

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

Overview and Purpose

The Political Science Departmental Honors Program is designed to provide outstanding Political Science majors with the opportunity to experience a more in-depth exposure to research in the discipline than ordinarily would be possible in normal course offerings. It is also seen as an opportunity to foster independent and creative work by students. These goals are achieved through an intensive research project in the form of an Honors Thesis conducted over the period of one to three semesters and carrying up to 10 semester credits. This work is in addition to the normal requirements of the major and students who successfully complete the program will receive recognition on their academic records, as well as in the commencement program.

Criteria for Admission to the Program

Political Science majors who wish to be considered for Departmental Honors in Political Science must demonstrate clearly superior academic performance and capability. The following serve as admission criteria:

1. A 3.50 GPA in courses offered in Political Science;
2. An overall GPA of 3.50 or better;
3. Successful completion of POLI 260 (Research Methodology) with a grade of at least B+;
4. Recommendation by two Political Science faculty members; and
5. Completion of at least five of nine courses (20 of the 36 credits) required for the Political Science major.

If all of these criteria have been met by the student, then the student will be admitted to the Program upon the completion of the Application Form and Thesis Committee Request Form. The Application Form will indicate that the student has met the five conditions stated above. Application should ideally be made before the 7th week of the semester prior to the beginning of the research study. Normally, application for entry into the program will be made in the junior year.

Selection of Study Supervisor, Thesis Topic and Committee

Upon acceptance to the program, the student should consult with faculty in his/her area of interest to select a research study supervisor, under whose direction the research will be conducted. Working with the study supervisor, the student should identify a thesis topic and then select two additional individuals to serve on the thesis committee. At least one of these persons must be from outside the Political Science Department. A copy of this form shall be submitted to the Director of the Honors Program.

Probationary Period

The first half of the initial semester shall be considered a probationary period during which the student will conduct a literature search, and in conjunction with the study supervisor, identify resources and data. The objective of this probationary period is the preparation of a Thesis Prospectus for presentation to the Thesis Committee. This shall be due at the end of the 6th week. At that time, the Thesis Committee will meet for the Defense of the Prospectus. If, at that time, it is the consensus of the committee that the Prospectus demonstrates a reasonable expectation for a successful project, the student will be accepted as a Political Science Departmental Honors Candidate. The student candidate

may be requested to revise and resubmit the Prospectus prior to the committee giving approval to the project. If a student fails to submit an acceptable Prospectus by the end of the first semester, the committee will take all work completed up to that point and assign a letter grade. The amount of credit in this case will be from 0-4 semester credits. If this occurs, the student shall then be dropped from the program and will not be eligible to graduate with Honors in Political Science.

Completion of Research

For the remainder of the first semester, second semester and, if applicable, the third semester, the student will be required to complete the research project under the direction of the study supervisor. Since the final grade for the project will be awarded after its completion, interim grades will be either satisfactory progress (X) or fail (F).

Upon completion of the research, the Thesis Committee shall convene for the defense of the Thesis. Results of the research will be evaluated by the Thesis Committee using all of the following criteria:

1. The written Thesis submitted in an acceptable format (APSA style), with one copy submitted to each Committee member and two copies submitted to the Department Chairperson;
2. A grade of at least A- on the Thesis;
3. An oral defense of the Thesis; and
4. Presentation of the Thesis in an appropriate forum (e.g., a Political Science Department Colloquium or at a professional political science conference).

After the evaluation of the Thesis and oral defense have been completed, the Thesis Committee will assign a final letter grade to the Honors project. The Thesis Committee will notify the Political Science Department Chairperson of the completion of the evaluation process and the letter grade awarded. The Chairperson will then instruct the Registrar to denote on the student's permanent transcript, 'Departmental Honors in Political Science' and to record the appropriate grade. The Registrar will also list departmental honors with the student's name in the commencement program.

Submission of Information to the Honors Committee

Once the honors project is completed, the following information shall be submitted to the Honors Committee by the Department Chairperson:

1. A copy of the Thesis and the date it was completed;
2. The date of the oral exam;
3. The date and format for the presentation of the Thesis; and
4. The final grade awarded for the project.