition, a stipend and health insurance. Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. The amount of support available for entering students varies from year to year, in accordance with the University budget and contractual commitments with the Temple University Graduate Students' Association (TUGSA). Assisting in research and undergraduate teaching helps graduate students integrate their studies and prepare for examinations, and gives those who plan on pursuing an academic career valuable experience.

In making funding awards, the Graduate Chair and committee place high priority on a student's academic performance and potential. The following rules and criteria guide the committee's decisions for continuing students:

- The student must be making normal progress toward meeting their degree requirements. *Two incompletes disqualify a student from consideration for financial assistance.* Advanced students should note that no student will be awarded financial assistance who has not successfully defended a dissertation prospectus within a year of passing the comprehensive examinations.
- To spread support more broadly and to provide an incentive for students to move quickly through coursework and examinations and into the dissertation, the department typically will not provide financial aid for students who have already had five years of support as a Graduate Assistant.

Graduate School Support:
The Graduate School offers Presidential and University Fellowships to the very best applicants on a competitive basis for newly admitted PhD students. Each fellowship offers a stipend plus tuition, for up to two years, plus up to two additional years of support as a Teaching and/or Research Assistant. Fellowships can be offered to candidates who are newly matriculating in the doctoral program at Temple.

For students nearing completion of their dissertations, the Graduate School offers a limited number of Doctoral Dissertation Completion Grants. Doctoral candidates with approximately six months of anticipated writing to complete their dissertations may apply for this grant. These awards are given on a competitive basis. Students should apply for these awards only when all other department and university support has been exhausted, and when a persuasive case can be made that the dissertation will be completed within the time period of the grant. No more aid will be available after the awarding of such a grant. Interested students should speak to the Graduate Chair at least one term before they plan to apply for the award. Application can be made for Fall, Spring or Summer funding, when available.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

Fall: December 15

Late applications may not be considered.

A limited number of fee waivers are available for applicants for whom the application fee represents a financial hardship. U.S. applicants should verify whether they are eligible for a fee waiver from the Graduate School by visiting https://grad.temple.edu/admissions/how-apply. By November 20, applicants who want to be considered for a fee waiver should complete their application, then fill out the request form: Temple Political Science PhD Program Fee Waiver Request. Applicants are notified by December 1 as to whether they will receive a fee waiver.

APPLY ONLINE to this graduate program.

Letters of Reference:
Number Required: 3

From Whom: Letters of recommendation should be obtained from college/university faculty members familiar with academic competence.

Master's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: A master's degree is not required.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: A baccalaureate degree is required.

Statement of Goals: In approximately 500 to 1,000 words, share your interest in Temple's program, research goals, future career goals, and academic and research achievements.

Standardized Test Scores:
GRE: Optional. Scores may be submitted if available.

Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master’s degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 100
- IELTS Academic: 7.0
- PTE Academic: 68

Resume: Current resume required.

Writing Sample: The writing sample should demonstrate your ability to research and write a scholarly paper. The paper should be no more than 25 pages and fully referenced according to a professional, scholarly style manual.

Advanced Standing: For students entering the PhD program who have received an MA degree elsewhere, up to 18 credits may be applied to the doctoral program, provided they are relevant to the department's required courses. These credits must have been obtained no more than five years prior to the student’s matriculation at Temple and the grades must be "B" or better. The Graduate Chair decides which courses students may transfer. As a general rule, transfer students should expect that they will have to complete much of the required coursework in residence. Students transferring into the PhD program should note that it is advisable to take courses from Temple faculty in their major and minor fields before taking the PhD Qualifying Exams in those two fields.

Program Requirements

General Program Requirements:
Number of Credits Required to Earn the PhD: 45, including 30 credits at the master's level and 15 at the doctoral level

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Courses		
Select two from the following:		6
POLS 8101	Government in American Society	
POLS 8201	Comparative Politics	
POLS 8301	International Politics	
POLS 8401	Introduction to Political Theory	3
Methods Courses		

CLA 8985	Teaching in Higher Education: Liberal Arts	3
POLS 8001	Political Statistics I	3
POLS 8002	Qualitative Research Methods	3
POLS 8003	Political Statistics II	3
Electives [1]		**18**
Research Courses		**6**
POLS 9994	Preliminary Examination Preparation	
POLS 9998	Pre-Dissertation Research	
POLS 9999	Dissertation Research [2]	
Total Credit Hours		**45**

1 Students select three elective courses in a first field, two elective courses in a second field, and one free elective. Elective courses in the two fields should be taken in areas in which the student plans to complete written comprehensive exams. The free elective may be taken in advanced methods or another substantive course. Taking more than two independent study courses requires the permission of the Graduate Chair.

2 Students must register for POLS 9999 while writing their dissertation to remain in good standing in the program unless they file for a leave of absence. Students usually register for 1 credit of POLS 9999 for every term they are writing the dissertation. Of the 6 required research credits, a minimum of 2 credits of POLS 9999 must be taken.

Culminating Events:

Qualifying Examinations:

The Qualifying Examinations are given at the end of the Spring term for students in their second year of the PhD program. To be eligible to take the Qualifying Exams, students must have completed nearly all didactic coursework and have no incompletes on their transcript regardless of how many credits they have completed. In practice, all incompletes must be converted to a letter grade by the date on which the examinations take place.

Students take the PhD Qualifying Examinations in one of four fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations and Political Theory. The field in which a student takes their Qualifying Examinations is considered their primary field of study. Examinations consist of a written component and are conducted by at least three faculty selected from the subfield by the Graduate Chair in consultation with the Subfield Coordinator. The examiners have joint responsibility for writing and grading the field examination. In this exam, students must demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge and intellectual sophistication across their primary PhD field of study. They should also be prepared to interpret political phenomena within the context of various theories, use empirical data to illuminate concepts, and identify gaps in knowledge. Students are encouraged to meet with faculty in their field to discuss the general areas of the exam content to ensure that they have accurately identified key theories, concepts and literature. Professors may make sample questions, previous exams or special reading lists available as study aids.

Students who fail the written exam portion of the Qualifying Examinations can take a new version at the end of the summer after their second year in the PhD program. The Graduate School specifies that any student who fails all or part of these examinations twice is automatically dismissed from the program.

Field Paper:

In addition to the Qualifying Examinations in their primary field, students must also submit a field paper in their primary field of study. The field paper is a completed piece of research of publishable quality. It is intended to serve as a significant steppingstone toward the dissertation proposal and may build on papers written in previous courses. In the Spring term of a student's second year, the student enrolls in POLS 9994 and works with the course instructor and a member of the graduate faculty to generate a topic for the field paper. Field papers are due at the start of the Fall term of the student's third year. Papers are evaluated by the Qualifying Examinations committee in the relevant field. Students whose papers are deemed passing are invited to present their papers orally to the Qualifying Examinations committee within ten days of the date of submission. Papers not approved by the Qualifying Examinations committee must be revised and resubmitted again before the end of the Fall term of the third year. Failure to complete a satisfactory field paper by the end of the exam period in the Fall term of the third year constitutes grounds for dismissal from the program.

Seminar Paper:

In lieu of a Qualifying Exam, students submit a seminar paper in their secondary field of study to the Qualifying Examinations committee in the relevant field. As part of their coursework, students must take the core seminar and two electives in their secondary field. All graduate elective courses give students the option of writing a seminar paper as a central element of the course grading. In one of these electives, students complete a seminar paper, which is graded as usual by the instructor of record, and turned in when students sit for their Qualifying Examinations in their primary field. The instructor of record in the course for which the seminar paper is written may require further revision before the paper is submitted to the Qualifying Examinations committee.

Dissertation Proposal:

In consultation with the Graduate Chair, the candidate secures a principal dissertation advisor. This person must be a member of the Political Science Graduate Faculty and specialize in the area of the dissertation topic. Preferably in the term immediately after passing the PhD Qualifying Exam, and no more than two terms thereafter, the candidate takes POLS 9998, the dissertation proposal preparation course. The course is offered every Fall under the

guidance of the Graduate Chair. The purpose of the course is to launch students on writing their dissertation proposals and prepare them for writing the dissertation. Students are required to do the following:

1. Under the guidance of their advisor (or if different from the advisor, the faculty member most likely to supervise their dissertation) and Graduate Chair, begin exploring possible dissertation topics through research and reading.
2. Attend seminar meetings in the Fall term under the supervision of the Graduate Chair. At these sessions, the Graduate Chair presents information relevant to the development and preparation of dissertation proposals and chapters. Students are required to make presentations that address problems encountered in the proposal and dissertation writing process and strategies for overcoming them. Students who already have taken POLS 9998 are invited back to attend and participate in subsequent seminars and report on their progress and share their experiences with the students enrolled in the course.

In consultation with the dissertation advisor, the student assembles a Doctoral Advisory Committee. The Doctoral Advisory Committee is to be composed of at least three Temple Graduate Faculty, at least two of whom have their primary appointment in Political Science. The composition of the Doctoral Advisory Committee must be formally approved by the Graduate Chair. A student wishing to pursue a dissertation on a topic that requires supplementing the expertise of the department's faculty may have to seek a committee member from another department. The student has the burden of convincing the Graduate Chair that a committee with adequate expertise can be established with faculty willing to serve.

Students are required to submit a preliminary proposal not to exceed five double-spaced pages. The preliminary proposal should address both the question(s) to be examined and a justification for why those questions warrant a major study. Students are expected to show why these questions are or should be important to political scientists as well as to citizens. Only after the Doctoral Advisory Committee is satisfied that the student has written a persuasive preliminary proposal will the student be permitted to write a longer proposal, if the committee believes a longer proposal is warranted.

Successful completion of POLS 9998 culminates in the defense of the dissertation prospectus before the Doctoral Advisory Committee. The dissertation prospectus, consisting of a research design and literature review, should be defended and accepted by the full membership of the committee within two terms after completion of PhD coursework. No student is awarded financial assistance who has not successfully defended a prospectus within a year of completion of coursework. Students who fail to submit an approved dissertation proposal within two years of completing their PhD coursework are subject to dismissal from the program. An approved proposal is a contract between the student and the Doctoral Advisory Committee. After approval, any significant theoretical or methodological change in the substantive direction of the project must be approved by the committee.

Once the prospectus is successfully defended, the student is advanced to candidacy. The Doctoral Advisory Committee must confer at least once a year with the student to review progress and provide advice. Students should take the initiative to schedule these exchanges and ensure that written faculty comments on the exchange be placed in their graduate file.

Dissertation:
A doctoral dissertation should demonstrate that the candidate can conduct scholarly research with a high level of professional competence. The dissertation should constitute a distinctive contribution to knowledge in Political Science. Normally, it should outline theoretical knowledge in some field of Political Science, propose a question or hypothesis that is linked to the theory, and provide empirical data to illuminate the theoretical issues in a convincing manner.

The Graduate School requires that students working on a dissertation register for POLS 9999 in order to maintain status as an active graduate student.

Students must submit final drafts of dissertations in an approved style and format. Not doing so may result in significant reformatting at the end. Information on the desired format can be found in the Dissertation and Thesis Handbook.

After the principal dissertation advisor and the Doctoral Advisory Committee have reviewed the completed dissertation draft, a fourth reader from outside the department who has not been involved with the dissertation previously must be selected by the dissertation committee chair and the Graduate Chair. Students may suggest a reader. This reader must be a Graduate Faculty member from another department at Temple or from another university who has the qualifications necessary to act as a fair judge of the dissertation's scholarly merit. As a member of the newly formed Dissertation Examining Committee, this reader should receive a completed draft of the dissertation one month before the anticipated dissertation defense date. Readers who are from outside of Temple University must submit a curriculum vitae and be approved by the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the oral defense.

When a majority of the Dissertation Examining Committee has judged in writing that the dissertation is ready to be defended, a defense date can be scheduled. A defense is open to the university community and to the student's family. Others who wish to attend must obtain the written permission of the student and the Dissertation Examining Committee. The defense must be announced publicly at least 10 working days in advance. Notice must be sent to all faculty members in the department and to the Graduate School. The public announcement of the defense should include an abstract of the dissertation.

The oral defense must be chaired by a member of the committee other than the dissertation advisor. The oral defense should demonstrate that:

- the dissertation is commensurate with the standards for original research in Political Science;
- the ethics and standards governing Political Science research have been followed;
- the research and appropriate methodology have been mastered; and
- the candidate has an understanding of the relationship of this work to the broader field in which it is lodged.

Passing the examination requires a vote of approval by more than half of the full membership of the Dissertation Examining Committee. If a dissertation is approved but revisions are required, the revisions must be submitted to the Graduate School in final form within 30 days of the defense. Otherwise, the defense is nullified and a new oral defense must be scheduled. After the final draft of the dissertation has been approved by the dissertation chair, it must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator and to the Graduate School by uploading the final document to https://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=171.

Contacts

Program Web Address:

https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/political-science-phd-la-pols-phd

Department Information:

Dept. of Political Science
408 Gladfelter Hall
1115 W. Polett Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6089
215-204-7796

Submission Address for Application Materials:

https://apply.temple.edu/CLA/

Department Contacts:

Admissions:
Anna Hunter
Graduate Coordinator
annahunter@temple.edu
215-204-7796

Graduate Chairperson:
Michael Sances, PhD
psgrad@temple.edu

Chairperson:
Mark Pollack, PhD
mark.pollack@temple.edu
215-204-7709