

**Graduate Handbook**  
University of Victoria  
Department of Political Science

Fall 2023

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## Degree and Registration Requirements

### MA and PhD Degree Requirements

Please refer to the University of Victoria Graduate Calendar for up to date information on requirements for the MA and PhD programme. If, after reading these requirements, you are unclear, please make an appointment to see the Graduate Advisor.

## Degree Timelines

### MA Timeline for One-Year Completion

September	Individual Consultation with Graduate Advisor
October 1 – 15	Developing a preliminary thesis
October 15 - November 1	Developing a working plan
By November 1	Working plan and thesis committee in place
December 15	Submit 5-page thesis proposal
December 16 - January 15	Completing your background research
January 16 - February 15	Expanding your thesis proposal
February 16 - April 15	Elaborating your analysis
April 16 - June 15	Preparing the final draft
June 16 - July 1	Revising the final draft
July	Preparing for thesis defense
August	Oral examination
November	Graduation!

*Note: Deadlines for the application to graduate: February 15 for Spring program completion; July 15 for Summer program completion, November 15 for Fall program completion.*

Usually students take 2 courses each semester, but may choose to take 3 courses in the fall and 1 in the spring. It is, however, important to discuss this with the graduate advisor, as graduate courses are considerably more demanding than undergraduate courses. The timing of your teaching assistant position also plays a role in determining the most appropriate program of study.

It is recommended that you complete your course work as quickly as possible so that you can focus on completing your thesis during the spring and summer months. In most seminar courses, you will be expected to write a major paper on topics within the broad limits of the course. *Where possible, try to write papers that contribute directly to your thesis work or allow you to explore an aspect of your thesis research.*

Full-time students are required to have a thesis proposal approved by their supervisory committee by May 15 of the academic year in which they entered the program. Although no formal extension is required for students who cannot meet this deadline, they must have an approved thesis proposal before they will be considered for teaching assistant positions in their second year. Students who fail to submit a thesis proposal by October 15 of their second year may be asked to withdraw from the program.

### September

New Student Orientation meeting, which includes a sign up for your individual

consultation with the Graduate Advisor. At that meeting you will finalize course selection for the year, review CAPP report and formalize supervisor.

### **October 1 - October 15: Developing a preliminary thesis proposal**

Prepare a preliminary thesis proposal (3-5 pages) in which you explain the problem you want to investigate and set out the means you will be using in the investigation. If possible, pose a hypothesis: i.e., explain what your investigation is likely to reveal, given what you know now.

The hypothesis or idea with which you start is just a preliminary formulation that helps you get oriented toward your work, and enables you to sort through what you have to do to complete the project successfully. **You should be developing your preliminary thesis proposal in consultation with your supervisor.**

### **October 15 – November 1:**

Continue developing a work plan. By November 1, students should have a completed work plan.

### **By November 1:**

Make a work plan with your supervisor (for example: thesis proposal by **January 15**; first chapter by **February 15**; second chapter by **March 15**; remaining chapters by **June 15**; thesis defense in August). You also need to have selected a thesis committee. Keep in mind that you will allow the committee four weeks to read your final manuscript before you can defend it!

### **December 15:**

Submit your 5-page thesis proposal and time-line to your supervisor and then to the Graduate Advisor. Give a copy to the graduate secretary for your student file.

### **December 16 - January 16: Completing your background research**

Having worked out what you need to read in order to understand the problem you are investigating, you will need to begin collecting material, scanning it, and identifying what you will have to read more closely.

Figuring out what you don't have to read is extremely important. You must be selective, and really zero in on the crucial material. At this time of the year, you will be trying to finish papers for your courses and to do marking in your relation to your TA assignment, if you have one.

If you are astute, you will have chosen essay topics for your courses that will give you



reason to read some of things that you need to read for your thesis. You should also have an opportunity to work out some thesis-related ideas when you write your course papers.

However busy you are, you must remember that your thesis counts for six courses, and that you should be working on it constantly. Before you begin reading or writing anything, ask yourself how the work might contribute to your thesis.

### **January 16 - February 15: Expanding your thesis proposal**

See the Graduate Studies website for other thesis resources to help prepare your thesis, including the thesis checklist and thesis formatting guidelines.

By this point, you should be ready to move from a 5 page preliminary proposal to a 25-30 page paper that explains your problem in more detail, sets out relevant analytic perspectives on the problem, and indicates how you propose to get at the truth (or at least get a bit closer to the truth) about the matter at hand. The detailed proposal should be written in such a way that you can incorporate a sizeable chunk of it into the final version of your thesis.

If you find yourself writing a proposal that encompasses six or seven chapters, this is a sign that you have not yet crystallized what you are doing. A chapter is likely to consist of a short introduction, two or three sections of substantive material, and a concluding/transitional section. A typical chapter is likely to be in the 25-30 page range. At most, you can write three such chapters, preceded by a short introduction and followed by a brief conclusion.

If you plan to do field work, you will almost certainly have to put your proposal before the University's Ethics Review Committee. You will need to allow a couple of months for this process of ethical review, so you won't be able to start your field research until mid-April or later. Keep that in mind when you develop your thesis proposal. You may decide to abandon the field research component simply because it is too difficult to do the field research in the time you have available.

### **February 16 - April 15: Elaborating your analysis**

Your proposal will set out an analytic plan for your thesis, which will tell your supervisory committee what issues you will be addressing and in which order. Try to keep to the plan. You may need to reorganize your material after you have finished writing your first draft. You may sense before you are finished that a major reorganization is necessary. (If you get to that point, you should talk to your supervisor.)

Nevertheless, it usually makes sense to continue with the original plan until you get the first draft done. Don't worry at this stage about whether it all fits together. You need to be generating material on the various issues you said you were going to address. Start with

the ones that you understand best, and about which you can write most easily. (This may mean that you start writing in the middle of Chapter Two rather than the beginning of Chapter One.)

Above all, start writing. Don't leave the writing until you have done all your research. Draft material as you go along. You may end up discarding a good deal of what you have drafted, but the drafting helps you sort out your analysis.

If you have your proposal (which serves as your draft introductory chapter) and about half the body of the thesis written by mid-April, you will be in good shape.

### **April 16 - June 15: Preparing the final draft**

This is the crunch period. You should have all your course work out of the way by mid-April. This gives you two months to focus entirely on your thesis. You ought to have been revising your work plan constantly to take account of your accomplishments (which may well be more modest than you had hoped).

You need to be very strict with yourself at this point. You have to push yourself to keep to your plan, and keep churning out more and more of your analysis. You may hate your thesis by this point. That is normal. You have to treat it as a job to do. Set yourself strict deadlines. Write out your analysis even if you know it is highly imperfect.

Keep pushing yourself until you have a manuscript that is more-or-less complete and that more-or-less makes sense. Your supervisor should be giving you comments and advice on bits and pieces of your work as you go along. This will help you to keep on track and to get through the inevitable crises that come when you think, "I don't know what to say."

Your aim is to have a manuscript that your supervisor thinks is more or less OK by mid-June. That's the sort of manuscript on which the other members of your committee will be able to comment in detail.

### **June 16 - July 1: Revising the final draft**

This is the point at which your draft thesis will be in circulation among the members of your supervisory committee. You will be receiving comments back from them. Your supervisor will be helping you to work out what to do with the various comments.

You have to focus on the essential revisions. You will probably have ideas of your own about how to revise the thesis in order to make it stronger. You may find yourself doing a great deal of re-writing at this stage. The ultimate thesis may be quite different in its argument and even in its focus from the one you set out in February. (For instance, you may decide that your original analysis of the problem was mistaken, and that a theory that you had initially discarded is actually the correct one. You may have turned up facts that

you did not anticipate finding. You may decide that what you were trying to show originally is just too difficult to demonstrate, and that your evidence and argumentation can only sustain a more modest claim. You may need to prune tangential arguments. Fair enough. That's what happens when you do research and develop a fuller understanding of the matter you are investigating.)

The draft you have in mid-June should reflect this shift, but you are likely to find that you have cobbled things together in a way that is not entirely satisfying to you or anyone else. So, be prepared to re-write your introduction, cut out sections that now seem redundant, and add material that you didn't think was necessary for your analysis.

If you have a complete draft and are getting pertinent comments from your committee members, you are likely to find that you can make extensive revisions very quickly. The writing will flow, because you finally understand what it is you have to say. You will be working very intensely at this point, but the work is likely to be quite satisfying, since things will fall into place in ways that you could only hope to happen a month or two before.

Submit your thesis to your supervisor and fill out and submit the Application to Graduate form (**Deadlines: February 15 for Spring program completion; July 15 for Summer program completion; and November 15 for Fall program completion**).

### **July: Preparing for the thesis defense**

When the members of your supervisory committee are satisfied that you have a defensible thesis, they will sign a Request for Oral Examination. Grad Studies needs a month to organize the exam and to arrange for a Chair for the Oral.

At least **20 working days prior to the oral exam** give a copy of your signed Request for Oral form to the graduate secretary, **along with a copy of your thesis (.pdf) and ethics approval form (if applicable). These can all be emailed to poligrad@uvic.ca.** Your supervisor will select an External Examiner who has not been involved in the supervision of your thesis.

Your committee members may sign off on your thesis at a time when you are still doing some final revisions; however, you will need to have the examination copy of your thesis ready for the External Examiner when the Request for Oral Examination form has been submitted.

Once a copy of your thesis goes to the External Examiner (usually sent by GARO or the graduate secretary), then you can make no further changes before the Oral Examination. You can and should take a break. You are likely to need one by this point. You will need

a few days before the Oral Examination to prepare for it, but you are likely to do better if you spend a bit of time away from your thesis and then come back to it with a fresh eye.

**August: Oral examination**

With your supervisor, plan a date in August for the oral examination when all the members of your committee will be available. Expect the exam to last two to three hours. You will make a 15 minute presentation in which you summarize your thesis, offer any thoughts that might help to contextualize it, and comment on related lines of research that could be taken up at another stage. (This may also be an opportunity to explain why you did not do something that you originally intended to do.)

There will be a first round of questioning in which each of the examiners (starting with the External Examiner and ending with your principal supervisor) poses questions in relation to your thesis and pushes you to elaborate on your ideas or defend them against possible criticisms. Expect to be engaged with each examiner for 15-20 minutes. There will then be a second, much briefer round of follow-up questions. You will then be asked to withdraw from the room (or ZOOM call if remote) while your examiners deliberate on the result.

Expect to be asked to do some revisions after the examination. You yourself may have noticed a few things you want to change. If you're lucky, the changes will all be "editorial": very minor revisions to correct grammatical errors, clarify particular statements, etc. More often, students are asked to do more substantial revisions (minor or major), but if so you will be given very specific directions about what you have to do. Only when these revisions are done to the satisfaction of the examiners will you get your degree.

**November: graduation**

The University has two graduation dates: one in June and the other in November. You are aiming for November. Good luck.

**PhD Timelines**

The PhD program takes about four years to complete following an MA degree. The first year is for coursework: five graduate courses plus a professional development seminar. In the second year, students will normally take two candidacy examinations. The student will then prepare and defend a dissertation proposal. Students should aim to have their dissertation proposal approved by the end of their second year of study. Once approved, the dissertation should take about two years to complete, though often this may take longer.

## Registration Process and Requirements

### Registration Requirements

Once you have become a graduate student, you have to be registered year round. In general, students are defined as full-time if they are enrolled in courses totaling a minimum of 3 units, or enrolled in a Candidacy Exam (693), dissertation (699), thesis (599), or co-operative education work term (800+). Students who do not fall into any of the above categories are considered part-time, unless special permission has been granted by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies to pursue 693, 699, 599, on a part-time basis.

MA students not taking any other courses in a particular term should register for POLI 599 (thesis) or POLI 598 (MRP). Since the thesis counts for 9 units, you can maintain "full-time" status as long as you are registered for it. PhD students should be registered in either POLI 693 (candidacy exams) or POLI 699 (dissertation).

Part-time study is permitted, but the MA degree must be completed within five years of the initial registration and the PhD degree within seven years from the date of first registration. Students that cannot meet these time limits must obtain a program extension before the program expiry date.

### CAPP Reports

All graduate students, including those in CSPT, must have their graduate program approved by the Graduate Advisor. A 'walk-in' session will be set up for this purpose in September. Please have the graduate secretary print a copy of your "CAPP report" and bring this with you. The CAPP reports provide a summary of academic requirements for a student's declared program. When all program requirements are complete, students are expected to review and approve their final CAPP report before applying to graduate. Please make sure you have registered in all your courses before you come for approval. This is also the time to formalize your thesis supervisor.

Your program can be changed at any time with permission from the Graduate Advisor. Although you can use My Page to register for Political Science graduate seminars, you will need special permission to register for Political Science undergraduate classes or for graduate seminars outside the Political Science Department (including CSPT seminars unless you are a CSPT student). This can be done upon arrival in September.

Students can, if they wish, arrange for permission to take the courses ahead of time by contacting their supervisor and graduate advisor, but will not be able to register until September. Course instructors, who also have to grant permission, are unlikely to agree

ahead of time as students from their own department, or undergraduate students as the case may be, have priority for registration. Once approval is given, the appropriate forms are signed by the instructor, supervisor, and graduate advisor, and given to the graduate secretary before submission to Graduate Admissions and Records, which will then register the student.

### Registration after your dissertation/thesis

After successful completion of a dissertation or thesis final oral defense, students are not permitted to be enrolled in courses in the Faculty of Graduate Studies except as indicated below:

- Registration in dissertation or thesis until required revisions are complete
- Co-op work terms as required to receive the Co-op designation for the graduate degree
- Graduate Studies Internship Program placements
- Registration in a course that may be required to complete degree requirements
- Other registration as approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>A student registered in courses other than those listed above will automatically be dropped from all such courses upon notification to the Graduate Admissions and Records Office of successful completion of the oral or comprehensive examination.

### Leaves of Absence

If you run into difficulties, the Faculty allows MA students to "temporarily withdraw" from the program for up to three terms (4 months each) within a five-year period. Students in approved one-year master's programs, such as Political Science, may take only one term of personal leave unless a second term of leave has been approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. CSPT students are, however, in a two-year program and so eligible for the three terms. PhD students are allowed six terms (4 months each) within a seven-year period. Once you have exhausted this privilege, you have to maintain your registration (and pay fees continuously). Students with exceptional circumstances that exceed these limitations should discuss the matter with their supervisor and graduate advisor as exceptions are possible depending on the circumstances.

While on leave of absence students do not pay tuition fees and supervisory processes are suspended. Students may not undertake academic or research work, nor may they use University facilities. There are four types of leaves of absence: Personal, Parental, Medical, and Compassionate.

### CSPT and Political Science

One frequent point of confusion for students emerges in regards to the relationship between CSPT and political science. When applying for the CSPT program, you apply to political science and specify CSPT (so if you sent in two applications, let the graduate secretary know – she can probably get you a refund). In the application process you are accepted to political science FIRST before your application is forwarded to CSPT.

What this means for students already in the program is that your place in the Political Science program is independent of your place in the CSPT program. If you want to leave CSPT you are not also required to leave political science. Conversely, if you'd later like to add the CSPT program, you do not have to reapply to political science.

### Additional Information

CSPT Program: <<http://www.uvic.ca/interdisciplinary/cspt/>>

Graduate Calendar

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/grad/#/content/6092db40fcc58f001bd9c610>

Graduate INTD Calendar <https://www.uvic.ca/graduate/programs/specialized-programs/individual-interdisciplinary-programs/index.php>

[Graduate Calendar: Political Science](#)

[Political Science MA Requirements](#)

[Political Science PhD Requirements](#)

### Indigenous Nationhood and Political Science

Another frequent point of confusion for students emerges in regards to the relationship between IN and political science. When applying for the IN certificate, you apply to political science and specify IN (so if you sent in two applications, let the graduate admissions know – they can probably get you a refund). In the application process you are accepted to political science FIRST before your application is forwarded to IN.

What this means for students already in the program is that your place in the Political Science program is independent of your place in the IN certificate. If you want to leave IN you are not also required to leave political science. Conversely, if you'd later like to add the IN program, you do not have to reapply to political science.

### Additional Information

IN Certificate: < <https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/intd/indigenousnationhood> >



## Coursework

### Auditing Courses

Graduate students may request permission to audit a course. It is possible to change your registration from audit to credit, or credit to audit, up to the last day to add courses for the term or session. Audited courses will not appear on the student's official transcript and will not be considered as meeting admission, prerequisite or course requirements for any graduate program.

### Courses Outside the Graduate Program

Students may register in courses which are not part of the formal requirements of their graduate program if:

- the courses will contribute to the research or provide background for the program, and
- the courses have been approved by the student's supervisor.

Faculty of Graduate Studies permission is required for all course work outside of the program area. For undergraduate courses that also have course surcharges in addition to the course fee, the surcharges will apply and will be extra to the cost of the graduate degree.

### Directed Readings

Directed Readings (POLI 590/690) courses are courses related to a topic on which the professor has particular expertise, but must be offered by a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (i.e., sessional lecturers are not eligible). It is recommended that Directed Readings relate closely to your thesis topic. If your supervisor is not teaching a graduate course he/she may be prepared to offer such a course, but be sure to consult with the person concerned well in advance.

MA students are only permitted to take one directed reading course in fulfilling their degree requirements. Although the graduate calendar does not specify how many directed readings a PhD may take, students will not normally be permitted to take more than one for degree credit.

Directed readings are often preferred by graduate students looking to focus on their areas of interest. The department, however, limits them in order to promote a wider breadth of knowledge as well as exposure to the seminar format at a graduate level. Seminars provide students with the opportunity for discussion and debate that is essential to their professional



development.

### **Elective Courses: MA**

One of the two elective courses must be a Political Science graduate seminar, either another field course or a specialized topic. The last course may be another Political Science graduate seminar, a graduate seminar in another department, a senior undergraduate course in a relevant field, or a directed reading course with a regular faculty member in Political Science. CSPT students must meet the Political Science requirements for their non-CSPT elective.

MA students are eligible to take one senior undergraduate seminar in Political Science at the 300 or 400 level. This course may be taken ‘as is’; that is, as an undergraduate course subject to the same reading and work requirements as the other students. MA students must always obtain permission in order to enroll in undergraduate courses.

Some undergraduate courses can be ‘upgraded’ to graduate level, in which case a graduate level course code and additional work would be assigned. This is typically done with a 400-level course, but in the case of a 300 level course it may be possible to upgrade it to a graduate course with the permission of the instructor. In this case, it would be taken as a directed reading. Keep in mind, however, that only one directed reading is permitted in fulfilling the MA degree requirements. Students should also be aware that if they have already taken another undergraduate course for credit, they cannot also ‘upgrade’ another undergraduate course to fulfill their degree requirements, as one elective must be a political science graduate seminar.

Other courses are cross-listed (e.g. POLI 433/533), in which case a graduate student may enroll at either the 400 or 500-level. In these cases, the graduate students registered in the 500-level version of the course will have additional readings and more onerous assignments than the undergraduates. MA students are expected to enroll in the 500 level versions as most 400-level courses have space assigned for graduate students, but can, with permission, enroll in the 400-level.

### **Elective Courses: PhD Political Science**

Elective courses must be a political science graduate seminar (another field course or a specialized topic), a graduate seminar in another department, or a directed reading course with a regular faculty member in Political Science.

PhD students are not eligible to take undergraduate courses as such for degree credit. It may, however, be possible to ‘upgrade’ an undergraduate course to a graduate course, but

it would have to be done as a directed study. They are, however, eligible to take a 500-level graduate course.

CSPT students must meet the Political Science requirements for their non-CSPT electives.

### Field Courses

The field courses are exclusively for graduate students. Some will be MA students, registered in the 500-level version of the course while others will be PhD students, registered in the 600-level version. PhD students will have additional readings and more onerous assignments, but will participate in the same seminar discussions.

In order to take a candidacy exam, PhD students must have first completed that field course. Normally, this will be done prior to studying for the exam, but in some rare cases students may be allowed to take the field course during their preparation period.

### Letter of Permission for Study Elsewhere

Students currently registered in a graduate program who wish to undertake studies at another institution for transfer credit toward their graduate degree at UVic must apply in writing to the Graduate Admission and Records Office, specifying the host institution, the exact courses of interest and their unit values. The application must be supported in writing by the supervisor. Students will be required to provide supporting information such as a calendar description or course syllabus. If permission is granted, the student must either take a leave of absence or register concurrently in a comprehensive exam, thesis, dissertation or Co-op Work Term at the University of Victoria. Students must make arrangements for an official transcript to be sent directly to the Graduate Admissions and Records Office upon completion of the course work.

### Professional Development Seminar

POLI 600 is a compulsory seminar worth 1.5 units for PhD students in Political Science that runs from September until April. This is a pass (COM) or fail course. Students are introduced to the professional aspects of the discipline including: how to write grant applications, how to teach effectively, how to design a syllabus and a CV, how to contribute to the administrative and intellectual community in their department and in political science more broadly.

Offered every second year, the professional development seminar is normally taught by the current graduate advisor. As the seminar is usually offered every other year, thus students who are intending to undertake field work should try to fulfill the requirement in the first

two years of their program.

### Out of Department Courses

MA students are eligible to take one senior level (300 or 400) undergraduate course, or a graduate seminar outside the Political Science department. PhD students may take no more than two graduate courses outside the department.

In some cases, however, a political science professor may teach a graduate seminar under the rubric of an interdisciplinary program, like Contemporary Social and Political Thought (CSPT), Indigenous Governance or Law. If you take such a course, you may ask for permission to count it as a "Political Science" seminar. The Graduate Advisor decides whether such permission is appropriate.

### Additional Information

CSPT Program: <http://www.uvic.ca/interdisciplinary/cspt/>

IN Program: <https://www.uvic.ca/hsd/igov/future-students/certificate/index.php>

## Dissertations, Examinations, Proposals, and Theses

### MRP (Major Research Paper) Requirements

The major research paper ([POLI 598](#)) is based on an independent research project, normally 40-50 pages in length. At the initiative of the student and with the approval of the supervisory committee, it may also consist of a research paper on a topic in political science completed for an external organization (e.g., employer, or a voluntary non-profit organization). The paper will be graded by the student's supervisory committee.

When you complete your coursework in April, you should turn your attention to your Major Research Paper. Your first step should be to settle on a topic or problem and a way of approaching it. Discuss these matters with your supervisor and construct a five-page proposal. Get feedback from your supervisor on what you will need to do with the plan outlined in the proposal to turn it into a successful research paper.

Typically, one of your graduate course essays can be seen as the starting point for your Major Research Paper. Imagine turning it into a paper for a scholarly journal: what needs to be done to expand upon the original research and to pursue more fully the lines of inquiry first attempted in the paper? What reading and research need to be added to develop your earlier essay into a more serious and fully realized piece of work? Discuss these matters with your supervisor, and keep in mind that you will need to do at least two drafts of the research paper in order to submit a thoughtful and polished piece of work.

## MA Thesis Requirements

When research is completed, and before the thesis is written, the student should download a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines (available through Graduate Studies). This publication specifies academic and technical requirements to ensure acceptability of the document to the University and the National Library.

A master's thesis is an original lengthy essay that demonstrates the student's understanding of, and capacity to, employ research methods appropriate to their discipline(s). It should normally include a general overview of relevant literature in the field of study, be well organized and academically written. The work may be based on body of original data produced by the student or it may be an original research exercise conducted using scholarly literature or data produced and made available by others.

In general, a master's candidate must demonstrate a command of the subject of the thesis. A thesis demonstrates that appropriate research methods have been used and appropriate methods of critical analysis supplied. It provides evidence of some new contribution to the field of existing knowledge or a new perspective on existing knowledge.

## Candidacy Examinations

Field seminars will help prepare students for candidacy written and oral examinations. Normally, students will complete a field seminar in each of the areas in which they will write a candidacy exam. IN, CSPT, and Public Policy and Governance, have slightly different requirements. Please see the Graduate Calendar for details. Although the seminars are designed to expose students to the diversity of approaches in the field and thereby to contribute to exam preparation, the field seminars are not designed to be sufficient for exam preparation. Preparation for candidacy exams is meant to go well beyond the field seminar, to include other departmental seminars and to be the focus of the student's time between the end of Spring term of their first year and end of Spring term of their second year.

The purpose of the exams is to provide all students receiving a PhD in Political Science at UVic a broad understanding of the literature and issues in the discipline, to expose students to concepts in a different area of the discipline, and to prepare students for teaching competence in their two chosen fields. The exams are thus meant to be generalist in orientation, in contrast with the specialist nature emphasized by their dissertation research and graduate course work. In general, adequate preparation for the exam will take five to six months.

Readings for the candidacy exams will be broader than the course work and will be determined according to reading lists drawn up by the faculty in the field being examined

and in consultation with the student. Students must successfully complete candidacy examinations in two of the following fields: Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Students may substitute one of these examinations for an interdisciplinary examination in Comparative Public Policy and Governance, IN, or Cultural, and Social and Political Thought. At this time, students may not take the candidacy exams offered by any other department.

Each PhD candidate must enroll in POLI 693 (Candidacy Examinations) for the duration of their preparation for their two candidacy examinations. This begins at the time a student first enrolls in the PhD program and continues until candidacy requirements have been completed. Each candidacy exam is composed of a written exam followed by an oral exam. The oral exam will follow within two weeks of the written exam. If a student fails either component of the candidacy exam, a retake of the failing exam will be allowed within two to four weeks or in the following term. If the student fails an exam and the retake, the student must leave the program.

PhD candidacy exams will be offered in the Fall and Spring of each year. *The Fall exam will be held in early October, and the Spring exam will be held in early March.* Students are required to give written notice to the graduate advisor of their intention to write. *For the October exam, notice must be received by May 1st of the previous academic term. For the March exam, notice must be received by November 1.* Within two weeks of this date, the committee for each field in which an exam is offered must decide and inform students of the content of the reading list and the makeup of the examining committee. The examining committee should consist of a minimum of three examiners and a chair. Normally, a candidate's supervisor is invited to participate in the oral exam in an ex-officio capacity, but may be invited as part of the examining committee if no other qualified examiners are available.

You can, however, delay your candidacy exam after you have given written notice of your intention to write. There is no official cut off time, but notice of your intention to delay the exam should be given four to six weeks prior to the exam. You should notify your field coordinator, the graduate secretary, the graduate advisor, and your committee members.

It's a good idea to get to know the members of your committees as this gives you the opportunity to clarify readings, discuss different interpretations, get a sense of the wider literature, and learn their viewpoints. It is also a chance for them to get to know you and your interests, which will assist them in writing your exam questions. Professors will often tailor questions to your areas of research interest if they are aware of them.

Students will be given the questions for the written portion of the exam 24 hours in

advance. It will consist of at least six questions, with students required to answer no more than four and no fewer than three. The written component of the exam will be completed in a sit-down five-hour period, or may be taken home and completed within a 72 hour period. Exams are to be written on electronic equipment that has been approved for this purpose. The oral portion of the exam will be scheduled within two weeks of the written portion. Assessment of the exam is based on both the written and oral components together. In cases where the committee has judged the exam to be failed, the student must retake both portions of the exam.

Students will be given an opportunity to make a statement at the beginning of their oral exam. There is no single approach to the exam and will vary by subfield and committee composition. In general, the oral exam is a collegial process of inquiry, but committee members have different approaches, so students should be prepared to defend their exam and to speak to the broader reading list. Fellow graduate students, faculty members (including your committee members) will know the approaches taken by the individual members of your committee and are a good source of advice to prepare your expectations.

There is no particular order for the candidacy exams (i.e., neither is the ‘primary’ field according to the department). It is up to the individual student to determine what order works best for them. Some students may elect to write the exam for which they have most recently taken the field course. Others may want to select the exam in the area they feel the most confident, or to select the one they are the most nervous about in order to get it out of the way. Discussing the process with your supervisor or senior graduate students can help alleviate fears and design an effective preparation process.

*Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations stipulate that all students must complete both exams within three years of their initial registration in the PhD program.* If you are not ready for the candidacy examination because of exceptional and extenuating circumstances, complete the Request for Extension: Candidacy form and forward it to the Dean of Graduate Studies via your graduate secretary. Review the calendar regulations regarding the implications on your program time limit before extensions are requested.

### Canadian Politics

The Canadian Politics exam is intended to provide student with a foundation in a broad range of the important studies, conversations, debates, methods, and approaches in the subfield. Your reading list will be comprised of core components, expanded sections, and a special topic based on your interests. The exam itself consists of choice of questions to answer in essay format. You will be assessed on your familiarity with the list and your ability to situate yourself in relation to its themes and debates. Sections include:

- Texts and approaches
- Political culture
- Federalism, Regionalism, and Intergovernmental Relations
- Canada in the World
- Quebec
- Government: Parliament, the Executive, and the Bureaucracy
- Parties, Elections, and Electoral Systems
- Public Policy
- Interest Groups and Social Movements
- The Charter and the Courts
- Constitutionalism
- Aboriginal Politics
- Political Economy
- Women and Gender
- Multiculturalism and the Politics of Diversity

### Comparative Politics

Comparative Politics is a vast sub-field and the exam covers a wide range of literature. The reading list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather is designed to assist students in identifying major works in the field. While you are not expected to read every page of every book, you are expected to immerse yourself in this literature in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the major theoretical traditions within this subfield, the methodological approaches, and the intellectual disputes. Please note that more details are provided on the comprehensive exam reading list itself and by visiting the field coordinator for Comparative Politics. There are eight key subject areas:

- Theory and methodology of comparative politics
- Citizenship, culture, ethnicity, identities, immigration, and nationalism
- Social movements and revolutions
- Elections, media parties, and representation
- States and institutions
- Authoritarianism, democracy, and democratization
- Comparative political economy
- Politics of development

The written exam comprises three questions: one on methodology, two from the remaining subfields that will not be known to the student in advance. In each case, the student will have a choice of question to answer.



### Comparative Public Policy and Governance

Political Science and Public Administration jointly administer the candidacy exam in Comparative Public Policy and Governance. This is a take-home exam comprised of three general questions drawn from the material covered in POLI 607 and POLI 610. Students receive the exam on a Monday morning and submit their answers the following Monday. Typically, the exam is administered at the same time as the other political science candidacy exams, but due to the need to accommodate the schedule of the School of Public Administration the timing can vary. The examining committee is comprised of faculty from both academic units.

In addition to overviews of the (comparative) public policy field, the reading list deals with a number of policy determinants, policy dynamics, and policy capacities:

- Parties, Ideologies, Culture, and Style
- Interest Intermediation: Pluralism/Corporatism/Clientilism
- Networks, Subsystems, Communities and Advocacy Coalitions
  
- Agenda Setting and Problem-Definition
- Decision-Making and Policy Formulation
- Diffusion, Emulation, and Policy Learning
  
- State Capacity and Autonomy, Neo-Institutionalism
- Policy Instruments and Policy Design
- Governance, Deliberation and Discourse

In general, the readings exclude case study literature on specific policy sectors or individual countries. The list is intended as a guide to the various conceptual, theoretical and empirical issues students are expected to address in the candidacy exam.

### Cultural, Social and Political Thought

The CSPT Candidacy Exam is intended to evaluate the student's knowledge in the interdisciplinary field of cultural, social and political thought. The broad range of this field is expressed in the CSPT Candidacy Exam Reading List. In coordination with his/her (Co-)Supervisor, the student is expected to define five problematics on which they will be examined and to identify 40 texts (books but also equivalent articles) for which they will be responsible; the Reading List provides some recently popular examples of how such choices have been made. These problematics and texts are expected to reflect the research interests of the student and show that they can offer a coherent account of their capacity to teach in this field. Although the student is expected to be able to respond to questions about all 40 texts, 15 of these texts must be identified for more specialized and extensive



engagement

The examination can take one of three formats:

- Exam questions are provided 24 hours in advance of writing, followed by a five hour written exam
- Exam questions are provided to the student with a short paper due 72 hours later
- Exam questions are provided to a student at 9 a.m. with a fully referenced, extended theory paper due precisely one week later.

### International Relations

The International Relations exam covers a diverse range of material, and is broken down into two sections. The first contains influential and exemplary texts from five substantive research fields:

- The interstate/international system
- The state/nation in IR
- War and security
- International/global political economy
- World/global politics

The second focuses on three broad categories of contemporary debate within the field:

- Metatheoretical
- The state and its others
- Normativities

The list identifies a number of core works for which students are responsible. There will be at least one examination question on these works. The remainder of the list will be comprised of a combination of mandatory and selected texts. In addition to the required texts, students are expected to select, in consultation with their committee, two of the five fields of substantive research and one broad area of contemporary debate upon which to focus. Students may also suggest up to five recently published texts that may be substituted for non-core texts on the grounds that they are more up to date or of greater scholarly significance, as well as five additional texts that address the specialized interests of the candidate.

### Political Theory

The Political Theory exam requires students to engage with a range of classic texts in (primarily Western) political thought, as well as with historical accounts of influential

traditions and key texts and themes in contemporary political theory. Students are also expected to be familiar with the main analytical, historical, and critical approaches to the study of political theory.

There are three components to the candidacy exam:

- Classics of Political Thought
- Contemporary Approaches to Political Theory
- Special Topics in Political Theory

You will answer four questions in the written exam: two out of at least three options for Classics of Political Theory and one out of at least two in each of Contemporary Approaches to Political Theory and Special Topics.

In all cases, you will work with your supervisory committee to produce an individualized reading list that captures both a broad range of texts across the field of political theory and a more specialized focus on your specific interests. Examples of the latter might include feminist thought, ecological politics, theories of justice, contract theory, democratic theory, and literatures on violence or non-violence. The process of constructing the list should already help your committee to understand the way you engage with theoretical literatures and will have a significant impact on the types of questions you receive. You will be responsible for twenty (out of twenty-five) authors in classical theory, of which you will select five for particular study. In Contemporary Approaches to Political Theory you will select twenty authors (out of twenty-five). In both cases, you are permitted to suggest five substitutions to the original list before selecting your twenty for study. In the final section, you will construct a list of at least ten readings on the special topic of your choice.

### Politics of Global Challenges

This program provides you with advanced training in theoretical and methodological approaches to addressing critical global political challenges. The stream equips students to be researchers, scholars and advocates active in advancing alternative and innovative solutions to problems of global importance.

The PGC stream is a research project-based degree and offers a focused program of study. The program is centred on four key global challenges:

1. migration and contested borders
2. political economy and development
3. (in)security and surveillance
4. democracy, diversity and human rights

You'll specialize in one of these challenges and should have a good grounding in your chosen area. Please see the [research interests of associated faculty](#) for the types of questions that might work well with these challenge areas.

The research project-based degree is intended to both train students for careers outside academe and prepare those interested in continuing on to a PhD. It is structured to be completed in a single academic year (September-July). You will also have the opportunity to apply for internship opportunities through the Centre for Global Studies, Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives or Centre for Studies in Religion and Society.

### **Comprehensive Exam Checklist**

#### **Required**

- ☐ All courses must be completed before sitting for a Comprehensive Exam
- ☐ Respond affirmative to Graduate Secretary's call for those who will write in the next comp sitting and indicate in what area.
- ☐ Meet with the field coordinator to receive a copy of the most updated version of the comp list, discuss the comp process and goals and how to study for the comp, and discuss the composition of the examining committee. If you are uncertain who the field coordinator is, please ask the Graduate Secretary.
- ☐ Meet with each committee member at least once and within a month of the committee being formed. Good questions to ask the committee members include: What is the best way to study for this exam? Any questions related to the comp material such as: Ask for feedback on answers you are thinking about to potential questions. Feedback on the definitions of key terms you have developed or debates in the literature you have identified.

#### **Best Practices**

- ☐ If possible, try to coordinate writing the same comp at the same time with other students and form a study group to share and discuss key concepts, key debates in the literature, possible questions, and possible answers to these questions.
- ☐ Preparation for the exam is designed to take approximately five months of full time study. If more time is available, such as for the October exam sitting, it is recommended to use it.
- ☐ Read all the readings on the comp list in the manner directed by the field coordinator and committee members. Follow-up on your curiosity to explore related material.
- ☐ It may be a good idea to pause regularly during your reading of the material to try to answer potential essay questions to help you see the connections between the material you are reading and develop your own analysis.
- ☐ Focus not only on knowing the material but also analyzing how the material fits within the larger debates and trends in the field. Think about where you situate yourself in these debates and why.
- ☐ Remember that the comprehensive exam aims to allow you to showcase your breadth of knowledge of the field. It is not meant to test you on your particular research topic.

## Dissertation Proposal

Within three to six months after passing the candidacy examinations, students are required to write and orally defend a dissertation proposal before their supervisory committee. The committee must consist of three members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, two of whom must be from the department of Political Science.

Normally, proposals should be between 20-30 pages, and will consist of a description of their research project, a review of the relevant literature, their original contribution to the field, and an explanation of their methodology/approach. The proposal and oral defense must be considered satisfactory before the student may proceed to the dissertation.

Upon satisfactory completion of all coursework, candidacy exams and dissertation proposal, students achieve All But Dissertation (ABD) status, and will be eligible for teaching appointments in the department. All students are required to submit and orally defend a dissertation worth 30 units of credit.

Graduate Studies provides a guide to writing thesis or project proposals that may be helpful. Additionally, some students have found POLI 605 useful in developing their thesis

proposal. This course, which focuses on political science methodology, typically assigns a draft thesis proposal for its final assignment instead of a term paper. This, however, is not intended to produce a final dissertation proposal as students will need to consult with their supervisor and, in some cases, their dissertation committee as to the final direction.

## Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation must embody original work and constitute a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field of study. It should contain evidence of broad knowledge of the relevant literature, and should demonstrate a critical understanding of the works of scholars closely related to the subject of the dissertation. Material embodied in the dissertation should, in the opinion of scholars in the field, merit publication.

The general form and style of dissertations may differ from academic unit to academic unit, but all dissertations shall be presented in a form that constitutes an integrated submission. The dissertation may include materials already published by the candidate, whether alone or in conjunction with others. Previously published materials must be integrated into the dissertation while at the same time distinguishing the student's own work from the work of other researchers. At the final oral examination, the doctoral candidate is responsible for the entire content of the dissertation. This includes those portions of co-authored papers that comprise part of the dissertation.

When research is completed, and before the dissertation is written, the student should download a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines from the website of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This publication specifies academic and technical requirements to ensure acceptability of the document to the University and the National Library. Within these guidelines, information can be found regarding thesis and dissertation basics, ethical issues and copyright considerations; scope, structure and formatting; checking your thesis or dissertation; oral examinations; final submission of your thesis or dissertation; and withholding your thesis or dissertation.

## Research Resources

### Human Research Ethics

The Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) ensures that UVic research and research occurring in academic courses involving **human participants or human biological materials** meets the ethical standards required by Canadian universities and national regulatory bodies.

If you are not sure whether your research project requires ethics approval, we urge you to contact us as soon as possible to discuss. **For graduate students in particular, failing to obtain research ethics approval could have serious implications for your thesis or dissertation defense and your ability to graduate.**

Ethics approval is required for projects that involve but are not limited to the following:

- Individual interviews
- Group discussions
- Questionnaires, surveys
- Self reflective research - autoethnographies, autobiographical narratives
- Audio recording, video taping or photographing people
- Research by students in a UVic course (course-based research)
- Observations
- Linked data
- Human biological materials: fluids, tissue, bones, cells, stem cells, remains, cadavers, embryos, fetuses, DNA/RNA or fragments of DNA/RNA
- Some forms of research conducted on the Internet
- Secondary data (information gathered for a non-research purpose to be used in research such as grades/report cards, course assignments, health records, minutes of non-public meetings, diaries)

**You must apply for and receive ethical approval before you begin your study and maintain the approval during recruitment and data collection.**

- Human Research Ethics Approval is required prior to the initiation of recruitment activities and the start of data collection phases of the study.
- Human Research Ethics Approval is granted for one year and must be renewed annually as long as there is the potential for the researchers to be in contact with the participants; whether this is for ongoing recruitment or data collection, or for the dissemination of results to participants.

Additional information includes: Overview of the Ethics Review Process; Annotated Guidelines for completing the Human Research Ethics Board Ethics Approval for Human Participation Research; Forms and Guidelines

### **Policy on inclusion of copyrighted material**

The following is for the general information of candidates who are engaged upon, or who are about to embark upon, research and preparation of a dissertation or thesis for a graduate degree in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria. It is, however, emphasized that it is not to be interpreted as legal advice. Neither the faculty nor the

university (including any faculty or staff member) can, or does, give legal advice to candidates. If legal advice is desired or required, candidates should retain the services of a solicitor.

Copyright is frequently confused with plagiarism. They are quite different. Plagiarism is the taking of the ideas, works or depictions of another and representing them or passing them off as your own. To avoid plagiarism, the source of the ideas, words or depictions must be acknowledged and proper credit given. However, any such acknowledgment does not negate a breach of copyright, which occurs upon the reproduction of the work, whether or not it is accompanied by an acknowledgment.

Copyright is breached when any person other than the owner of the copyright (or in the case of moral rights, other than the author) does anything that violates the rights of the owner (or author). Most candidates in the Faculty of Graduate Studies will be primarily concerned with the owner's right to control reproduction of the whole work or a substantial part of the work. The reference to "substantial" has both quantitative and qualitative features. Usually the qualitative feature is the most significant feature because it contains a key, crucial or attractive portion of the work. Indeed, the fact that someone wishes to reproduce it suggests that it is of some qualitative value. Beyond this there is little guidance as to what constitutes substantiality in qualitative terms. Similarly there is little guidance as to what quantitatively is a substantial amount. In an attempt to give a practical guideline, the Faculty of Graduate Studies recommends that:

- At a minimum, when more than one full page or 10% of a work is reproduced in a thesis or dissertation by quotation or otherwise, the candidate should attempt to obtain a copyright clearance or consent from the owner of that work. This is not to say that a violation of copyright cannot occur within these limits.
- Copyright clearances or consents should be obtained by the candidate for the reproduction of the whole of any map, diagram, chart, drawing, survey, questionnaire, computer code, painting, photograph, or poem in any thesis or dissertation. Care must be given that attribution is to the actual creator of the work.
- No work of any nature should be reproduced in any thesis or dissertation in any distorted or modified format without both a copyright clearance from the owner and a waiver of moral rights from the author.

Works that have been published for over 50 years from the death of the author are in the public domain and need not be dealt with in the restricted manner described above. However, care must be exercised when dealing with works reprinted in modern editions. If it appears that those modern editions contain additional editorial work or rearrangement of the original work (for instance, the inclusion of modern stage directions or added musical

arrangements), those additions may be sufficiently substantial to be the subject of an independent copyright which may not have expired.

Where it is necessary to include "the whole" or "a substantial part" of a copyrighted item, the student is advised to apply to the owner of the copyright for permission. This action may involve considerable time and should be done well in advance of the submission of the thesis/dissertation. A letter of permission must recognize your right as the author of the thesis/dissertation to have it reproduced through the library and Archives Canada and its agents.

When permission to quote is not available, the copyrighted material should not be included in the body of the thesis/dissertation, but should be added as an appendix which can be withheld from binding and microfilming. Such material should be correctly referred to within the thesis/dissertation. A letter from your supervisor acknowledging the removal of the appendix from binding and microfilming is required with your final thesis/dissertation copy(ies).

[from Graduate Studies: Ethical Issues and Copyright]



## The Department

### Graduate Studies Committees, Advisors, and Supervisors

Additional Information: Graduate Calendar

#### Graduate Studies Committee

Chaired by the Graduate Studies Adviser, this committee is responsible for tasks such as admission decisions, and curriculum deliberations. The committee also ranks applications for MA and PhD SSHRC submissions. The Grad Advisor meets twice a year with students; once in the fall term and once in the spring term.

#### Graduate Advisor

The Graduate Adviser is the formal liaison officer between the academic unit and the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The graduate advisor reviews and approves your graduate program, including special requests such as permission to take undergraduate seminars or graduate seminars outside of the program, at the beginning of your program as well as when all program requirements are complete.

S/he makes recommendations to the Faculty of Graduate Studies on the following matters: admission to graduate programs, awards administered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, changes to the student record including degree program, supervisory committee and registration. The Graduate Studies Adviser must also sign requests for oral examination.

#### Primary Academic Supervisor

Students in all doctoral and master's programs will have a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies assigned as primary academic supervisor, faculty adviser or mentor to counsel the student in academic matters. The primary academic supervisor must be from the academic unit offering the degree program.

In particular, the primary academic supervisor must be aware of Calendar and Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations and provide guidance to the student on the nature of research, the standards expected, the adequacy of progress and the quality of work. See the document "Responsibilities in the Supervisory Relationship" on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website for more information.

The primary academic supervisor should maintain contact with the student through mutually agreed upon regular meetings, and be accessible to the student to give advice and constructive criticism. Supervisors who expect to be absent from the University for an extended period of time are responsible for making suitable arrangements with the student

and the academic unit's Graduate Studies Adviser for the continued supervision of the student or for requesting the academic unit to nominate another supervisor. Such absences and the resulting arrangements must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

### Co-Supervisor

One co-supervisor, in addition to the primary academic supervisor, may be designated in cases where the level of supervision and/or support to be provided by the co-supervisor is greater than normally expected from regular members of a supervisory committee. The co-supervisor is nominated by the academic unit of the student and must be a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Co-supervision is limited to one primary supervisor and one additional co-supervisor.

### Supervisory Committees

Students in all doctoral programs and students in thesis and project-based masters' will have a supervisory committee nominated by the academic unit and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The academic supervisor will facilitate all activities of the supervisory committee. All members of a supervisory committee must be on the Faculty of Graduate Studies membership list or be specifically approved by the Dean.

Within the first session of attendance in a graduate degree program, a primary supervisor must be nominated. Unless otherwise specified, the remainder of the prescribed supervisory committee will be nominated and names forwarded to the Graduate Secretary by the graduate adviser within two sessions of the first registration in the thesis, project or dissertation.

The duties of the committee include: recommending a program of study chosen in conformity with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and academic unit's regulations; supervision of the project, thesis or dissertation; participation in a final oral examination when the program prescribes such an examination. The committee may conduct other examinations, and will recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies whether or not a degree be awarded to a candidate. See the document "Responsibilities in the Supervisory Relationship" on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website for more information.

### Composition of the Supervisory Committee: MA

All members of the Master's supervisory committee must be on the Faculty of Graduate Studies membership list or be specifically approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. MA students in Political Science are required to have at least one member of their committee from their home department. The supervisory committee consists of a minimum of two

members, one of whom is the primary supervisor:

- Member #1: The primary supervisor — must be from the home academic unit
- Member #2: May come from inside or outside the home department; May be a co-supervisor

For CSPT students, one member must be associated with political science and at least two members of the examining committee must be drawn from the faculty members affiliated with the CSPT program.

- Member #1: The primary supervisor must be from CSPT and Political Science
- Member #2: May be a co-supervisor
- Member #3: Not required unless the second committee member is not affiliated with CSPT, in which case a second CSPT member is required

Although MA committees are only required to have two members, if a student has a supervisor from outside CSPT this will necessitate a larger committee. A student may have a supervisor from outside CSPT provided that there is a CSPT co-supervisor and a third committee member also from CSPT.

### Composition of the Supervisory Committee: PhD

All members of the Doctoral supervisory committee must be on the Faculty of Graduate Studies membership list or be specifically approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The supervisory committee must have at least three members, one of whom is the primary supervisor. Another may be a co-supervisor. One of the three members must be from outside the home department.

- Member #1: The primary supervisor must be from the home academic unit
- Member #2: Inside or outside the home academic unit; May be a co-supervisor
- Member #3: A committee member from inside or outside the home department

For CSPT students, at least two members of the examining committee must be affiliated with the CSPT program. Students must have a supervisor from the CSPT program. A student may, however, have a co-supervisor from outside CSPT provided that there is a CSPT co-supervisor and a third committee member also from CSPT.

- Member #1: The primary supervisor must be from CSPT and Political Science
- Member #2: A committee member from CSPT and/or Political Science; May be a co-supervisor.
- Member #3: A committee member from CSPT and/or Political Science; May come from outside these departments providing the other committee members are each

from both CSPT and Political Science

## Department Administrative Officers

Although they may have additional duties, the following provides an overview of the administrative responsibilities of the department staff in relation to graduate students.

### Department Chair

[chairpol@uvic.ca](mailto:chairpol@uvic.ca)

The Chair is the chief executive officer of a department created by Senate. The Chair has primary responsibility for the academic leadership of a department including particularly the encouragement of excellence in teaching and research within the Department and for all administrative decisions within the Chair's jurisdiction. The Chair may delegate some duties to committees established in the Department or to other faculty members with administrative responsibilities.

The Chair manages the department, which includes allocating teaching responsibilities, making recommendations to the Dean for the career progress (tenure and promotion) of faculty, and addressing matters of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism). He/She is also responsible for the department's budget. The Graduate Advisor is delegated responsibility for the graduate program and students should consult with the Advisor about matters having to do with their programs. The graduate advisor will sometimes direct matters to the chair's attention but usually, in the first instance, students consult with the grad advisor.

### Graduate Secretary

[poligrad@uvic.ca](mailto:poligrad@uvic.ca)

The graduate secretary coordinates all matters pertaining to the graduate program and graduate students. Responsibilities include: coordinating the TA hiring process, signs out departmental equipment, books A357 and A318, distributes and collects keys, coordinating graduate events, graduate student recruitment, and coordinating TA evaluations.

### Administrative Officer

[poliao@uvic.ca](mailto:poliao@uvic.ca)

The administrative officer is responsible for sessional postings and appointments, and overseeing the department website.

### Department Secretary

[polisec@uvic.ca](mailto:polisec@uvic.ca)

The departmental secretary is responsible for graduate travel grants, coordinates textbook and course pack orders, processes graduate student financial support, processes RA appointment forms, and updates to the website.

## Responsibilities in the Supervisory Relationship Policy

The Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies is dedicated to the promotion of effective graduate teaching/learning/supervisory experiences for graduate faculty, students, graduate advisors, and graduate secretaries. Effective supervision is a joint effort and partnership of the supervisory unit, the supervisory committee members, the student, the graduate advisor and the graduate secretary. This document is designed to help to clarify the principles and policies for best practices in graduate supervision. Policies and procedures generated by academic units are required to be consistent with those established by the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

### Responsibilities of the Academic Supervisor

The academic supervisor is a mentor and advisor who develops a professional, interpersonal relationship with the graduate student that is conducive to scholarly activities and intellectual enhancement.

Mentoring involves a developmental and supportive relationship. The mentoring relationship is an interactive process between individuals within the supervisory mandate and incorporates interpersonal development, career and educational development and professional socialization functions.

The academic supervisor is directly responsible for the supervision of the student's program. In this capacity, the supervisor assists the student in planning the program, ensures that the student is aware of all program requirements, degree regulations, and general regulations of the academic unit, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the university, and external granting agencies. The academic supervisor provides counsel for all aspects of the program, and stays informed of the student's scholarly activities and progress.

#### **1.0 The academic supervisor has responsibilities related to overseeing the student's program:**

- 1.1 to assist the student in forming a supervisory committee;
- 1.2 to chair meetings of the committee as needed and, if necessary, arbitrate decisions of the committee;
- 1.3 to be aware of the rules and procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the university and relevant external agencies, and to advise the student of the responsibility to be aware of them as well;

- 1.4 to be aware of the rules and procedures of the academic unit regarding the supervisory process, documentation, and communication of academic progress, and to make the student aware of them as well;
- 1.5 to work in accordance with the academic unit's procedures to document and communicate the student's academic progress;
- 1.6 to be aware of the standards to which a major paper, thesis, dissertation or creative project must conform and to make the student aware of them as well;
- 1.7 to maintain contact with the student in accordance with the academic unit's procedures through mutually agreed upon regular meetings and to be reasonably available for consultation as needed;
- 1.8 to help in selecting appropriate course work for the program and also involve the supervisory committee when appropriate in the student's program;
- 1.9 to inform the student and direct them to source material on the Tri-Council Guidelines for Ethical Research in Humans and ensure that, where appropriate, student research or academic proposals involving human subjects have been submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee for approval before the commencement of the research project;
- 1.10 to ensure that, where necessary, student research proposals have received approval before implementation from the appropriate committee reporting to the vice-president research. Examples include, but are not limited to, the Animal Care Committee, Hazardous Materials Committee, and Biosafety Committee;
- 1.11 to assist the student in negotiating a realistic timetable for the completion of the various requirements of the program of study;
- 1.12 to thoroughly examine the work submitted by the student and to make timely and constructive written comments for improvement on a schedule negotiated with the student;
- 1.13 to determine whether or not a draft of a major paper, thesis, dissertation or creative project is ready for submission to the supervisory committee. If a draft is not to be submitted, to provide to the student reasons in writing;
- 1.14 to make satisfactory arrangements for supervision of the student if the supervisor is to be away for more than three months and this absence is

deemed detrimental to the student's progress. An interim supervisor is to be arranged by the supervisor and student in consultation, and the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies informed in writing. If the absence is extended, a replacement is to be found by the supervisor leaving;

- 1.15 to work within the academic unit's candidacy structure and with the academic unit's graduate advisor and/or graduate secretary in initiating the steps required in setting up candidacy examinations. The student should be consulted regarding the scheduling of such exams and expectations (which may or may not be negotiable) and times are to be communicated in writing;
- 1.16 when appropriate, to direct the student to the Office of Research Administration for advice regarding Intellectual Property; and
- 1.17 to encourage and assist the student to attend conferences and meetings in his/her field of study.

## **2.0 The academic supervisor has responsibilities related to the basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism:**

- 2.1 to not withdraw monetary support without reason and due notice in writing and to stipulate a particular length of time before withdrawal of money;
- 2.2 to be aware of situations of potential conflict of interest or roles and conflict of commitment and to deal with them according to official university guidelines;
- 2.3 to acknowledge contributions of the student in published material;
- 2.4 to recommend that the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies withdraw a student when the supervisor, in consultation with the supervisory committee, the head of the academic unit and the graduate advisor has reasonable grounds to believe academic progress is not being made and continued supervision will not lead to the satisfactory completion of degree requirements by the student;
- 2.5 to withdraw from supervising a student when the supervisor and student, in consultation with the supervisory committee, the head of the academic unit and the graduate advisor are unable to resolve interpersonal conflicts which are impeding satisfactory academic progress toward degree requirements. The supervisor must give reasonable notice in writing of the withdrawal of supervision to the student, the graduate advisor and the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies; and to normally remain as supervisor until another supervisor is in place or the student is withdrawn;



- 2.6 the appointment of a replacement supervisor is expected to be negotiated by the graduate advisor, the student, and the replacement supervisor in consultation with the members of the supervisory committee;
- 2.7 It is unprofessional for a withdrawing supervisor or for a student whose supervisor has withdrawn to engage in personal recriminations related to the termination of the supervisory relationship.

### Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee

Each student has a supervisory committee consisting of the academic supervisor and from one to three additional members depending on the student's program. Although the academic supervisor serves as the student's major advisor, committee members are expected to be involved in the student's program in accordance with the academic unit's procedures and to be available for consultation with the student in accordance with those procedures.

#### **3.0 The supervisory committee has responsibilities related to overseeing the student's program:**

- 3.1 to be aware of the rules and procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the university, and external granting agencies and to advise the student of them;
- 3.2 to recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies a program that has been approved by all members of the committee, including the student;
- 3.3 to, in accordance with the academic unit's supervisory procedures, participate in the evaluation of the proposed work plan;
- 3.4 to ensure that the student is aware of normal expectations concerning the length, quality, style, and standard presentation of the paper, thesis, dissertation or creative project;
- 3.5 to, in accordance with the academic unit's supervisory procedures, negotiate and guide the student in the implementation of the work plan, and to evaluate the progress of the student's work;
- 3.6 to aid in the arbitration of problems which arise between the student and the supervisor;
- 3.7 to evaluate drafts of the thesis, dissertation or creative project in accordance with the academic unit's supervisory procedures;

3.8 to serve as the core of the examining committee.

**4.0 Supervisory committee members have responsibilities related to the basic principles of scholarly integrity and professionalism:**

- 4.1 to withdraw from being on a student's committee when, in consultation with the entire supervisory committee, the head of the academic unit and the graduate advisor, the student and committee member are unable to resolve interpersonal conflicts which are impeding satisfactory academic progress and completion of the degree. The committee member must give reasonable notice in writing of the withdrawal from the committee to the student, the graduate advisor and the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The committee member must, in this case, negotiate a change of membership in accordance with this section and so as to minimize to the extent possible the negative impact of the change on the student's program; and normally to remain on the committee until another committee member is in place or the student is withdrawn;
- 4.2 to work with the supervisor, other committee members and the student to find a replacement in order to minimize to the extent possible any negative impact on the student's program.
- 4.3 It is unprofessional for a withdrawing committee member or for a student whose committee member has withdrawn to engage in personal recriminations related to the termination of the supervisory relationship. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **Responsibilities of the Dean of the Faculty Graduate Studies**

**5.0** In the case of alleged non-compliance with these supervisory guidelines by an academic supervisor or supervisory committee member, the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies has the following responsibilities:

- 5.1 to request a written report from the person making the allegation;
- 5.2 to review the written report of noncompliance;
- 5.3 to provide an opportunity for a consultative process with the parties involved;
- 5.4 where, in the opinion of the dean, a report of noncompliance constitutes "misconduct" as that term is defined in the university's Policy on Scholarly Integrity, the dean may make a complaint under the Policy on Scholarly Integrity and the report shall thereafter be dealt with in accordance with that

Policy;

- 5.5 where, in the opinion of the dean, a report of noncompliance does not constitute “misconduct” as that term is defined in the university's Policy on Scholarly Integrity or does not warrant invoking the university's Policy on Scholarly Integrity, the dean shall forward a copy of the report to the student's academic supervisor and the members of the student's supervisory committee with an invitation to send a response to the dean; the dean may also, when appropriate, forward a copy of the report to the student.
- 5.6 After reviewing any responses to the report, the dean may
  - a. meet with the person who made the report, the student's academic supervisor and the student's supervisory committee either together or separately to discuss the report and the responses to the report for the purpose of:
    - i. seeking a resolution of any conflicts among the parties;
    - ii. discussing methods of compliance in the future;
    - iii. proposing education and remedial strategies for particular parties.
  - b. Where the dean is satisfied that the matter can be satisfactorily dealt with in writing, the dean shall send a letter to the person who made the report and all persons to whom a copy of the report was sent.
  - c. Where a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached in this manner the dean may refer the issue to the Peer Review of Supervisory Practices Committee or may initiate procedures under section 56 of the Framework Agreement.

### Responsibilities of the Student

In entering a graduate degree program, a graduate student is making a commitment to devote the time and energy necessary to complete the program. The supervisory committee has the right to expect reasonable effort, initiative, respect and receptiveness to suggestions and criticisms. The student must accept the rules, procedures and standards in place in the program at the University of Victoria and is expected to check the university calendar and academic unit documents for regulations regarding academic and non- academic matters. The student has a right to be present and participate in meetings of the supervisory committee concerning the student's program requirements and may initiate and negotiate changes to the program and committee membership in full consultation with the committee and without prejudice due to changes requested.

#### 6.0 Graduate students have the following responsibilities:

- 6.1 to make a commitment and to show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue and complete the research or creative project successfully;
- 6.2 to develop, in conjunction with the supervisor, a plan and a timetable for completion of all stages of the degree program, and to adhere to a schedule to meet appropriate deadlines;
- 6.3 to maintain contact with the supervisor through mutually agreed upon regular communication and be reasonably available for consultation as needed;
- 6.4 to maintain registration throughout the program and (for international students) to ensure that student visas and (where applicable) employment authorization documents are kept up to date. To inform the supervisor of any temporary withdrawal from the program and reasons for the absence;
- 6.5 to keep the supervisor, the graduate advisor and the Graduate Admissions and Records Office informed on how the student can be contacted;
- 6.6 to give serious consideration to and respond professionally to the advice and criticisms received from the supervisor and other members of the supervisory committee;
- 6.7 to pay attention to the need to maintain a workplace which is tidy, safe and healthy and where each individual shows tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- 6.8 to be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources provided by the supervisor and by the University, and to assist in obtaining additional resources for the research or for other group members where applicable and possible;
- 6.9 to conform to university, faculty, and program requirements and to consult with the supervisor, members of the supervisory committee, the graduate advisor of the program, the graduate secretary of the program, and the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies as needed.
- 6.10 to recognize that the supervisor and other members of the supervisory committee may have other teaching, research and service obligations, which may preclude immediate responses;
- 6.11 to meet the relevant performance standards and deadlines of funding organizations to the extent possible when financing has been provided under a contract or grant;

- 6.12 to conform to professional standards of honesty in order to assure academic integrity and professionalism. This includes, but is not limited to, acknowledging assistance, material and/or data provided by others;
- 6.13 to terminate the work and clean up the workspace, leaving the place to another student, when program requirements have been met;
- 6.14 to return borrowed materials to the supervisor, academic unit, library or reading room etc. when the academic work has been concluded or when return is requested;
- 6.15 to identify the contributions of supervisors or committee members in publications as well as identifying fellowship or grant support for research in publications; and
- 6.16 to address situations that are not working. Students are encouraged to deal directly with the supervisor and supervisory committee so that dissatisfactions, issues, and conflicts can be resolved. If for any reason the situation cannot be resolved, the student may consult with the graduate advisor, or the head of the academic unit, or take counsel from the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies on how to proceed.



## Teaching and Research Positions

### Teaching Assistantships

There are two types of teaching assistantships available in Political Science: Teaching Assistant (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses) and Grading Positions (3<sup>rd</sup> year courses). Teaching assistant positions (approximately 124 hours) involve tutorials, holding office hours, and grading student essays and exams. Some professors may also require attendance at lectures. Grading positions, in contrast, have fewer hours (typically 30-40) with responsibilities limited to grading and assisting the professor.

The department posts the Winter and Spring term teaching assistant positions the preceding summer, with the Summer term positions posted in late winter/early spring. There are typically very few positions in the summer. Occasionally, positions may become available due to increased enrollment or last minute changes. In all cases, you must apply to be considered for positions. Although you must indicate your preferred courses, you will also be considered for other courses depended on your experience.

*Note:* Second year MA students will only be considered for teaching assistant positions provided that the department has a copy of their thesis proposal outline and their supervisor provides a memo indicating satisfactory progress.

The Political Science Department appoints TAs (Specialist Instructional (CUPE 4163) positions according to the Appointment Priority Policy – Variance 1.

Priority Group	Level
Masters Year 1 and Phd Year 1. PhD years 2 and 3 (where previously appointed to a bargaining unit)	1
Where previously appointed to a bargaining unit position, Masters Year 2 and PhD Year 4 or 5	2
Other graduate students (in other years, not previously appointed, or from other departments)	3
Undergraduates	4
Others/non-students	5

For more information, the full [collective agreement](#) can be read online.

The grading-only positions are advertised shortly before the term begins and clearly specify the available courses. These positions are not filled according to the Appointment Priority Policy. Students must apply to be considered for the positions. Although to they may be awarded to any level of graduate student, PhD students often receive preference.

Student may also apply for positions in other departments in areas related to their interests. In the past programs such as Social Justice Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Continuing Studies have sought outside TAs. Students are also welcome to apply to positions at other universities, particularly those with marking positions that do not require you to be on site.

From time to time, problems arise between professors and their teaching assistants. The department recommends that you first discuss the matter with the Graduate Advisor who can facilitate a resolution of the matter. This is not, however, the only means of resolving issues. You have the right to contact your CUPE representative for advice or representation and, if you prefer, you can choose to use their process for dispute resolution. Each department has graduate student shop stewards available to help you.

## Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 4163

[Office4163@email.com](mailto:Office4163@email.com)

Phone: 250-472-4778

Technology Enterprise Facility, Room 2IT/2I9

[www.facebook.com/UVicTAs](https://www.facebook.com/UVicTAs)

[www.cupe4163.ca](http://www.cupe4163.ca)

Dear Teaching/Academic Assistant,

In your employment role as a teaching/academic assistant, you are automatically a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 4163. Welcome to your Union!

There are approximately 1500 members in our local, and we estimate these members perform two-thirds of the teaching at UVic. As a part of CUPE, local 4163 is able to draw on the financial, legal, and bargaining strength of the largest public sector union in Canada.

A current copy of the collective agreement, governing your rights and responsibilities as a worker, including pay scales, can be found online at [www.cupe4163.ca](http://www.cupe4163.ca). This agreement covers important information related to your employment including appointment priorities, funding for conferences, discrimination and harassment, representation at times of grievance or discipline, and many other fundamental workers' rights.

A union representative will visit your department in September to provide information regarding your contract. Attendance is mandatory, and you will be paid for your time. If you are unable to attend your orientation please contact us to schedule an alternate time.

As the members are the union, we strongly encourage you to get involved to help keep our organization strong. Some of the opportunities for involvement include: servicing as a shop steward for your department, joining the mobilization committee, or running for a position



on the executive board. CUPE will gladly pay for you to take workshops to gain or develop skills if you lack experience.

General membership meetings are held in October and March of each year. Please attend these meetings to vote on important issues and select leadership.

Please contact the CUPE 4163 office with any questions, concerns, or ideas. We have resources and a group of people committed to the union that will be happy to work with you.

In Solidarity,

Greg Melnechuk  
President CUPE 4163

## Research Assistantships

Many professors have funding for research assistantship, but these positions may or may not be advertised. Most often, priority is given to a professor's own students. Students should discuss potential RA work with their supervisor, but it is also recommended that they contact professors whose work is relevant to their own interests. Some professors, for instance, may have substantial funding but few graduate students to supervise or vice versa. Obtaining an RA position, in many instances, requires initiative on the part of the student.

*Tip:* Professors often choose students that they already have a relationship with or that have been recommended by a colleague. Those recommendations, or a caution against hiring a student, are often based on a professor's experience with you as a TA.

## Sessional Appointments

The department has committed to offering Advanced PhD students the opportunity to teach an undergraduate course before they graduate. In order to be considered, however, the PhD student must have All But the Dissertation (ABD) status. At this time, although there is technically no restriction on the number of sessional appointments a student may hold, the department is only offering one appointment per student unless exceptional circumstances apply, as they do not have sufficient resources to offer all students multiple opportunities. Students, however, may apply to positions at other universities.

Sessional appointments may be at any level of undergraduate instruction and in any of the three academic terms. PhD students should, therefore, consider carefully not only which courses are the most suitable, but also the timing if they intend to undertake field research. The application process for the next academic year happens in the fall of the previous year (e.g., in Fall 2022 for 2023-2024).

## University 101

University 101 is a program that offers FREE, non-credit, academic courses that will engage students to a wide range of university topics. The goal is to provide introductory academic courses to people whose economic and social circumstances normally pose obstacles to university education.

There are two courses offered: University 101 (Humanities) and 102 (Social Sciences). Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30-8:30 pm. Students will be given a meal each class. Bus fare and child care subsidies will be provided where needed. All course materials will be provided.

This is a volunteer-based program: professors volunteer to lead classes in a wide range of topics, and graduate students volunteer their time as Teaching Assistants to facilitate small discussion groups, lead tutorials, and assist students with readings and assignments. Preference is for Teaching Assistants who can commit to full-time volunteer positions (attending every week) or half-time volunteer positions (attending every other week) for at least one term. Teaching Assistants will receive training in facilitation, communication, and problem solving.

## Teaching Assistant Consultant

The Teaching Assistant Consultant (TAC) Program positions TA mentors in most departments throughout campus. The TACs develop discipline-specific seminars designed for the TAs in the departments they are responsible for, taught in the fall or over the academic year that cover a range of practical topics, tips, approaches and issues most pertinent to TAs at UVic and complemented by supporting materials.

The TA Consultants (TACs) are typically senior graduate students with considerable teaching experience and demonstrated teaching excellence. The TAC's primary role is to facilitate the professional development of TAs in his/her department(s), assisting them to be effective teachers, primarily by offering a discipline-specific TA seminar (or series of workshops), as well as helping with one-on-one questions/consultations and providing advice and referral to appropriate campus resources. Training, support, and resources are provided to fulfill this role. The TAC may also provide additional resources through a CourseSpace module.

## Teaching Resources

### Bibliography

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## Counseling Services

**Counseling for Studying and Learning:** <sup>[L]</sup><sup>[SEP]</sup>Individual counseling is available to help students develop and refine their ways of learning, as well as to manage the difficulties that arise in adjusting to university demands. <sup>[L]</sup><sup>[SEP]</sup>Counseling Services offers courses and activities to help students develop the specific skills needed to succeed in their studies, including:

**Study Solutions** in the C. W. Lui Learning <sup>[L]</sup><sup>[SEP]</sup>Commons: The Learning Skills Program provides services at our satellite offices in the C. W. Lui Learning Commons on the main floor of the Mearns Centre for Learning. See our website for hours of operation.

**Learning Skills Course:** This non-credit course is offered in September and January. It is designed to help students develop better techniques for reading, listening, note making, organizing and learning material, problem solving, and writing essays and exams.

**Workshops:** During the Fall and Spring terms, workshops are offered by request on topics such as Time Management, Reading Efficiency, Exam Writing, Note Making, Essay Writing and Class Participation/Public Speaking.

**University Learning Skills Course for New Students:** This special version of the Learning Skills Course is offered in August. It helps new and mature students cope with the transition to university learning. Contact the Division of Continuing Studies for dates and times.

## Online Resources

### Policy Manuals

- **Instructors Guide to Working with TAs** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **UVic TA Manual** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Overview of Primary TA Responsibilities** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Poli Sci Department Information for Instructors on Grading and Assignments** (via CourseSpace – Political Science TAs)
- **The Semi-Official Poli Sci TA Manual** (via CourseSpace – Political Science TAs)

### Additional Resources

- **Academic Integrity** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Communication Strategies for International Graduate Students** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Culturally Diverse Learners** (Thompson Rivers University, (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Formative Feedback for Teaching Assistants** (via Learning and Teaching

Centre)

- **International Teaching Assistant Resources** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Library Guidance for International Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants** (via UVic Library Subject Guides)
- **Online Workshops for Teaching and Learning for Faculty and TAs** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **TA Advice: Video** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **TA Tip Sheets (via Learning and Teaching Centre):** Grading Papers; Creating a Community in your Classroom; Encouraging Learning in the Classroom; How to Get Students Actively Engaged; Leading Discussion Groups; Icebreakers; Managing your Time; etc.
- **Graduate Student Instructor Teaching & Resource Centre (Berkley):** Includes guides on Pre-semester Preparation; Teaching Discussion Sections; Teaching Reading & Composition; Evaluating & Improving Your Teaching; Working with Student Writing; Teaching Critical Reading; Academic Misconduct: Cheating, Plagiarism, & Other Forms; Teaching with Technology
- **Teaching Resources** (via Learning and Teaching Centre)
- **Teaching Assistant Consultant CourseSpace Module** (Political Science TAs)

Additional Resources:

- **H-Teachpol:** Teaching political Science (post-secondary)
- **PSRT-L:** H-Net/APSA Political Science Teaching and Research

## TA and Graduate Student Professional Development Program

The TA and Graduate Student Professional Development Program offers a range of training and professional development options for all graduate students on campus to help them prepare for their role as future faculty, or to provide valuable transferable skills. New TAs will most likely want to attend the TA Conferences that take place in September and January, and workshops that take place each month. Experienced TAs and senior PhD graduate students may want to take part in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LATHE) program, which leads to a certificate, and prepares graduate students to teach effectively in higher education in order to compete in the academic job market. All workshops and programs are available at no cost, but we appreciate prior registration so that we have enough supplies and refreshments for those attending.

To further assist you with your academic professional development, we have provided links to other resources available to you, such as TA Tip Sheets, TA Manuals and a website on Academic Integrity.

### The Learning and Teaching Centre

The Learning and Teaching Centre's mission at the University of Victoria is to inspire, support and promote excellence in learning and teaching university-wide in order to enhance the educational experience for everyone. Core activities include:

- Academic unit program curriculum design/re-design and learning outcomes development
- Support for instructors and faculty at all career levels
- Professional development for TAs and graduate students
- Innovative instructional methods
- Advocacy for fair, effective, transparent and developmentally-focused teaching assessment for instructors, and learning assessment for students
- Administration of the Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards (JCURA), the Writing Centre, the Math and Stats Assistance Centre and a variety of grants for instructional improvement

### The Mathematics and Statistics Assistance Centres

Whether you are a Math wiz or a student struggling with a required math course for your major, the Mathematics and Statistics Assistance Centre is available to enhance and support your learning in the mathematical sciences. At the Centre you will find free, high quality, one-on-one drop-in support for all UVic first and second year Mathematics and Statistics courses. The Centre hosts a team of skilled graduate and undergraduate student tutors ready to help you on a first-come-first-served basis.

Schedules for each term, along with additional information about the Centre may be found at <https://www.uvic.ca/science/math-statistics/current-students/undergraduate/msac/index.php>

### The Centre for Academic Communication

Learning Commons McPherson Library

The Centre for Academic Communication supports all UVic graduate and undergraduate students with academic expectations, reading support, writing support, and speaking support. Our tutors are experienced writers trained to assist students with all aspects of academic writing (pre-writing, revision, thesis construction, grant applications, and so on). In order to help students develop these skills, tutors do not edit or proofread papers. Instead, TWC focuses on the writer not the writing. We provide one-on-one tutorials and workshops that address common issues in academic writing.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### The Most Important Question

**Q: If I'm having problems, whom do I talk to about them?**

A: The answer depends on the problem, but in general your supervisor, the graduate advisor, or the graduate secretary should be able to address most issues including all matters covered in this handbook. Your supervisor should be able to give you direction in academic areas, while the graduate secretary, who coordinates all matters pertaining to the graduate program and graduate students, or the graduate advisor are likely the best sources to address technical problems. The Department Chair, in general, will not be able to assist you as the graduate advisor has been delegated the responsibility for the graduate program. In some cases, however, the graduate advisor will direct matters to the chair's attention.

This handbook contains a copy of the Responsibilities in the Supervisory Relationship Policy, which includes the responsibilities of the academic supervisor, the supervisory committee, the dean of Graduate Studies, and the student. Reading through it should help students develop a constructive relationship with their supervisor.

### Candidacy Exams

**Q: Do I need to complete all my coursework before proceeding to the candidacy exams?**

A: Yes, with at least a B+

**Q: Do I need to take the field seminar before the candidacy exam?**

A: Yes, but in some cases you may be permitted to take the course concurrently with your exam preparation although this is not recommended.

**Q: How long does it take to prepare for the candidacy exam?**

A: Five to six months.

**Q: Can I take a candidacy exam outside of political science?**

A: Currently Political Science students can only take exams in Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Students may substitute one of these examinations for an interdisciplinary examination in Comparative Public Policy and Governance or Cultural, and Social and Political Thought.

**Q: What happens if I fail the exam?**

A: If a student fails either component of the candidacy exam, a retake of the failing exam will be allowed within two to four weeks or in the following term. If the student fails an exam and the retake, the student must leave the program.

**Q: When are the candidacy exams offered?**

A: The exams are offered in early October and early March of each year.



**Q: What will the candidacy exam look like?**

A: Each section's exam is unique. This handbook contains some general information, but students should consult with the field head for more information. Talking to students who have already passed that exam can also help you to understand the process and develop study strategies.

**Q: Can I cancel an exam after I indicated I would write it?**

A: There is no official cut off time, but notice of your intention to delay the exam should be given four to six weeks prior to the exam. You should notify your field coordinator, the graduate secretary, the graduate advisor, and your committee members.

**Q: How does the written exam work?**

A: Students are given the questions for the written portion of the exam 24 hours in advance, unless they opt for the take-home exam. The format will vary from subfield to subfield, but it will consist of at least six questions, with students required to answer no more than four and no fewer than three.

**Q: How does the oral exam work?**

A: The oral portion of the exam will be scheduled within two weeks of the written portion. The process will vary according to the committee. Often it takes the form relatively collegial questioning on aspects of your questions (e.g., clarification, more information, other approaches, etc.), but some members may take a more demanding approach and students should be prepared to speak to their exam and the reading list.

**Q: How long do I have to complete the exams?**

A: Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations stipulate that all students must complete both exams within three years of their initial registration in the PhD program. Extensions can be obtained for extenuating circumstances.

**Coursework****Q: Can I audit a course?**

A: Yes, with permission from the course instructor you may register to audit a course. You may also change your registration from audit to credit or credit to audit up until the last day of the term to add courses.

**Q: Can I take courses not part of my degree requirements?**

A: Yes, provided that the course contributes to your research or degree program in some manner (e.g., language courses) and you have your supervisor's permission.

**Q: Can I use a directed reading to fulfill my degree requirements?**

A: Yes. Both MA and PhD students may only take one to fulfill their degree requirements.



**Q: Can I register for courses at another university?**

A: Yes, but it requires special permission.

**Q: How often is the professional development seminar offered?**

A: Every other year. Students who are intending to undertake fieldwork should try to fulfill the requirement in the first two years of their program.

**Q: Can I take an undergraduate course for degree credit?**

A: Yes, if you are in an MA program and have the required permission. Where possible, you are generally expected to enroll in the graduate version of the course. If you are a PhD student, it may be possible to ‘upgrade’ an undergraduate course into a graduate course as a directed reading.

**Q: Can I take a course in another department for degree credit?**

A: Yes, but only one such course.

**Q: Can PhD students take a 500-level course?**

A: Yes.

## CSPT Program

**Q: Can I add or remove the CSPT component without it affecting my standing in Political Science?**

A: Yes. You are admitted to each program separately so your participation in the CSPT program is independent of your standing in the Political Science program. You can, at any point, apply for admission to CSPT or withdraw from it while continuing as a Political Science student.

**Q: What are my options for my elective courses?**

The same as Political Science students for the political science electives providing the student has fulfilled their CSPT requirements.

## Dissertations and Theses

**Q: When do I need to submit my MA thesis proposal?**

A: Full-time students are required to have a thesis proposal approved by their supervisory committee by May 15 of the academic year in which they entered the program. Although no formal extension is required for students who cannot meet this deadline, they must have an approved thesis proposal before they will be considered for teaching assistant positions in their second year. Students who fail to submit a thesis proposal by October 15 of their second year may be asked to withdraw from the program.

**Q: When do I need to defend my PhD dissertation proposal?**

A: Three to six months after your final exam.

**Q: What is expected in a MA thesis Proposal?**

A: A 5-page thesis proposal that includes the problem you want to investigate and the means you will be using in the investigation. The hypothesis or idea with which you start is a preliminary formulation that helps you get oriented toward your work, and enables you to sort through what you have to do to complete the project successfully.

**Q: What is expected in a PhD dissertation proposal?**

A: Normally, proposals should be between 20-30 pages, and will consist of a description of their research project, a review of the relevant literature, their original contribution to the field, and an explanation of their methodology/approach.

**Q: What are the expectations for the length of an MA thesis?**

A: No more than 100 pages. A master's thesis is an original lengthy essay that demonstrates the student's understanding of, and capacity to, employ research methods appropriate to their discipline(s). It should normally include a general overview of relevant literature in the field of study. The work may be based on body of original data produced by the student or it may be an original research exercise conducted using scholarly literature or data produced and made available by others.

**Q: What is the length of a PhD dissertation?**

A: The length and format will vary with each student. In all cases, the doctoral dissertation must embody original work and constitute a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field of study.

**Q: What does ABD mean?**

A: All But Dissertation. At this point a student will have completed all their coursework, their two candidacy exams, and their dissertation proposal. Students who have reached this point are eligible to teach sessional courses at UVic and other universities.

**Q: Do I need to submit an ethics approval?**

A: If your research involved human participants, including interviews, group discussions, surveys, and autobiographical information, then yes, you need to obtain ethics approval. You must apply for and receive ethical approval before you begin your study and maintain the approval during recruitment and data collection.

**Q: How do I get a supervisory committee?**

A: Once you are at the dissertation proposal stage you will discuss the matter with your supervisor. You should develop a list of possible members in the department and in other faculties to ensure that you get the greatest benefit from its composition.

**Q: What are the requirements for my supervisory committee?**

A: It depends by the degree and whether or not you are in CSPT. Check the relevant

sections of this document for more precise information.

**Q: Can I have more committee members?**

A: Yes, but more members means more people to please.

## Funding and Tuition

**Q: How many terms do I pay fees for?**

A: A minimum of three for a POLI MA, five for a CSPT MA, 7.5 for a PhD student. After 6.0 for MA and 9.0 fee installments for PhD, students will be assessed lower reregistration fees.

**Q: Does Political Science offer funding for the second year of the CSPT program?**

A: No. The Political Science MA is a one-year program, whereas CSPT is a two-year program. Students seeking second year funding should approach the matter with CSPT.

**Q: Do I have to apply for SSHRC?**

A: Yes, if you are receiving UVic fellowship funding you must apply for SSHRC each year in order to maintain your eligibility for upcoming years. MA students with only one year of funding are not required to apply, but it is highly recommended.

## Political Science, MA

**Q: What is the average completion time of the MA in Political Science?**

A: Around two years

**Q: Is it actually possible to complete the MA in Political Science in one year?**

A: Yes, although it does require careful planning and a strict schedule. See the MA Timeline for One-Year Completion section of this document.

**Q: What are my options for my elective courses?**

A: You must take a Political Science graduate seminar, which can be either a third field course or a specialized topic. Your remaining elective can be another Political Science graduate seminar, a graduate seminar in another department, a senior undergraduate course in a relevant field, or a directed reading course with a regular faculty member in Political Science.

## Political Science, PhD

**Q: What is the average completion time of the PhD in Political Science?**

A: Around five years.

**Q: What courses can I take to fulfill my electives?**

A: Political Science graduate seminars (either a field course or a specialized topic), a graduate seminar in another department, or a directed reading course with a regular faculty

member in Political Science. PhD students may not, however, take an undergraduate course for degree credit unless it is taken as a directed reading.

## Registration

### **Q: Do I have to register for all three terms each year?**

A: Yes. If you are not taking any other courses MA students should be registered for POLI 599 (thesis) or 598 (MRP) and PhD students should be registered for either POLI 693 (candidacy exams) or POLI 699 (dissertation).

### **Q: What are the time limits for the completion of my degree?**

A: Five years for the MA program and seven years for the PhD. Students needing additional time will be required to obtain a program extension.

### **Q: Do all graduate students need to meet with the graduate advisor to review their CAPP report?**

Yes, an appointment will be set up at the graduate orientation.

### **Q: How do I register for undergraduate or out of department courses?**

A: You will need special permission. This is typically done after your arrival in September, as the instructor, your supervisor, and the graduate advisor must give approval.

### **Q: Can I take a leave of absence?**

Yes, there are four types available: Personal, Parental, Medical, and Compassionate. Political Science MA students are eligible for one term, CSPT MA students for three terms, and doctoral students for six terms. Students exceeding these limits will need to obtain approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Teaching and Research Assistantships

### **Q: What types of Teaching Assistantships are available in the department?**

A: Teaching Assistant (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses) and Grading Positions (3<sup>rd</sup> year courses).

### **Q: When are these posted?**

A: The department posts the Winter and Spring term teaching assistant positions the preceding summer, with the Summer term positions posted in late winter/early spring. A limited number of positions are available in the summer and a few positions may come available at other times due to increased enrollment or last minute changes. The grading-only positions are advertised shortly before the term begins.

### **Q: Do I have to apply to be considered for a Teaching Assistantship?**

A: Yes, students must always apply to be considered for a teaching assistantship even if it has been promised in your letter of offer.

### **Q: How are they awarded?**

A: Teaching Assistantships are awarded according to the Appointment Priority Policy – Variance 1 found at [www.cupe4163.ca](http://www.cupe4163.ca) or in this handbook. Grading positions are not filled according to the Appointment Priority Policy. Although they may be awarded to any level of graduate student, PhD students often receive preference.

**Q: Can I apply for TA positions in other departments?**

A: Yes. In the past programs such as Social Justice Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Continuing Studies have sought outside TAs. Students are also welcome to apply to positions at other universities.

**Q: How do I resolve a dispute with my TA supervisor?**

A: The Graduate Advisor and your CUPE representative are both available to help and can provide more information on formal and informal process of resolution.

**Q: Are there research assistantships available?**

A: Yes, but these are often not advertised. Most often, priority is given to a professor's own students. Students should discuss potential RA work with their supervisor, but it is also recommended that they contact professors whose work is relevant to their own interests.

## Sessional Appointments

**Q: Will I get a sessional appointment?**

A: The department has committed to offering Advanced PhD students the opportunity to teach an undergraduate course before they graduate.

**Q: What do I need in order to be considered?**

A: The PhD student must have All But the Dissertation (ABD) status.

**Q: Can I get more than one sessional appointment?**

A: At this time, although there is technically no restriction on the number of sessional appointments a student may hold, the department is only offering one appointment per student unless exceptional circumstances apply, as they do not have sufficient resources to offer all students multiple opportunities.

**Q: Can I apply for sessional appointments at other universities?**

A: Yes.