

POLITICAL SCIENCE, MA

Banner Code: PP-MA-POS

Academic Advising

560 Van Metre Hall
Mason Square Campus

336 Aquia Building
Fairfax Campus

Website: schar.gmu.edu

The Master of Arts in Political Science program prepares students for advanced work in political science, teaching, and research about government; a career in government and politics; and work in domestic and international nongovernmental organizations.

The program is made up of four core courses in political science and completion of either a concentration in international security or a broader field of specialization in American government and politics, international relations, or comparative politics. Students choosing a specialization have interdisciplinary opportunities to take up to 9 credits in related fields such as history or public policy.

The master's degree is the first step in an engaging and stimulating career. Students develop a deeper understanding of political ideas and institutions, more sophisticated research skills, a better grasp of the intricacies of governments abroad, and a deeper knowledge of the complexities of international politics. This degree can lead to a career teaching about government; working with legislative bodies, government agencies, and international organizations; or doing research and writing about politics and government.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Requirements

See Graduate Admission Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) for general information on graduate admission to George Mason University. Specific information on application requirements and deadlines may be found with Schar Admissions (<http://schar.gmu.edu/admissions/>).

Completed applications for fall and spring semesters are reviewed on a rolling basis, with late applications considered on a space-available basis. Students may be admitted for non-degree study and apply a limited number of credits toward the master's degree should they choose to apply to the degree program later, in accordance with university policy.

Policies

Termination from Program

Students admitted to a Schar program will be terminated from Schar upon receiving one grade of F and are no longer eligible to take courses offered by the Schar school. Per university regulation, students are terminated from the university after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades in graduate courses. For

policies governing all graduate degrees, see Graduate Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 36

Students should develop an education plan with their advisors that lists the courses they plan to take. The plan is approved by the student's advisor. Students may include courses from other units to complement their field of specialization; they should reflect the ideas, institutions, or processes of contemporary governance.

Students who wish to begin a career in government and politics or to alter their current career path in government and politics are encouraged to take a 3-credit internship in their area of interest. Internships can be arranged through the Schar school.

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
GOVT 510	American Government and Politics	3
GOVT 520	Political Theory	3
GOVT 530	Comparative Politics	3
GOVT 540	International Relations	3
Total Credits		12

Methods Courses

Code	Title	Credits
GOVT 500	The Scientific Method and Research Design	3
POGO 511	Introductory Data Analysis for Policy and Government	3
Total Credits		6

Concentration or a Specialization

Code	Title	Credits
Select three to five courses in the concentration or a specialization		9-15
Total Credits		9-15

Students complete the degree by completing additional coursework in the concentration or one of the specializations.

Concentration in International Security (INLS)

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
GOVT 744	Foundations of Security Studies	3
GOVT 745	International Security	3
Electives		
Select two to three courses from the following:		6-9
GOVT 741	Advanced Seminar in International Politics	
BIOD 621	Ethics and International Security	

BIOD 622	Negotiating in the International Arena	
BIOD 705	Intelligence: Theory and Practice	
BIOD 706	Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons Policy and Security	
BIOD 709	Nonproliferation and Arms Control	
BIOD 722	Examining Terrorist Groups	
BIOD 725	Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction	
BIOD 760	National Security Technology and Policy	
Total Credits		12-15

American Government and Politics Specialization

Code	Title	Credits
Required Field Seminars		
Select two field seminars from the following:		6
GOVT 603	Seminar in the Courts and Constitutionalism	
GOVT 604	Seminar on Congress and Legislative Behavior	
GOVT 605	Seminar on the Presidency	
GOVT 706	Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations	
Electives		
Select one to three electives.		3-9
Total Credits		9-15

Comparative Politics Specialization

Code	Title	Credits
Required Field Seminars		
GOVT 631	Seminar in Comparative Politics and Institutions	3
GOVT 731	Advanced Seminar in Comparative Politics	3
Electives		
Select one to three electives		3-9
Total Credits		9-15

International Relations Specialization

Code	Title	Credits
Required Field Seminars		
Select two field seminars from the following:		6
GOVT 741	Advanced Seminar in International Politics	
GOVT 743	International Political Economy	
GOVT 745	International Security	
Electives		
Select one to three electives.		3-9
Total Credits		9-15

Electives

Code	Title	Credits
Select up to two electives. ¹		0-6
Total Credits		0-6

1

The number of electives students have will depend on how many credits they took in the concentration or field of specialization and whether they choose a 3-credit project or a 6-credit thesis. Students choose the remaining credits required for the degree, if any, from other courses in Schar, including an internship, additional courses in the field of specialization, or from course work offered by other units.

3 Credits of Project or 6 Credits of Thesis

A project or thesis is required for the MA in political science. Students who choose to do a project take 3 credits of GOVT 798 Political Science Research Project linked to an advanced specialty course and produce a final research project. Students who choose to do a thesis should be aware of the policies governing theses. They must follow the enrollment policy of the university and, once enrolled in GOVT 799 Political Science Thesis, must maintain continuous enrollment as specified in AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9-3>). A thesis director and a committee of two additional faculty members appointed by the school read and approve the thesis. Students should make arrangements for doing a project or thesis with their advisor.

Code	Title	Credits
Select one from the following:		
GOVT 798	Political Science Research Project	3-6
GOVT 799	Political Science Thesis	
Total Credits		3-6

Accelerated Master's

Bachelor's Degree (any)/Political Science, Accelerated MA

Overview

Highly-qualified undergraduates in any major may apply to the accelerated MA degree in political science. If accepted, students will be able to earn a bachelor's degree in their current undergraduate major and a Schar School master's degree within a reduced timeframe. More information on bachelor's/accelerated master's programs may be found in AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degrees (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7>).

Students in an accelerated degree program must fulfill all university requirements for the master's degree. See AP.6.9 Requirements for Master's Degrees. (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-9>)

Admission

Please see the Graduate Admissions Policies for general information on graduate admissions to George Mason University. Information specific to the accelerated master's program may be found on the Schar School BAM website.

To be considered for this accelerated master's program, applicants must have completed a minimum of 60 credits, including 12 GOVT credits, and have a minimum GPA of 3.50 in all coursework applied to the degree.

Accelerated Option Requirements

While undergraduate students, accelerated master's students may complete up to eighteen graduate credits of which twelve may be counted toward both the bachelor's and master's degrees. Remaining credits may be held as reserve graduate credit and count only toward the master's degree. The courses are chosen from GOVT 500 The Scientific Method and Research Design, GOVT 510 American Government and Politics, GOVT 520 Political Theory, GOVT 530 Comparative Politics, GOVT 540 International Relations and POGO 511 Introductory Data Analysis for Policy and Government. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 in these courses and in coursework applied to their major.

Upon completion and conferral of the undergraduate degree in the semester indicated in the application, students must submit the Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Transition Form to apply credits to the master's degree. Students must begin their master's program the semester immediately following conferral of the undergraduate degree (excluding summer).