

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Admission to Program

The Political Science Department recommends that applicants have an undergraduate degree in political science. However, it also accepts applicants from related majors or from those who otherwise demonstrate preparation for graduate-level studies in political science.

The minimum cumulative GPA is 3.25. Applicants with lower GPAs may be considered if, for instance, their grades showed marked improvement throughout their studies, their grades in their major were significantly higher than their cumulative GPA, their application statement or letters of reference provide a compelling explanation for making an exception and/or if students have received high scores on both the math and verbal portions of the GRE. The GRE is not required for application.

All applicants are required to submit two letters of recommendation evaluating their ability, promise, and past performance. Letters should be from university faculty. Applicants with GPAs lower than 3.25 should ask their recommenders to provide some account of this.

All foreign students whose native language is not English are required to meet all SF State requirements, including a score that meets University requirements on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). See the University requirements for specific scores.

Applications are to be received by April 1st for the fall semester, and November 1st for the spring semester.

Written English Proficiency Requirement

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different levels.

Level One (preadmission/admission)

A GRE score that demonstrates proficiency in writing (i.e., a score of 4.0 or better). Students who do not meet this requirement must take an appropriate graduate-level writing course in their first year at SF State.

Level Two

Satisfactory completion of Culminating Experience requirements - either a Comprehensive Exam in two fields or M.A. thesis. Students who elect to take the Comprehensive Exam must enroll in PLSI 896EXM. Students who elect to do the thesis must take PLSI 898.

Advancement to Candidacy

Candidates for the M.A. degree must have classified status; have successfully completed PLSI 700, PLSI 740, PLSI 760, and PLSI 780; maintained an overall grade point average of 3.0; and have the approval of the graduate coordinator.

Program Learning Outcomes

- a. Students demonstrate a systematic comprehension of the discipline of political science; and acquire a specialized knowledge of three sub-fields of political science (political theory, American politics, comparative politics) in which they demonstrate not only familiarity and expertise with key concepts, arguments, and theorists, but an ability to contribute meaningfully through their written work to one or more subjects of study.

- b. Students demonstrate advanced training in research, writing, and presentation, including the ability to think critically, construct logical arguments, collect and analyze relevant evidence, formulate reasoned conclusions, and situate themselves as critical subjects in their work.
- c. Students demonstrate a knowledge of the professional aspects of the field through one or more of the following experiences: teaching in political science, research assistantships; and classroom, conference, or workshop presentations.

Political Science (M.A.) – 30 units

Core Requirements (12 units)

Code	Title	Units
PLSI 700	Research Methods ¹	3
PLSI 740	Seminar in American Politics	3
PLSI 760	Seminar in Comparative Politics	3
PLSI 780	Seminar in Political Theory	3

¹ PLSI 700 is a required course that all incoming students must take in their first year of the program. Students who do not pass it must take it in their second year in order to be eligible to register for further classes. Students may only attempt the course twice.

Political Science Topic Seminars (6 units minimum)

Take two topic seminars from courses chosen from among the following: PLSI 705, PLSI 714, PLSI 741-759, PLSI 761-779, PLSI 781-797. Graduate students must register from the graduate section of any paired PLSI course.

Electives (8-9 units)

Select enough electives to reach 30 units for the major. Electives include:

- PLSI 701, PLSI 707, PLSI 708
- Additional courses from the seminar area not used to fulfill that requirement.
- Graduate courses outside the Political Science department closely related to political science, with prior approval by the graduate coordinator.
- Up to 9 units of upper-division (300-level or above) PLSI courses with prior approval by the graduate coordinator.

Note: for students who do not have a Political Science BA and/or seek more writing instruction in political science, we strongly recommend PLSI 302GW.

Culminating Experience (3 units)

Select One:

Code	Title	Units
PLSI 896EXM & PLSI 896	Culminating Experience Examination and Preparation for Written Comprehensive Examination	3
PLSI 898	Master's Thesis	3

Students who want to enroll in a course of independent study (PLSI 899) must have a GPA of at least 3.25.