MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Mission Statement
The mission of the Department of Government is to educate students in the areas of government, politics, and international affairs, and by this means to foster more knowledgeable, informed, and active citizenship, as well as more enlightened future political leadership, in the communities to which they belong.

Student Learning Outcomes
UWF Government graduates in Government should be able to do the following:

Content
- Discuss competing theories on the nature of political power, including the origin, evolution, and meaning of law, justice, and equality
- Compare the exercise of political power in different regimes and political cultures
- Articulate competing theories of international relations; elections and electoral systems; and constitutionalism, particularly in the American context
- Describe different methods for testing competing hypotheses in political science
- Discuss the relevance of political research to the study and conduct of political life
- Identify the advantages and limitations of civic participation in different political and cultural contexts.

Critical Thinking
- Recognize the causes, severity, magnitude, and importance of a political problem
- Delineate the relevant features of a particular political question, problem, or puzzle
- Identify relevant theories from the scholarly literature that are helpful for understanding the selected question, problem, or puzzle
- Generate a plausible hypothesis or logical argument to address the question
- Develop a coherent and comprehensive plan for evaluating the hypothesis using the tools of political science
- Use appropriate resources to collect evidence for assessing and evaluating hypotheses
- Synthesize theory, evidence, and applications to produce an intelligible conclusion or solution to the original question
Communication
- Write coherent, intelligible, systematic, and potentially persuasive papers
- Accurately present findings orally with appropriate visual tools
- Defend details of oral presentations

Integrity/Values
- Pursue the use of legitimate scholarship and appropriate citation in keeping with standards of academic integrity
- Identify the similarities and differences between individual moral and political obligations
- Foster a free exchange of ideas

Project Management
- Design and execute an appropriate work plan, using outlines and timelines, to complete project obligations
- Anticipate and overcome obstacles in project completion
- Promote appropriate civic participation

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
Students in the Masters program will demonstrate the outcomes throughout their graduate coursework. However, two specific vehicles will provide measurement opportunities. The comprehensive examination concentrates on content quality, argumentation skills, and communication style. Subsequently, the thesis requirement allows students to demonstrate an integrative grasp of all the outcomes by managing a research project of appropriate complexity that must abide by ethical standards and make a creative contribution to the literature.

Job Prospects for the Master's in Political Science
Masters of Political Science have many options after graduation. Some employment opportunities include:
- Public Policy Analysis
- Education
- Business
- Media
- Law
- Military
- Government

For more information about graduate education in Government, Please see this website:
http://uwf.edu/govt
### Core Courses

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<tr>
<td>POT 5602 Masters of Political Thought</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>POS 6001 The Study of Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>CPO 6006 Seminar in Comparative Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>INR 6007 Seminar in International Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>POS 6045 Seminar in American Politics</td>
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<td>PAD 6275 Political Economy of Public Admin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>POS 6704 Political Science Research Methods</td>
<td>2</td>
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### Knowledge

| Literature | Students should demonstrate a general knowledge of the classic texts in the field areas in which they are choosing to be tested. Scholarly research should be cited throughout student answers. Students should use this research to defend their argument. |
| Concepts   | Students should demonstrate through their answers an understanding of the concepts of political science as a field of study. Students should have enough familiarity with these concepts to appropriately use them in both their written and oral examinations. |
| Theory, Method, and Evidence | Students should be capable of answering general questions on the major theoretical, methodological, and evidentiary fault-lines in the chosen fields. Students should demonstrate familiarity with the principal points made by each side of these disputes, and, if pressed, to make a case for one or the other on theoretical, methodological, or empirical grounds. |

### Argument

| Clarity | Students should make a clear argument, easily stated in a general thesis. This argument should be developed throughout the answer in a clear manner, as well. |
| Cogency | The purpose of exams is not only to demonstrate knowledge of material, but also to demonstrate ability in argument and presentation. For this reason, students should not only attempt to articulate an argument throughout the course of their answers, but also make that argument persuasive to an intellectual audience. |
| Development | Students’ arguments should be logically developed with the substance of the answer used to defend the initial thesis, the arguments and evidence drawn from the body or literature skillfully marshaled in its support. |
| Strength | Students should further develop their argument to demonstrate strength in terms of originality and significance. |

### Style

| Grammar | Students should demonstrate a command of the English language both in written and spoken form. Sentences should be in proper structure and use appropriate punctuation. |
| Structure | The answers should be in proper structure, addressing the question asked through development of an introduction, body, and conclusion. |
| Relevance | Finally, the answers should follow from the question. Students should focus on the issue at hand and limit tangential subject matter. Occasional anecdotes are allowed, but only if they illustrate or make more vivid general patterns in a body of evidence. |
Overview of Thesis
The thesis will include an appropriate theoretical foundation and a scholarly investigation of a significant political problem or question. The problem may be historical, contemporary, or hypothetical. The research will be conducted in accordance with a methodology suitable for studying the question. The method may be quantitative, qualitative, or some combination of these two. The data may be statistical, textual, or both. What is absolutely required is a disciplined approach that involves rigorous thinking, objective examination of the available evidence or texts, and reaching conclusions that are consistent with the weight of the evidence or the logic of the argument. The object is to produce something that, in condensed form, could be presented at a state or regional conference of political scientists. There is no minimum or maximum length, although most theses will run between 50 and 100 pages. For more information on the thesis structure, see the guidelines that follow.

The choice of the thesis topic lies with the student in consultation with the thesis director. Before a student embarks on a thesis, a prospectus has to be approved by a committee of three faculty members. Also, the final product will be defended before a committee of faculty whose composition should, if at all possible, be identical to the first committee. Approval of the prospectus and successful defense of the final product requires the consent of at least three faculty members on the thesis committee. In the case of an unsuccessful prospectus defense, the student will have one more opportunity to defend the prospectus, but this defense must be successfully completed within the semester subsequent to the first defense. In the case of an unsuccessful final thesis defense, the student will have one more opportunity to defend the thesis, but this defense must be successfully completed within the semester subsequent to the first thesis defense.

Committee
The thesis committee must have a minimum of three members. The thesis will be directed by a faculty member who consents to work with the student. The thesis director, who must be a full-time member of the Political Science program faculty, will chair the committee. The director will assume responsibility for guiding the student through the entire thesis cycle, from choosing and refining a topic, preparing a thesis prospectus, doing the bibliographic review, collecting and analyzing data, through writing one or more drafts of the thesis. It is the thesis director who decides when the prospectus is ready for presentation and when the thesis is ready for a defense.

At least one more committee member must be a member of the full-time faculty. The third committee member may be an emeritus faculty, a visiting faculty member, an adjunct faculty, a member of another UWF department, or even a faculty from another institution whose expertise bears on the thesis topic. The selection of committee members outside of UWF is subject to approval by the thesis director.
Thesis Prospectus
The thesis prospectus must contain the following parts:
1. A statement of the research problem or question.
2. A statement on the methodology to be followed in investigating the question as appropriate to the discipline.
3. A description of the data or texts to be analyzed.
4. A comprehensive bibliography to be consulted.
5. A timeline for completion of the thesis.

Thesis Timeline
A thesis normally takes two semesters. In consultation with the thesis director, the student must draw up a timeline consistent with the university thesis calendar. The timeline should have dates for the following milestones:

1. Selection of two or three committee members in addition to the thesis director.
2. Submission of a thesis prospectus to the committee.
3. Meeting of thesis committee to approve, subject to revisions, the thesis prospectus.

Sample Calendar with Suggested Target Dates
A student may work on a thesis at any time during the academic calendar, however it should be noted that a Fall-Spring schedule leaves more time for completion than a Spring-Summer or Summer-Fall schedule.

Fall – Spring Schedule
September – select thesis director and discuss thesis topic
October – select other committee members and defend prospectus
November – if successful defense of prospectus, begin work on thesis
December – schedule second defense of prospectus if first is unsuccessful
January – meet with thesis director to discuss draft of thesis
February – work on revisions and meet with committee members to discuss draft
March – schedule defense of thesis
April – if unsuccessful, work on revisions to re-defend in the summer

Thesis
The thesis shall consist of the following parts:
1. An abstract of no more than 300 words.
2. A statement of the research problem or question.
3. Review of the literature.
4. Description of data or texts and methodology.
5. Data or textual analysis.
6. Presentation of findings.
7. Discussion of results and implications of investigation.
8. Conclusion.
Preparation for Prospectus Defense
The prospectus defense is a panel discussion between the student and the faculty on the thesis committee. This discussion serves to clarify, bolster, and defend the thesis structure and argument provided in the prospectus. Generally, it will be scheduled during the first semester of the student’s work on the thesis.

After scheduling the prospectus defense, but before the actual meeting of the thesis committee, students would be well advised to visit with the individual members of their thesis committee to gain possible early insight into their potential concerns. To prepare for the prospectus defense, students should thoroughly revisit their prospectus, noting areas in need of clarification, elaboration, or amendment.

The prospectus defense begins with a presentation by the student of the thesis topic. After this 10-30 minute presentation, each faculty member on the thesis committee may ask questions of clarification or elaboration of the prospectus. Typically prospectus defenses last up to 2 hours. At the end of the prospectus defense, the student is asked to leave the room so the faculty on the thesis committee may deliberate on passage. The student is then asked to return, and the decision is announced.

Students should treat this phase as a defense of their conceptualization of the project and an opportunity for intellectual discussion. Students should prepare to hear constructive criticism and difficult questioning.

Preparation for Thesis Defense
In many ways, the thesis defense is very similar in form and purpose to the prospectus defense. The thesis defense is a panel discussion between the student and the faculty on the thesis committee. Whereas the prospectus defense is a time for clarification and constructive criticism of the proposed topic, the thesis defense is a discussion to defend the thesis structure, argument, and findings in revised form. Generally, it will be scheduled early enough during the second semester of the student’s work to provide time for a secondary defense if necessary.

The thesis defense begins with a presentation by the student of the thesis research question, mode of analysis, findings, and major conclusions. After this 10-30 minute presentation, each faculty member on the thesis committee may ask questions of clarification or elaboration of the thesis. Typically thesis defenses last up to 2 hours. At the end of the defense, the student is asked to leave the room so the faculty on the thesis committee may deliberate on passage. The student is then asked to return, and the decision is announced.
## Guidelines for and Explanation of Thesis Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>No longer than 300 words.</td>
<td>The purpose of the abstract is to communicate the research question and the major findings of the study in a succinct well-designed paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2-5 pages</td>
<td>The introduction should briefly suggest the theoretical basis for the inquiry, the specific research question, the scope of the project, and expected findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Problem</td>
<td>2-5 pages</td>
<td>The research problem should be phrased in such a way that it can be systematically addressed. It should set up a scholarly investigation of a significant political problem or question. The problem may be historical, contemporary, or hypothetical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>10-20 pages</td>
<td>The literature review should briefly describe the major academic works in political science on the topic as well as suggest to the reader to the areas of the topic left inadequately addressed by the literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data and Methods*</td>
<td>2-5 pages</td>
<td>The data and methods section should present the choice of data sources, including statistical, textual, or both. The methodology also should be presented. The student may choose to use a quantitative or qualitative methodology or some combination of both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>10-25 pages</td>
<td>The analysis section should present the major analytical work of the thesis. For example, if the student chooses to use a quantitative approach, this section would present the major tables, charts, graphs, models or arguments suggested by the data and methods employed. In the case of political theory, this section would offer a textual analysis that supports the contention of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>10-20 pages</td>
<td>The findings section draws the reader’s attention to the major results of the analysis. The student should focus on the important correlations or associations in the data or, or similarities and differences between authors or deductions or inferences drawn from the text(s) These results should be related back to the original research question to either support or refute the initial expectations of the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion/Implications</td>
<td>5-10 pages</td>
<td>In the discussion and implications section, the research findings are discussed in terms of the broader literature on the subject. The contribution of the student’s findings should be highlighted. This section should also draw out the implications of the findings for future research in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>5-10 pages</td>
<td>The conclusion sums up the entire thesis in a concise manner for the reader. The research question is rearticulated. The major findings are summarized. Just as the reader should gain from the abstract and the introduction the purpose and structure of the thesis, so should the reader ascertain this information from the conclusion.</td>
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Total = 50-100pp