Master of Arts in Political Science

The mission of the Master of Arts (MA) program is to prepare students for future graduate study in political science by helping them develop knowledge and skill in political science and research methodology. This program emphasizes general preparation in political science and research. Specific outcomes of the program include:

M.A. Goals

1. Graduates will master literature-based knowledge in two areas of political science.
2. Graduates will develop an understanding of political science research methodology and the role of research in academia.
3. Graduates will further their graduate careers by pursuing a doctorate in political science.
4. Graduates pursuing a terminal degree will find professional employment in education, public service, and business.

M.A. Objectives

1. Graduates will pass comprehensive examinations.
2. Graduates will present papers at professional conferences.
3. Graduates will be accepted into doctoral graduate programs.
4. Graduates will find employment in education, public service, and business.

Thesis/non-thesis options are available.

Areas of emphasis in the M.A. program are limited, because of the research nature of the degree, to American governmental institutions and political behavior, public law, political theory, public administration and comparative/international politics.

Requirements

M.A. candidates are required to present themselves for comprehensive examination on their thesis and/or in two of the five areas of emphasis mentioned above.

In addition to meeting the general requirements of the Graduate School, a student must have achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in upper-division undergraduate study, and submit official GRE scores. If a student has a GPA of 3.5 in the final 60 hours of undergraduate work, the GRE requirement is waived. The candidate must also submit to the Department of Political Science three letters of recommendation and a statement of his/her personal goals that will be weighted equally with the applicant’s GPA and GRE scores.

The program employs an admission scoring system which awards M.A. applicants points based on the evaluation and scoring of four components: (1) upper-division undergraduate GPA; (2) scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE); (3) the quality of letters of recommendation; and (4) the quality of the applicant’s goal statement.
Students may choose a thesis or non-thesis program. The requirements for these respective options are detailed below.

**Thesis Program**

Required courses are POLS 5519 and POLS 5519L (Political Research Methods, 4 credits) and POLS 6650 (Thesis, 6 credits). Students must also complete course work in two subfields. Other requirements include a total of 30 credits in graduate-level courses approved by the Department of Political Science and the Graduate School; a minimum of 15 credits taken at the 600-level; a maximum of 9 credits of directed reading courses; a comprehensive oral examination that covers the student’s graduate course work and the literature in two subfields; and the M.A. thesis. The thesis may be defended a second time if the first defense is not satisfactory and further revisions are required.

**Non-thesis Program**

Political Research Methods, POLS 5519 and 5519L, is required. Other requirements include a total of 36 credits in graduate level courses approved by the Department of Political Science and the Graduate School; a minimum of 15 credits taken at the 600-level; a maximum of 9 credits of directed reading courses; a comprehensive written examination that covers the student’s graduate course work and the literature in two subfields; and a final oral examination, which, like the final written examination, may be taken no more than twice.

This program emphasizes general preparation in political science and research. It is designed to:

1. Provide the first phase of graduate study for students seeking terminal degrees such as the Ph.D. or D.A. and who plan to complete their studies at Idaho State University or at another institution.

2. Train individuals who plan to seek employment upon completion of the M.A. degree in non-teaching governmental positions.

3. Provide in-service opportunities for enhancing the conceptual and research capabilities of persons who are employed in teaching or public positions.

4. Internship credits are not counted as part of the 36 total credit requirements for the thesis and non-thesis programs.

**CANDIDACY:**

A "Program of Study" must be completed and approved the semester before the student plans on graduating. The student can obtain a "Program of Study" form from the Political Science secretary. Any changes after the program of study has been approved will be documented by the Department secretary in the student's file and the Graduate School will be notified. Students should plan their course work with their committee chair to make sure their classes meet program requirements. **If you fail to file this application by the penultimate semester, your graduation may be delayed.**
1. Applicant GRE Percentile, if applicable.
   - 80th percentile or above: 10 points
   - 60th - 79th percentile: 8 points
   - 40th - 59th percentile: 7 points
   - 20th - 39th percentile: 4 points
   - Below 20th percentile: 0 points

2. Applicant Upper-Division GPA
   - 4.00: 10 points
   - 3.80 - 3.99: 9 points
   - 3.60 - 3.79: 8 points
   - 3.40 - 3.59: 7 points
   - 3.20 - 3.39: 6 points
   - 3.00 - 3.19: 5 points
   - Below 3.00: 0 points

3. Reference Letters
   Rated on a Scale of: 0 points (very poor) to 10 points (excellent).

4. Goal Statement
   Rated on a Scale of 0 points (very poor) to 10 points (excellent).

5. Undergraduate degree:
   - Political Science: 10 points
   - Social Sciences: 5 to 9 points
   - Other: 0 to 4 points
The candidate for admission should sign, date, and circle their preference below:
I do/do not waive the right to examine this reference letter.

__________________________________  _______________
Candidate Signature          Date

_____________________________ has applied for admission to the ISU Master of Arts program in political science. You have been chosen by the applicant as a reference. Please answer the questions below. Please return this page and make sure that you complete the box for question #6. Feel free to answer questions 1-5 on a separate sheet of paper, or submit a reference letter that addresses these questions.

1. In what capacity do you know the applicant?

2. How long have you known the applicant?

3. Please discuss the applicant’s academic strengths.

4. Please discuss the applicant’s academic weaknesses.

5. Do you think that the applicant is ready to undertake graduate school work? Why or why not?

6. In terms of college students that you have been associated with where would you rate this applicant in terms of overall academic ability? Please place a check under each criterion that indicates your rating of the candidate’s ability.

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__________________________________  _______________
Reference Writer          Date
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__________________________________________________________________________
Candidate Signature                                                      Date

__________________________________________________________________________
Reference Writer                                                        Date

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__________________________________________________________________________
Reference Writer  Date
MA Goal Statement

Please answer the following questions. Type your answers and develop them fully. The goal statement is an important part of the selection process.

1. Please explain why you want to pursue a MA degree including how the degree would influence your career path.

2. Please describe your academic background paying particular attention to course-work in political science, economics, sociology or other social science disciplines that have prepared you for master’s level study in political science.

3. What are your research interests? Discuss any previous research projects undertaken and/or completed.

4. What major academic works (books, articles) in political science or the social sciences have influenced you the most?
Master of Arts in Political Science
Application Checklist

1. Send a complete Application for Admission to Graduate School, and application fee, to:

   Graduate Studies
   Stop 8075
   Idaho State University
   Pocatello, ID 93209-8075

2. Ask each college or university you have attended to send two official transcripts to:

   Graduate Studies
   Stop 8075
   Idaho State University
   Pocatello, ID 83209-8075

3. Have official transcripts of your scores on the GRE general examination sent to:

   Graduate Studies
   Stop 8075
   Idaho State University
   Pocatello, ID 83209-8075

4. Have three letters of recommendation, from professors who know your recent academic work, sent to:

   Department of Political Science
   Stop 8073
   Idaho State University
   Pocatello, ID 83209-8073

5. Send a statement of your personal goals to:

   Department of Political Science
   Stop 8073
   Idaho State University
   Pocatello, ID 83209-8073

6. To apply to financial assistance, send a completed Application for a Master of Arts Teaching Assistantship, by March 1, to:

   Department of Political Science
   Stop 8073
   Idaho State University
   Pocatello, ID 83209-8073
Application for Teaching Assistant and Fellowship

Application for a graduate:

______ Teaching Assistantship
______ Fellowship

College of ____________________________ Department of ____________________________

Graduate major or minor
Areas (order of preference if needed).

See announcement concerning assistantships and fellowships available.

An individual applying for financial aid specified above should complete this form and forward it to the dean of the college or chairman of the department to which application is being made. In addition the applicant must complete the Application for Admission to Graduate Study and send that form to the Admissions Office. A complete set of official copies of transcripts from colleges or universities attended must be sent to the Admissions Office and a set to the college or department to which this application is being made. The set sent to the department will be forwarded promptly to the Admissions Office to complete requirements of two completes in that office. This application, letters of recommendation and transcripts must be received by March 15 or earlier in case of certain departments (see announcements) and ordinarily awards will be made soon after that date, but prior to May 1.

Name in Full ____________________________________________
First            Middle            Last

Present Address _______________________________________

Home Address _________________________________________

Place of Birth __________________________ Date of Birth

Citizenship ___________________________________________

Colleges attended Dates Major Field of Study Degrees Granted Dates of Degrees

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

*(If still in college, indicate the date on which requirements for the degree will be met. Admission and financial aid are provisional in this case.*)
If you have a reading knowledge of any foreign languages, list such languages and indicate for each whether you read with fair, good or excellent facility.

___________________________________________________________

Purpose of taking graduate work.

___________________________________________________________

What do you plan to do after receiving your degree?

___________________________________________________________

Honors, fellowships or scholarships, if any, which have been awarded to you.

___________________________________________________________

Assisting positions held while in college, if any, and dates.

___________________________________________________________

If employed since graduation, give positions held (including present position, if any) with names of institutions or firms, and dates. In case of teaching positions, give rank or title and the subjects taught.

___________________________________________________________

Names and addresses of three college teachers who will serve as reference and Have Been Requested by you to send recommendations to the dean of the college or the chairman of the department concerned.

___________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

(Idaho State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution and does comply with the various State and Federal statutes and Executive Orders designed to insure equal opportunity.)