



Political Science Graduate Student Handbook
University of Illinois at Chicago
May 2019

Welcome to the Department of Political Science! This description of the procedures and requirements of the Political Science Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago is meant to be a first base of reference for graduate students. Procedures and forms are subject to change, so think of this handbook as a living document and remember to seek further advice from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), the Department Head, and the rest of your faculty.

A student is held to the regulations in place in the handbook at the time the student begins the program, but a student may choose to follow any revisions that occur after the date they entered. We recommend students keep a copy of the handbook that is in place when they begin the program so they have a frame of reference as to what regulations apply to them.

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MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Master of Arts in Political Science prepares students for a significant range of postgraduate opportunities: application to a doctoral program; employment at the junior college or high school levels; employment in public service, government, and non-profit organizations. Students will gain theoretical and methodological training in the discipline of Political Science. MA candidates demonstrate command of the requisite skills by successfully completing coursework and a major research paper requirement.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

As detailed in the current on-line Graduate Catalog, the Master of Arts in Political Science requires a minimum of 34 hours of graduate level course credit for completion. Required coursework totals 18 semester hours, and elective coursework totals a minimum of 16 semester hours at the 500-level. Up to 8 hours of elective credits (two courses) may be taken outside the Department if the student and the DGS, in consultation with other advisors, agree the material will further the student's progress and education and will not be available through our Department. The maximum time to complete the program is five years from the date of entry. Full-time students generally complete the program within two years.

In POLS 593 (2 hours) students complete a major research paper under the supervision of two faculty members.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Waiver requests for required courses in favor of previously taken equivalent graduate level course work may be submitted to the DGS, but waivers are approved only in very unusual circumstances. No credit hours will be granted for waived course requirements, and students will still need to complete 34 semester hours of credit to graduate.

ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

If at all possible, elective courses are to be selected from Department offerings. If students wish to take electives outside the department to meet graduation requirements, they should submit a request containing a course syllabus to the DGS. Such requests may be for courses offered in cognate Departments at UIC or at universities participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program.

To count toward graduation, core courses must be successfully completed with grades of B or better. Students who receive a C in a core course must meet with the DGS to review their academic progress.

Two outstanding Cs in core courses will result in dismissal from the program, unless students retake the classes in which they received a C grade at the earliest possible opportunity and earn grades of B or A.

Students are not allowed to repeat the same course for credit if they received a grade of B or higher, but may audit courses that they have already completed successfully. Credits earned through repeating the same course do not count towards graduation.

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Unsatisfactory progress includes: (1) failure to comply with Graduate College rules; (2) grades of C or below or incomplete grades; (3) undue delays in completing required coursework; (4) failure to enroll in degree required courses before taking other courses unless specifically approved by the DGS; and (5) two or more withdrawals from the same core course. The Department admits only those applicants who are expected to succeed in the program, but if a student is making unsatisfactory progress, the department will consider recommending the Graduate College dismiss the student from the program.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid normally is reserved for PhD students, but exceptionally qualified MA students are also considered for Department assistantships, depending on the availability of funds.

ENTERING the PHD PROGRAM

Current master’s students may apply to enter the Department PhD program before or upon completion of the MA degree. To apply, an MA student will need to submit a statement of purpose including research intent and two letters of recommendation by Department faculty. The DGS will render a decision based on current progress in the MA program and documents submitted.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

***Core Courses - MUST be completed with a grade of B or better.**

	Credit Hours
1. *Pols 401 Data Analysis I	4
2. *Pols 482 Theories of Democracy and Representation	4
3. *Pols 505 Research Design and Methods	4
4. One Subfield Gateway Course among:	4
Pols 504 Seminar in Political Theory	
Pols 551 Seminar in Urban Politics	
Pols 560 Seminar in American Politics	
Pols 570 Seminar in Comparative Politics	
Pols 571 Seminar in International Relations	
5. Pols 593 Independent Research for MA	2
Total Required	<u>18</u>
 Electives (at least two in Political Science)*	
1. Elective 500 level course	4
2. Elective 500 level course	4
3. Elective 500 level course	4
4. Elective 500 level course	4
Total Electives	16
Grand Total	34

*Note on additional Graduate College requirements: the Graduate College requires 9 hours at the 500-level; independent study courses like Pols 497, 498, and 596 do not count toward this requirement.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science emphasizes the study of political action and behavior, culture, and institutional structures and settings. The Department at UIC is unusual in the commitment of its members to a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches. By taking advantage of its Chicago location and its status as a land-grant urban university with a diverse student body and world-class faculty, the Department can offer outstanding doctoral training.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The PhD in Political Science requires completion of 72 hours of graduate level course credit for those with relevant Master's degrees (Graduate II standing) and 96 hours for those without. The maximum time to complete the program is seven years from the date of entry for those with a Master's degree and nine years for those without. The Department expects full-time students to complete all requirements except the dissertation within four years.

Requirements for program core and gateway courses cannot be met by substituting courses from other programs, and waivers for core and subfield gateway courses are approved only in very unusual circumstances.

Registration for elective political science courses prior to satisfactory completion of all first year requirements must be approved by the DGS. The DGS serves as the advisor for all first year students. After the first year, students are encouraged to select a primary advisor in their chosen subfields.

Students must complete all core and subfield gateway courses with a grade of B or better in order to continue in the program. If a student is not progressing satisfactorily, the Department may recommend to the Graduate College that the student be dismissed from the program.

Unsatisfactory progress includes: failure to comply with Graduate College rules and standards; grades of C or below or incomplete grades; two or more withdrawals from the same course; failure to enroll in required courses when available before taking other courses unless specifically approved by the DGS; undue delays in forming exam, proposal, or dissertation committees or in following their recommendations; and failure to complete other program requirements.

Students who receive a C in any course must meet with the DGS to review their academic progress. Two outstanding Cs in required courses will result in dismissal from the program, unless the course is retaken at the earliest opportunity. Retaking a course will not expunge the original C grade from the transcript or from the GPA calculation.

Students are not allowed to repeat the same course for credit if they received a grade of B or higher. Credits earned through repeating the same course do not count towards graduation nor do they count for preliminary examination purposes. Students may audit courses that they have already completed successfully. Auditing can be a great substantive way to encounter new material and new approaches, but students do not receive credit for auditing a course.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The First Year: Program Core

Core courses introduce students to the basic approaches and methods of analysis in political science. Students must take core courses in the first year of study or as soon as they are next scheduled.

**Core courses must be completed with grades of B or better. Courses earn four credit hours unless otherwise noted.*

Fall Semester	Credit Hours
1. *Pols 401 Data Analysis I	4
2. *Pols 482 Theories of Democracy and Representation	4
3. One Subfield Gateway Course:	4
Pols 504 Seminar in Political Theory	
Pols 551 Seminar in Urban Politics	
Pols 560 Seminar in American Politics	
Pols 570 Seminar in Comparative Politics	
Pols 571 Seminar in International Relations	
Spring Semester	
1. *Pols 501 Data Analysis II	4
2. *Pols 505 Research Design and Methods	4
3. One Subfield Gateway Course* among:	4
Pols 551 Seminar in Urban Politics	
Pols 570 Seminar in Comparative Politics	
Pols 560 Seminar in American Politics	
Pols 504 Seminar in Political Theory	
Pols 571 Seminar in International Relations	
TOTAL	24

The Second through Fifth Years of study:

In years two through five, students should develop a plan of study in consultation with faculty subfield committees and an advisor selected by the student. The plan of study, although dynamic, will inform the student's choice of preliminary examination subfields, elective coursework, and dissertation topic.

PRELLIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

After successful completion of the program core, students, in consultation with advisors, will choose to be examined in two Department subfields. Eligibility requirements for both subfields are the same.

The first exam subfield will be chosen from one of the Department's three core areas of specialization: **American politics, urban politics or comparative politics.**

The second exam subfield can be chosen from American politics, urban politics, and comparative politics. Students with interests in political theory and international relations can pursue these areas as a second exam field, but shall do so only with DGS approval. Two exams over the same subfield are not allowed.

A third exam field will be based on the student's proposed dissertation work.

ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

To aid students in choosing coursework to register for in preparation for exams, Department faculty subfield committees will provide a list of approved Department offerings. Approved course registration offerings each semester in cognate Departments at UIC, or in other institutions through the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program will be available upon request.

If at all possible, elective courses are to be selected from Department offerings. If students wish to take electives outside the department to meet preliminary exam course requirements, they should submit an approval request containing a course syllabus to the DGS and the Department faculty subfield chair. Such requests may be for courses offered in cognate Departments at UIC or at universities participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSEWORK

Independent studies must be approved by the instructor and the DGS using a department form to enable registration for these courses to be completed.

For students in their first two years of the PhD program, independent studies should be taken to master material in a specific subfield area when a course in this area is not being offered by the Department or is not available through other departments or through the Metropolitan Exchange Program.

For independent studies to be approved, students must submit to the DGS a schedule of readings and assignments worked out with their instructor. Students are not allowed to take more than two independent studies in the first two years. For students who have not reached All But Dissertation (ABD) status, independent study credits should not be used to write papers for publication or to work on projects.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

In addition to course requirements, students may also be requested by the Department to satisfy an advanced methodology or language requirement appropriate to their plan of study (the nature of some work in the discipline demands extra preparation of this sort). Coursework to prepare for any required language examination does not count toward hours needed for the degree.

CONCENTRATIONS

Graduate students may use their elective credit requirements to achieve an additional concentration from one of several available interdepartmental programs.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Gender and Women's Studies

Students earning a graduate degree in Political Science may complement their courses by enrolling in a concentration in Gender and Women's Studies. See [Gender and Women's Studies](#) in the *College of Liberal Arts and Sciences* section for more information.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Latin American and Latino Studies

Students earning a graduate degree in Political Science may complement their courses by enrolling in a concentration in Latin American and Latino Studies. See [Latin American and Latino Studies](#) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences section for more information.

Interdepartmental Graduate Concentration in Survey Research Methodology

Students earning a graduate degree in this Department may complement their courses by enrolling in a concentration in survey research methodology. See [Interdepartmental Graduate Concentration in Survey Research Methodology](#) in the Graduate College section for more information.

Survey Research Methods Online Certificate Program

[This certificate program](#) is very similar to the one above, except the required hours are fewer (11hrs vs. 14hrs) and the classes are slightly different. Check out the link for further information.

THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Upon passing preliminary examinations, the student will be formally admitted to doctoral candidacy by the Graduate College. Students are then required to form a dissertation proposal committee comprised of at least three faculty members to help develop the dissertation proposal.

The dissertation proposal will contain an analysis of the relevant literature, the theoretical issues to be addressed, the evidence to be used, the methods of analysis, and a statement of the anticipated significance of the research project. **Students will not be authorized to proceed with dissertation research until their proposal has been formally presented at an oral defense and approved by the dissertation proposal defense committee.** The student is expected to defend a dissertation proposal within **six months** of passing preliminary exams. Failure to complete and successfully defend a dissertation proposal in the allocated time may have consequences for a student's eligibility for financial support as well as his/her standing in the program.

THE DISSERTATION

Institutional Research Board (IRB): Before beginning any research involving human subjects, students must complete University required Institutional Research Board training and obtain research protocol approval or exemption. A copy of IRB approval will be filed with the Department office.

A dissertation is a substantial piece of original research that argues a specific thesis. Students are expected to make a significant contribution to political science with their work.

Graduation requirements are fulfilled when the student has successfully defended the completed dissertation before a Graduate College approved dissertation committee and has met the requirements of the Graduate College. For information on the Graduate College's requirements, students should refer to the UIC Graduate College Thesis Manual.

ANNUAL REVIEWS

Students are regularly evaluated and are encouraged to participate in and keep abreast of their evaluations. During every spring semester the DGS, in consultation with the faculty, conducts a review of the student's progress in the program to date, based on a variety of performance indicators that may include academic progress and earned grades, seminar papers, and research interests.

In addition to feedback from the student's advisor and professors with whom the student works, the review will consider a self-assessment in which the student may provide evidence of progress, completion of milestones, student strengths, and weaknesses.

Students are encouraged to meet with the DGS to discuss their review and progress. The results of the review also will be referenced when funding and placement decisions are made.

ASSISTANTSHIPS AND OTHER FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid awards for continuing students are made on an annual basis by the Department Head and the DGS in consultation with other Department faculty. Renewals of assistantships are contingent on Departmental needs, the student's timely progress in the program, quality of scholarship, and satisfactory performance of assistantship duties. Students not previously awarded financial assistance are welcome to apply at any time during the course of their studies. Students are generally notified of their awards for the next academic year before the end of each spring semester.

Specific assignments will continue to be made on a semester-by-semester basis. Each semester, the Graduate Office provides forms to continuing students to state their preferences for the following semester's assignments. Every effort is made to take these preferences into account with consideration of student eligibility, Department budget constraints, faculty requests, scheduling, and other Department priorities.

Advanced PhD students may be invited to teach their own courses as circumstances arise. The Department Head and the DGS make the final assignments in such cases.

Students are rarely funded for more than four years.

Priorities for graduate student funding are made in the following rank order:

1. First and second year students who were promised aid from time of admission and who are making satisfactory progress in their coursework
2. Third and fourth year students who are making satisfactory progress toward taking preliminary examinations
3. First through fourth year students who were not promised aid at time of admission but whose performance in the program warrants support
4. Students who are beyond their eighth semester, who are making satisfactory progress in the program, and for whose services the Department has a specific need.
5. Students who are beyond their eighth semester and who are not making satisfactory progress in the program, for example,
 - a. Not having taken preliminary examinations
 - b. Having taken prelims but not having defended a dissertation proposal
 - c. Students who are ABD but who are not making reasonable progress toward defending their dissertation

Satisfactory progress includes:

- Completion of preliminary exams by the end of the seventh semester
- Maintaining a minimum of 3.5 GPA with no grades below “B”
- Defending a dissertation proposal within six months after passing preliminary examinations.
- For ABD students, satisfactory progress is measured by reports from the dissertation committee submitted every semester

International students who were promised aid from time of admission and who are making satisfactory progress may need to receive 50% funding

The Department encourages students to apply for travel funding to help defray travel costs to present papers and conduct sited dissertation research. Travel funds are available from the Department, the College, the University and from outside grants. See The Graduate [College’s Funding Overview](#) and [The Graduate Student Council](#) website.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Department fully supports the University’s commitment “to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, administrators—share the responsibility of ensuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists” (UIC Graduate Study Catalog). We expect and encourage our students (and faculty and staff) to review the rules and strive to achieve the goals specified in the University’s “Guidelines Regarding Academic Integrity” (<http://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/graduate-study/graduate-study/>). Please note that the university maintains strict standards regarding academic integrity and does not tolerate misconduct by students, faculty or staff. Students can find specifications regarding the University’s academic standards and the consequences for violating such standards in the above specified “Guidelines” and in the “Student Disciplinary Policy” handbook available online at <http://dos.uic.edu/conductforstudents.html>

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT PhD PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

Exams should be taken within the academic year following completion of the core and additional required coursework. Information on course registration during this period can be obtained at the Department Graduate Office.

Courses and Fields: American, Comparative, Urban

For both the first and second fields, students are expected to complete the gateway courses as designated on page 5 of this handbook. For both fields, students must complete at least three additional substantive courses. Students are encouraged to take courses in additional fields as electives.

Courses are often cross-listed but cannot be double-counted. A course used to satisfy requirements for one field cannot also be used to satisfy requirements for a second field.

American subfield

The American subfield focuses on theories that seek to explain the way politics operates in the United States, the institutions of congress, the presidency and the courts, state and local politics, political behavior, political economy, public opinion, campaigns and elections, and political communication/psychology. Many of the theoretical approaches used in American politics cross over into both urban and comparative politics.

Students studying American politics as a field shall complete the gateway in American politics (Pols 560) and at least 3 courses relevant to the following themes:

Institutions:

- State and local politics
- Congress
- The presidency
- The courts/public law
- Political parties
- Political institutions

Political Behavior:

- Public opinion/political behavior
- Political communication
- Political psychology
- Campaigns and elections
- Race, ethnicity & nationalism

Other:

- The urban gateway course
- Interest groups
- Political economy

Comparative subfield

Comparative politics focuses on understanding how political actors, institutions, and culture influence political outcomes across different countries. Students studying comparative politics as a field shall complete the gateway in comparative politics (Pols 570) and at least 3 courses relevant to the following themes:

- Comparative urban politics
- Political parties
- Democratization and democratic transitions
- Social movements
- Political communication
- Race, ethnicity & nationalism
- Political economy
- Politics of the Middle East
- Latin-American politics
- Theories of conflict
- Political institutions and the state

Urban Subfield

Students studying urban politics as a field shall complete the gateway in urban politics (Pols 551) and at least 3 courses relevant to the following themes:

- Comparative urban politics
- Interest groups
- Gateway in American politics
- Social movements
- Race, ethnicity & nationalism
- State and local politics
- Globalization and urban planning
- Revitalization and gentrification
- Contested cities
- Political economy

Elective courses are to be selected from offerings approved by the Department. Students may wish to take other electives to meet subfield requirements, in which case they must submit a request for approval to the Department. Such requests may be for courses offered in cognate departments at UIC or at other universities participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program. All such requests will be reviewed by the relevant subfield committee and the DGS. Assessment will be based on information about the course provided by the student.

Dissertation Field Exam

Each student must determine a focused area of study in which to take a dissertation field exam. In cooperation with faculty, students must develop a reading list for the dissertation field exam. The purpose of the exam is to determine that the student has a well-developed dissertation idea and enough mastery of the relevant literature to complete the dissertation. Students are strongly advised to work with several faculty members in preparation for the dissertation exam. Two courses must be completed that focus on areas to be explored in the dissertation. These courses may be independent studies or substantive courses offered in cognate Departments at UIC or at universities participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program.

Eligibility to Sit for Exams

To be eligible to sit for the preliminary exams, students must 1) complete the gateway courses, 2) complete additional coursework in both exam subfields, 3) complete dissertation-related courses chosen in consultation with faculty, 4) master the subfield reading lists provided by the subfield faculty

committee, 5) submit a major research paper for approval (explained below), and 6) complete all incomplete grades.

Research Requirement

Before taking the preliminary examination, all students must have completed an extensive research project. The paper will be evaluated by the project supervisor and possibly one other member of the faculty who has been appointed by the DGS.

Preliminary Exam Preparedness Form

To be eligible to sit for preliminary exams, students must also complete this checklist form and obtain signatures from relevant faculty by the specified deadlines. More information on the preliminary examination procedure is available from the Department Graduate Office.

Other preliminary examination considerations

PhD students who seek to have credits from a previous degree recognized for exam purposes should submit a copy of their transcript and relevant syllabi to the relevant subfield committee.

Graduate Students usually complete preliminary examinations by the end of their seventh semester. The Graduate College requires that, in order to be counted towards graduation, preliminary examinations be completed no more than five years before graduation. <https://grad.uic.edu/preliminary-exam-policies-and-procedures>. Some exceptions are made by petitioning the Graduate College.

Exams are spaced over a three-week period and are administered beginning the third week of January or September. The content of exams will be based on the expectation of broad knowledge of listed subfield literature and mastery of major areas to allow students to be admitted to candidacy in the field.

Students will have 8 hours to write responses to questions in each of the chosen fields, and may use books and notes during the exam, but may not consult with others. Second language English speakers may take an additional 2 hours to complete each exam.

The examination is prepared by a committee of Department faculty in accordance with the rules set by the Dean of The Graduate College (see the current Preliminary Exam Preparedness Form for an updated list on committee chairs and members.) The committee consists of at least three members who are UIC Graduate Faculty with full membership, and two of whom must be tenured. The chair of the committee must be a full member of the UIC Graduate Faculty. At least three faculty members will submit exam questions and grade student responses. All students who are sitting for an exam in the same subfield will receive the same exam.

Exam responses will be emailed to the examiners and the Graduate Office at the close of the examination day.

Grading criteria are based on:

1. Directness
2. Organization and clarity
3. Soundness of argument and logic
4. Knowledge of the field
5. Critical reasoning

For directness, does the answer address the question? For soundness of argument and logic, does the answer address conceptual issues related to the question? For knowledge of the field, does the answer refer to relevant literature? The best exams are productively creative: examiners are looking for an interlocutor, for an informed “mind at work.”

Grades given include:

2. High Pass
3. Pass
4. Conditional Pass
5. Fail

Students who receive high passes in all three exams achieve “pass with distinction” classification and the student will receive a letter from the DGS. Students who receive a conditional pass must address specific conditions, generally a clarified written portion, and/or an oral exam, within 30 days of the receipt of the grade to convert the grade to a passing grade. Students may retake one failed field within one year; if a student fails two fields or receives conditional passes on all three fields, the entire exam must be repeated at the next regular sitting. Students receive only this one additional chance to pass the exams.

FORMS AND INFORMATION SHEETS FOR THE MA AND PHD PROGRAMS

The forms are available at our graduate student tab on the Political Science Webpage
<https://pols.uic.edu/>

Consent of Instructor Form for Directed Readings, Independent Study and Dissertation Research Courses

Political Science MA Research Paper Requirement

PhD Graduation Hours and Course Requirements

Political Science PhD Preliminary Examination Preparedness Form

PhD Research Project Requirement

PhD Preliminary Examination Grading Instructions

PhD Dissertation Proposal Rules and Guidelines

PhD Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How do I get an advisor?

A: For all new students, the DGS serves as an advisor during their first year in the program. Selection of an academic advisor can be based on multiple criteria such as compatibility of academic interests, similarity in worldview and approach, or positive inter-personal relationships. Come to the Departmental welcome reception for new students, and come to Department events afterwards. Take courses from multiple people to get a feel for different approaches and personalities. Meeting faculty early on will help ease you into finding an advisor. Faculty members are here for you. Take advantage of their office hours!

Q: Which courses should I take to prepare for a subfield exam?

A: Read the relevant section of the Handbook carefully. It provides guidance on course selection. You need to ensure that your course selection covers as much of the subfield as possible. Meet with each member of the subfield early. A good strategy is to take courses with each of the subfield faculty who will expose you to different approaches, theories and ways of thinking. It will also help you to develop a relationship with the people preparing your exam and to learn about their standards and expectations.

Q: How do I prepare for exams?

A: First meet with the subfield faculty. They will assess your status and provide advice. Second, secure copies of syllabi for all the subfield courses that you have taken as well as the subfield's reading list. These will give you the material that you need to cover. Third, get an exam group going. Preparing for exams as a team has many advantages: 1) you can to some extent divide labor; 2) you benefit from the ideas and perspectives that others bring to the field; 3) you have a support network who understands what you are going through. Fourth, take good, detailed notes in all of your classes, seminars, and talks that you attend. Keep everything accessible and organized. Don't throw out notes or anything else from your classes.

Q: So, about those preliminary exams (colloquially called prelims or comps)... what can I expect?

A: Get a good night's sleep the night before. Come in early on the morning of the given date of your preliminary comprehensive exam. Bring your laptop or tablet, snacks, drinks, comfort music – or whatever helps you focus, and, most importantly, your notes. Do not submit pre-written answers; it is crucial that you read your question carefully and tailor your response to the question. Do not use the Internet in search of new information or in any way consult with others. Showcase your understanding of the material you have learned. You will have eight hours to draft your answer and send it to the Department Graduate Office and the committee; once you've passed it along, you are free to go.

Q: What happens when a course I need to take is not offered?

A: The Department does its best to provide subfield gateways and required courses at least once every two years, but should a student need a course that is not being offered by the Department, the student should meet with the DGS to discuss a few options:

1. Wait for it to be offered by the Department
2. Take a course with another Department at UIC that offers a similar course
3. Utilize the [Metropolitan Exchange Program \(MEP\)](#)

These options should be discussed with your academic advisor, subfield members, and the DGS.

Q: How do I register for the Metropolitan Exchange Program?

A: First, you should contact the instructor at the other institution to get permission to join the class. Then contact the MEP coordinator at UIC who will guide you in terms of the process. This should take place at least a month before the start of the term so that there is time to complete the paperwork and get you registered.

Q: When can I ask for an incomplete in a course, and what does it mean?

A: Incompletes should be given rarely, and should never be given when students have completed all assignments for the class. They work against the student's progress, can negatively affect a review for funding, and may result in a student's unsatisfactory standing to remain in the program. If an incomplete is granted, you should establish a clear and precise agreement with your professor about new due dates and the implications for your grade. You are responsible for ensuring that you do not miss those dates and for staying on top of the situation as your incomplete goes through the system. Be sure to stay in communication with instructors about any incompletes. If possible, avoid incompletes altogether.

Q: How are decisions about financial aid made?

A: Each year, the University determines our budget. Within the constraints of that budget, we make every effort to provide assistance to graduate students equitably based on factors described elsewhere in this handbook. Financial aid awards are merit, not need based.

Q: How many semesters of financial aid does the Department provide?

A: The Department tries to provide up to eight semesters of financial aid to students whose performance meets the standards of the program, contingent upon Departmental funding.

Q: Who decides how student awards and mini-grants are given?

A: The Department Head and DGS in consultation with other Department faculty make all decisions.

Q: What are my responsibilities as a graduate student?

A: Remember that you represent the Department and your fellow graduate students; respect fellow graduate students, faculty, and staff; conduct yourself with professionalism; be flexible in and responsible for your own experience. Above all, expand your horizons and learn.

Q: I've completed my coursework, passed my prelims, and passed my dissertation proposal. Do I have to keep registering as a student?

A: Yes, read about the requirements to apply for [zero hour registration](#) through the Graduate College. Exceptions in the case of exigent circumstances may be made through the Graduate College.

Q: What resources does the campus have to help me adjust?

A: Adjusting to graduate life can be difficult for everyone; many successful students make use of resources on campus to help them adjust.

1. Activities: the campus provides movies, music, and sporting events for free. Check out [Life at UIC](#) for more information
2. Become part of the UIC community, volunteer or use the Pop Up Pantry ([The Wellness Center](#)), and check out [other resources](#) including the [UIC Counseling Center](#).
3. Know where to relax. Student Center East has a commuter lounge (Suite 245) and a food court, and C-Stop locations in the Behavioral Sciences Building are ready to help with your technological needs (check out the [campus map](#)).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The UIC Graduate College Catalog <http://www.uic.edu/gcat/index.shtml>

This document is updated every 2 years and contains important Graduate College rules, graduation requirements, examination and time to degree deadlines, and minimum GPA requirements. Violations of Graduate College rules may result in dismissal from the program.

The UIC Graduate College Home Page <http://grad.uic.edu/>

This web page contains information about registration, graduation, financial aid, diversity, PHD dissertation approval procedure and time to degree. All Graduate College regulations are strictly enforced. It is helpful to become familiar with the Graduate College's website and the relevant documents posted there.

The Political Science Department Home Page <http://pols.las.uic.edu/>

This web page contains information specific to our program including forms, Department news and links to other helpful sites.

Political Science in the Graduate Catalog <http://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/colleges-schools/liberal-arts-sciences/pols/phd/>

This document provides a succinct summary of the Ph.D. program.

Everything in this handbook is intended to be consistent with the rules of the Department's Ph.D. program and rules of the Graduate College as specified in the above pages. In the event of any inconsistency the graduate school catalog shall always take precedence over this handbook.