Political Science Graduate Group
Ph.D. and MA Degree Requirements
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A. Introduction

1) Aims and Scope:

Political Science is a social science discipline concerned with study of governments, public policies, political processes, systems, and political behavior. The graduate research program in Political Science at the University of California, Merced is quantitatively focused program and trains students in two broad areas: Political Cognition & Behavior (CAB) and Political Institutions & Political Economy (PIPE). The Ph.D. Program in Political Science is intended to prepare students for research careers. It is research intensive, innovative, and tailored to students' individual interest within the field of Political Science. The Ph.D. program is designed to be full-time, and we do not accept students seeking to attend on a part-time basis. The M.A. degree is offered as an option for students admitted to the Ph.D. program, but we will not admit students seeking an M.A. as a terminal degree.

2) Admissions Requirements

All students seeking admission to the Political Science Graduate program must make a formal application for admission. Applicants use an on-line application to streamline the process. Applications are reviewed by the Admissions Committee, which makes recommendations on admission to the Graduate Group Chair. The Dean of Graduate Studies makes final decisions on admission. The deadline for receipt of applications is January 15 for enrollment in Fall semester. Enrollment in other semesters will not be typical, but may be considered on an individual basis.

Materials to be submitted include:

- Official application form
- Application fee
- Official transcripts from all prior university or college attendance
- An official Graduate Record Exam (GRE) score report (only the general tests are required)
- A statement of research interests and career goals
- Three letters of recommendation from instructors or supervisors who can comment on the applicant's scholarly ability and promise as a researcher (letters from faculty are preferred)
- Demonstration of English proficiency if the applicant's native language or language of instruction is other than English. Official score reports from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the Duolingo English Test (DET) are accepted.
- Applicants will also be required to complete a microteaching component for demonstration of English Language Proficiency for Academic Student Employees.

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements for admission to graduate study at University of California, Merced, described in the Section II of the Graduate Student Handbook. Admission decisions are made on a case-by case basis. Meeting some or all of these criteria does not guarantee admission, but merely eligibility.

The minimum requirement for graduate admission to UCM is a bachelor's degree with grade point

average of 3.0 or greater on a 4.0 scale, though the students we admit typically have much higher GPAs. Performance on the GRE, distribution of undergraduate grades, accomplishments in undergraduate research, and letters of recommendation will also be evaluated as important determinants of an applicant's potential for success in graduate education. Students with undergraduate degrees in Political Science, Economics, and Psychology normally have a background that is well suited to the graduate study in Political Science; however, applicants with other degrees are strongly encouraged to apply.

3) General Committees

a) *Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee (EC) in consultation with the faculty, determines and implements policy for the good of the Group, establishes and guides the educational requirements of the Group, and represents the interests of the Group to the University and other agencies. The EC consist of at least three elected members (the Graduate Group Chair and Vice-Chair plus additional members). The Executive Committee makes appointments to standing and ad hoc committees (such as First Year Exam and Qualifying Examination Committees) of the Group.

b) *Graduate Curriculum Committee*

The Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) shall consist of 3 faculty members. The Graduate Curriculum Committee has the following functions: (1) To establish and maintain documentation on the Political Science Graduate Group curriculum; (2) To prepare and execute all reviews and assessments of the Political Science Graduate Group program; and (3) in consultation with the program faculty, to coordinate and document proposed changes in programmatic requirements of the Political Science Graduate Group program, and present proposed changes to the voting body, Graduate Council, and WASC as needed. All changes to the programmatic requirements of the Political Science Graduate Group curriculum and associated requirements must be approved by vote of the eligible Graduate Group Faculty.

c) *Admissions & Awards Committee*

The Admissions & Awards Committee is charged with the development of recruiting materials for the Group, reviewing applications for admissions (in consultation with members of the Group), making recommendations for admissions to the Dean of Graduate Studies, and allocating intramural financial assistance. This committee will be constituted by at least three Group members and chaired by the Graduate Group Vice-Chair. The term of service is one year, and appointments are renewable.

Each year the Admissions & Awards Committee reviews all applications for admission, prepares a proposed list of applicants, and forwards these recommendations to the Graduate Group Chair for approval. When approved, the list is forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Admissions & Awards Committee also recommends the allocation of intramural financial assistance, fellowships, and awards for new and continuing students.

B. Doctoral Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is not granted by the University of California merely for the fulfillment of technical requirements. Rather, the recipient of a Ph.D. degree is understood to possess thorough knowledge of a broad field of learning, have demonstrated evidence of distinguished accomplishment in that field and critical ability. The degree also signifies that the recipient has presented a doctoral dissertation containing an original contribution to knowledge in his or her chosen field of study. Ultimately, the quality of the dissertation and the qualifications of the candidate for the Ph.D. in Political Science are determined by a faculty committee convened to provide such an evaluation to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

In general, students seeking a Ph.D. degree in Political Science must satisfy all of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree specified by the Graduate Division of the University of California, Merced. These include residency requirements and scholarship requirements, including a minimum grade-point average (GPA). These requirements are described in detail in the *Graduate Advisors Handbook*, available from the Graduate Division. In addition to these general requirements, students must satisfy a range of program-specific requirements in order to be awarded a Ph.D. in Political Science. Students must complete a program of coursework, competently perform on first year and candidacy examinations, serve as a teaching assistant for at least two semesters, and finish and defend a doctoral dissertation involving original research that contributes to knowledge in the field. These are only the major requirements and are not meant to be exhaustive. It is also expected that graduate students will contribute to and generate additional research and add to the intellectual and organizational life of the department through service work, teaching, and exchange with graduate student colleagues.

The Political Science Graduate program is organized along two substantive tracks: Political Cognition & Behavior (CAB) and Political Institutions & Political Economy (PIPE).

The CAB subfield is intended for students concerned with the formation, acquisition, and measurement of political attitudes, beliefs, and preferences at the individual and/or group level. The focus includes research questions surrounding the ways in which political attitudes and identities affect political behavior and decision-making as well as the bases of political attitudes.

The PIPE subfield is intended for students interested in studying the development and operation of formal and informal rules and practices in domestic and international politics which guide and constrain political choices and activities. The focus includes research questions surrounding the organization and effects of legislatures, parties, judiciaries, markets, and other social structures related to the distribution of material resources and political power.

Students must choose a major track by the end of their 1st year. The other track will be considered the student's minor track. Minor track study is required because many of the interesting research questions at the forefront of Political Science fall at the intersection of political institutions and political behavior. Additionally, knowledge in both tracks will aid students in expanding their future teaching portfolios.

Reflecting its central importance to the research endeavor, all students, regardless of individual focus, will be expected to develop strong quantitative skills in statistics and research design. The curriculum outlined below implements this plan.

1) Program Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of the Political Science Ph.D. graduate students will have

1. A comprehensive graduate-level understanding of processes, theories, and empirical regularities in the student's major area of emphasis (Political Cognition & Behavior or Political Institutions & Political Economy).
2. A graduate-level understanding of processes, theories, and empirical regularities in the student's minor area of emphasis (Political Cognition & Behavior or Political Institutions & Political Economy).
3. Competency with contemporary social science methods used to conduct rigorous research on political phenomena.
4. Effective scientific communication skills, especially the ability to convey complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner.
5. The ability to initiate and conduct independent research that makes an original contribution to Political Science knowledge of a quality that can be published in a peer reviewed outlet.
6. Proficiency in the skills needed to participate in the intellectual and organizational aspects of the profession of Political Science.

2) Course Requirements

The Political Science Graduate Group faculty has established a minimum requirement of 72 units of graduate work for the Ph.D. (typically 18 4- unit courses). Only courses taken for a letter grade will count towards this requirement. All 72 units of graded graduate coursework must be completed before advancing to candidacy.

In accordance with University of California policy, a minimum of four semesters in academic residence is required prior to awarding the Ph.D.

Courses taken toward a graduate degree at another institution cannot be transferred for credit toward a Ph.D. at UCM. However, course requirements may be waived if a similar course was taken at another institution. The General Petition form should be used for all requests for waivers of course work.

The following course requirements must be met before the Ph.D. can be awarded:

a) *Core Courses*

Every student enrolled in the Political Science Graduate Program is required to take a methodology sequence consisting of POLI 200, POLI 210, and POLI 211, plus 8 additional units of methods courses (typically 2 4-unit courses) appropriate to the student's research focus. Courses numbered POLI 212 through POLI 219 can be used to fulfill this additional methods course requirement. Students are encouraged to consider taking appropriate methods courses

from other disciplines (such as ECON, SOC, CIS, or PSY) to fulfill this additional methods course requirement. These substitutions can be made by petition to the Graduate Group chair. POLI 200, 210, and 211 must be taken in the student's first year of residence at UC Merced.

In addition, every student must complete 16 units (typically 4 4-unit courses) in the student's major track and 8 unts (typically 2 4-unit courses) in the student's minor track. PIPE classes are those numbered POLI 220 through POLI 249. CAB classes are those numbered POLI 250 through POLI 269. Classes numbered between 290 and 297 may not be used to fulfill this requirement. Students may petition the Graduate Group chair to use classes numbered 298 and 299 to fulfill this requirement.

All students are required to take POLI 290 in the Spring of the student's 2nd year and Fall of the stduent's 3rd year. It is generally expected, although not required, that POL 290 will be taken with the same faculty member for both semesters.

b) *Elective Courses*

In addition, 20 units of regular course electives are required (typically 5 4-unit graduate level [200 series] courses). POLI 297 may not be used to fulfill this requirement. Elective courses may be selected from a discipline outside of Political Science with approval from the Graduate Group Chair. Depending on students' interests and the recommendations of students' advisors, it is anticipated that students will be strongly encouraged to take courses outside of political science.

Graduate Division requirements are that graduate students must be enrolled in at least 12 units of upper division or graduate-level units per semester. Registration in POLI 200 through 299 may be used to fill this requirement in any given semester.

3) Special Requirements

a) *Teaching Requirement*

The Political Science Graduate Program requires all graduate students pursuing the Ph.D. to acquire teaching experience at the post-secondary level under faculty supervision, for no fewer than 2 semesters. This requirement is usually satisfied by appointment as a Teaching Assistant or Teaching Fellow in undergraduate courses. A student who has advanced to candidacy may fulfill the teaching requirement by teaching one full course of their own design. For more information, consult the Academic Appointment and Graduate Student Employment section in the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook.

b) *First Year Exam*

All students in the Political Science program are required to take and pass a First Year Exam prior to the end of the Spring semester of the student's first year of academic residence at UCM. The exam will typically be given in April. The First Year Exam is intended to determine whether the student has an introductory command of the research tools necessary to successfully complete the Political Science Ph.D. Students will be asked to evaluate a research

article and assess the success of the author's research design, methodological approach, and evidence in generating causal inferences. The exam is written with no oral component.

All first year exams are prepared and graded by three members of the First Year Exam Committee. Each member of the First Year Exam Committee grades each exam on a pass/fail basis. To pass the First Year Exam, a student must receive passing grades from all three committee members. Students who fail the First Year Exam must receive a passing grade from at least one committee member to be eligble to retake it. Students who do not receive a passing grade from at least one committee member are not eligible to retake the exam and will face academic disqualification.

The use of generative artificial intelligence is prohibited on the First Year Exam unless the Examination Committee explicitly grants permission to use generative artificial intelligence to the student in writing prior to the exam.

4) Dissertation Plan

In accordance with University of California policy, a minimum of four semesters in academic residence is required prior to awarding the Ph.D. Typically, a longer period of five years is required for completion of all degree requirements. All graduate students are considered resident graduates not candidates for a degree, unless admitted to candidacy after completion of all candidacy requirements and approval by the Graduate Division after formal application. A student advances to candidacy for the Ph.D. upon successfully demonstrating a high level of scholarship at the Ph.D. level, and upon completing all preparatory work and demonstrating readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase.

5) Doctoral Degree Committees

a) *Qualifying Exam Committees*

The CAB and PIPE Qualifying Exam Committees are comprised of three faculty members who prepare, administer, and evaluate the CAB and PIPE Qualifying Exams.

b) *Candidacy Committee*

The Candidacy Committee (CC), which is typically the same as the Doctoral Committee, is charged with determining the readiness of the student to proceed with the Doctoral Dissertation. The CC must be composed of no fewer than three UC Senate voting faculty members. The CC is chaired by the student's Faculty Advisor. At least one member in addition to the Chair must be a member of the Political Science Graduate Group. The student should initially propose a CC to her/his Faculty Advisor; if approved by the advisor, the student should contact the desired members and invite them to join the CC. Students should be aware that faculty members may in some instances be unable or unwilling to serve on a CC. The members of each student's CC are approved by the Chair of the Political Science Graduate Group and the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to the Dissertation Proposal Defense.

c) *Doctoral Committee*

The Doctoral Committee (DC) shall supervise the preparation and completion of the dissertation and the final examination The DC is chaired by the student's Faculty Advisor. The DC must be composed of no fewer than three UC Senate voting faculty members. At least one member in addition to the Chair must be members of the Political Science Graduate Group. The membership of the student's DC is listed on the Graduate Division form *Advancement to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy — Plan A*.

The DC is typically the same as the CC but may differ in membership to accommodate changes in the student's research interests and the availability of faculty. Changes to the composition of the DC after its initial formation must be approved by the Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Group Chair using the Graduate Division form *Request for Reconstitution of Committee Membership*.

6) Qualifying Examinations Requirements

In order to demonstrate readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase, students must pass a Qualifying Examination at the beginning of the Spring semester in the student's third year (typically in January or February). In the event that the student does not pass the Qualifying Examination, he/she may retake it one time prior to the end of the third year of graduate study. The Qualifying Examination is intended to determine whether or not the student possesses the knowledge and skills needed to successfully complete a dissertation research project in their chosen area of interest. Students must complete the Graduate Division form *Application for Qualifying Examination* at least one month prior to the scheduled date of the Qualifying Examination.

The Qualifying Examination consists of written examinations in the student's major track. The examination will be time limited essay exams covering theoretical approaches, methodological issues, and research frontiers in a given field. It will be structured so that passing requires general knowledge and understanding of important work in the field as a whole. The examination will be open-note and open-book. Students are expected to do their own work and to compose their answers on the day of the examination. The use of generative artificial intelligence is prohibited on the Qualifying Examination unless the Examination Committee explicitly grants permission to use generative artificial intelligence to the student in writing prior to the exam.

Examination Committees grade all exams in their respective field with a grade of pass or fail. Each Examination Committee shall have the authority to request an oral examination of any student to further clarify the student's knowledge and skills. A student must receive a passing grades from all three committee members in order to pass the Qualifying Examination. A student who fails the exam will be allowed to retake the failed exam prior to the end of the Spring semester of the student's third year. A student who fails the Qualifying Examination twice will face academic disqualificaiotn.

Examination Committees will complete the Graduate Division form *Qualifying Examination Report* within 30 days of the completion of the exam.

7) Advancement to Candidacy

All graduate students are considered resident graduates, not candidates for a degree, unless admitted to candidacy by the Graduate Division after formal application. Before advancing to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have satisfied all requirements set by the graduate program:

- Complete at least four semesters of academic residency at UCM
- Complete POLI 200, POLI 210, POLI 211 and 8 additional units of methods courses
- Complete 16 units in the student's major track of study
- Complete 8 units in the student's minor track of study
- Complete 8 units of POLI 290
- Complete 20 units of elective courses
- Complete 72 units of graduate coursework
- Have a cumulative GPA not lower than 3.2
- Receive a "pass" outcome on the Qualifying Examination

These criteria are generally unambiguous, though the final requirement demands a comprehensive evaluation by the members of the Candidacy Committee. Committee members should evaluate the relevant portions of the student's academic record, the student's performance on the Qualifying Examination, and an overall assessment of the student's potential for scholarly research. Students are admitted to candidacy by unanimous and unequivocal vote of the Candidacy Committee.

If the Candidacy Committee recommends advancement to candidacy, committee members must sign the Graduate Division form *Advancement to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy — Plan A*. If the recommendation of the Candidacy Committee is favorable, the student must pay the Advancement to Candidacy Fee to the campus Cashier's Office, which will validate the *Candidacy* Form. The student must then complete the online OnBase *Candidacy* Form. The date the student conmpletes the signed and validated *Candidacy* Form will be the official date of advancement. The candidate and Graduate Group will be notified of formal advancement and the appointment of a Doctoral Committee.

If the Committee recommends that the student not be advanced to candidacy, this decision must be reported to the Graduate Dean.

Students enrolled in the Political Science Ph.D. program must advance to candidacy before the the start of their fourth year of study to maintain satisfactory progress.

8) Dissertation Requirements

The Doctoral Dissertation is the culmination of the Ph.D. program, in which the Doctoral Candidate demonstrates the capability to conduct research independently that makes an original contribution to knowledge of a quality that can be published in a reputable peer reviewed outlet.The Doctoral Committee, headed by the Doctoral Committee Chair, is charged with guiding the student in research and in the preparation of his or her dissertation.

The successful completion of this final requirement is demonstrated through the production of a dissertation document, describing the research project and its results, and the defense of the project from challenges offered by the members of the student's Doctoral Committee. The quality of the dissertation and the defense of its thesis are evaluated by the Doctoral Committee in order to determine if the student has successfully completed this final requirement for the Ph.D. degree in Political Science.

While working on the Dissertation students must enroll in 12 units of POLI 297 each semester. Students are expected to complete the dissertation by the end of their 5th year of study.

a) The Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal (DP) serves three primary functions. First, it reviews the relevant literature and in so doing defines the area of inquiry of the proposed Dissertation. Second, it provides a clear statement of actionable research questions that will be addressed in the Dissertation. Third, it outlines the methodological and analytic approach that will enable the proposed research to answer the research questions.

The DP should be approximately 20 to 30 double-spaced pages (not including references and appendices). It is advisable for a student to work with the Faculty Advisor until the student and the advisor deem the DP of sufficient quality to pass an examination by the DC. The student is encouraged to submit the DP to members of the DC informally for their feedback and revisions prior to finalizing the DP. When the finalized DP is submitted, the DC should have at least 7 days in which to review the DP prior to the Proposal Defense Meeting.

Students working on the DP in the Spring semester of their third year can enroll in up to 4-units of POLI 297 so long as it does not conflict with obtaining the 72 units needed to advance to candidacy.

b) The Dissertation Proposal Meeting.

The student must consult with the DC to schedule a dissertation proposal defense meeting, at which all members of the committee must be present in person (or via conference call under extenuating circumstances such as a DC member being on sabbatical or at a distant site). The proposal defense meeting should be completed by September 15 of the student's fourth year of study.

The proposal defense consists of an oral presentation of the proposed Dissertation research by the student, followed by questions from the DC and possibly other audience members. The student is tasked with responding to the questions clearly and coherently. This portion of the meeting is open to the public. Students are responsible for securing a room for the Defense with a minimum of two hours for the meetng as well as ensuring that announcement of the oral defense time and location is made in appropriate forums such as an email list serve or a Political Science bulletin board.

At the conclusion of the public portion of the defense, the student and the DC will excuse the public in order to discuss the proposal with the student in private. At the conclusion of committee

questions, the graduate student leaves the room, allowing the DC members to deliberate on the readiness of the proposal. The committee makes one of the following recommendations:

- Pass: The proposal is passed and the student may commence with the proposed research.
- Fail: The proposal requires major or minor revision.

If the committee recommends failure of the proposal, the student will be allowed to revise the proposal in light of committee feedback and resubmit the proposal within three months. At that time, the student must reschedule the proposal defense and complete it satisfactorily before undertaking any dissertation research.The failure of the proposal, or failure to meet the revision deadline, may constitute unsatisfactory academic progress. If the DC recommends failure of the revised proposal, the student may face academic disqualification.

c) The Dissertation

Following successful defense of the Dissertation Proposal, the Doctoral Candidate undertakes and completes the proposed research under the supervision of the DC.

Although there are no set criteria for dissertation length or content, students are expected to produce a body of work that contains a thorough review of the literature, theoretical innovations, novel data collection and/or analysis, and at least three substantive chapters. One of two formats is typically used. Dissertations should be convertible to three related, but separable articles or one book. The format of the Dissertation manuscript should be approved by all members of the DC, subject to any requirements by the Political Science Graduate Group, the Graduate School, and the University Archives. Candidates prepare the manuscript under the supervision of the Faculty Advisor who requests revisions until s/he judges that the work is ready to be reviewed by the remaining DC members.

Once the dissertation document is complete in the opinion of the student and his or her Faculty Advisor, the Candidate circulates the Dissertation among DC members. The DC should provide comments, possibly leading to another revision before the final submission and the scheduling of the Dissertation Defense. DC members should provide these comments in a timely fashion.

The complete Dissertation must be provided to the DC members at least 14 days prior to the scheduled defense.

d) Dissertation Final Examination

Once all members of the DC have read the dissertation and agreed that it is ready to be defended, the student is expected to work with the members of the DC to schedule a date and time for the defense. All members of the DC must attend the thesis defense in person (or via conference call under extenuating circumstances such as a DC member being on sabbatical or at a distant site).

The defense of the Dissertation is a capstone event in the student's graduate career. It consists of an oral presentation of the Dissertation research by the candidate, followed by questions from the DC and possibly other audience members. The Candidate is tasked with responding to the questions clearly and coherently. This portion of the meeting is open to the public. Candidates

are responsible for ensuring that announcement of the oral defense time and location is made in appropriate forums such as an email list serve or a Political Science bulletin board.

At the conclusion of the public portion of the defense, the Candidate and the DC will excuse the public in order to discuss the Dissertation with the Candidate in private. At the conclusion of committee questions, the Candidate is excused and the DC deliberates on the quality of the written dissertation and the student's performance during the defense. The committee makes one of the following recommendations:

Pass: The dissertation and defense are of sufficient quality to warrant the awarding of a Ph.D. degree from the University of California. The committee recommendation for passage must be unanimous.

Fail: The dissertation does not meet the standards of a Ph.D. degree from the University of California.

If the Doctoral Committee recommends awarding the Ph.D. degree, committee members must sign the graduate division form *Report on Final Examination for the Ph.D. Degree*, recommending conferral of the Ph.D., subject to final submission of the approved Dissertation for deposit in the University Archives (see *Graduate Advisor Handbook,* Section VII. H.8).

9) Advising and Evaluation

a) *Faculty Advisor*

Each incoming students is assigned to the Graduate Group Chair for advising. At the end of the first year, students are expected to work with the Graduate Group Chair to identify and switch to a permanent Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor must be a member of the Political Science. The Faculty Advisor is expected to offer guidance in course selection and research foci and formally evaluates the student's progress in the program at least biannually. A graduate student must have a recognized Faculty Advisor at all times.

The faculty recognizes that under certain circumstances there may be valid reasons for a graduate student to want to change Faculty Advisor. Examples may include personality conflict, changes in research interests, and resignation of the Faculty Advisor from the faculty. If a student requests a change in Faculty Advisor, the faculty members in Political Science are expected to ensure a smooth transition that takes into account the needs of both the student and the faculty involved.

When a student decides a change in Faculty Advisor is in his/her best interest, he/she must obtain a clear commitment by the new Faculty Advisor to take on this responsibility. The student then needs to inform the former Faculty Advisor and the Political Science Graduate Group Chair of this change and submit a Change of Advisor form to the Graduate Division.

b) *Biannual Review Process*

Student progress will be evaluated on a biannual basis. To this end, the student prepares a

cumulative Progress Report prior to the end of each semester. The Progress Report for the Fall semester is reviewed and completed by the Faculty Advisor alone. The Faculty Advisor for all first year students is the Graduate Group Chair. It is expected that the Graduate Group Chair will consult with faculty teaching courses in the first year sequence prior to preparing the midterm Progress Report. On or about May 1st of each Spring semester, the Graduate Group faculty will meet to discuss the evaluation of all graduate students. The Progress Report for the Spring semester is then completed and reviewed by the Faculty Advisor. Biannual Review continues until the student has completed an approved Doctoral Dissertation.

A meeting is convened between the student and his/her Faculty Advisor prior to the end of the semester, in which feedback is provided to the student both orally and in writing. As part of each review, a determination must be made whether the student's progress on the whole is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. This determination is then clearly communicated in written form and signed by the Faculty Advisor. The student also signs the evaluation indicating understanding of the evaluation and is given one copy. The original is placed in the student's file.

Satisfactory Progress: Satisfactory progress is determined on the basis of both the student's recent academic record and overall performance. Satisfactory Progress is more than simply avoiding displaying any of the specific behaviors listed below as indicative of Unsatisfactory Progress. It is a subjective judgment made by the Faculty Advisor and members of the Graduate Group faculty based on the quality, quantity, and timeliness of performance in research as well as the other activities described in the Graduate Student Handbook. The Faculty Advisor is expected to communicate his/her standards in these respects on a continual basis. These standards also provide the framework for the Biannual Reviews.

Unsatisfactory Progress: Unsatisfactory academic progress is *in part* determined on the basis of explicit requirements, including those outlined in the UC Merced Graduate Division's *Graduate Advisor Handbook* and reproduced here.

- An overall grade point average below 3.2; or
- A grade point average below 3.2 in two successive semesters; or
- Fewer than 8 units completed and applicable toward the advanced degree requirements in the last two semesters; or
- Failure to complete required courses or examinations satisfactorily within the period specified by the Graduate Group; or
- Failure to pass Qualifying or Dissertation Final Examination in two attempts; or
- Failure to progress academically within the Normal Time to Degree framework specified for the student's Graduate Group; or
- The appropriate faculty committee's evaluation that there has not been satisfactory progress toward completion of the dissertation.

Note however, that the professional judgment of the faculty assigned the role to evaluate the student, upon review of all graduate work undertaken by that student, *is paramount*. Faculty may establish more restrictive criteria than the above minimum criteria.

A judgment of Unsatisfactory Progress can have significant negative consequences for a graduate student.

1. A student who has a GPA less than 3.2 in a single semester is at risk of being disqualified

from getting an assistantship unless the employing unit wants them to continue to be employed; in that case, the Graduate Group Chair asks the Dean of the Graduate Division to make an exception.

2. A student who has a D or F in a single course is disqualified from getting an assistantship. A grade of C in a single course is disqualifying unless the employing unit wants them to continue to be employed; in that case, the Graduate Group Chair asks the Dean of the Graduate Division to make an exception.
3. A graduate student who has not demonstrated satisfactory academic progress by any of the other criteria listed above is not eligible for any academic appointment or employment, such as a Teaching Assistantship, and may not receive fellowship support or other awards.

The Graduate Division delegates the monitoring of student performance regarding these rules to the Graduate Group and the Registrar.

Communication of Unsatisfactory Progress: It is important to give students an early warning of potentially unsatisfactory progress. The Biannual Review specified above is a minimum. In addition, Faculty Advisors are encouraged to be direct in communicating orally, and in writing as necessary, with students demonstrating difficulties as soon as possible and on a continual basis. For example, course instructors are encouraged to engage in this communication, and to inform the Faculty Advisor when a student is experiencing difficulties during a course, and not wait until the end.

It is useful for the Faculty Advisor to keep a written record of all such communications. When notices of potential unsatisfactory progress are provided in writing to the student, a copy should also be retained in the Political Science Graduate Group files. The written communication should include specific details on areas that require improvement, provide an outline for future expectations of academic progress, and set meeting dates to maintain continuity in advisement.

The purpose of the notice of unsatisfactory progress is to provide the student with a reasonable period of time (usually at least one academic semester) in which to make the necessary improvement in their academic status, and successfully complete their graduate study.

A formal determination of Unsatisfactory Progress in any Biannual Review may result in academic disqualification immediately or following a probationary period as determined by the Graduate Group faculty. A determination of academic disqualification will conform to the requirements and policies for disqualification of graduate students specified by the UC Merced Graduate Division's *Graduate Advisor Handbook* .

If the Graduate Group faculty offers the student probation, criteria must be specified in writing detailing what the student will need to achieve to be removed from this status if they are to be allowed to remain in the program, and the timetable for doing so. This is included in the written feedback provided to the student as part of the formal review. Whenever a student has been deemed to make Unsatisfactory Progress, the Political Science Graduate Group reviews the student's progress at the end of the subsequent semester and determines his/her status at that time. The professional judgment of the Political Science Graduate Group, upon review of all graduate work undertaken by that student, is paramount in determining whether the student can

or cannot be removed from Unsatisfactory Progress status. While it is expected that the Faculty Advisor will communicate with the student when in this status to provide guidance and feedback on efforts to meet the specified criteria, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to achieve progress that can be deemed Satisfactory Progress.

10) Normative Time to Degree

While time to completion of the degree will vary, a general expectation is that students will take and pass the Qualifying Examination at the start of the Spring semester of their 3rd year of study, complete their coursework and advance to candidacy by the end of their 3rd year of study, defend their dissertation proposal in the Fall semester of their 4th year of study, and complete the Doctoral Dissertation in an additional 1-2 years, for a total time to completion of approximately 5 years. Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed to exceed five years, subject to university regulations and the approval of the Political Science Graduate Group Chair.

11) Typical Timeline and Sequence of Events

Sample Plan of Study for a Political Science Graduate Student	
Fall Semester	**Spring Semester**
1st Year	
POLI 200: Research Design in Political Science	POLI 211: Quantitative Analysis of Poli Data II
POLI 210: Quantitative Analysis of Poli Data I	POLI XXX: Major Course (CAB or PIPE)
POLI XXX: Major Course (CAB or PIPE)	POLI XXX: Minor Course (CAB or PIPE)

	First Year Examination (end of semester)
2nd Year	
POLI XXX: Major Course (CAB or PIPE)	POLI 290: Political Science Research Practicum
POLI XXX: Minor Course (CAB or PIPE)	POLI XXX: Major Course (CAB or PIPE)
POLI XXX: Methods Elective	POLI XXX: Methods Elective
3rd Year	
POLI 290, Political Science Research Practicum	POLI XXX: Elective
POLI XXX: Methods Elective	POLI XXX: Elective
POLI XXX: Elective	POLI XXX: Elective
	Qualifying Exam (start of semester)
	Advance to Candidacy (by June 30)
4th year	
POLI 297: Dissertation Research (12-units)	POLI 297: Dissertation Research (12-units)
Dissertation Proposal Meeting (by September 15)	
5th Year	
POLI 297: Dissertation Research (12-units)	POLI 297: Dissertation Research (12-units)
	Dissertation Defense

12) Sources of Funding

Graduate students who received a funding offer with their admissions offer will have their financial support according to the terms of the funding offer. Funding will come through a combination of Teaching Assistantships, graduate Research Assistantships, and/or Fellowships. Master's students are typically not expected to be funded by such means; but they may receive a funding offer with their admissions offer. More information on financial support can be found in the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook.

13) Leaving the Program Prior to Completion of the PhD Requirements

A student admitted for the Ph.D. degree, which, in the judgment of the Graduate Group should not continue in the program, must be notified in writing by the Political Science Graduate Group Chair. A copy of the letter must be sent to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. In some cases a doctoral student may choose to leave the program with a master's degree only if he or she has completed the requirements for the MA degree. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Group unit to notify the Graduate Division via the Change of Degree form so that the student's record may be updated to reflect the student's degree status. This notice must include the student's written permission to have his/her degree objective changed officially from doctorate to master's.

C. Master's Degree Requirements

1) Degree Plan II – Non-Thesis

The *Master's of Arts in Political Science* is not intended as a stand-alone degree but rather as an option for students admitted to the Ph.D. program. The optional M.A. serves as recognition of advancement in the degree program, though it is not a prerequisite for advancement. Ph.D. students will have the option to obtain a *Master's of Arts in Political Science* degree, either en route to a Ph.D. degree (non-terminal), or in lieu of a Ph.D. degree (terminal) if a student exits the graduate program prior to fulfilling the Ph.D. requirements. The recipient of an M.A. degree

is understood to possess knowledge of a broad field of learning that extends well beyond that attained at the undergraduate level, but is not expected to have made a significant original contribution to knowledge in Political Science or to be able to use sophisticated methodological tools to conduct independent research.

a) Program Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the Political Science M.A. graduate students will have

1. A Master's-level understanding of processes, theories, and empirical regularities in the student's chosen area of emphasis (Political Cognition & Behavior or Political Institutions & Political Economy).
2. The ability to critique, analyze, and evaluate social science methods used to conduct research on political phenomena.
3. Effective scientific communication skills, especially the ability to convey complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner.

b) Course and Special Requirements

- Complete at least four semesters of academic residency at UCM
- Complete POLI 200, POLI 210, POLI 211
- Complete 6 courses numbered between POLI 220 and POLI 269
- Complete 48 units of graduate coursework (all taken for a letter grade)
- Have a cumulative GPA not lower than 3.2
- Receive a "pass" outcome on the Master's Comprehensive Examination or Qualifying Examination if the M.A. is received en route to the Ph.D.

Students who choose the M.A. degree en route to their Ph.D. (non-terminal) need only complete the Graduate Division form *Final Report for the Master's Degree* following successful passage of the Qualifying Examination (which stands for the Master's Comprehensive Examination in this case). All other M.A. requirements will have been met at this point and the M.A. degree will be awarded at the end of the following semester.

Students who opt for a terminal M.A. degree in lieu of the Ph.D. adegree should inform their Faculty Advisor and the Graduate Group Chair of this decision prior to the start of their terminal semester (typically the Spring semester of their 2nd year). Students must complete the relevant portions of the Graduate Division form *Application for Advancement to Candidacy* at this time.

c) Comprehensive Examination

An Examination Committee comprised of 3 faculty members will be appointed by the Executive Committee to compose and administer a Master's Comprehensive Examination. This examination will be given at the beginning of the student's terminal semester, usually at the same time as the Qualifying Examination for the Ph.D. is being offered for continuing students.

The Master's Comprehensive Examination consists of a time-limited essay based exam in either the PIPE or CAB track depending on the student's plan of study. Students will be expected to demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of theoretical approaches, methodological issues, and important work in the field. The examination will be open-note and open-book.

Students are expected to do their own work and to compose their answers on the day of the examination. For additional details regarding expectations see Appendix E6.

The Examination Committee grades the exam with grades of pass or fail. The Examination Committee shall have the authority to request an oral examination to further clarify the student's knowledge and skills. A student must receive a passing grade from at least two Examination Committee members to pass the Master's Comprehensive Examination. A student who fails the exam will be allowed to retake it prior to the end of classes in the terminal semester. A student who fails the Master's Comprehensive Examination twice will not be awarded the M.A. degree and will be unable to continue in the program.

2) Sources of Funding

Graduate students who received a funding offer with their admissions offer will have their financial support according to the terms of the funding offer. Funding will come through a combination of Teaching Assistantships, graduate Research Assistantships, and/or Fellowships. Master's students are typically not expected to be funded by such means; but they may receive a funding offer with their admissions offer. More information on financial support can be found in the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook.

D) General Information

1) PELP, In Absentia and Filing Fee status.

Information about ELP (Educational Leave Program), In Absentia (reduced fees when researching out of state), and Filing Fee status can be found in the Graduate Group Policies and Procedures Handbook available on Graduate Division.

2) Political Science Graduate Courses

Methods

200 Research Design - This course is intended to give students an introduction to designing Political Science research. The course will emphasize scientific method and causal inference, with special emphasis on designing strong tests, especially experimental and quasi-experimental designs and including the use of natural experiments and observational data. (4 units)

210 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data I - This course is a graduate-level introduction to the theory and practice of quantitative data analysis. It is intended to prepare students for future work in methodology. Aside from formal treatment of the material, students will receive a basic introduction to the use of Stata statistical analysis software. (4 units)

211 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data II - Provides an in-depth introduction to ordinary least squares regression analysis and its use in Political Science. (4 units)

212 Quantitative Analysis of Political Data III - Maximum likelihood estimation and limited

dependent variable models as applied to Political Science data. (4 units)

213 Experimental Methods in Political Science - This course is intended to provide students with an understanding of experimental methods in Political Science. The first portion of the semester will emphasize concepts and tools from the experimentalist's toolbox with a strong focus on causal inference, external and internal validity, and choosing subjects and subject's motivations. Later weeks will focus on issues and challenges to specific types of Political Science experiments including survey experiments, laboratory experiments, physiological experiments, and field experiments. (4 units)

215 Introduction to Game Theory - This is an introductory course on game theory and its applications in social and Political Science. Students will learn basic concepts and tools of non-cooperative game theory, covering both complete and incomplete information games in static and dynamic settings, and see how they can be used in studying political/social phenomena. (4 units)

216 Formal Political Analysis - This course introduces the formal analytic tools that are now used extensively to model political phenomena. It is more advanced and technical than POLI 215, and covers materials not included in POLI 215. It will provide students with interests in formal theory a foundation to construct serious formal models of politics in their areas of interests. (4 units)

219 Special Topics in Political Science Methodology - A special, instructor-selected topic in Political Science methodology. (4 units)

Political Institutions & Political Economy

220 American Political Institutions - This course is intended to provide students with a broad understanding of American political institutions (the constitution, Congress, presidency, bureaucracy, judiciary, electoral systems, and subnational governments). The first portion of the semester will emphasize concepts and tools while later weeks will examine institutions in more depth, emphasizing classic writings and contemporary research controversies. (4 units)

221 Legislative Politics - This course provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature on legislative politics. The main focus of the course will be the U.S. Congress, but much of what we cover will have direct relevance for the study of legislatures more generally (both cross-nationally and the American state legislatures). (4 units)

222 Executive Politics - This course examines executive politics, with special attention to the U.S. presidency and the politics of the bureaucracy. The course considers the theoretical and empirical literature on the processes of presidential selection (nomination and election), the ways in which presidents differ in their leadership styles, skills, executive management, and their roles as decision makers are also analyzed for their consequences. (4 units)

223 Judicial Politics - Development and consequences of judicial institutions; influences on judicial decision making; role of courts in political systems. (4 units)

224 Subnational Politics - This course provides an introduction to politics in American cities and metropolitan areas. We examine the historical development of local government institutions,

analyze urban coalitions, investigate distributions of power, investigate the process and consequences of suburbanization, and examine local development and poverty policy. (4 units)

225 Political Parties - This course provides a general overview of political parties and party systems. We investigate the goals of parties, organizational structures, and the sources of parties (including societal divisions, coordination needs, and institutional structures). We explore party competition and interaction, study the causes of party system change, and the effects of parties in electoral and policy making arenas. (4 units)

226 Interest Groups - Collective action problems, organization of interests, lobbying strategies, and the effect of advocacy activities. (4 units)

227 Media and Politics - This course examines the role of the mass media in politics. We analyze the function of media in different political settings, study the development and transformation of the media, explore sources of bias, evaluate theories of news development and analyze the effect of the media in campaigns, elections, and governance. (4 units)

228 Elections and Representation - Electoral institutions and their consequences for election outcomes and public policy. (4 units)

230 Institutions and Institutional Change in Comparative Perspective - This course will explore the political economy of institutions and institutional change in comparative perspectives. It will analyze the causes of institutional emergence/change and the effects of institutions. (4 units)

235 International Institutions - International political institutions and their connection with international relations. (4 units)

240 Political Economy - The purpose of this class is to introduce students to political economy, a field of inquiry that seeks to explain political and economic behavior by characterizing the incentives of actors and the context in which these actors make decisions and influence outcomes. (4 units)

249 Special Topics in Political Institutions & Political Economy - A special, instructor-selected topic in political institutions and/or political economy. (4 units)

<u>Political Cognition & Behavior</u>

250 American Political Behavior - This course provides students with a broad understanding of American political behavior (political participation, the nature and origins of public opinion, vote choice). The first portion of the semester emphasizes concepts and tools while later weeks will examine political behavior in more depth, emphasizing classic writings and contemporary research controversies. (4 units)

251 Political Cognition - This course is intended to provide students with an understanding of political cognition, a topic that examines political attitudes and behavior from the perspective of research from Psychology and Cognitive Science. Each week's readings will include research from Psychology or Cognitive Science and research in Political Science informed by these disciplines. (4 units)

252 Public Opinion - This course provides an in-depth examination of American public opinion. We will cover concepts and tools, including technical issues of sampling and measurement, as well as the origins and structure of political attitudes and specific areas of public opinion research such as approval of political institutions, war attitudes, and tolerance. (4 units)

253 Voting, Campaigns, & Elections - The purpose of this course is to explore the factors that explain citizens' vote choices and the strategies used by candidates and their campaigns to win these votes. Additional consideration will be given to the structural factors influencing elections in the United States. (4 units)

254 Biological Bases of Politics - This course provides an overview of the different avenues explored by scholars working in the bio-politics paradigm. The course covers a number of disparate topics, including: twin studies and other techniques of behavior genetics, neuroscience, psychophysiology, personality psychology, and evolutionary psychology. (4 units)

255 Politics of Diversity - This course examines politics through the lenses of race, ethnicity, and immigration. We consider topics such as the development of racial and ethnic identities, discrimination, voting rights, electoral mobilization, campaigns, representation, and policy debates over issues like affirmative action, immigration and naturalization, and language policy. (4 units)

260 Comparative Political Behavior - This course is an introduction to the study of comparative mass political behavior. The seminar will focus on research questions related to cross-national differences and similarities in public opinion, voting behavior, and other forms of political participation. (4 units)

269 Special Topics in Political Cognition & Behavior - A special, instructor-selected topic in either political cognition or political behavior. (4 units)

Other

290 Political Science Research Practicum - Individual research practicum with a faculty member in the Political Science Graduate Group. (4 units)

297 Research for Ph.D. Dissertation – Research and writing of Doctoral Dissertation. (2-12 units)

298 Directed Group Study in Political Science – Directed group study on a Political Science topic. (4 units)

299 Directed Individual Research in Political Science – Directed individual research on a Political Science topic. (4 units)