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