

*University of Nevada Reno*

*Curriculum and Program  
Requirements*

*Department of Political Science*

*Masters (MA) Program*



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**THE UNIVERSITY**

As Nevada's flagship land-grant institution, the University has been instrumental in the history of the nation's fastest-growing state. When the University opened in 1874 as the University Preparatory School in Elko, it was located 300 miles east of the state's Virginia City-Carson City-Reno population base. State officials relocated the university to Reno in 1885, and its first year of formal college-level study was in 1887. Until 1957, the University of Nevada served as the only state-supported higher-education institution in the Silver State.

One of the top 150 research universities in the country, Nevada enrolled 19,865 students in fall 2009. The University's two Reno campuses are in northwestern Nevada, just 15 minutes from the California border. Nestled in the Sierra Nevada foothills, the University is 45 minutes from Lake Tahoe and four hours from the San Francisco Bay Area.

The faculty of the University is exceptionally well-qualified, with 94 percent of tenured faculty and 79 percent of the full-time faculty holding the highest degrees attainable in their respective fields. More than 50 percent of the faculty has been hired during the past 10 years, reflecting the retirement of the “baby boomer” generation of faculty and general growth of the University. Faculty-initiated research grants and contracts have increased 600 percent during the past 15 years, a result of attracting world-class faculty members.

At present, 37 percent of the University's 999 full-time academic faculty members are female, with 15 percent made up of men and women of color. The University's 663 administrative faculty, or professional staff, includes 53 percent women and 16 percent people of color.

The University of Nevada, Reno is fully accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the official accrediting agency of most western states.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

The MA degree is offered as part of the curricular program of the Department of Political Science. The Department is an academic unit within the College of Liberal Arts. The activities of

the Department focus upon both undergraduate and graduate education, research, and public service. In addition to the MA, the Department offers the Bachelor's (BA) and Ph.D. in Political Science, a Master's of Public Administration (MPA), and a BA in International Affairs.

### THE MASTERS FOCUS

The MA program has the following general goals.

- To offer students opportunities for advanced, specialized courses in the discipline of political science, leading to a graduate degree.
- To prepare students for additional graduate work leading to a Ph.D. and a career as a political scientist.
- To offer students the opportunity to prepare for a career in teaching, politics, public service and government, or to complement their present careers.
- The support of university-based research involving issues of politics and public policy.

The courses in political science cover a full range of the discipline, both in terms of substance and methodology. Courses in research methods provide the skills necessary for sophisticated analysis of political processes, institutions and policies. More specialized interests are developed through independent research courses and projects tackled by students.

### ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Admission to the Masters program is competitive; a limited number of applicants are accepted each year. To be considered, all applications must be complete. Please note that the Graduate School, which has to approve all applicants, has its own deadlines and regulations. Students are expected to know these and meet and follow them. The Graduate School can be reached online at [unr.edu/grad](http://unr.edu/grad). Application deadlines:

Fall Admission: The application **deadline is March 31** for admission in the following fall semester. Admission decisions are made by a departmental selection committee, usually by the end of April.

Spring Admission: The application **deadline is October 31** for admission the following spring semester. Admission decisions are made by a departmental selection committee, usually by the end of November.

Minimum Scholastic Requirements:

- *Undergraduate Degree (BA/BS) (JD accepted as well)*
- *Minimum 2.75 overall GPA (BA/BS) or a 3.0 GPA for last two years of BA/BS*
- *1000 minimum combined verbal and quantitative GRE (or GMAT, LSAT equivalent)*
- *450 Verbal GRE (or GMAT, LSAT equivalent)*
- *18 credit hours (6 courses) in Political Science (PSC)/Social Science*

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS; MEETING MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS DOES NOT GUARANTEE ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM. STUDENTS ARE ADMITTED ON AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE BASIS. WE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION A STUDENT'S OVERALL RECORD, AS WELL AS FIT WITH DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY AREAS OF EXPERTISE AND RESEARCH/TEACHING INTERESTS.

***Application materials need to be mailed to the Graduate School—postmarked no later than October 31 (for Spring admission) or March 31 (for Fall admission):***

- *Application*
- *Undergraduate transcripts*
- *GRE/GMAT/LSAT scores*
- *3 Letters of recommendation of which a minimum of 2 are from professors with whom you have taken and completed coursework.*

*NOTE: You may apply for Graduate Special status and register for classes. Only up to nine graduate credit hours taken as a Graduate Special can apply toward the MA degree.*

***Application materials need to be mailed to the Political Science Department—postmarked no later than October 31 (for Spring admission) or March 31 (for Fall admission):***

- *You must submit a Statement of Purpose. This statement should be 500 words, double spaced, and printed in a standard font (Courier, Times New Roman). This Statement should discuss your career and educational goals. Please make sure that the Statement has your name at the top of the each page.*

*Mail the Statement of Purpose directly to: Director of Graduate Studies; Department of Political Science, Mail Stop/302; University of Nevada, Reno; Reno, NV 89557-0302.*

Completed applicant files are reviewed by the Department and forwarded to the Graduate School for final approval. Applicant files cannot be processed without GRE or equivalent scores. Incomplete applicant files are discarded after each admission cycle.

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### **REGULAR ADMISSION**

To be eligible for admission, applicants must have an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher (on a four-point scale) for all prior coursework. While no university requirement for the GRE is established, the Department utilizes a combined score on the **VERBAL** and **QUANTITATIVE** sections of the GRE (or equivalent exam) that falls in the 60th percentile or above as a guideline for admission. Students must achieve a score of at least 450 on the verbal portion of the GRE (or equivalent exam). In addition, the Department requires a minimum of 18 credit hours (six semester courses) of coursework in political science or acceptable social science cognates. Acceptable coursework in statistics, economics and American government is required of all applicants. The Department reserves the right to specify additional requirements. A student must make up any deficiencies in coursework requirements. Such make-up coursework can generally be completed while the student is pursuing an approved program of graduate study.

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**Please note that these are minimum requirements; meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the program. Students are admitted on an increasingly competitive basis. We take into consideration a student's overall record, as well as "fit" with departmental/faculty areas of expertise and teaching/research interests. We also consider each student's long-term professional goals, with an eye toward determining the extent to which this department can effectively contribute to student achievement of those goals.**

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International Students (studying under a student visa) must have a minimum TOEFL score of 500 on the paper-based exam; 61 on the internet-based exam; OR 173 for the computer-based exam. They must also meet all other requirements for International Students, as established by the Graduate School and the Office of International Students and Scholars [Student Services Building(0074), University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada 89557-0074 (unr.edu/oiss)]. The Department of Political Science reserves the right to request that the English skills of incoming International

Students be evaluated by the Intensive English Language Center, University of Nevada, Reno. The results of that evaluation will be used to determine if the student needs to take additional English or other classes to facilitate their success in the program.

### **PRESCRIBED PROGRAM ADMISSION**

The applicant must meet the following requirements: Please check with the specific program as some programs require a higher GPA:

1. An undergraduate grade-point average of at least 2.75 on a scale of 4.0, or an average of at least 3.0 for courses taken during the last half of the undergraduate program;
2. Have a completed baccalaureate degree from an appropriate accredited institution;

If the applicant does not meet the criteria described above, admission to graduate standing on a prescribed program can be considered. Prescribed admissions are granted at the discretion of the department. A prescribed program of study consists of the completion of one semester (fall, spring or summer) of full-time study in nine credits or 12 credits over two consecutive semesters, with a grade of "B" or better in all courses taken. The courses prescribed may be undergraduate or graduate courses. These courses may or may not apply to the graduate program of study.

The online Prescribed Program Request Form signed by the student and the director of graduate studies for the program must accompany the student's graduate data admissions sheet when forwarded to the Graduate Dean for approval. A student enrolled in a prescribed program is ineligible for a teaching or research assistantship. International students are ineligible for admission via a prescribed program.

### **FINANCIAL AID AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

The Department of Political Science offers a limited number of graduate research assistantships. Departmental assistantships are generally awarded towards the end of the spring semester for the following academic year, but there are times where opening occur for Spring Semester—check with the Director of Graduate Studies. Assistantships are competitive and available only for full-time students. Application forms and information can be obtained from the Political Science website ([unr.edu/cla/polisci](http://unr.edu/cla/polisci)).

The university provides a range of financial assistance options for graduate students. Interested applicants should contact Student Financial Services located in the Student Services Building.

#### GENERAL OVERVIEW OF COURSEWORK FOR THE MA DEGREE

The MA program requires the student to fulfill the following course requirements. **All students must complete at least 15 (professional paper option) or 18 (thesis option) credits at the 700-level (seminars).** The Thesis and Professional Paper options are described below.

Field Seminars	9 Credits
Methodology Sequence	9 Credits
General Electives and Professional Paper or Thesis Credits	15 Credits
<b>Total Course Requirements</b>	<b>33 Credits</b>

#### FIELD SEMINARS

The Department offers five fields of study for the MA:

- American Politics
- Political Theory
- International Relations
- Comparative Politics
- Public Policy.

Each student is expected to select one of these fields as his/her major field of study.

Each student must complete a "core" seminar (700 level) in three of the five areas of study listed above. At least one of these seminars must be from the student's major field of study. Work

with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and/or your program advisor (Committee Chair) in selecting your core seminars.

Some seminars, particularly in the areas of public administration, policy and methodology, are offered in the evenings or on weekends. Students may pursue the degree part-time within the prescribed time limit and registration requirements set by the University. Courses that were taken more than six years prior to the student's date of graduation may not be applied to a student's program of study.

### ***THE METHODOLOGY SEQUENCE***

All MA students are required to complete a three-course research methodology sequence. The three courses are:

1. PSC 780 Research in Political Science
2. PSC 781 Political Science as a Discipline
3. PSC 782 Advanced Research Methods

*There is no substitute for PSC 781, which must be taken in-residence.*

### ***GENERAL ELECTIVES AND PROFESSIONAL PAPER/THESIS CREDIT***

Remaining coursework is taken as general electives. Up to three hours of Professional Paper credits (PSC 796), or Thesis credits (PSC 797) **may** be applied toward the 33-credit degree requirement. Please discuss this **option** with the Graduate Director before registering for such credits.

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*Transfer of Credits: A maximum of 9 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred for credit towards the MA degree. These credits may be from another university or from "graduate special" courses at UNR. All such transfers must be approved by the Graduate Director.*

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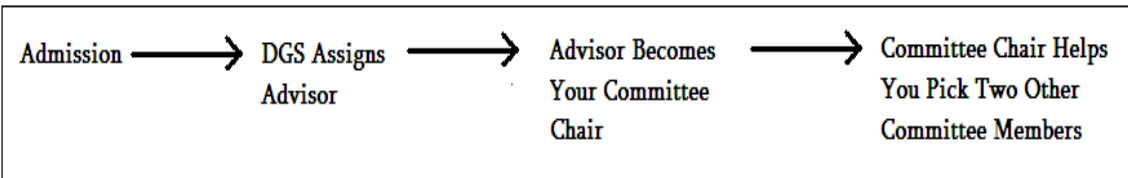
## ADVISING

Initially, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) serves in advising role for new students. The DGS will advise you on courses to take and will answer any degree-related questions that arise.

The DGS assigns an advisor to all accepted graduate students. The department strongly recommends that you maintain the assigned initial advisor as your permanent graduate advisor and make him/her your committee chair. Please consult the DGS if you feel that another advisor is better suited to your needs.

Beyond your first semester, your advisor should ensure that you enroll in graduate courses for each semester. Your advisor will also serve as your committee chair. As your committee chair, your advisor will help you choose your other committee members of which you need two.

## Advisor-to-Committee Chair: A Chart *Advisor-to-Committee Chair: A Chart*



## COMMITTEES

Each graduate student should fairly quickly decide which professors will be most helpful to them in completing their degree program. The chair of your committee (very likely, your assigned initial advisor) is your most regular contact for class advisement, exam study, and for professional paper completion. Your other committee members (2)—i.e., secondary committee members—serve in advisory capacities—they are not your primary advisor, but they are there to offer specific advice about topics related to your professional paper. All committee members must be designated graduate faculty (professors viewed as qualified to work with graduate students). One of the two secondary committee members must be a graduate faculty member from a department other than political science. It is possible that some of your

elective coursework will be with a professor from another department—in which case, it would be good to ask them if they are willing to serve on your committee.

### ***PROGRAM OF STUDY (POS)***

Nearly every time you interact with the DGS, you will likely hear the following question, “Have you filled out your POS yet? Has it been signed and submitted to the Graduate School?”

Essentially, your POS is a type of contract with both the department and university—you list out all courses required to complete your degree. This would include up to nine graduate credits completed at UNR prior to official admission to the graduate program (Graduate Special credits) and/or credits you intend to transfer from another institution with the nine credit limitation. Grades, as well as the semester a course is completed may be entered for already completed graduate courses. Courses yet to be taken may indicate the approximate semester or year in which you intend to take the course. It is strongly recommended that you begin the POS submission process within one semester of entering the program—definitely within the first year of entering the program.

In order to complete the POS, you will have to consult with your advisor regarding course availability in the upcoming semesters—usually, the department has scheduled out the future courses 6-12 months in advance of any current semester.

You will also have to have received confirmation from other potential committee members in terms of their willingness to sign the POS and become recognized members of your committee. Finally, you will need the DGS to sign the POS.

Following the process of obtaining all necessary signatures, you will need to take the signed original POS document to the Graduate School (in Room 225 of the Student Services Building on the south end of the Whalen Parking Garage). The Graduate School is the ultimate arbiter in the process and will either approve or reject the POS.

If your POS is rejected, then it is likely there will be some explanation and you will need to consult with either your assigned advisor/committee chair to determine the deficiency. The DGS might also need to be consulted.

## **GRADUATE SPECIAL STUDENTS**

Students with Graduate Special status may take graduate courses in political science. In terms of advising, a Graduate Special student will consult with the DGS until that time when they are admitted as regular graduate students—at that point, the student will be assigned an advisor.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

All MA students must pass a written comprehensive exam in one of the fields offered as part of the MA program. Students are not required to take comp exam credits. Students wanting to take comp exam credits should discuss this **option** with their assigned advisor and committee, or the Director of Graduate Studies *before* registering for such credits. The examinations are designed so that student must show a broad understanding of relevant theory and research in the given field. Exams are constructed by the student's committee chair and committee members and is also graded by these individuals. ***Permission to retake a failed exam is granted at the sole discretion of the Graduate Studies Committee.***

## **THE PROFESSIONAL PAPER**

All MA students are required to complete a Professional Paper or Thesis. The topic of the Professional Paper is selected by the student in consultation with his or her Program of Study committee. The Professional Paper must demonstrate the student's ability to select and delimit a topic for analysis, to assemble pertinent data, to ground the analysis in a relevant body of theory and literature, to execute a research design, and to prepare a written report of the findings in clear and effective English. There are three distinct phases of the Professional Paper process. First, the student must submit a written proposal for review and approval by his or her committee. **A proposal cannot be submitted until the student has successfully completed a comprehensive exam.** In the second stage, the student, working in consultation with his or her committee, researches and writes the paper. In the final stage, an oral defense of the paper is required. Before the oral exam, the student's paper will be made available for review by interested faculty and students. Students taking this **option** may apply three Professional Paper credits toward completion of the 33-credit Program of Study. Before registering for such credits please consult with their committee chair and/or Director of

Graduate Studies. All students under this option must complete 15 hours of 700-level coursework.

### **THESIS OPTION**

MA degree candidates may choose to write a thesis in lieu of a professional paper. The process, goal and substance of the thesis largely mirror those of the professional paper. However, the form of the thesis adheres to more traditional academic writing. There is a greater emphasis on theory and literature review in the thesis. Specific rules of composition and format are also mandated.

There are three distinct phases of the Thesis process. First, the student must submit a written proposal for review and approval by the committee. **A proposal cannot be submitted until the student has successfully completed a comprehensive exam.** In the second stage, the student, working in consultation with the committee, researches and writes the paper. In the final stage, an oral defense of the paper is required. Before the oral exam, the student's paper will be made available for review by interested faculty and students.

All students taking this option must complete 18 hours of 700-level coursework. The graduate school also has rules and guidelines for the preparation and submission of the thesis; these are available on the Graduate School's website ([unr.edu/grad](http://unr.edu/grad)).

### **ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY FOR GRADUATION**

Advancement to candidacy implies that students have successfully completed all Departmental coursework, the comprehensive exam, and University residency requirements. Students usually file for candidacy in their last semester of graduate study. Forms and deadlines for application are available from the Graduate School. Admission to candidacy requires approval of the student's Committee Chair, the Graduate Director, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Candidacy also requires completion of the following items.

1. The student must have a "B" average in all graduate work taken prior to admission to candidacy. (The department may terminate the student's program if he or she receives

six or more credits of B- or lower grades. The department may terminate the student's program if he or she received three or more credits of C or lower grades.)

2. The student must have gained formal approval for a Program of Study, and for a Professional Paper or Thesis proposal.

All students should be familiar with the general requirements of the Graduate School. Students should obtain a copy of the University's catalog detailing these regulations and important calendar dates governing the academic year. The following are several important items often considered by prospective graduate students.

#### KEY TERMS AND REGULATIONS OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

All students should be familiar with the general requirements of the Graduate School. Students should obtain a copy of the University's catalog detailing these regulations and important calendar dates governing the academic year. The following are several important items often considered by prospective graduate students.

- Graduate Courses: Courses numbered 600 and above are for graduate credit. No course is acceptable for graduate credit for which the student received undergraduate credit.
- 700 Level Courses: A minimum of 18 credits in courses numbered 700 and above is required for the MA degree.
- Residence: A minimum of six semesters of graduate study beyond the bachelor's degree is required. At least two successive semesters, excluding summer sessions, must be spent in full-time study (9 credits) in residence at UNR. Residence credit is defined as earned by students physically present on the Reno campus for the duration of the scheduled instruction or training period. Exceptions include such field courses or off-campus sites as approved by the university and department.
- **All students must register for at least three credits each semester in order to remain in active status in the program.** (No coursework is required in the summer sessions.)

- Foreign Language Requirement: There is no general foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree. However, a student's committee may require a reading knowledge of a foreign language linked to a particular program of study.
- Time Limit: All requirements for the MA degree must be satisfied within the period of six calendar years immediately preceding the granting of the degree.
- Grades and Credits: Each graduate course must be completed with a grade of "C" or above for the credit to be acceptable toward an advanced degree. Each candidate must have a "B" average or above on all graduate course work taken, including transfer credit\*. *In addition, a "B" average or above must be obtained throughout a student's Program of Study.*
- S/U Grading: A maximum of 9 graduate credits for a Ph.D. of S/U grading, including transfer credits, may be acceptable (pending approval of the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate Director). (Comprehensive Exam credits are exempt from this policy.)
- Correspondence Study: Graduate credit is not allowed for correspondence study courses.
- Extension Courses: Graduate credit earned through extension courses is not accepted for transfer credit.
- Full-time Study: Registration in 9 graduate credits or more in a semester is considered full-time. For half-time graduate assistants, or other assigned equivalent duties, a minimum of 6 graduate credits constitutes full-time study. All Teaching Assistants must complete 9 credits each semester.
- Limitations on Student Credit Loads: a full-time graduate student may not register for more than 16 graduate credits in any semester or for more than 6 graduate credits in any five-week summer session. Registration for graduate assistants is limited to 12 graduate credits per semester. Undergraduate credits, taken as part of a student's required course of study, are calculated on a 3-2 conversion scale.

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**\*Note: these are graduate school rules--the political science department may terminate a student's program if s/he receives six or more credits of B- or lower grades, or three credits of C or below**

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#### **POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY**

William L. Eubank. Ph.D., University of Oregon, Associate Professor. Areas of interest: Research Methods, Judicial Process and Constitutional Law, Voting Behavior and Parties, Public Choice.

Stacy Fisher. Ph.D., University of California, Davis, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Advisor. Areas of interest: Research Methods, Legislative Politics, American Government, Comparative Politics.

Carlos Guevara Mann. Ph.D., University of Notre Dame, Assistant Professor. Areas of Interest: Comparative and International Politics, Politics of Democracy, Politics of Latin America.

Eric B. Herzik. Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Professor and Chair of the Department. Areas of interest: State and Local Government, Policy Analysis and Evaluation, Executive Politics.

Derek Kauneckis. Ph.D., Indiana University, Bloomington, Assistant Professor. Areas of Interest: Public Policy, Environmental Policy, Property Rights Theory, Institutional Analysis, Research Methods, and Comparative Politics.

John Marini. Ph.D., Claremont Graduate School, Professor. Areas of interest: Political Philosophy, Organizational Theory, Bureaucratic Politics.

Robert Ostergard. Ph.D. University of New York, Binghamton, Assistant Professor. Areas of Interest: International Relations and Security policy, Comparative Politics (regional focus on Africa), International Political Economy, Civil-Military Relations, and Civil Conflict.

Jennifer Ring. Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, Professor, and Director of Women's Studies. Areas of interest: Political Philosophy, Feminist Theory, Multicultural Politics.

Christopher Simon. Ph.D., Washington State University, Professor. Areas of interest: Public Administration, Public Policy, Research Methods, Education Policy, American Politics, Policy Analysis and Evaluation, State and Local Politics.

Leonard Weinberg, Ph.D., Syracuse University, Professor. Areas of interest: Comparative Politics, Terrorism, Western Europe, Extremist Movements.

Leah Wilds. Ph.D., Colorado State University, Associate Professor. Areas of interest: Public Policy, Environmental Politics (global and domestic), Western Land and Water Resources.

Jiangnan Zhu. Ph.D., Northwestern University, Assistant Professor. Areas of Interest: Comparative Politics, Regional Focus: China.

#### ADJUNCT FACULTY

Carina Black. Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno, Adjunct Professor. Areas of Interest: Comparative Politics, Public Policy and International Affairs.

Robert Dickens. Ph.D., University of Arizona, Director, Governmental Relations, University of Nevada, Reno. Areas of interest: Public Policy, Bureaucratic Politics, Intergovernmental Relations, Public Choice.

Richard Harris. J.D. Stanford University, Adjunct Professor. Areas of Interest: Natural Resource and Environmental Law.

John Scire. Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno, Adjunct Professor. Areas of Interest: Energy Policy, Foreign Policy, International Conflict Studies, and Terrorism.

Sue Wagner. M.A. University of Arizona, Adjunct Professor. Areas of Interest: Legislative Process, Economic Development and Nevada Gaming.

Sally Zanjani. Ph.D., New York University, Adjunct Professor. Areas of Interest: American West and Nevada History.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Where to Email:

Departmental Web Site: <http://www.unr.edu/cla/polisci>

Where to Write:

Christopher A. Simon, Graduate Director

Political Science Department

University of Nevada, Reno

Reno, Nevada 89557-0302

Email: [casimon@unr.nevada.edu](mailto:casimon@unr.nevada.edu)