

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department of Political Science

Doctor of Philosophy

Ph.D. in Political Science

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1. Introduction

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Political Science has been in existence since 1968. Dating back around 10 years (2006) there was a much larger faculty and the PhD program enrolled many more students than it does currently. At the last major program review in 2012, it became clear that our graduate program enrollments (MA and PhD combined) were much higher than peer institutions, especially given the decreased size of the Department's faculty. The norm at peer institutions was about two graduate students enrolled for every one faculty member. The Department at NIU had a ratio of over five students to one faculty member. Given the recent freeze on faculty hiring, it was determined at that time that we needed to reduce enrollments. More specifically, it was established that the size of the graduate programs were preventing the level of faculty-student interaction necessary to provide students with adequate training. Despite faculty shortages in International Relations and Political Theory, demand for the PhD program has remained high and in the past four years we have routinely turned away about 65 percent of students who wished to enroll in the PhD program. In the past five years we have admitted an average of seven (7) students each fall and have stopped admitting students entirely in the spring semester. There are currently 34 students enrolled in our PhD program and the Department has 12 tenure-track faculty members and no full-time instructors. The current student/faculty ratio is still too high.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Political Science requires students to successfully pass candidacy exams in their primary and secondary subfields of interest (these being International Relations, Comparative Politics, Public Administration, American Government, and Political Theory), defend a doctoral thesis prospectus, and then successfully defend said thesis.

Learning Outcomes

Students in the Ph.D. program in Political Science will achieve the following learning outcomes.

1. Students will demonstrate competency in research methodology necessary for conducting original scholarship in the field of Political Science.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to competently write in a manner consistent with professional norms in the discipline.
3. Students will demonstrate both substantive and theoretical knowledge in at least one subfield of Political Science.
4. Students will demonstrate teaching effectiveness sufficient for employment at institutions of higher education.
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to submit/present their research in a professional forum.
6. Students will complete a doctoral thesis that:
 - a. Demonstrates the ability to conduct original scholarship and make a meaningful contribution to the field of Political Science
 - b. Demonstrates their preparedness for employment in either the public or private sectors.

3. Curriculum Map

Course	PhD Student Learning Outcomes 1-6					
	1. Students will demonstrate competency in research methodology necessary for conducting original scholarship in the field of Political Science.	2. Students will demonstrate the ability to competently write in a manner consistent with professional norms in the discipline	3. Students will demonstrate both substantive and theoretical knowledge in at least one subfield of Political Science.	4. Students will demonstrate teaching effectiveness sufficient for employment at institutions of higher education.	5. Students will demonstrate the ability to submit/present their research in a professional forum.	6. Students will complete a doctoral thesis that: a. Demonstrates the ability to conduct original scholarship and make a meaningful contribution to the field of Political Science b. Demonstrates their preparedness for employment in either the public or private sectors
POLS 600			B			
POLS 601	D					
POLS 602	B					
POLS 603			B			
POLS 605			D			
POLS 606			D			
POLS 607			D			
POLS 608			D			
POLS 609			D			
POLS 610			D			
POLS 611			D			
POLS 612			D			
POLS 618			D			
POLS 619			D			
POLS 620	D		D			
POLS 630			B			
POLS 631			D			
POLS 632			D			
POLS 633			D			
POLS 637			D			
POLS 641	B					P

Course	PhD Student Learning Outcomes 1-6					
	1. Students will demonstrate competency in research methodology necessary for conducting original scholarship in the field of Political Science.	2. Students will demonstrate the ability to competently write in a manner consistent with professional norms in the discipline	3. Students will demonstrate both substantive and theoretical knowledge in at least one subfield of Political Science.	4. Students will demonstrate teaching effectiveness sufficient for employment at institutions of higher education.	5. Students will demonstrate the ability to submit/present their research in a professional forum.	6. Students will complete a doctoral thesis that: a. Demonstrates the ability to conduct original scholarship and make a meaningful contribution to the field of Political Science b. Demonstrates their preparedness for employment in either the public or private sectors
POLS 642	D					P
POLS 643	D					P
POLS 645	D					P
POLS 650			B			
POLS 651			D			
POLS 652			B			
POLS 653			D			
POLS 654			D			
POLS 655			D			
POLS 660	D		B			
POLS 661			D			
POLS 662			B			
POLS 663			D			
POLS 664			D			
POLS 665			D			
POLS 666			D			
POLS 667			D			
POLS 668			D			
POLS 669			D			
POLS 670			D			
POLS 672			D			
POLS 673			D			
POLS 675			D			

Course	PhD Student Learning Outcomes 1-6					
	1. Students will demonstrate competency in research methodology necessary for conducting original scholarship in the field of Political Science.	2. Students will demonstrate the ability to competently write in a manner consistent with professional norms in the discipline	3. Students will demonstrate both substantive and theoretical knowledge in at least one subfield of Political Science.	4. Students will demonstrate teaching effectiveness sufficient for employment at institutions of higher education.	5. Students will demonstrate the ability to submit/present their research in a professional forum.	6. Students will complete a doctoral thesis that: a. Demonstrates the ability to conduct original scholarship and make a meaningful contribution to the field of Political Science b. Demonstrates their preparedness for employment in either the public or private sectors
POLS 680			B			
POLS 681			D			
POLS 682			D			
POLS 683			D			
POLS 684			D			
POLS 685			D			
POLS 686			D			
POLS 687			D			
POLS 688			D			
POLS 690	D	D			D	
POLS 691				D		
POLS 692				P		
POLS 696		D			D	
POLS 699		P				P
POLS 701			D			
POLS 702			D			
POLS 750			D			
POLS 796					D	
POLS 798			D			
POLS 799A	D	D			D	P
POLS 799B	P	P			D	P

Note. Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.

4. Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
<p>Presentation of original research at an academic conference/Academic publication. (Because both conference presentations and publishing require students to produce written work based on original research they are being lumped together as a single assessment tool).</p>	<p>Each student must present a piece of original research at an academic conference at least once, and/or publish at least one piece of original research during their time in the program. We consider “publishing” to include peer-reviewed journal articles but also chapters in edited volumes, book reviews, and opinion editorials if these appear in major newspapers and if the editorial is informed by the student’s original research.</p>	<p>To present original research and/or publish original research</p>	<p>The department’s goal is to have 25% of students each year participating at conferences or publishing.</p>	<p>Over the duration of the PhD course of study.</p>	<p>Graduate Program Coordinator.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 5.</p>
<p>Receipt of professional awards or scholarships related to academic accomplishments or original research. We do not count Department funding in this category, but do count awards obtained through Department controlled endowments</p>	<p>Measures the extent to which the broader academic community acknowledges the accomplishments of current PhD students.</p>	<p>This is a little out of the students hands; however, the goal is for students to receive an award or some form external recognition of their academic prowess</p>	<p>The Department’s goal is for 10% of our current PhD students to receive outside recognition of some kind each year.</p>	<p>Over the duration of the PhD course of study.</p>	<p>Graduate Program Coordinator.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.</p>

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Candidacy Exams	Students must pass an exam in both their primary and secondary subfields of interest.	All students (100%) must pass both their exams to continue in the program after two attempts.	The program target is for 100% of students to pass after the second attempt.	Evaluation occurs shortly after student takes each exam.	Graduate faculty	2, 3.
Doctoral Thesis Rubric (Appendix A)	Each committee member at the doctoral defense completes a rubric assessing students in seven categories: Topic Originality, Literature Review, Research Implementation, Organization, Writing Quality, Presentation/Defense, and Prospective Academic. A 0 to 4 scale is used with each number corresponding to a specific level of proficiency. 0 is lowest, 4 highest.	Students must receive a score of 3 or 4 in at least 5 of 6 (83%) categories. The final category assesses likelihood of being a successful academic.	All students (100%) must receive scores of 3 or 4 in at least 5 of 6 (83%) categories. Additionally, the goal is to have 80% percent of graduating PhD students receive either a 3 or 4 in the final category, indicating that committee members believe the student is likely to be successful in the academia.	Doctoral thesis defense.	Graduate faculty serving on the doctoral committee.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
Graduate Instructor Form (Appendix B)	Students are evaluated on their ability to teach at an institution of higher education. Along with written comments, students are assessed on a 4-point scale ranging from Poor to Excellent across 10 teaching-related categories.	Students must receive a rating of either Good or Excellent in 8 of 10 categories (80%).	All students (100%) must receive ratings of either Good or Excellent in 8 of 10 categories (80%).	Each time the student teaches their own section.	Graduate faculty.	3, 4.

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form	Students are evaluated on their abilities to assist faculty in the teaching of their courses and other responsibilities the faculty member may assign. Along with written comments, students are assessed on a 4-point scale ranging from Poor to Excellent across 5 teaching related activities.	Students must receive a rating of either Good or Excellent in 4 of 5 categories.	All students (100%) must receive ratings of either Good or Excellent in 4 of 5 categories (80%).	Each time the student assists a member of the graduate faculty.	Graduate faculty.	3, 4.
<p><i>Note.</i> ^a Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome. ^b Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.</p>						

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	1. Students will demonstrate competency in research methodology necessary for conducting original scholarship in the field of Political Science.	2. Students will demonstrate the ability to competently write in a manner consistent with professional norms in the discipline.	3. Students will demonstrate both substantive and theoretical knowledge in at least one subfield of Political Science.	4. Students will demonstrate teaching effectiveness sufficient for employment at institutions of higher education.	5. Students will demonstrate the ability to submit/present their research in a professional forum.	6. Students will complete a doctoral thesis that: a. Demonstrates the ability to conduct original research, b. Demonstrates their preparedness for employment in either the public or private sector.
	Presentation of original research at an academic conference/Academic publication.	F, D				F, D
Receipt of professional awards or scholarships related to academic accomplishments or original research.		F, D			F, D	
Qualifying (Candidacy) Exams	S, D		S, D			
Doctoral Thesis Rubric		S, D	S, D			S, D
Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form			F, D	F, D		
Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form				F, D		

Note. F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment. See the paragraph above for an explanation of each type of assessment.