

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Admission to Program

The Political Science Department recommends that applicants have an undergraduate degree in political science. However, it also accepts applicants from related majors or from those who otherwise demonstrate preparation for graduate-level studies in political science.

The minimum cumulative GPA is 3.25. Applicants with lower GPAs may be considered if, for instance, their grades showed marked improvement throughout their studies, their grades in their major were significantly higher than their cumulative GPA, their application statement or letters of reference provide a compelling explanation for making an exception and/or if students have received high scores on both the math and verbal portions of the GRE. The GRE is not required for application.

All applicants are required to submit two letters of recommendation evaluating their ability, promise, and past performance. Letters should be from university faculty. Applicants with GPAs lower than 3.25 should ask their recommenders to provide some account of this.

All foreign students whose native language is not English are required to meet all SF State requirements, including a score that meets University requirements on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). See the University requirements for specific scores.

Applications are to be received by April 1st for the fall semester, and November 1st for the spring semester.

Written English Proficiency Requirement

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different levels.

Level One (preadmission/admission)

A GRE score that demonstrates proficiency in writing (i.e., a score of 4.0 or better). Students who do not meet this requirement must take an appropriate graduate-level writing course in their first year at SF State.

Level Two

Satisfactory completion of Culminating Experience requirements - either a Comprehensive Exam in two fields or M.A. thesis. Students who elect to take the Comprehensive Exam must enroll in PLSI 896EXM. Students who elect to do the thesis must take PLSI 898.

Advancement to Candidacy

Candidates for the M.A. degree must have classified status; have successfully completed PLSI 700, PLSI 740, PLSI 760, and PLSI 780; maintained an overall grade point average of 3.0; and have the approval of the graduate coordinator.

Program Learning Outcomes

- Students demonstrate a systematic comprehension of the discipline of political science; and acquire a specialized knowledge of three sub-fields of political science (political theory, American politics, comparative politics) in which they demonstrate not only familiarity and expertise with key concepts, arguments, and theorists, but an ability to contribute meaningfully through their written work to one or more subjects of study.

- Students demonstrate advanced training in research, writing, and presentation, including the ability to think critically, construct logical arguments, collect and analyze relevant evidence, formulate reasoned conclusions, and situate themselves as critical subjects in their work.
- Students demonstrate a knowledge of the professional aspects of the field through one or more of the following experiences: teaching in political science, research assistantships; and classroom, conference, or workshop presentations.

Political Science (M.A.) – 30 units

Core Requirements (12 units)

| Code | Title | Units |
|----------|---------------------------------|-------|
| PLSI 700 | Research Methods ¹ | 3 |
| PLSI 740 | Seminar in American Politics | 3 |
| PLSI 760 | Seminar in Comparative Politics | 3 |
| PLSI 780 | Seminar in Political Theory | 3 |

¹ PLSI 700 is a required course that all incoming students must take in their first year of the program. Students who do not pass it must take it in their second year in order to be eligible to register for further classes. Students may only attempt the course twice.

Political Science Topic Seminars (6 units)

Two PLSI graduate seminar topics (6 units). These are seminars that focus on a substantive topic in a political science subfield offered in our department. Students may fulfill their 6 units with two courses from one subfield or from more than one subfield.

- Topics in American Politics – PLSI courses with a number in the range of 741 to 759
- Topics in Comparative Politics – PLSI courses with a number in the range of 761 to 779
- Topics in Political Theory – PLSI courses with a number in the range of 781 to 797

Additional Electives (9 units)

Students should take an additional 9 units that may include:

- Any other PLSI graduate topic seminar
- PLSI 701, PLSI 707, PLSI 708, or other graduate PLSI courses.
- Any upper-division (300-level or above) undergraduate PLSI courses. Note: for students who do not have a Political Science BA and/or seek more writing instruction in political science, we strongly recommend PLSI 302GW.
- Any graduate or upper-division undergraduate courses from International Relations, Public Administration, or Urban Studies and Planning.
- For both undergraduate and graduate electives, Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology, Communication Studies, or History courses may be permitted but MUST receive prior approval from a faculty advisor.

Culminating Experience (0-3 units)

Select One:

| Code | Title | Units |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|
| PLSI 896EXM & PLSI 896 | Culminating Experience Examination and Preparation for Written Comprehensive Examination | 3 |
| PLSI 898 | Master's Thesis | 3 |

Students who want to enroll in a course of independent study (PLSI 899) must have a GPA of at least 3.25.