

Political Science, Ph.D.

The Department of Political Science offers a Ph.D. program in Political Science. The department has attained a reputation for producing the very best innovative and interdisciplinary scholarship. Faculty are engaged in the study of such key questions as the politics of advanced and democratizing societies, international cooperation and peace, the politics of racial and ethnic minority groups, and the origins of altruism and morality and their impact on world politics.

Graduate students can pursue concentration in public choice and specializations in democracy studies, international relations, and race and minority politics. The Ph.D. program offers big payoffs to graduate students, in fact, because of the extended range of inquiry an interdisciplinary program affords.

Political science faculty members are regular participants in and help direct several research units on campus. The Center for the Study of Democracy, an Organized Research Unit at UCI, sponsors research and education aimed at improving the democratic process in the United States and expanding democracy around the world. The UCI Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics and Morality explores questions concerning the origins and causes of morality. The Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies (CGPACS), housed in the School of Social Sciences, is a multidisciplinary program dedicated to promoting scholarly, student and public understanding of international conflict and cooperation. The Institute for Mathematical Behavioral Sciences, also located in the School of Social Sciences, offers opportunities for participation in ongoing faculty research, notably with faculty members engaged in fields of public choice and political economy.

The deadline for application for fall quarter admission is December 1. Applications received after the deadline may be considered, although it is not guaranteed they will be reviewed. Students are admitted for winter or spring quarters only under exceptional circumstances. Additional information is available in the general section on admission to social science graduate programs. Please note especially the required examinations.

Requirements

During the first two years in the doctoral program, students must complete three of the following five seminars: Field Seminar in American Politics, Field Seminar in Comparative Politics, Field Seminar in International Relations, Field Seminar in Political Theory, and Foundations of Political Science. Prior to advancement to Ph.D. candidacy, doctoral students must complete two fields of study, one of which must come from the following list: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, or Political Theory. Each student must complete a second field, which may come (1) from one of the four listed above; (2) from an area of faculty strength, such as democracy studies, methodology and modeling, critical theory, ethics, political psychology, political economy/public choice, race and ethnicity, or public law; or (3) from a specialized area of interdisciplinary study. If the student chooses the specialized area of interdisciplinary study (3), this area must be approved by the student's advisor and the graduate committee. Students must complete four or five courses in their first field and three–five courses in their second field. The precise number is to be determined in each field by the field faculty. The field seminar in each field counts as one of the required courses.

Students are expected to have successfully completed course work resulting in knowledge of basic introductory statistics. Students who do not have this preparation must acquire the equivalent background during their first or second year in graduate school. Undergraduate statistics courses are considered to be remedial, and thus will not count toward graduate course credit needed for the Ph.D. Competence in a foreign language is required. Students may substitute mastery of an advanced research skill or an advanced qualitative skill in place of a foreign language. To acquire such a quantitative skill (which could involve course work in such disciplines as economics, mathematics and computer science, or statistics), students must complete at least one year of upper-level, undergraduate course work in mathematics, economics, or computer science or one year in graduate-level statistics beyond the required minimum of two quarters of introductory statistics. To acquire a qualitative skill, students must complete at least one year of graduate-level course work in qualitative or interpretative research methods. A student electing to meet the foreign language requirement should select a foreign language which is useful for research in his or her dissertation or in which there is a substantial body of scholarly literature.

Reviews and Examinations

Students ordinarily are expected to maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or better. At the completion of the first year, a review of performance in the graduate program will be conducted for each student by the political science faculty.

Students must complete two qualifying papers. The first qualifying paper must be completed and approved by the end of the winter quarter of a student's second year in the program; the second qualifying paper must be completed and approved by the winter quarter of a student's third year in the program. There must be two faculty readers on each qualifying paper, and only one faculty reader may serve as a reader on both papers. Upon successful completion of these papers and demonstration of competence in a foreign language, mastery of an advanced quantitative skill, or an advanced qualitative skill, a candidacy committee is appointed to oversee the qualifying examination and the formal advancement to candidacy. Students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their eighth quarter in the Ph.D. program. All students must pass the advancement to candidacy examination by the end of the tenth quarter in the Ph.D. program.

After the student advances to candidacy, the doctoral committee, usually composed of three members of the candidacy committee, reviews a dissertation prospectus and supervises work toward completion of the dissertation. Within six months of the oral qualifying examination (the formal advancement to candidacy), students are expected to meet with their doctoral committee, in order to discuss with the members a dissertation prospectus.

The normative time for completion of the Ph.D. is six years, and the maximum time permitted is seven years.

Ph.D. in Political Science with a Concentration in Public Choice/Political Economy

Public choice is an interdisciplinary field, at the intersection of political science and economics, which draws on sophisticated quantitative tools to model the functioning of political institutions. Public choice examines such areas as theories of voter and party choice; the theory of constitutions; the theory of committees and elections; models of regulation; problems of public goods and externalities; rent-seeking models; and issues in social choice, social welfare, and demand revelation.

This concentration is administered by an interdisciplinary committee of faculty from the Departments of Political Science and Economics.

Requirements

Students who elect this concentration are admitted under the normal procedures for the program in political science and must fulfill all the requirements for the political science degree, with the following modifications:

1. Students must complete the three-quarter core sequence in public choice, which is taught jointly by political science and economics faculty. This sequence is usually taken in the student's second or third year.
2. Students must complete three additional graduate-level, four-unit courses in related fields with the consent of their graduate advisor, chosen from a set of courses designated by the interdisciplinary committee. The courses chosen are to be tailored to the individual interests and academic background of the student and usually will include at least two economics courses (such as Econometrics, Game Theory, and Law and Economics) and one political science course (such as those on electoral systems, party systems, constitutions, courts).
3. Students are expected to write their dissertation on a topic related to public choice. Usually the dissertation advisor will be a political science member of the interdisciplinary committee.

Program in Law and Graduate Studies (J.D./Ph.D.)

Highly qualified students interested in combining the study of law with graduate research and/or professional qualifications in political science are invited to undertake concurrent degree study under the auspices of UC Irvine's Program in Law and Graduate Studies (PLGS). Students in this program pursue a coordinated curriculum leading to a J.D. degree from the School of Law in conjunction with a Ph.D. degree in political science. Additional information is available from the PLGS program director's office, 949-824-4158, or by email to plgs@law.uci.edu. A full description of the program, with links to all relevant application information, can be found at the School of Law Concurrent Degree Programs website (<http://www.law.uci.edu/academics/interdisciplinary-studies/concurrent-degrees.html>).