

Graduate Student Handbook
Revised August 2022

**MA/PhD Program in
Political Science and International Affairs**



Graduate School
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

This version of the Graduate Student Handbook was revised in August 2022 and is effective beginning Fall Semester 2022.

1. Academic Unit Overview

The School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) at The University of Georgia (UGA) is comprised of three departments: International Affairs, Political Science and Public Administration and Policy. Together, the Departments of Political Science and International Affairs maintain a joint graduate program offering a Masters (MA) and Doctoral (PhD) degree in Political Science and International Affairs.

This manual sets forth the policies and procedures for the MA and PhD degrees in Political Science and International Affairs, which are adopted pursuant to regulations of the University of Georgia and its Graduate School. It does not attempt to cover all University regulations relevant to graduate studies, which are available on the Graduate School website. **The University of Georgia's Graduate School Bulletin takes precedence over this Handbook should discrepancies exist between them.** It does, however, provide specific information as to the rules and requirements of the degree programs offered by Political Science and International Affairs.

If you have any additional questions that are not answered by the contents of this manual, please email the Graduate Program Administrator (GPA) at polgrad@uga.edu.

2. Faculty and Staff

A full listing of SPIA faculty may be found at <https://spia.uga.edu/directory/faculty/>. SPIA staff may be found at <https://spia.uga.edu/directory/staff/>.

3. Program Goals

The faculty expects that each graduate student will have arrived at the decision to pursue graduate work after seriously considering what such work entails. This decision should not be made lightly. A full commitment of talents and energies is required to become a professional in one's field of study. Among the qualities that contribute to professionalism in political science and international affairs are the following:

- a dedication to the comprehensive understanding of one's discipline, including its development, its aims, its current direction, and problems it seeks to address;
- the ability to identify significant questions, analyze major alternative positions, and apply relevant methodologies and standards of judgment;
- the understanding that scientific inquiry is an ongoing, collective enterprise in which any work must be seen in relation to past and present efforts of others;
- a devotion to the highest standards of scholarly integrity; and
- the utmost respect for colleagues and their work, even as that work is submitted to critical

scrutiny.

In addition to the skills that are necessary to pursue research and the presentation of such research, the above are considered critically important in development as a social science researcher. We devote much of our effort toward developing these qualities in our students.

4. Program Administration

Although the MA and the PhD in Political Science and International Affairs are joint degrees, each department has its own Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who is responsible, with the Graduate Program Administrator (GPA), for advising and supporting the students within that department.

5. Global Expectations of All Students

5.1. Professional Standards of Behavior

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior while enrolled in the graduate program and to act in a manner that demonstrates integrity and respect for others and the campus environment.

It is expected that students who enter our graduate program will understand that much more is expected of them than was during their undergraduate careers. Undergraduate study is most often directed to the satisfaction of requirements in particular courses, where students are given quite specific directions in reading and research assignments. Graduate study, by contrast, is directed to the *mastery of broad fields of study with specialization in particular areas of inquiry*. Although graduate students work under faculty supervision, they must take the initiative to read beyond specific course assignments in order to discover the boundaries of their chosen fields and to identify the questions that are essential to mastering them. Moreover, graduate students must frame and carry out independent research projects that explore some field in considerable depth and detail.

It is also expected that students admitted to our program will have the maturity, initiative, and intelligence to complete a graduate degree. Mature and highly motivated students will meet program requirements, make plans well in advance of deadlines, budget their time wisely, and complete assignments in a timely fashion. Those who do not do these things often find themselves struggling to complete the requirements.

From what has been said about faculty expectations, it should be clear that graduate students in our programs will be treated as adults. Our graduate courses are taught largely as seminars, where students enter fully and actively into discussion. You can expect to have your ideas challenged, just as you, in turn, will be expected to challenge the ideas of your peers and professors. You will participate in an intellectual setting that is engaging, lively, and open.

Please review the codes of conduct for the [American Political Science Association](#) (APSA) and/or [International Studies Association](#) (ISA) to familiarize yourself with the professional values and ethics of your field(s).

5.2. Adherence to University Policies

5.2.1. Academic Honesty

SPIA expects that its graduate students will observe the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Each student is responsible for complying with the University of Georgia's [regulations governing student academic conduct](#).

There are specific unethical practices that each graduate student must be careful to avoid. One of the most important is plagiarism. When students fail to distinguish carefully between their own work and that of others, plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is often the result. Plagiarism must be guarded against, particularly in writing outside examinations, research papers, theses, and dissertations. Generally speaking, documentation need not be given when reference is made to events or occurrences which are common knowledge, but documentation is necessary when one draws on another person's interpretations of these events. A good rule of thumb, if doubts exist, is to be generous in giving credit to other sources.

Students are also expected to do their own work in each course for which they register. That includes adhering to an instructor's guidelines when collaboration is allowed or required. It also means not submitting written work for more than one course without the approval of the instructors involved.

Another unethical practice is the falsification of research data or the misreporting of the actual results of one's research. Since this practice threatens the very integrity of scientific inquiry, persons who have been found to engage in it have not only been censured severely by their peers, but have often seen their professional careers ruined.

In a related matter, students should be scrupulously honest in preparing a curriculum vitae or resume. They should never claim a degree that has not been earned, even if requirements have been unofficially completed. The same is true of awards and honors. Such invention or falsification of academic credentials is a practice that cannot be tolerated in an academic community.

Finally, any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty on their written comprehensive examination(s) will not be permitted a retake. Regardless of whether it is their first or second attempt to pass the written exams, evidence of academic dishonesty will result in the student being dismissed from the graduate program.

Students who have committed acts of academic dishonesty may be dismissed from the program.

5.2.2. Non-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment (NDAH) and Workplace Violence (WPV)

Every member of the University Community is expected to uphold the [NDAH](#) and [WPV](#) policies as a matter of mutual respect and fundamental fairness in human relations. Every student of this institution has a responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with this Policy as a condition of enrollment, and every University employee has an obligation to observe University policies as a term of employment.

5.2.3. Student Code of Conduct

The [Code of Conduct](#) has been developed by Student Conduct to provide students with expectations for behavior that upholds the principles outlined in the Pillars of the Arch. In addition to describing regulations for behavior, the Code of Conduct provides useful information to students and student organizations regarding alleged violations of conduct regulations. All procedures for responding to possible violations of conduct regulations, including specifics of the conduct process, a listing of possible sanctions, the interim suspension policy, and the appeals procedures are included in the Code of Conduct.

These procedures have been established to ensure due process and fundamental fairness to all involved in the University's judicial processes.

5.3. Academic Standards

To be eligible for admission to candidacy and graduation, students must maintain a minimum average of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) on all graduate courses taken and on all courses on the program of study. Courses with a grade below a "C" (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) may not be counted on the program of study.

5.4. Student Rights and Responsibilities

Graduate students are permitted an advisory, nonvoting role in governance. Insofar as practicable, they will be informed when a matter of policy affecting graduate students is pending before the faculty or a committee. This will permit students or their representatives to attend meetings where such policies are decided and to contribute their views. Students may not be present, however, where the discussion concerns the following:

- Faculty personnel matters;
- Decisions regarding the admission of students to the graduate programs or the awarding of financial aid to individual students;
- Matters involving individual student records.

Student views are particularly welcome on such matters as curriculum revision, the recruitment of new faculty members, and decisions on faculty promotion and tenure. When candidates for faculty positions visit the campus for an interview, it is policy to make time available for the job candidate to meet with graduate students. Students are also invited to attend the candidate's research presentation and to share their impressions with the faculty prior to a vote on the job offer.

When regular faculty members are under consideration for promotion and tenure, students may submit their views, individually or through their representatives, on a faculty member's performance as a teacher and student advisor.

6. Description of Program Components

Three degrees are offered by the joint program in Political Science and International Affairs: a **Master of Arts–Thesis** (MA-T), a **Master of Arts–Nonthesis** (MA-NT), and the **Doctor of Philosophy** (PhD). The requirements for each degree are specified in detail in [Section II](#) of this handbook.

6.1. Available Areas of Emphasis

For the purpose of graduate instruction in Political Science and International Affairs, the curriculum is divided into fields. Four major fields and eight minor fields are currently available within our program.

MA students do not have to select a major or minor field, although most do identify with a field of study or department. At the doctoral level, the distinction among fields applies. PhD students must choose and prepare for both written and oral examinations in one major field and one minor field.

Some courses can be classified in several fields, depending on a given PhD student's combination of major and minor. Such decisions must be approved by the DGS.

6.1.1. Fields Offering a Major and a Minor

American Politics. A large proportion of research in political science draws its data from the American context.

Comprehensive examinations in this field will be constructed so that questions will require knowledge of two American Politics subfields: Government Institutions and Political Behavior. Students will be held accountable for basic works, as well as journal articles and major books published during the previous five years.

Students majoring or minoring in American Politics are required to take a core seminar: POLS 6100, Pre-Seminar in American Politics. Additional courses should be selected in consultation with the student's major professor and advisory committee.

Comparative Politics. Students working in this field examine such phenomena as political behavior, governmental institutions and structures, policy processes and outcomes, and political goals and strategies. These phenomena are considered both within and across national systems. Nation-states are taken as the primary, but not exclusive, units of analysis.

Students preparing for comprehensive examinations in this field should expect some general questions that deal with: the evolution of the field of comparative politics, major practitioners in the field, the leading conceptual frameworks or paradigms in comparative politics, major contributions to comparative politics, difficulties or problems in the study of comparative politics, and ways of testing hypotheses (i.e., research methods). Comprehensive exam questions will also test students' proficiency in selected subfields within comparative politics.

Students majoring or minoring in Comparative Politics are required to take a core seminar: INTL 6300, Comparative Analysis and Method. Additional courses should be selected in consultation with the student's major professor and advisory committee.

International Relations. The field of International Relations focuses on the important agents and structures of international politics. These include nation-states, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Studies in this field examine the preferences and strategies of these actors, as well as the nature of the economic, military, political, and social interactions among them.

In preparing for the comprehensive examination in International Relations, the student should seek to understand the major actors on the international scene, their policies, and the sources of cooperation and conflict. Comprehensive exam questions will test the student's general knowledge of these matters, as well as proficiency in selected subfields.

Students majoring or minoring in International Relations are required to take the core seminar: INTL 6200, Pre-Seminar in International Relations. In addition, at least one course is recommended from each of the following subfields: International Cooperation, International Conflict, International Political Economy, and Foreign Policy. Additional courses should be selected in consultation with the student's major professor and advisory committee.

Political Theory. This field encompasses both normative political philosophy and empirically oriented theory. Its leading questions concern the ends or purposes of political action, the nature of a good or just political order, the proper relationship of individuals to their political communities, and the appropriate criteria for evaluating and designing voting systems. Empirically oriented theory seeks to explain

regularities in politics such as how and when political actors come into conflict or behave cooperatively.

There is no pre-seminar in this field, but rather a series of distinct courses. A major in Political Theory involves a combination of the three subfields below. A minor in Political Theory is built around the first two subfields. There is no major in Formal Theory, but a distinct minor is available.

History of Political Philosophy. In this subfield, students become familiar with the most influential works of major political philosophers from Plato to Rawls, and understand the importance of these works in the development of political thought. Attention is given to the distinctive ways that problems are resolved and concepts defined during the history of political philosophy.

Normative Theory. In this subfield, students address fundamental issues of justice, fairness, political legitimacy, and individual rights. Study in this subfield develops the student's ability to assess the standard approaches and positions associated with leading political philosophers.

Formal Political Theory. In this subfield, students learn to understand formal political theory, particularly rational choice theory, and applications that contemporary political scientists have developed to explain political behavior and to account for individual decisions and collective outcomes.

6.1.2. Fields Offering a Minor

Political Methodology. This minor is designed by individual students, subject to the approval of the DGS. In addition to the methods core (POLS 7010, 7012, 7014, and 8501), students must complete two additional advanced methods courses. Qualitative Methods (INTL 8500) may count towards a methods minor, as can one formal theory course (POLS 8000, 8020 or 8030).

Formal Theory. Students will be expected to understand formal political theory, particularly rational choice theory, and applications that contemporary political scientists have developed to explain political behavior and to account for individual decisions and collective outcomes. Rational choice theory in general, social choice theory, game theory, and political economy are among the approaches that are relevant to this subfield. In addition to SPIA courses, students minoring in Formal Theory may take approved courses in other UGA departments.

Normative Theory Minor: A total of three classes in Theory, one of which may be from the Formal Theory offerings.

Formal Theory Minor: A total of three classes in Theory, one of which may be from the Normative Theory offerings OR a total of two classes in Formal Theory and either POLS 8501 (MLE), POLS 8505 (Scaling), or POLS 8510 (Bayes).

Public Administration. This minor is offered through SPIA's Department of Public Administration and Policy (PADP). This required field involves coursework in the general field of Public Administration, as well as coverage of major subfields, such as public personnel administration, public financial administration, and organization theory. Students should select courses for the minor in consultation with the DGS and relevant faculty. PADP does not give a minor exam; students wishing to minor in this area are required to take the full comprehensive major exam. Information on the format of the written comprehensive exam in PADP may be found on their [website](#).

Public Policy. This minor is offered through PADP. This required field involves course work in the study of public policy generally, as well as in substantive policy areas that are of interest to the student.

Students should select courses for the minor in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator and relevant faculty. PADP does not give a minor exam; students wishing to minor in this area are required to take the full comprehensive major exam. Information on the format of the written comprehensive exam in PADP may be found on their [website](#).

6.2. Dual Degree Programs

There are currently no dual *graduate* degree programs involving the MA or the PhD (i.e., it is not currently possible to pursue, e.g., a JD and the PhD simultaneously). However, highly qualified UGA undergraduate students may apply to participate in the Double Dawgs program, through which they earn a bachelor's and master's degree within five (5) years. More information is available in [Section II](#) of this handbook.

7. Admissions Requirements

7.1. Minimum Admissions Standards

Admission to our graduate programs is highly competitive and is based on holistic review of each applicant's materials. The [Graduate School](#) requires that all applicants to a graduate degree program hold at least a bachelor's degree accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting association or its international equivalent prior to the expected semester of enrollment. In addition, the Graduate School requires the following:

- A minimum GPA of 3.0 (B) on a 4.0 scale
- Proof of English language proficiency for international applicants (minimum TOEFL score: 80, at least 20 on speaking and writing; minimum IELTS score: overall band of 6.5, with no single band below 6.0; minimum Duolingo English score: overall score of 105)

The Departments of Political Science and International Affairs do not set GPA or GRE minimums. However, given the rigorous nature of our programs, most successful applicants have a GPA of at least 3.5/4.0 and a combined GRE score above 300.

The MA and PhD admit traditional applicants for **fall** only, and there are no exceptions. Double Dawgs Pathway applicants to the MA may matriculate in spring if necessary.

7.2. Submitting an Application

Applicants must submit their application materials [online](#) through the Graduate School. Applicants should not submit materials directly to a faculty member, as they will not be reviewed. The application fee for domestic students is \$75 and for international students is \$100.

All applicants must submit the following materials with their application for it to be considered complete:

- **Online Graduate School Application and fee.** *Please note that the Graduate School does not issue fee waivers based on financial need. Some applicants, such as veterans of the armed forces and McNair Scholars, may qualify for a fee waiver; consult the [full list of eligible programs](#).*
- **One unofficial transcript** from each institution of higher education attended, except the University of Georgia. You may upload transcripts through the application portal, request that they be sent electronically from your institution, or mail them directly to the Graduate School.

- **Official GRE General Exam test report.** The UGA institutional code for ETS reporting is 5813. *The GRE is required for all applicants other than Double Dawg Pathway students. We do not accept LSAT, GMAT, or other test scores in lieu of the GRE. No waiver is possible.*
- **Statement of purpose**
- **CV/resume**
- **Three academic letters of recommendation**
- **[Personal objective form](#)**

Applicants to the PhD must also submit a **writing sample** representing high-quality, original research.

If funding is sought, applicants must also submit the **[graduate assistantship application](#)**.

International applicants to the MA and PhD may need to submit proof of English language proficiency (i.e., **IELTS, TOEFL, or Duolingo English** scores). Country-specific information on waivers of this policy is available at the **[Graduate School website](#)**. International applicants may have additional requirements; please see the **[Graduate School website](#)** for details.

7.3. Special Deadlines

Priority consideration is given to complete applications submitted by **December 1**. Most assistantship offers are made following the first round of review. The final deadline to submit a complete application is **February 15**. Applications submitted after February 15 will not be reviewed.

II. ACADEMIC / CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

1. Specific Program Degree Requirements

1.1. *Master of Arts–Thesis (MA-T)*

1.1.1. Duration of the MA-T Program

The MA-T program is designed so that a student taking three courses per semester can complete the MA-T degree in approximately two years. The first-year MA student takes the bulk of the methodology core and begins an area of concentration. The second year is devoted to remaining MA-T course requirements and to the completion and defense of a master's thesis.

1.1.2. Relationship to the PhD Degree

We encourage students who enter at the master's level to think of themselves as prospective PhD students. Students may complete the MA-T degree en route to the PhD. The program is designed so that all course work taken by our students at the master's level is fully applicable to broader doctoral requirements.

Our MA-T requirements are designed to prepare students for doctoral studies and/or professional research and teaching positions that do not require the PhD, but do require rigorous academic training. We seek to impart the methodological skills, substantive competencies, and research experience that a rigorous doctoral program will demand.

1.1.3. Program of Study

MA-T students are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of graduate credit (27 hours of substantive course work and at least 3 hours of thesis credit, POLS 7300) with a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

Hours on the program of study must include at least 21 hours of coursework exclusive of POLS 7000 (Master's Research) and POLS 7300 (Master's Thesis). Twelve of these 21 hours must be courses restricted to graduate students (i.e., not 4000/6000 split-level courses). GRSC 7001 (GradFIRST seminar), POLS 7005 (Graduate Student Seminar), and POLS 7770 (Graduate Teaching Seminar) may not be used to fulfill required coursework hours. All incoming graduate students must enroll in GRSC 7001 ([GradFIRST](#) seminar) in their first semester of graduate school. *All coursework must be completed within six years of a student's matriculation to the MA-T program.*

In addition to these general requirements, MA-T students must complete a methodology core (POLS 7010, 7012, and 7014). Beyond this, MA-T students have flexibility in designing programs of study, but courses should be selected to provide competency in some area of concentration, as well as familiarity with other fields.

MA-T students must also write and defend a master's thesis under the supervision of an advisory committee, including the major professor and at least two additional members of the Graduate Faculty. Additional details on the MA-T advisory committee and master's thesis are provided in Section III, subsections [4](#) and [6](#).

A sample degree program timetable is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1.2. Master of Arts–Nonthesis (MA-NT)

1.2.1. Duration of the MA-T Program

The MA-NT program is designed so that a student taking three courses per semester can complete the MA degree in approximately two years. The first-year MA-NT student takes the bulk of the methodology core and begins an area of concentration. The second year is devoted to remaining MA-NT course requirements and to the completion of a research article under the guidance of a major professor.

1.2.2. Relationship to the PhD Degree

We encourage students who enter at the master’s level to think of themselves as prospective PhD students. Students may complete the MA-NT degree en route to the PhD. The program is designed so that all course work taken by our students at the master’s level is fully applicable to broader doctoral requirements.

Our MA-NT requirements are designed to prepare students for doctoral studies and/or professional research and teaching positions that do not require the PhD, but do require rigorous academic training. We seek to impart the methodological skills, substantive competencies, and research experience that a rigorous doctoral program will demand.

1.2.3. Program of Study

MA-NT students are required to complete a minimum of 33 hours of graduate credit (entirely comprising substantive coursework) with a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

Twelve of the 33 hours must be courses restricted to graduate students (i.e., not 4000/6000 split-level courses). GRSC 7001 (GradFIRST seminar), POLS 7005 (Graduate Student Seminar), and POLS 7770 (Graduate Teaching Seminar) may not be used to fulfill required coursework hours. Although the bulk of coursework should be taken within SPIA, appropriate classes within other departments may be selected after consultation with the GPA and/or faculty advisor. All incoming graduate students must enroll in GRSC 7001 (GradFIRST seminar) in their first semester of graduate school.

All coursework must be completed within six years of a student’s matriculation to the MA-NT program.

In addition to these general requirements, MA-NT students must complete a methodology core (POLS 7010, 7012, and 7014). Beyond this, MA-NT students have flexibility in designing programs of study, but courses should be selected to provide competency in some area of concentration, as well as familiarity with other fields.

A sample degree program timetable is available in [Appendix 1](#).

1.2.4. Completing a Research Paper

MA-NT students complete a research paper instead of a thesis in their final semester. The paper is written and revised over the course of the semester under the guidance of the student’s major professor and a second reader. The aim of this process should be to produce a paper that could be presented at a reputable

academic conference.

The major professor has discretion regarding whether the paper is suitable for approval and should evaluate the paper in conjunction with the second reader. An oral defense is not required, but approval of the research paper must occur no later than the last day of regular classes in the semester.

1.3. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is generally designed to build on work done at the master's level. Students who have completed an MA degree in Political Science at UGA will have made a substantial beginning toward the fulfillment of PhD requirements. Most or all of the courses in the PhD methodology core will have been completed. Substantive coursework will prepare the student for doctoral comprehensive examinations. Students who enter our PhD program with master's-level work from other universities should consult with the DGS about the applicability of that coursework to our doctoral requirements.

Placement in the PhD program is not guaranteed for any applicant. Funding and program spots are limited, and the process for selection is competitive. Applicants who are refused admission may appeal but should be advised that candidates are assessed relative to a large pool of candidates, and only those candidates that are ranked at or near the very top are offered admission.

1.3.1 PhD Tracks: Traditional and Fast-Track

Traditional PhD. Students who already hold an advanced degree (e.g., MA, JD) should apply to the traditional PhD. Students admitted to the MA program at UGA who wish to transition to the PhD program may apply at the end of their first year **upon invitation from the DGS**, or during their second year when external program applications are also considered. If a student applies during the regular application period, the priority application deadline is December 1. In both application scenarios, MA applicants should submit all requested materials to be reviewed by the current Graduate Committee. All admission decisions for the PhD program, whether for current UGA MA students or applicants from another institution, are based on holistic review and are not guaranteed.

Fast-Track PhD. Under this track, highly qualified undergraduate degree holders who meet Graduate School criteria and departmental criteria may apply to enter the program as PhD students and complete the program in a timeframe that bypasses the MA degree. Fast-track applications are also considered under a holistic review process.

1.3.2. Duration of the PhD Program

The general expectation is that the PhD will take five years, including coursework, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation. This is true for both the traditional and fast-track PhD programs. Each student's previous graduate coursework will be evaluated to plan out their program of study at UGA. In certain circumstances, such as with military-supported students, the PhD can be completed in three to four years.

1.3.3. Program of Study

PhD students are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of graduate credit (27 hours of substantive coursework and at least 3 hours of dissertation credit, POLS 9300) with a minimum grade point average

of 3.0. These 30 hours must also include 16 hours of coursework at the 8000/9000 level, exclusive of POLS 9000 (Doctoral Research) and POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation). *All coursework must be completed within six years of a student's matriculation to the PhD program.*

PhD students are also required to enroll in GRSC 7001 (Being a Political Scientist) in their first semester and INTL 7002 (Dissertation Prospectus Workshop) the semester after they pass comprehensive exams.

In addition to these general requirements, SPIA has specified that PhD students must:

- complete a methodology core (POLS 7010, 7012, 7014, and 8501);
- successfully complete written and oral comprehensive examinations (at which points students may be admitted to doctoral candidacy);
- write and defend a dissertation prospectus;
- write and defend a dissertation.

Additional information about these requirements is provided in [Section III](#).

Sample degree program timetables for the traditional and fast-track PhD are available in [Appendix 1](#).

1.4. Double Dawgs

Most of the policies for the traditional master's degree programs also apply to those students pursuing an MA-T or MA-NT in Political Science & International Affairs through the Double Dawgs program. Interested students should consult the MA-T or MA-NT subsections above for full information. However, there are some important distinctions and differences, which are discussed below.

1.4.1. Applying for the Double Dawgs Pathway

Students who wish to apply for the Double Dawgs MA (either MA-T or MA-NT) must first discuss their plans with their undergraduate academic advisor and create a full program of study plan for their undergraduate degree. Once that has been created, students should email the GPA to schedule a meeting to discuss timelines and application procedures. Typically, this stage occurs in students' second year of undergraduate study.

Double Dawgs students may vary slightly in their overall timelines, but typically, in Year 3, students should apply to the Double Dawgs pathway in their desired area. This is **not** the same as application to the graduate program; rather, it allows the student to take graduate-level coursework while continuing their undergraduate degree.

1.4.2. Taking Coursework in the Double Dawgs Pathway

Students should plan to take the following courses while in the Double Dawg Pathway:

- Fall: POLS 7012
- Spring: POLS 7014
- Fall: POLS 6100 (Preseminar in American Politics) OR INTL 6200 (Preseminar in International Relations) OR INTL 6300 (Comparative Analysis and Methods), depending on the student's preferred course of study

- Fall or Spring: One upper-level seminar (8000-level)

POLS 7010 is not required for Double Dawgs MA students. In some cases, alternative graduate courses to those specified above may be necessary to accommodate undergraduate degree requirements. In such cases, courses should be chosen in consultation with the undergraduate advisor and the GPA.

Please note that students can count up to **12** hours of graduate-level courses towards the undergraduate degree as well as the MA. *There are no exceptions to this policy.*

1.4.3. Applying for/Pursuing the Double Dawgs MA

In Year 4, students should begin working with the GPA to discuss formal application to the graduate program. This should include whether the student wishes to apply to the MA-T or the MA-NT. Students are not automatically granted entry to the MA program and must formally apply through the Graduate School. The DGS and Admissions Committee will review each application holistically on its individual merit.

Double Dawgs Pathway students are not required to submit GRE scores with their Graduate School applications.

In almost all cases, students should graduate with their undergraduate degree **before** matriculating into the MA as a full-time graduate student.

In Year 5, eligible students who are admitted to the MA complete their graduate studies as a full-time graduate student (at least two courses per semester).

1.4.4. Funding a Double Dawgs MA

Double Dawgs MA students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

For additional questions, please visit doubledawgs.uga.edu or email doubledawgs@uga.edu.

2. Enrollment Requirements and Time Limits

2.1. Minimum Enrollment

A full-time course load for SPIA graduate students is typically considered **9 graduate credit hours** (three courses) per semester.

All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must register for a minimum of **3 graduate credit hours** during any semester in which they use University facilities and/or faculty/staff time. This includes semesters in which they are completing comprehensive examinations and defending their thesis or dissertation.

Students who are funded through a graduate assistantship must register for a minimum of **12 graduate credit hours** during any fall or spring semester in which they receive assistantship funding. If the student

is assigned assistantship work during the summer, the student must register for a minimum of **9 graduate credit hours**. Students may register for POLS 7005 (MA) or POLS 9005 (PhD) to meet these minimums.

Doctoral students who have completed coursework and comprehensive exams may register for a combination of dissertation hours (POLS 9300), research seminar hours (POLS 9005), and doctoral research hours (POLS 9000) to reach the required 12 credit hours.

Undergraduate-level courses and audited courses do not count toward these minimums.

2.2. Continuous Enrollment Policy

All enrolled graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated.

Doctoral students must maintain enrollment during fall and spring semesters (breaking only for summer semesters) until the residency requirement has been met.

All students must be enrolled for at least **3 graduate credits** in the semester in which degree requirements are completed.

2.3. Residency Credit Requirement

The residency requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is interpreted as 30 hours of consecutive graduate course work that is included on the approved program of study. There is no residency requirement for master's degree programs.

2.4. Leave of Absence

A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual circumstance to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy. A leave of absence requires approval of the graduate program coordinator and the dean of Graduate School. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause such as serious medical and health-related issues, major financial and employment issues; pregnancy, childbirth, child care, elder care, and other significant family issues; and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. An approved leave of absence does not stop the clock unless the leave is granted for pregnancy, childbirth or adoption: time on leave counts toward any University, Graduate School, or program time limits pertaining to the degree being sought.

2.5. Time Limits

Master's degree students must complete all degree requirements, including all coursework on their approved program of study and defend their thesis (if applicable) within **six years** of matriculation.

Doctoral students must complete all course work on their approved program of study and be admitted to candidacy within **six years** of matriculation.

For all degrees, the six-year limit begins with the semester the student matriculated into the program and ends with the last semester before the beginning of the sixth year.

For doctoral students, the time limit to complete the dissertation and qualify for graduation is **five years** following admission to candidacy. After this time, the student's candidacy will be considered expired and the student must retake the comprehensive exams and be re-admitted to candidacy in order to defend the dissertation and qualify for graduation. If a doctoral student's candidacy expires after the first week of classes in the final semester of the fifth year, the student is granted the remainder of the semester to complete degree requirements without special permission of the dean of the Graduate School.

2.6. Extension of Time

A special request for an extension of time on the six-year expiration of coursework or the five year expiration of candidacy may be made to the dean of the Graduate School. This request must include specific reasons that the student did not complete requirements in the time allotted by Graduate School policy. A petition of this type must include 1) a specific timeline for the completion of requirements, 2) an approved advisory committee form, if required for the degree, 3) an approved program of study and a letter of support from both the program DGS and the major professor.

3. Doctoral Comprehensive Exams and Candidacy

As a requirement for admission to candidacy, all PhD students must pass written and oral comprehensive examinations covering both a major and minor field of study. Courses at both the MA and PhD levels can be counted as preparation for the major and minor, although most courses for each should have been completed at UGA, and all credit hours required by the Graduate School for the PhD (30 for traditional PhD students, 45 for Fast-Track PhD students) must be completed in residency at UGA. Before the comprehensive examinations are taken, all incompletes must be removed and all coursework must be completed with a minimum 3.0 GPA.

Students must complete a minimum of five courses in their major field and three courses in their minor field, with the exception of the Political Methodology minor. Methods minors must complete the methods core (POLS 7010, 7012, 7014, and 8501) and two additional upper-level methods courses. Additionally, they must take at least one class in a major field other than the two fields in which they are examined, to be chosen in consultation with the DGS.

3.1. Expected Timeline

PhD students who intend to make good progress toward degree completion should aim to take their comprehensive exams in the fall or spring of their third year in the program.

3.2. Dates Administered

Written comprehensive examinations for PhD students are administered twice each year. They are scheduled for the second and fourth weeks of each semester, counting from the first full week of classes. The oral comprehensive examination is administered after all parts of the written examination have been successfully completed.

Doctoral students should consult with their DGS regarding comprehensive examinations. Students are required to sign up no later than the midpoint of the semester prior to the one in which the examinations

will be taken. Students who have signed up may not defer their comprehensive examinations more than once. Written appeals to have this rule waived, based on extraordinary circumstances, must be granted by the DGS *prior to the examination*.

3.3. Comprehensive Exam Committee

A comprehensive exam committee is designated by the DGS no later than the start of each semester. This committee consists of two readers for the major field and two readers for the minor field. All students who take comprehensive exams will have the same committee in a semester. If one committee member votes to pass and the other votes to fail, a third faculty member will be chosen to break the tie.

3.4. Student Responsibilities

Comprehensive examination questions are designed to test the student's capacity for critical analysis and synthetic integration of knowledge. It is the student's responsibility to master the fields of study and not merely to review the coursework from each field. Students should also seek to strike the proper balance between learning factual information or empirical data and comprehending theories, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies that are used to organize and interpret data. It is best not to enroll in regular seminars during the semester when one is taking comprehensive examinations.

It is the responsibility of the faculty members in each field to decide what constitutes the knowledge of that field and what level of mastery is required to pass the examinations. The design of examination questions is a field responsibility. Common questions are developed for all students writing in a field at a given time, but allowances are made for differences in the students' subfields. Previous examination questions are available for students to consult as they prepare for the exams.

3.5. Format of the Written Examination

3.5.1. Major Field Exams

For major field exams, the morning portion of the exam covers the general nature of the field, including major research approaches and findings, classic works, and current trends and controversies. The afternoon session covers more specialized areas within the field.

3.5.2. Minor Field Exams Except Political Methodology

For a minor field in which there is also a major field, students will complete only the morning (general) portion of the exam.

3.5.3. Political Methodology Minor Exam

For the Political Methodology minor field, each student will prepare and defend a paper featuring quantitative analysis. Papers will be submitted to the Methods Committee no later than 5pm on the day on which the other minor field exams are scheduled (typically, the fourth Friday of each semester). The paper should include quantitative analysis that utilizes either (1) maximum likelihood estimation techniques or (2) linear regression analysis that includes the use of interactive variables. Other estimation techniques (e.g., Bayesian estimation) must be approved by the Methods Committee prior to the submission of the paper. The paper should evaluate the statistical significance of models presented and

should report and visually display the magnitude of effect size for key independent variables. Students may not submit a co-authored paper.

3.6. Administration of the Written Examination

For all exams *except the Political Methodology exam*, comprehensive exams are taken in person.

The written examination will be administered in a controlled environment. Writing paper, pens, and computers will be provided. The morning session lasts from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Following a lunch break of one hour, there is an afternoon session from 12:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. The exam is generally proctored by the GPA. If a student begins a field examination but does not complete it by returning the answers at the designated time, he or she will be given a grade of "fail" in that field. Any student failing to follow the instructions on a comprehensive examination will be deemed as having automatically failed the examination, and the exam will not be graded.

The appointed Comprehensive Exam Committee will evaluate written answers in each field. To guard against bias, the GPA will assign anonymous identifiers before exams are submitted to the committee.

Once all written examinations have been evaluated, the GPA will inform the student in writing of the results in each field. The student may proceed to the oral examination after passing both written examinations. The Methods Committee will provide students with feedback on passing papers prior to a student's oral comprehensive exam.

3.7. Format and Administration of the Oral Examination

All oral comprehensive examinations are digitally recorded. If a student fails the oral exam, the recording will be held as part of that student's confidential record until the oral examination is retaken and passed.

The oral comprehensive examination will be approximately 90 minutes in length. The comprehensive exam committee chair will preside over the examination and ensure that all examiners have an opportunity to question the student. The oral exam can cover the written exam, the student's knowledge of the major and minor fields, and the student's research (particularly dissertation plans). Students are not allowed to use notes or other aids during the exam.

3.7.1. Political Methodology Minor Oral Examination Procedure

During the oral comprehensive exam, students will orally defend their methods paper. In addition to answering questions related to the analyses included in the paper, students should be prepared to answer broader questions related to research design, causality, model assumptions, robustness, and issues of measurement.

3.8. Requirements for Passing Comprehensive Exams

Doctoral students must pass both a written and an oral comprehensive examination before they are eligible for admission to candidacy. The written and oral examinations are judged separately by the student's faculty examiners. A "pass" on the written examination cannot be reversed due to poor performance on the oral examination. To reiterate:

- Students must successfully complete the written examination and the oral examination in both the major and minor fields to pass their comprehensive examinations.
- The written examination in each field will be graded separately and given one of the following grades: Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail.
- If the student receives the examination questions in a field but does not complete the examination, this will be counted as a failure in that field, unless the student can provide a medical excuse for the day of the exam or there are other extenuating circumstances. The Graduate Committee will decide on the validity of the medical excuse and the extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- No student will be passed or failed in a written field without the concurrence of *at least two faculty members*.
- To pass the oral examination, the student must obtain at least three positive votes from an examining committee of four.

3.9. Retaking an Exam

Under SPIA rules, a student has two chances to pass the written examination and two chances to pass the oral examination.

If a student fails the written examination in one field, he or she may retake only that examination in a subsequent semester and will not need to retake any written examination on which a “Pass” or “Pass with Distinction” was earned.

A student who fails one field on the written examination or the entire written examination will be allowed one re-examination, but these results will be final. No student shall be permitted a third try on a written field or on the written examination as a whole.

If the oral examination is failed on the first attempt, it may be retaken a second time, but the results of this second examination will be final.

Any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty on their written comprehensive examination(s) will not be permitted a retake. Regardless of whether it is their first or second attempt to pass the written exams, evidence of academic dishonesty will result in the student being dismissed from the graduate program.

3.10. Advancing to Candidacy

Before receiving a graduate degree, a student must be admitted to candidacy for that degree. Admission to candidacy is a formal process that the student initiates by submitting the Application for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degrees after successfully completing comprehensive examinations. SPIA PhD students are not required to defend their prospectus before advancing to candidacy. After being admitted to candidacy, doctoral candidates have 5 years to defend their dissertation and graduate.

4. Selection of Major Professor/Thesis/Dissertation Advisor and Advisory Committee

4.1. For Master’s Students

Entering students will be assigned a faculty advisor, generally the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in their major department. The DGS provides specific advisement on courses and rules and regulations regarding the degree. This does not preclude the development of a faculty mentor within the student's field early in the student's academic life.

4.1.1. MA-T Advisory Committees

At the start of the second year, each MA-T student should designate a three-person advisory committee. The student's major professor and at least one other advisory committee member must be on the University's Graduate Faculty. These individuals will provide support primarily for the planning and development of the master's thesis and its defense. Because the Graduate School counts co-chairs as one person, a total of four committee members are necessary if a student chooses co-chairs to head their advisory committee.

4.1.2. MA-NT Major Professor and Second Reader

MA-NT students should select a major professor and second reader whose interests overlap with their own and who can provide supervision and guidance in the process of completing their research paper. The major professor and/or second reader for MA-NT articles are not required to be on the Graduate Faculty, and instructors may serve in either role.

The major professor has discretion regarding whether the paper is suitable for approval and will evaluate the paper in conjunction with the second reader. While a student may be invited to discuss the paper with their major professor, an oral defense is not required.

4.2. For Doctoral Students

Entering students will be assigned a faculty advisor, generally the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in their major department. The DGS provides specific advisement on courses and rules and regulations regarding the degree. This does not preclude the development of a faculty mentor within the student's field early in the student's academic life.

After passing comprehensive exams, students should choose professors to serve as major professor and advisors to the dissertation. PhD advisory committees must consist of a minimum of three members, at least two of whom must be members of the [University Graduate Faculty](#). In choosing a major professor and committee members at this level, students should select members of the faculty whose areas of interest overlap with their own and with whom they can work constructively.

Because the Graduate School counts co-chairs as one person, a total of four committee members are necessary if a student chooses co-chairs to head their advisory committee.

4.2.1. External Dissertation Committee Members

Students who wish to have an outside reader (i.e., non-UGA faculty) on their dissertation committee must submit the intended member's CV and a letter of support from the DGS. Outside members must be approved by the Graduate School.

Students wishing to have a non-UGA faculty member serve on their committee must have at least three UGA faculty members on their committee.

5. Final Program of Study Approval

For the Doctor of Philosophy degree, an approved program of study must carry a minimum of 30 hours of graduate course work, three hours of which must be dissertation writing (9300). The program of study for the Master of Arts–Thesis (MA-T) degree must contain a minimum of 30 hours of graduate course work, three hours of which must be thesis writing (7300). The program of study for the Master of Arts–Nonthesis (MA-NT) degrees must contain a minimum of 33 hours of graduate course work.

5.1. For Master’s Students

MA-T and MA-NT students must submit a Program of Study form no later than a week before the [deadline](#) stipulated by the Graduate School in the semester in which they plan to graduate (typically, around the second or third week of the semester).

5.2. For Doctoral Students

PhD students must submit a preliminary Program of Study form no later than a week before the [deadline](#) stipulated by the Graduate School in the semester in which they plan to take comprehensive exams (typically, around the second or third week of the semester).

If the student subsequently takes any graduate course for credit (excluding POLS 9005, 9000, and 9300), he or she should submit an updated Program of Study form that includes those courses no later than a week before the [deadline](#) stipulated by the Graduate School in the semester in which they plan to graduate.

6. Preparing the Thesis/Dissertation

6.1. Preparing the Thesis (MA-T Students)

The thesis, which is written under the direction of the student's major professor, must show independent judgment in examining a problem from primary sources. The thesis should be the student’s original research work; co-authored MA theses are not permitted.

If an MA-T student is to complete degree requirements by the end of the second year of residence, it is important that timely progress be made on the master’s thesis. Approximately one-half of the student's time during the second year should be devoted to planning and writing the thesis.

6.1.1. Thesis Prospectus

A thesis prospectus is not required but is allowed. The format and content of a prospectus is determined by a student’s major professor and thesis committee.

6.1.2. Completing the Thesis

Once faculty members have consented to assist a student with the thesis, the student has the right to expect that they will be available for consultation, will read and return materials in a timely fashion, and will judge the final product fairly. At the same time, faculty may reasonably expect certain behavior from

the student, including patience and perseverance.

6.1.3. Meeting Deadlines

Both the Graduate School and the graduate program post various deadlines that govern the awarding of degrees. Students must keep in mind that if their thesis is to receive final approval by the Graduate School's deadline, it will be necessary for them to work with their major professor to finish a final draft well before the official deadline. The GPA will make students aware of various deadlines that must be met each semester.

6.2. Preparing the Dissertation (PhD Students)

A dissertation is the capstone of a doctoral degree. It must demonstrate the student's ability to plan, conduct, and complete a substantial research project. It should also represent an important contribution to knowledge in the student's field of study and be written in a clear and literate manner.

Just as a student is not compelled to work under the direction of any particular faculty member, so too are faculty not compelled to serve on a particular student's advisory committee. Faculty members choose freely to do this from a sense that the student has the ability as well as the motivation to contribute to the advancement of learning.

6.2.1. Dissertation Prospectus

The process of writing a dissertation begins with the preparation of a prospectus. Students should regard the prospectus as presenting a research design for the dissertation. The prospectus identifies a problem to be explored, draws on relevant literature to show the significance of the problem for political science, sets forth a line of argumentation to be pursued or hypotheses to be tested, and describes the approach or methods and the data that will be employed in conducting the research. The prospectus is written in close consultation with the student's major professor.

Once the major professor certifies that the dissertation prospectus is satisfactory, it must be considered formally by the advisory committee in a meeting with the student. Approval of the prospectus requires the agreement of at least two of the three members of the advisory committee.

A prospectus defense may be conducted in person, or virtually with the approval of the DGS and relevant department head.

6.2.2. Completing the Dissertation

Once faculty members have consented to assist a student with the dissertation, the student has the right to expect that they will be available for consultation, will read and return materials in a timely fashion, and will judge the final product fairly. At the same time, faculty may reasonably expect certain behavior from the student, including patience and perseverance.

6.2.3. Meeting Deadlines

Both the Graduate School and the graduate program post various deadlines that govern the awarding of degrees. Students must keep in mind that if the dissertation is to receive final approval by the Graduate

School's deadline, it will be necessary for them to work with their major professor to finish a final draft well before the official deadline. The GPA will make students aware of various deadlines that must be met each semester.

7. Thesis/Dissertation Submission and Final Oral Examination

7.1. Thesis Submission, Approval, and Defense (MA-T Students)

7.1.1. Format Check

Master's theses must meet the Graduate School's formatting specifications. Information on required formatting can be found on the Graduate School [website](#). Students are required to electronically submit their thesis for a [format check](#) shortly after the midpoint of the semester in which they graduate.

7.1.2. Stages in the Approval of Theses

Once the complete draft of the thesis is submitted to the major professor, several stages of review and possible revision are necessary before it can be sent to the Graduate School.

- (a) *Final Approval by the Major Professor.* Before a thesis can be submitted formally to the advisory committee, the major professor must approve the student's entire completed draft, even if individual chapters have been read previously.
- (b) *Formal Submission of the Thesis to the Committee and Scheduling of the Defense.* The student should then distribute copies of the thesis to the advisory committee and notify the GPA that distribution has been completed. This may be done electronically. At this point, the GPA will schedule a time for the oral defense. Any date scheduled at this time must be regarded as tentative and subject to cancellation, pending approval of the thesis by the advisory committee.
- (c) *Evaluation of the Thesis by the Advisory Committee.* A thesis must be read and approved by the advisory committee before an oral defense can take place. After reading the thesis, the members of the advisory committee will choose from three options on the evaluation form:
 - Approve the thesis as ready for the final defense. This option requires at least two out of three positive votes.
 - Approve the thesis with suggested changes. This option requires the same vote as option "a". The oral defense will be held when suggested changes have been made and approved by the advisory committee.
 - Disapprove the thesis. This option will be chosen if the thesis requires extensive revisions. If changes are suggested by the advisory committee, they will be communicated to the student in a clear and timely fashion. The major professor will assume primary responsibility for determining the committee's consensus on what changes are needed and communicate this to the student.

When the thesis has been approved by the advisory committee, the student may proceed to the oral defense.

7.1.3. Master's Thesis Defense (Final Oral Examination)

The GPA will assist in scheduling thesis defenses. These may be conducted in person, or virtually with the approval of the DGS and relevant department head.

The thesis defense is administered by the advisory committee and chaired by the major professor. The student must receive at least two positive votes from the three-member advisory committee to pass the thesis defense.

7.1.4. Submission of Theses to the Graduate School

Once a thesis has been successfully defended and final changes (if any) have been approved by the major professor, the student must submit a final electronic copy to the Graduate School. The committee must also submit electronic approval. All paperwork related to the defense is managed by the GPA.

7.2. Dissertation Submission and Defense (PhD)

7.2.1. Format Check

Dissertations must meet the Graduate School's formatting specifications. Information on required formatting can be found on the Graduate School [website](#). Students are required to electronically submit their dissertation for a [format check](#) shortly after the midpoint of the semester in which they graduate.

7.2.2. Stages in the Approval of Dissertations

- (a) *Final Approval by the Major Professor.* Before a dissertation can be submitted to the advisory committee, the major professor must approve the student's entire completed draft, even if individual chapters have been read previously.
- (b) *Formal Submission of the Dissertation to the Committee and Scheduling of the Defense.* The student should distribute the draft to the committee and notify the GPA of the distribution, which may be done electronically. The GPA will schedule a time for the oral defense. Any date scheduled at this time must be regarded as tentative and subject to cancellation, pending approval of the dissertation by the advisory committee.
- (c) *Evaluation of the Dissertation by the Advisory Committee.* A dissertation must be read and approved by the advisory committee before an oral defense can take place. After reading the dissertation, the members of the advisory committee will choose from three options on the evaluation form:
 - Approve the dissertation as ready for the final defense. This option requires at least two of three positive votes.
 - Approve the dissertation with suggested changes. This option requires the same vote as option "a". The oral defense will be held when suggested changes have been made and approved by the advisory committee.
 - Disapprove the dissertation. This option will be chosen if, in the advisory committee's judgment, the dissertation requires extensive revisions. If changes are suggested by the advisory committee, they will be communicated to the student in a clear and timely fashion. The major professor will assume primary responsibility for determining the committee's consensus on what changes are needed and communicate this to the student.

If the dissertation has been approved by the advisory committee, the student may proceed to the oral defense. If the dissertation has been approved with suggested changes, these changes should be made prior to the oral defense. The major professor must certify, prior to the oral defense, that the suggested changes have been completed satisfactorily.

7.2.3. Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Examination)

The dissertation defense may be conducted in person, or virtually with the approval of the DGS and relevant department head.

The dissertation defense is administered by the advisory committee and chaired by the major professor. The student must receive at least two positive votes from the three-member advisory committee to pass the dissertation defense.

7.2.4. Submission of Dissertations to the Graduate School

Once a dissertation has been successfully defended and final changes (if any) have been approved by the major professor, the student must electronically submit a final electronic copy to the Graduate School. The student must also obtain the committee's electronic approval. All paperwork related to the defense is managed by the GPA.

8. Graduation

8.1. Submitting the Application for Graduation

Applications for graduation must be submitted on Athena by the [deadline](#) stipulated by the Graduate School, typically the second or third week of each semester. Applications that are submitted after this deadline are subject to a \$50 fee, payable by check or money order to the Graduate School.

- Applications that are submitted more than **45 days** after the initial deadline will not be accepted.

8.2. Commencement

The Graduate School holds [commencement](#) ceremonies in the spring and fall semesters only. There is no summer commencement ceremony. Students graduating in the summer who wish to participate in commencement may return for the fall ceremony.

Students who have not completed degree requirements as determined by the Graduate School and by published deadlines will not be allowed to walk in the ceremony but may return to walk in a subsequent commencement event. There are NO exceptions to this policy.

8.2.1. Submitting Commencement Program Information (for PhD Students)

Doctoral students may have their name, major professor, and dissertation title printed in the official program for their commencement ceremony if they wish. This information must be submitted to the Graduate School via the Doctoral Commencement Information form by the deadline stipulated by the Graduate School, typically around the midpoint of the semester.

- In order to appear in the program, students must lift any FERPA restrictions when applying for graduation.

8.2.2. Hooding (for PhD Students)

It is traditional for PhD students to be hooded by their major professor or another chosen faculty representative at commencement. Hoods and other academic attire can be purchased at the UGA Bookstore or online. It is advisable to consult with the major professor or other faculty member well in advance to ensure that they will be available for the ceremony.

III. INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Compliance Training

1.1. *University System of Georgia (USG) Cybersecurity Awareness Training*

All USG employees, including student workers and graduate assistants, must complete mandatory [cybersecurity awareness training](#) twice annually, in April and October. The GPA will send a reminder to the listserv regarding this training. Failure to complete this training may result in termination of employment. Questions about this training may be addressed to helpdesk@uga.edu.

1.2. *Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Human Subjects Office*

Students whose research involves human subjects are responsible for acquiring the necessary permission and following all applicable rules and regulations when conducting their research. Full information on procedures can be found on the IRB [website](#). Questions may be directed to IRB@uga.edu.

1.3. *Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)*

Responsible conduct of research is critically important for all students conducting systematic analyses, not just those in the sciences. It involves the awareness and application of established professional norms and ethical principles in the performance of all activities related to scholarship.

Newly matriculating graduate students who receive financial support through an assistantship/fellowship that is supported partially or fully with funds from the Graduate School must complete training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). This training must be completed within the first year of enrollment. Continuation of funding beyond the first year is contingent upon demonstrated completion of this requirement. SPIA students will likely find the following course(s) most helpful to them in fulfilling this requirement:

- GRSC 8550, Responsible Conduct of Research (1 credit hour, offered Fall and Spring)
- QUAL 8595/E, Research Ethics in the Professional and Social Sciences (3 credit hours, offered every other Summer)

Please note that the RCR training required for grants from federal agencies may be different from that required by the Graduate School. Additional information regarding RCR requirements for grants can be found on the Office of Research's [website](#).

2. Required Teaching Assistant (TA) Training

2.1. *TA Orientation*

All first-time TAs are [required](#) to enroll in the TA Orientation hosted by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). It is recommended that incoming students on a graduate assistantship enroll in this during their first semester, even if they have not been assigned TA responsibilities in their first year, to ensure that they are prepared to assume TA duties when assigned.

TA Orientation is hosted twice a year, in the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. The schedule can be found on their [website](#).

2.2. *GRSC/POLS 7770*

All first-time TAs are [required](#) to enroll in the Graduate Teaching Seminar. This is taught each fall semester in the Political Science Department as POLS 7770. It is recommended that incoming students on a graduate assistantship enroll in POLS 7770/GRSC 7770 during their first semester to ensure that they are prepared to assume TA duties when assigned.

2.3. English Language Proficiency for TAs

Per University [policy](#), TAs for non-English speaking countries ([as determined by the Graduate School](#)) must demonstrate English language proficiency.

International students who have completed a four-year undergraduate degree at an accredited institution in a country where English is the primary language (as recognized by the Graduate School) no more than four years prior to beginning their degree at UGA are exempt from this requirement.

Students should consult the [placement level guide](#) provided by CTL to determine whether they will need to enroll in supplementary courses (i.e., LLED 7768 and/or LLED 7769) and/or take an English placement examination through UGA.

IV. EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC / RESEARCH PROGRESS

1. Acceptable Academic Standing

1.1. *Limits on Incompletes*

Students may sometimes find it necessary to request a grade of "I" (Incomplete) in courses where they are doing satisfactory work, but are unable to meet the full requirements of the course for non-academic reasons beyond their control. Nevertheless, accumulating incompletes is strongly discouraged. Several policies govern such matters.

- If an Incomplete is not removed after two semesters have passed, the "I" automatically will become an "F."
- If a student receiving financial assistance acquires more than two grades of Incomplete at any time, that financial assistance will be terminated at the end of the semester.
- PhD students may not proceed to comprehensive exams with an outstanding grade of Incomplete. All Incompletes must be resolved before comprehensive exams may be taken.
- Students will not be awarded an assistantship until all Incompletes received in their graduate-level work at UGA have been removed.
- No student will be permitted to accumulate more than three Incompletes at any time during his or her coursework. If more than three Incompletes are carried, the student will not be permitted to register for courses until the number is reduced to three or fewer.
- A student may not graduate with an Incomplete grade on his or her transcript if the conversion of the Incomplete to another letter grade will result in a GPA below 3.0.

1.2. *Academic Probation*

A student who fails to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 will receive a warning letter from the Graduate School. If the GPA remains below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must then submit an advisement plan (created in conjunction with the Graduate Program Administrator) and earn a 3.0 semester average or better in each succeeding semester that his or her overall cumulative GPA remains below 3.0. The student is no longer on probation when the cumulative GPA reaches 3.0 or above.

1.3. *Dismissal*

1.3.1. Dismissal by the Graduate School

Students may be dismissed by the Graduate School for several reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Students who make below a 3.0 semester graduate average while on academic probation. An appeal may be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School within 10 working days following receipt of notice of dismissal.
- Failure to adhere to the honor code and Student Code of Conduct
- Title IX/Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment violation
- Research misconduct
- Exhaustion of degree program time limits

1.3.2. Dismissal by the Department

Students may be dismissed by the department at the end of any semester if they have not made sufficient academic progress to warrant continuance of study. Failure to follow the Program of Study or other departmental and Graduate School guidelines, low grades, failure to pass comprehensive exams, and lack of progress on a dissertation or thesis are among the reasons dismissal might occur.

Evidence of academic dishonesty may result in the student being dismissed from the graduate program.

Evidence of academic dishonesty on the written comprehensive exam will result in immediate dismissal from the graduate program.

Violation of ethical and/or professional standards may result in dismissal.

1.3.3. Dismissal Process and Notification

If the student is dismissed by the Graduate School, the Graduate School will send written notification to the department and the student.

If the student is dismissed by the department, the student will receive written notification. Program dismissal triggers dismissal from the UGA Graduate School, unless the student remains in good standing in another program at UGA.

1.3.4. Appealing a Dismissal

Students who have been dismissed by the department may submit an appeal to the appropriate DGS and the Graduate Committee as their first recourse. If unsuccessful, the student may then submit an appeal to the dean of the Graduate School. This should be completed within 30 calendar days of the decision at the previous level.

Students who have been dismissed by the Graduate School for academic reasons may appeal to the dean of the Graduate School. The appeal must be submitted to the dean within 30 calendar days following receipt of notice of dismissal. Full information is available on the Graduate School [website](#). Please contact gradassociatedean@uga.edu for more information.

Students who were dismissed by a program may reapply to the Graduate School for admission to the same graduate program or a different degree-granting unit, *unless* the dismissal was triggered by:

- Failure to adhere to the honor code
- Title IX/Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment violation
- Research misconduct
- Violation of ethical (professional) standards in program's handbook (or professional society)

2. Student Recourse

2.1. Grade Appeals

Students who wish to appeal a final course grade should first speak with the faculty member who assigned it. If the faculty member will not change the grade, an appeal should be made to the chair of the department in which the course was taken. If the department provides an unfavorable decision, the student may appeal to the Graduate School.

If the appeal involves a hardship withdrawal or a grade of Incomplete converting to an F, students must appeal to the Educational Affairs Committee.

Full information on appeals is available on the Graduate School [website](#).

2.2. Grievance Process

In cases where a graduate student feels aggrieved by the actions of a faculty member, the following procedure should be observed in resolving the grievance:

- (1) The student should confer with the faculty member in question.
- (2) If the initial discussion does not lead to a resolution, the student should discuss it with the DGS, who may choose to serve as a mediator.
- (3) If the problem remains unresolved after discussions with the faculty member and with the DGS, the student may present it to the appropriate department head.
- (4) If the problem cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction by the department head, the student may choose to follow one of the courses of action established by the University and Graduate School to address [academic complaints](#) related to a faculty member or academic department.

To report a nonacademic complaint, such as harassment, discrimination, or a poor experience with a campus office, students may submit a report to the [UGA Student Complaints Portal](#) to be addressed by Student Affairs.

V. FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Graduate assistantships and waivers are based on academic competitiveness. The Graduate Committee in Political Science and International Affairs makes all assistantship funding decisions.

1. Assistantships

1.1. *SPIA Assistantships*

Assistantships carry stipends as well as tuition waivers that reduce tuition to. Students are required to pay a registration fee each semester as well as mandated student fees, which include transportation, activity/recreation, athletic, health, student facilities, technology, and green fees. International students may be subject to additional fees. Details on these specific fees are available from the [Bursar's Office](#). Note that these may change from year to year.

Students on assistantship are required to register for at least 12 graduate credit hours each semester. Generally, a student on an assistantship will register for at least 9 hours of substantive course work and then have the option of registering for 3 hours of "graduate student seminar" (POLS 7005 for master's or POLS 9005 for doctoral students) to meet the required minimum. No additional service is required for these hours.

1.1.1. Teaching Assistantships

Teaching assistants are generally assigned to SPIA's introductory undergraduate courses. All new teaching assistants *must enroll* in GRSC or POLS 7770, which is offered every fall semester and deals with a wide range of pedagogical and professional issues. Teaching assistants work under the direction of experienced faculty members and are usually part of an instructional team that includes several other teaching assistants.

Per University [policy](#), TAs for non-English speaking countries ([as determined by the Graduate School](#)) must demonstrate English language proficiency. International students who have completed a four-year undergraduate degree at an accredited institution in a country where English is the primary language (as recognized by the Graduate School) no more than four years prior to beginning their degree at UGA are exempt from this requirement. Students should consult the [placement level guide](#) provided by CTL to determine whether they will need to enroll in supplementary courses (i.e., LLED 7768 and/or LLED 7769) and/or take an English placement examination through UGA.

TAs are evaluated at the end of each semester by their faculty supervisor. These evaluations are shared with the respective DGS and may affect eligibility for future funding.

1.1.2. Research Assistantships

Research assistants work closely with one or more faculty members to conduct research. Duties are assigned by the faculty supervisor. Per University [policy](#), research assistants may not assume instructional duties such as grading. RAs are expected to communicate closely with their faculty supervisor(s) and perform their duties in a timely fashion.

RAs are evaluated at the end of each semester by their faculty supervisor. These evaluations are shared

with the respective DGS and may affect eligibility for future funding.

1.1.3. Renewal of Assistantships

The renewal of a SPIA assistantship is not automatic. Each student's record is reviewed annually by the Graduate Committee. The decision to renew an assistantship depends on:

- (1) the quality of the student's academic work;
- (2) timely progress toward the degree;
- (3) satisfactory performance of assigned duties as a teaching or research assistant.

Students on assistantship will be expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25. For new students, the calculation will be made after the first semester. A student whose GPA falls below 3.25 will be given one additional semester to come up to this level. If the student fails to do so, the assistantship will be terminated. Also, students may not carry more than two incomplete grades ("I") at any one time while holding an assistantship. These requirements help ensure that financial assistance goes only to those students who are making solid academic progress.

1.1.4. Limits on Eligibility

Limits are set on the period of time for which students are eligible for assistantships. At the MA level, the limit on eligibility is two years (four semesters). At the doctoral level, the limit is five years (10 semesters) for PhD students. Students who exceed these limits are placed on a standby list. Financial assistance may be awarded to students on the standby list as it becomes available. Note that the semesters discussed are the Fall and Spring semesters.

Graduate School Assistantships count against the years of assistantship committed by SPIA. Thus, one year of master's or doctoral aid commitment will be subtracted for each year of Graduate School aid. Other forms of aid will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with a general presumption that external grants will not offset SPIA's aid commitment.

1.2. Graduate School Assistantships

The graduate program nominates a limited number of incoming students for [Graduate School assistantships](#). Since these awards are very competitive, only students with outstanding records are nominated. All Graduate School assistantships are non-teaching awards. Students must be registered for a total of 12 hours each semester.

A student who holds a Graduate School assistantship has the option of continuing their funding through the summer semester but must register for a total of 9 semester hours to do so. The student will also be required to work for the department during the summer semester.

1.3. Tuition Waivers

The Graduate School awards a select number of out-of-state tuition waivers to degree-seeking domestic students who are classified as non-residents of the State of Georgia. These awards are based upon applicants' academic records and the recommendations of their DGS.

1.3.1. Research Out-of-State Tuition (ROOST) Waivers

The ROOST waiver lasts for one academic year and is renewed each term of that academic year, contingent upon recipients earning at least a 3.00 graduate grade point average based on 12 hours of graduate course work in the fall and spring semesters and 9 hours of graduate-level coursework during the summer (if summer courses are taken). These awards waive only the non-resident portion of the student's tuition. Being nominated does not guarantee receipt of a waiver.

1.3.2. Office of Global Engagement (OGE) Out-of-State Tuition Waivers for Outstanding International Students

Nominations for this waiver are submitted by the DGS based on academic merit. To be eligible for nomination, students must:

- Be non-US citizens or non-US permanent residents, enrolled in or enrolling in a full-time degree-seeking course of study at UGA
- Have a 3.0 GPA to be nominated when applying to the program
- Maintain a 3.5 GPA to be renominated in subsequent semesters
- Have no grades of Incomplete or Unsatisfactory

1.3.3. Student Veterans' Out-of-State Tuition Waiver

The Registrar's Office and the Admissions Office process [out-of-state fee waivers](#) for student veterans, their spouses, and their dependent children who meet the Board of Regents requirements.

1.4. Graduate School Funding

The Graduate School provides [competitive travel funding](#) for students presenting their research at conferences and professional meetings. Funds are awarded on a rolling basis, and only a limited amount of funding is available each semester. Students may receive only one travel grant per fiscal year, regardless of type of travel (domestic or international).

VI. APPENDICES

1. Degree Program Timetables

1.1. Timetable for the Traditional MA Degree–Thesis (MA-T)

The MA-T program of study must contain a minimum of 30 hours of graduate coursework, 3 of which must be POLS 7300 (Master’s Thesis).

These 30 hours must also include at least 21 hours of coursework exclusive of POLS 7005 (Master’s Research) and POLS 7300 (Master’s Thesis). Twelve of these 21 hours must be courses restricted to graduate students (i.e., not 4000/6000 split-level courses).

MA methods requirement is 9 hours: POLS 7010, 7012, 7014

A typical MA-T program of study is outlined below. Individual student programs may vary.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	One core seminar POLS 7010 POLS 7012 GRSC 7770 for new TAs GRSC 7001 (GradFIRST seminar)	POLS 7014 Two seminars
Year 2	Three seminars Major professor and advisory committee established. Students planning to go on to the PhD program must apply.	POLS 7300 (Master’s Thesis) Master’s Thesis Defense Students planning to advance to the PhD should take POLS 8501 at this juncture.

1.2. Timetable for the Traditional MA Degree–Nonthesis (MA-NT)

The MA-NT program of study must contain a minimum of 33 hours of graduate coursework. In lieu of an MA thesis, the student will complete an article for approval by their major professor.

These 33 hours must also include at least 21 hours of coursework exclusive of POLS 7005 (Master’s Research). Twelve of these 21 hours must be courses restricted to graduate students (i.e., not 4000/6000 split-level courses).

MA methods requirement is 9 hours: POLS 7010, 7012, 7014

A typical MA-NT program of study is outlined below. Individual student programs may vary.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	One core seminar POLS 7010 POLS 7012 GRSC 7770 for new TAs GRSC 7001 (GradFIRST seminar)	POLS 7014 Two seminars
Year 2	Three seminars Major professor established. Students planning to go on to the PhD program must apply.	Two seminars Paper Completion Students planning to advance to the PhD should take POLS 8501 at this juncture.

1.3. Timetable for the PhD Degree (MA in Political Science and International Affairs from UGA)

The PhD program of study must contain a minimum of 30 hours of graduate coursework beyond the MA, 3 of which must be POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation). These 30 hours must also include 16 hours of coursework at the 8000/9000 level, exclusive of POLS 9000 (Doctoral Research) and POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation).

Students must complete a minimum of five courses in their major field and three courses in their minor field. Additionally, they must take at least one class in a major field other than the two fields in which comprehensive exams are taken, to be chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Courses taken at the MA level at UGA may count toward these field requirements if approved by the DGS.

A full-time course load is 9 hours (12 for those on assistantship, including 3 hours of POLS 9005).

PhD methods requirement beyond the 9 hours for the MA degree is 3 hours: POLS 8501

A typical PhD program of study is outlined below. Individual student programs may vary.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 3	Three seminars GRSC 7770 for new TAs GRSC 7001	Three seminars POLS 8501, if not already taken.
Year 4	1-3 seminars, depending on remaining credit requirements. Major professor and advisory committee established.	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) Comprehensive exams Defend dissertation prospectus either this semester or next.
Year 5	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) INTL 7002 Dissertation prospectus defense, if not already completed.	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) Dissertation defense

1.4. Timetable for the PhD Degree (MA from another institution)

The PhD program of study must contain a minimum of 30 hours of graduate coursework, 3 of which must be POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation).

These 30 hours must also include 16 hours of coursework at the 8000/9000 level, exclusive of POLS 9000 (Doctoral Research) and POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation).

Students must complete a minimum of five courses in their major field and three courses in their minor field. Additionally, they must take at least one class in a major field other than the two fields in which comprehensive exams are taken, to be chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

A full-time course load is 9 hours (12 for those on assistantship, including 3 hours of POLS 9005).

PhD methods requirement is 12 hours: POLS 7010, POLS 7012, POLS 7014, POLS 8501

PhD students often need to take more than the required 30 hours of coursework in order to complete major field, minor field, and methodology sequence requirements. Each student's previous graduate coursework will be evaluated in order to plan out their program of study at UGA. Some courses from similar degree programs *may* count toward major, minor, and methodology requirements with approval from the DGS. The required number of hours in residence must be earned at UGA.

A typical PhD program of study is outlined below. Individual student programs may vary.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	One core seminar <i>and</i> POLS 7010 POLS 7012 GRSC 7770 for new TAs GRSC 7001	POLS 7014 Two seminars
Year 2	Two seminars POLS 8501	Three seminars
Year 3	0-3 seminars May take comprehensive exams May defend dissertation prospectus May be required to take one or more seminars to complete major or minor field requirements.	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) May take comprehensive exams May defend dissertation prospectus May defend dissertation INTL 7002

Year 4	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) Dissertation prospectus defense, if not already completed May defend dissertation	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) May defend dissertation
Year 5	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) May defend dissertation	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) Dissertation defense, if not already completed

1.5. Timetable for the Fast-Track PhD Degree (No prior graduate work)

The Fast-Track PhD program of study must contain a minimum of 45 hours of graduate coursework, 3 of which must be POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation).

These 45 hours must also include 16 hours of coursework at the 8000/9000 level, exclusive of POLS 9000 (Doctoral Research) and POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation), and 4 semester hours of UGA courses open only to graduate students. Coursework should also include one course in a major field of study in which the student is not sitting for comprehensive exams.

Students must complete a minimum of five courses in their major field and three courses in their minor field. Additionally, they must take at least one class in a major field other than the two fields in which comprehensive exams are taken, to be chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

A full-time course load is 9 hours (12 for those on assistantship, including 3 hours of POLS 9005).

Fast-Track PhD methods requirement is 12 hours: POLS 7010, POLS 7012, POLS 7014, POLS 8501

A typical Fast-Track PhD program of study is outlined below. Individual student programs may vary.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	One core seminar <i>and</i> POLS 7010 POLS 7012 GRSC 7770 for new TAs GRSC 7001	POLS 7014 Two seminars
Year 2	Two seminars POLS 8501	Three seminars
Year 3	Two seminars	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) Comprehensive exams Defend dissertation prospectus either this semester or next.
Year 4	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) INTL 7002 Dissertation prospectus defense, if not already completed.	POLS 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) May defend dissertation

Year 5	POL 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) May defend dissertation	POL 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) Dissertation defense, if not already completed
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2. Overview of Methods Sequence

Required for the traditional MA: POLS 7010, 7012, and 7014

Required for the Double Dawgs MA: POLS 7012 and 7014

POLS 7010: Research Design (3 credit hours)

Basic scientific methods, broadly defined, to include problems of definition, concept formation, hypothesis testing, explanation and prediction, and theory construction.

POLS 7012: Introduction to Political Methodology (3 credit hours)

Review of basic math skills and summary statistics such as measures of central tendency and dispersion, and crosstabulation. Also includes an introduction to probability theory, probability distributions, confidence intervals, and hypothesis testing. Statistical software and discussion of political science data sources will also be covered.

POLS 7014: Intermediate Political Methodology (3 credit hours)

Thorough coverage of the ordinary least squares regression model. Focus on assumptions of OLS, remedies for violations of the assumptions, and applications to political science research. Topics include interactive specifications, nonlinearities, and diagnostics.

Required for the PhD: POLS 7010, 7012, 7014 + POLS 8501

POLS 8501: Advanced Quantitative Methods II (3 credit hours)

Prerequisites: POLS 7014

Maximum likelihood estimation and advanced regression applications. Topics include models with qualitative or limited dependent variables (binary, ordered, and unordered logit and probit; event count models; tobit and selection models), regression with time series cross-sectional data, systems of simultaneous equations, and measurement models.

3. Sample Documents

3.1. [*Advisory Committee Form*](#)

3.2. [*Program of Study Form*](#)