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Introduction

This Handbook is intended for the use of Brandeis students who are currently pursuing a M.A. or Ph.D. degree in Politics. It contains the following information:

- An overview of the course of study for each graduate degree awarded by the Department of Politics
- A summary of the requirements for completion of each degree
- A year-by-year description of the course of study for each degree
- Funding opportunities and university policies regarding financial aid
- Brandeis policy and resources pertaining to grievances, and students with disabilities
M.A. in Politics

Requirements for completion of the M.A. in Politics include:

Coursework

A Master’s project

M.A. students are expected to complete their coursework and their M.A. project in two semesters, although students may take the subsequent summer to complete the project with approval from their academic advisor. The program is not designed for part-time students. Master’s degree students desiring to continue their studies toward the Ph.D. must apply for admission to that program.

Coursework Requirement

M.A. students are required to complete a minimum of 8 courses with grades of B or better, as follows:

Two of the dedicated graduate field seminars:

- POL 211a Political Theory
- POL 212a Research Methods
- POL 213a Comparative Politics
- POL 214a International Relations
- POL 215a American Political Development

Six courses from more specialized offerings:

3: Graduate-level special topics courses or field seminars OR
   Upper-level undergraduate seminars and advanced lecture classes
   that offer additional work for graduate credit

1: A one-semester directed readings course – usually in the spring – culminating in the Master’s Project

2: A non-credit two-semester sequence of the graduate student Proseminar (340d), a workshop for student and faculty research-in-progress

All non-required courses must be approved for enrollment in advance by the student’s academic advisor.

Master’s Project

The Master’s project can be an original research project, a comprehensive literature review (a critique of a sub-field of Politics), or another type of undertaking that is appropriate for the student’s course of study. The completed Master’s project must be approved by two members of the Politics faculty. The page length of the project is to be determined in consultation with
project’s primary advisor. Students must also present an oral defense of the project in the Proseminar.

The Master’s Project must contain:

An explanation and justification of the importance of the issue.

A critical survey of the relevant scholarly literature.

A clear presentation of the methodological approach employed.

A document that meets the form and style requirements of the Department.
Ph.D. in Politics

Each student is expected to acquire a broad knowledge of the major theoretical and analytical approaches of an area of specialization, as well as a more intensive familiarity with one or more functional sub-areas, and, where appropriate, special expertise in particular geographic areas, historical periods or theoretical traditions, for example.

Areas of specialization include but are not limited to:
  American Political Development, Race and Gender in U.S. Politics
  American Foreign Defense and Economic Policy
  Ethnic and Religious Conflict
  The Politics of the Middle East
  Democratic Citizenship and Cultural Pluralism

List of Degree Requirements
  Residency
  Coursework
  Teaching Fellow
  Qualifying examinations
  Dissertation proposal
  Research relevant skill
  Dissertation completion and defense
  Satisfactory annual progress toward the degree

Residency Requirement
Completion of the Ph.D. generally requires a minimum of five years of full-time graduate work, including dissertation research and writing. Students must complete three years in residence.

Coursework Requirement
The Ph.D. curriculum has two main parts: a required core curriculum and electives. The latter are to be chosen in consultation with the student’s primary academic advisor and the Graduate Director and should contribute to the development of a special area of competency.
Students must complete a minimum of 14 term courses. Five courses required of all students constitute the core curriculum; the remaining courses are taken as electives. All students in residence and on department funding are required to register for and attend the graduate Proseminar, a workshop for research-in-progress (POL 340). The Proseminar does not count toward the 14 course requirement. Students may take a maximum of two courses at consortium schools.

**Previous coursework:** Students who have completed graduate coursework at other institutions prior to entering the program may, after their first year in residence, apply for credit for up to two semester courses (not counting courses in foreign languages or statistics) taken elsewhere.

**Core Curriculum**
The following five field seminars – each taught every other year - are required for all Ph.D. students:

- POL 211a  Political Theory
- POL 212a  Qualitative Research Design and Analysis
- POL 213a  Comparative Politics
- POL 214a  International Relations
- POL 215a  American Political Development

Students may, with the approval of the Graduate Director, undertake an intensive independent readings course in their area of specialization, under the direction of a member of the department faculty. Syllabi are developed by the student under the supervising faculty member’s direction.

**Teaching Fellow Requirement**
Beginning with the second semester in residence, all graduate students are required to serve as Teaching Fellows for 6 courses, typically distributed across 6 consecutive semesters. Teaching Fellows are responsible for determining and fulfilling their obligations to the course in consultation with the faculty instructor, and for adhering to university and departmental requirements. Faculty are responsible for instruction in their courses, for evaluating and grading all course assignments, for ensuring that student work is returned in a timely fashion, and for submitting final grades in accordance with university deadlines.

**Qualifying Examinations**
In the first semester of the third year, all students must pass a general exam in each of two fields (US, Theory, IR, and Comparative) in order to continue in the program. Each exam requires students to write answers to questions over the course of approximately one week. Upon completion of the two written exams, students will sit for an oral exam conducted by a committee composed
of two faculty members drawn from the student’s first field and one from the second field. If, in the judgment of the examining committee, a student fails to pass a field exam, s/he may sit for a new exam in that field. If a student fails the second exam, s/he will exit the Ph.D. program and will be ineligible for further funding beyond the beginning of the subsequent semester. One may choose to complete a M.A. project and apply for a terminal M.A. degree before the end of the subsequent semester.

**Dissertation Proposal**

When a student passes both written and oral exams, he/she will then begin work on a focused 20-30 pp. "field paper" - intended to orient the dissertation project toward controversies in the relevant subfield - to be completed before the end of the term in which the student passes the general exams. This document will be supervised by an interim dissertation supervisor from the student’s primary field. This will take the form of a credit bearing directed reading course, or a targeted graduate level course taught by the likely dissertation supervisor. Students will be expected to complete a draft of the full dissertation proposal and present it to the Proseminar before the end of the second semester of the third year.

Students will submit their dissertation prospectus for consideration by the Graduate Committee by the end of the first semester of the fourth year, after having formally presented it in the Department Proseminar. The proposal must, under normal circumstances, be completed and approved before funding for the fifth year (ninth and tenth terms) will be granted.

**Dissertation Completion and Defense**

The dissertation will be completed under the supervision of an appropriate member of the department’s faculty. The dissertation committee will include the supervisor, one other department faculty member, and one faculty advisor from outside the department (at or outside of Brandeis). The student must successfully defend the dissertation at a formal, public defense conducted by the dissertation committee. The student must be registered and enrolled in the term(s) in which the dissertation is defended and submitted to the Graduate School office.

**Research Relevant Skill**

Each Ph.D. student is required to complete one of the following after passing qualifying examinations:

*Foreign language:* Students may demonstrate competency in a second language that is clearly a useful research tool in their scholarly field. The language examination will test for a reading knowledge of a foreign
language sufficient to conduct doctoral dissertation research. The exam consists of a timed written translation of a politically relevant text into English and is normally administered by University faculty and evaluated by the Department’s Graduate Committee. If, in the opinion of the student’s primary academic advisor, a native language gives a student access to primary or secondary materials that would enhance his or her scholarship, native fluency can fulfill this requirement.

**Methodology:** A credit-bearing class in statistics, qualitative methods or some other graduate level course in methods or analysis, approved by the graduate program director, and completed with a grade of B+ or better.

Students may petition to have coursework completed elsewhere applied to this requirement. However, courses taken in connection with this requirement (at Brandeis or elsewhere) may not be counted for course credit toward the Ph.D.

**Annual Progress Toward the Degree**

All students are expected to make satisfactory annual progress toward completion of the degree in eight years or less, as required by the Graduate School. Admission to graduate programs is granted for one academic year at a time. Each student’s progress toward the degree is periodically evaluated, recorded, and reported to the student in the following ways. Elements of the ongoing supervision of academic progress include:

- Faculty instructors of courses in which graduate students are enrolled are required to provide the Graduate Director with a written evaluation of the performance of each graduate student in the course. Students who receive a grade of “Incomplete” must complete outstanding coursework and secure a quality (letter) grade in accordance with university deadlines. Students may not carry more than two grades of “Incomplete” on their graduate record at any time.

  These evaluations are discussed by the Graduate Committee. Students will be informed by the Graduate Director of their status, and, if appropriate, of the actions necessary to ensure satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress will be advised of their status. Failure to make such progress may result in being dropped from the program.

  At the end of the first year, students will meet with the graduate director and any appropriate faculty members to discuss the student’s progress; determine whether the student will be allowed to continue in the program; help plan the student’s subsequent work.

All decisions on graduate student matters are made by the Graduate Committee, acting on the advice of the Graduate Director. The Graduate Director will inform each student of every such decision; students may appeal any decision to the Department Chair.
Year-By-Year Course of Study

Students should seek the advice of their academic advisor and the Graduate Director prior to registering for or dropping/adding courses.

First two years:

- Four courses (not including the Proseminar) are recommended for the first term, since no teaching is required. Language courses and audits are also encouraged.
- Reading courses are generally not offered to first-semester students, and are generally discouraged during the first year. Students may normally enroll in no more than two readings courses over the first two years.
- By the beginning of the second year, students should identify their first and second fields of study and begin preparations, through coursework and independent study, for the comprehensive exams.

Third year:

- End of the sixth semester: Dissertation prospectus presented to Proseminar and submitted to the Graduate Committee.

Fourth and fifth year:

- Research, fieldwork, and writing of dissertation.
Funding Opportunities for Graduate Students

A variety of funding opportunities are available to students in the Department of Politics and in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

GSAS Awards for Graduate Students

* Indicates award may not be combined with any other award in this listing.

Mellon Dissertation Year Fellowship*: Supports the final year of dissertation research and writing. $23,000 (12 month stipend) + $2000 research fund, for GSAS non-science ABDs in 5 or 6th year of residence. Application due date: Feb. 2 (to Brooke Harrison)

Redstone DYF*: Supports the final year of dissertation research and writing. $17,000 stipend, for GSAS non-science ABDs in 7 or 8th year of residence. Application due date: Feb. 2 (to Brooke Harrison)

University Prize Instructorship*: Supports students as they design and teach an undergraduate course in their field of research. $6,000 stipend, for GSAS doctoral students in 3rd or greater year of residence. Application due date: Mar. 16 (to Brooke Harrison)

Mellon/Sachar Dissertation Research Grants: Mellon funds research-related travel, duplication services, and other expenditures. Sachar funds help cover expenses for research abroad. Approx. $3,000 (flexible), for GSAS non-science doctoral students in their 2nd or greater year of residence. Application due date: Mar. 1 (to Brooke Harrison)

GSAS Travel Funds: Helps cover various expenses so that students may present papers, lead workshops, or serve on panels at conferences. Up to $500, to GSAS non-science/fine arts doctoral students in any year of residence. Application due date: funds dispersed throughout the year (to Linda Casey)

Master's Research Fund (master's students only): Helps cover various expenses related to a master’s project. Up to $300, to any terminal master's student. Application due date: funds dispersed throughout the year until depleted (to Brooke Harrison)

Other Departmental and University Funding Awards

Funds may be available at regular intervals from The Research Circle on Democracy and Cultural Pluralism, the Gordon Center for American Public Policy, the Crown Center for Middle East Studies and the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies. Information about each of these programs is available on the Brandeis University website.
Inter-University Cross-Registration Program

Brandeis participates in a cross-registration program with Boston College, Boston University, and Tufts University. Students are eligible to take graduate-level courses at these institutions (no more than one course per term) with the prior approval of one graduate instructor and the graduate director. Refer to the Brandeis University Bulletin for details.

Grievance and Petition Procedures

Departmental grievance procedures are governed by the GSAS Grievance Procedures set forth in the Graduate Student Handbook, that is available online at: http://www.brandeis.edu/gsas/students/student-handbook/index.html.

Disability Resources at Brandeis

At Brandeis University, a diverse body of people come together to form a cohesive community. Brandeis welcomes all qualified individuals into the University community as students, faculty, or staff members. Brandeis is committed to providing “reasonable accommodation/s” to individuals with appropriately documented physical, learning, and psychological disabilities.

A person is considered to have a disability if s/he fits within any one of these three categories:

- The person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual;
- The person has a record of such an impairment; or
- The person is regarded as having such an impairment.

“Major life activities” include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

A “reasonable accommodation” is defined as any change in the work or educational environment or the way things are customarily done which will allow an individual with a known documented disability to perform the essential functions of a position or let an otherwise qualified student receive a reasonable modification or adjustment for his/her known documented disability. All accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. Students, faculty, and staff must follow well-established procedures to obtain accommodations.

For more information regarding reasonable accommodations, contact the GSAS Disability Coordinator.