The MA 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 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 nondegree 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 an Schar program will be terminated from Schar upon receiving one grade of F and are no longer eligible to take courses in Schar. 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.

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
- 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
- GOVT 500 The Scientific Method and Research Design 3
- GOVT 511 Problem Solving and Data Analysis I 3
Total Credits 6

Concentration or a Specialization
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)
Required Courses
- GOVT 744 Foundations of Security Studies 3
- GOVT 745 International Security 3

Electives
Select one to three courses from the following: 3-9
- GOVT 640 Strategic Responses to Terrorism: Coordinated Decision Making
- GOVT 641 Global Governance
- GOVT 741 Advanced Seminar in International Politics
- GOVT 843 Diplomacy
- 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 9-15

American Government and Politics Specialization
Required Field Seminars
Select two field seminars from the following: 6
- GOVT 603 Seminar in the Courts and Constitutional Law
- 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
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
Required Field Seminars
Select two field seminars from the following: 6
- GOVT 641 Global Governance
- 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
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 SPGIA, including an internship, additional courses in the field of specialization, or from coursework 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. 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.

Select one from the following: 3-6
- GOVT 798 Political Science Research Project
- 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 chosen major and a MA in Political Science with a reduced number of overall credits and within a reduced time frame, sometimes five years. More information on bachelor’s/accelerated master’s programs may be found in AP.6.7 Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Degrees.

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.

Admission
See Graduate Admission Policies for general information on graduate admission to George Mason University. Specific information on application requirements and deadlines for the Political Science master’s program may be found on the Schar website (http://schar.gmu.edu/programs/undergraduate-degrees/accelerated-masters-programs).

To be considered for this accelerated master’s program, applicants must have completed a minimum of 75 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 complete two graduate courses (six credits) that may be counted toward both the bachelor’s and master’s degrees. In addition, students may take another two courses (six credits) to 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. 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).