

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Political Science Graduate Student Handbook**  
**2017-2018**



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Graduate Regulations are available on the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' site:  
<http://grad.uwo.ca/>

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# MA Program

## General Requirements

- The MA is three full-time semesters (Fall, Winter and Summer)
- There are two options:
  - MRP option: 3 courses in Fall, 3 courses in Winter, MRP in Summer
  - Thesis option: 3 courses in Fall, 1 course and thesis in Winter, thesis and oral defense in summer
- To be eligible for the thesis option, students must achieve a Fall term average of at least 83% - there are absolutely no exceptions to this minimum requirement
- We strongly encourage the MRP (MA Research Paper) option
- To remain in the program and progress to the MRP phase, MA students must achieve an overall course average of 75% assessed at the end of the Winter term. They must also have no individual course grade below 70%. If a student receives an individual course grade below 70%, they may be allowed to repeat the course at the Graduate Chair's discretion.

## MRP and Thesis Supervisors

- Each faculty member will only take on 2 MA students per year
- Students should approach potential supervisors early in the Fall semester
- Students must inform faculty if they intend to undertake the thesis option
- A list of faculty and their research interests are available on the Department website

## MRP Option Requirements and Timeline

### Fall Term

Students will take 3 courses:

ONE **PS9501A** - Scope and Methods of Political Science

TWO Graduate courses (only one special topic in total can be applied toward degree)

- **September:** See Western Academic Calendar for specific date classes begin
- **Mid-October:** SSHRC scholarship applications due for those considering a PhD

## Winter Term

Students will take 3 courses and begin work on their MRP:

THREE Graduate courses (cannot take a special topic if one was taken in Fall term)

- **15 February:** Email Teresa McLauchlan to confirm the name of your supervisor and provide the topic of your MRP
- **30 April:** Give your supervisor a 1 page outline of your MRP

## Summer Term

The summer term is a full-time term used for the completion of the MRP

- **15 May:** Give your supervisor a detailed bibliography for the MRP
- **Mid/late-June:** First draft of MRP due to supervisor (this should be a complete draft with bibliography, notes etc)
- **Last Tuesday in July:** Final version of MRP emailed to Teresa McLauchlan as one document (If the student misses this deadline, they will likely have to register for the Fall term and pay Fall term tuition)
- **Last Tuesday in July:** MA students in the GTA offices (SSC 4110) must vacate

## MRP Content and Grading

The MRP is a large essay or literature review of approx. **50-55 pages of text**. This is a significant undertaking and students must begin working on it during the Winter term.

- The precise format will be determined in consultation with the supervisor
- The MRP will be graded by the supervisor and by a second reader
- The MRP grade will be the average of the supervisor's and the second reader's grades
- Examples of recent MRPs are available from Teresa McLauchlan and students are encouraged to consult them to better understand the content and format requirements
- The MA Research Paper is intended to give the student an opportunity to spend an extended period of time researching, reflecting critically upon, and writing about an important question, issue, or idea and a related body of academic literature. It involves working in a one-to-one relationship with a supervising faculty member, within specific project boundaries that are compatible with the time constraints of a one-year graduate program. The aim is to advance the student's competence at research and enhance their skills at critical analysis, laying the foundation for significant research work within or beyond academia.

- The MA Research Paper is not intended to be a shorter *version* of an MA Thesis. The Paper should be a critical review of a body of literature in political science. This involves, first, identifying an area of study. The best way to proceed is by framing a question, and then organizing the Paper as an extended exploration of this question. There is no expectation that the student then proceed to state a position and defend it systematically over the course of the document, or develop hypotheses and subject them to testing. The question should set out an area of study to be addressed on the following terms:
  1. The student should develop a thorough bibliography and read extensively in order to establish a high level of competence in the area;
  2. Identify the intellectual stakes in the identified area of study, and organize the literature;
  3. Attempt a critical appraisal, distinguishing among different general approaches and/or methods, contrasting the conclusions that various individual scholars or schools of thought have reached, showing how and why they are vulnerable to criticism, and offering an assessment of the literature in terms of its ability to contribute to the guiding question;
  4. The student may complete the MA Research Paper by providing either a statement of preference or position, or by developing a series of thoughts as to how work within this field may best proceed.
- The MA Research Paper should: establish a question of significance, establish and examine a broad and well-selected bibliography that sheds light on the question, gives shape to this body of literature by identifying crucial themes and points of disagreement, and engages in a careful critical consideration of the literature in both specific and general terms.
- In cases where a somewhat different approach to the MRP seems particularly appropriate either to the area of focus or to the student's needs, the MRP can be adjusted accordingly. This altered arrangement requires a brief written statement of the changes to the MRP template, to be agreed upon and signed by the student and the faculty supervisor.
- Papers not submitted on the Last Tuesday in July will be assigned an "INC". Continued Fall term registration will be activated. The INC will be changed to a grade if the work is completed by the grade submission deadline for the term following the one in which the INC was awarded. **If a grade is not submitted by this deadline, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies regulations mandate that the INC becomes a Failure.**

## MA Thesis Option Requirements and Timeline

### Fall Term

Students will take 3 courses:

ONE **PS9501A** - Scope and Methods of Political Science  
TWO Graduate courses (no special topic courses can be taken)

- **September:** See Western Academic Calendar for specific date classes begin
- **Mid-October:** SSHRC scholarship applications due for those considering a PhD
- **15 October:** Students considering the MA Thesis Option must have a supervisor in place and must inform the Graduate Chair of their intent by email
- **1 December:** Deadline for submitting thesis application and initial proposal to the Graduate Chair.

### Winter Term

Students will take 1 course and work on their thesis:

ONE Graduate course (no special topic courses can be taken)

- **30 January:** Deadline for submitting detailed thesis proposal to the Graduate Chair. The detailed proposal format (available at the end of this handbook and on the Department's graduate webpage) must be completed by the student and signed by the supervisor.

### Summer Term

The summer term is a full-time term used for the completion of the thesis and the oral examination.

- **Early June:** First draft of thesis due to supervisor (this should be a complete draft with bibliography, notes etc)
- **Last Tuesday in July:** MA students in the GTA offices (SSC 4110) must vacate
- **1 August (latest):** Final draft of thesis is submitted for preliminary examination. For submission instructions, please see <http://grad.uwo.ca>. Your supervisor-approved, draft must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the oral examination: 1 August being the last possible date to allow for an oral exam before the end of the summer term. If the student misses this deadline, they will have to register for the Fall term and pay the tuition.
- **24 August (latest):** Oral examination completed by this date

## **Thesis Content**

- The MA thesis is a significant scholarly work of **approximately 100 pages of text**.
- However, MA theses vary greatly in scope, length, approach and method and the precise format will be determined in consultation with the supervisor. A thesis of less than 50 pages is unlikely to provide sufficient evidence of research to be successful, while one greatly in excess of 100 pages is likely to reflect either poor organization or an inappropriate choice of topic.
- Examples of recent MA theses are available from Teresa McLauchlan and students are encouraged to consult them to better understand the content and format requirements.
- The thesis could be an analysis of an event, an institution or a concept; a case study in the operation of government; a critical discussion of a body of literature in Political Science; a statistical analysis; an examination of a particular theorist; a comparison of theories, cases or institutions; or a discussion of a proposed institutional reform.
- The important thing is to define a topic clearly, to ensure that it is manageable and to avoid the temptation to stray from the subject. MA theses do not need to make an original contribution to theory but students must provide some element of their own above a mere review of the literature.
- You are strongly urged to select a thesis topic related to one or more of your course work areas. While a thesis which is merely a compilation of term papers would be unacceptable, you are encouraged to build the thesis on one of your term papers.

## **Thesis Format and Regulations**

- See the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) website at: [http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/8.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html)

## **Thesis Grading and Oral Examination**

- The MA thesis is a graded on a pass/fail basis.
- The thesis must first be approved for examination by the thesis supervisor.
- The supervisor will then organize an Examination Board consisting of:
  - 2 other faculty members of the Department of Political Science
  - 1 other faculty member from another Department or Faculty (it cannot be another member of the Political Science Department who is also cross-listed with another Department)
  - All examiners must be members of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – generally all full-time faculty)
- The supervisor must determine and confirm the members of the Examination Board, schedule the oral examination and submit the names and date to the Graduate Chair by 31 March
- The final, supervisor-approved, draft must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the oral examination
- The oral exam is normally 1.5-2 hours and generally proceeds as follows:
  - The chair will introduce everyone and ask the student to leave so that the



- examiners can determine the order of questioning
- The student can make a short 5-10 minute presentation on the thesis. This can combine summary, process, strengths and weaknesses as determined by the supervisor.
  - There will be a first round of questions and answers where each of the 3 examiners has 10-15 minutes of Q & A time. There will then be a second round of questions where each of the 3 examiners has 5-10 minutes of Q & A time. The precise number of rounds and Q & A time can vary and will be determined by the examiners at the start of the examination board.
  - The student will then be asked to leave the room while the examiners discuss the thesis and the oral defense. They will then vote to determine a pass or fail and if any revisions are required. The thesis and the oral exam are considered together (i.e. the student cannot pass one and fail the other).
  - A signed original Certificate of Examination must be completed at the end of the exam. If revisions are required, only the supervisor withholds a signature.

### **Final Submission of the Thesis After Successful Examination**

- Do the required revisions, obtain the final approval from your Supervisor and have your Certificate of Examination signed
- Upload your final thesis to Scholarship@Western. Ensure to upload to your existing ETD file as a revised thesis. DO NOT create a new submission
- Drop off to SGPS your signed Certificate of Examination
- Your thesis will be checked electronically. If revisions need to be made an email will be sent outlining the corrections needed and you will upload your thesis again.
- Common Errors:
  - Title page: should read The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
  - Certificate of Examination: NO LONGER APPEARS IN THE THESIS
  - List preliminary pages on Table of Contents
  - Text begins as Page 1
  - Appendices: DO NOT include any signatures, email address, phone numbers, addresses.
  - CV – DO NOT include any contact information
  - If you have any questions please contact Krystyna Locke X83914 or [klocke2@uwo.ca](mailto:klocke2@uwo.ca)

# PhD Program

## General Requirements

- The PhD is a 4 year program where the student must successfully complete the following requirements:
  - 3 courses per term in both the Fall and Winter terms of Year 1 including:
    - 2 Graduate courses in a first field
    - 2 Graduate courses in a second field
    - 1 **PS9501A** -Scope and Methods in Political Science course
    - 1 elective course (may be a special topic)
  - 2 PhD Comprehensive Exams
    - 1 exam in a first field
    - 1 exam in a second field
  - Cognate Skill
    - second language course or proficiency test (i.e. French for Canadian Politics or relevant regional language for Comparative Politics or IR) **or**
    - PS 9591 (relevant prerequisites may be required by the instructor prior to taking this course)
  - Dissertation
    - Dissertation proposal - orally defend proposal to your committee
    - Dissertation: an approximate book length original scholarly work
    - Public lecture on the dissertation
    - Orally defend the dissertation before an examination board

## Course Requirements and Timeline

### Annual

- **30 September:** Fall Progress Report due for all Year 2 students and above
- **Mid-October:** SSHRC scholarship applications are due
- **February 1<sup>st</sup>** OGS scholarship applications are due
- **31 March:** Winter Progress Report due for all Year 2 students and above

### Year 1 - Fall Term

Students will take 3 courses:

1. **PS9501A** - Scope and Methods in Political Science Course
2. Graduate Course in a first field: Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory or Urban Politics
3. Graduate Course in a second field: Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory or Urban Politics

### Year 1 - Winter Term

4. Graduate Course in a first field: Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory or \*Urban Politics reading course
5. Graduate Course in a second field: Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory or \*Urban Politics reading course
6. Elective Course: Graduate Course or Special Topic

- Confirm one supervisor for each field by the end of March.
- Meet with both of your comp supervisors to discuss the study schedule and preparation requirements. In May, the exact dates of your comps will be set. The written comps occur between September 1-30 and you will orally defend your comps prior to October 15.

### Year 1 - Summer Term

- The summer term is a full-time term used to prepare for the comprehensive exams and to begin initial work on the dissertation proposal
- Preparation for the comprehensive exams is similar to conducting 3 full reading courses

### Year 2 – Fall Term

- Write comprehensive exams (September 1-30 for written exams)
- Complete comprehensive oral exam by 15 October
- Continue working on the dissertation proposal
- If needed, complete PS9715A

### Year 2 – Winter, Summer, Year 3 - Fall Term, Winter Term

- Complete PS9591B – Quantitative Methods – cognate skill
- **31 March:** Progress Report
- **30 April:** dissertation proposal – submit/defend final dissertation proposal
- **30 September:** Progress Report

### Additional Terms

- Present dissertation proposal in PhD seminar for Departmental feedback (recommended but not required)
- Complete ethics review for field research (if necessary)
- Submit Fall and Winter Progress reports to Teresa McLauchlan each year
- Complete dissertation by giving a public lecture and orally defending thesis

## Progression Requirements

**To remain in the program**, and unless granted a formal extension by the Graduate Chair, all PhD students must meet the following criteria:

### Year 1 - Coursework

To remain in the program and progress to the comprehensive exam phase, PhD students must achieve an overall course average of 80% assessed at the end of the Winter term in Year 1. They must also have no individual course grade below 70%. If a student receives an individual course grade below 70%, they may be allowed repeat the course at the Graduate Chair's discretion.

### Year 2 – Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation Proposal

- Successful completion of the 2 Comprehensive Exams, including orally defending by 15 October.
- Complete first Progress Report by March 31 – **advise on plan to complete cognate skill**
- Submit draft dissertation proposal to thesis supervisor and committee members who should read, and comment on and signal readiness to be orally defended (example format available at the end of this handbook)
- Submit and orally defend final thesis proposal to supervisor and committee by 30 April

### Year 3+

- Successfully completed cognate skill
- Satisfactory progress on the thesis as determined by the supervisor

### Fall and Winter Progress Reports

All PhD students past their comprehensive exams must submit a PhD Progress Report in the Fall and Spring of each academic year using the standardized template form (available at the end of this handbook). The reports are due the last day of September and March each year.

If a student has made unsatisfactory progress during any reporting period, without good reason, they may be required to meet/communicate with the Graduate Chair and/or members of the Graduate Committee to determine a work plan, with specific deliverables, for the next reporting period. The Graduate Chair will provide the student with a written assessment of their progress and any expectations and deliverables required for the next reporting period. If the student makes unsatisfactory progress, without good reason and as determined by the supervisor, for a second reporting period, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

## **Comprehensive Exams**

The purpose of the comprehensive examinations is to ensure that students obtain a broad and deep understanding of two specific fields within the discipline of political science. The direct aim is neither merely to review the literature in preparation for the dissertation stage of the degree, nor simply to ensure teaching competence in the relevant subfield. However, a well-directed course of readings and study is likely to achieve both goals.

## **Required Coursework and Field Specialization**

All coursework must be completed before comprehensive examinations are taken. In order to take a comprehensive examination in two fields, the student must take the graduate courses offered by the department. The two fields are to be selected from the following list:

- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory
- Urban Politics

## **The Examinations**

- Each student obtains two comprehensive exam supervisors.
- No later than May 15th of the first year, the supervisors will convene a meeting with the student to organize the preparation for the comprehensive examination. The written examinations normally take place before September 30. The oral examination/defense will be held no later than October 15<sup>th</sup> of Year 2.
- The written portion of the examinations will be “closed-book,” i.e. no notes or other sources may be consulted. The proctored examinations will take place in a seminar room during the department’s office hours from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- Each of the two examinations will be four hours and have three sections. Students will write 3 essay answers. Faculty members from each field have established a list of common comprehensive exam questions. The first section of the exam will include one common question for all students writing that field exam at that time. The first question will be chosen by the Graduate Chair from the common field list and will be approved by the Graduate Committee. There will be no choice. The second section will include three essay questions as selected by the student’s exam supervisor. These questions will come from the established list of common comprehensive exam questions for that field. The student will write on one question. The last section will be composed of three questions as determined by the exam supervisor and may relate to the 20% of specific readings prepared by the student. The student will write on one question. Students will not receive questions in advance of the examinations.

- The examining board will consist of the supervisors and an additional faculty member from each field (called the 'examiners'). The additional faculty member will be appointed by the Graduate Chair and approved by the Graduate Committee. At the oral examination, the examiners may call upon the candidate to clarify, defend, or elaborate upon the written answers, or to respond to other questions falling within the scope of the requirements set.

### The Oral Exam

The oral exam is normally 1.5-2 hours and generally proceeds as follows:

- The chair will introduce everyone and ask the student to leave so that the examiners can determine the order of questioning
- There will be a first round of questions and answers where each of the examiners have 10-15 minutes of Q & A time. There will then be a second round of questions where each of the examiners will have 5-10 minutes of Q & A time. The precise number of rounds and Q & A time can vary and will be determined by the examiners at the start of the examination board.
- The student will then be asked to leave the room while the examiners discuss the written exams and the oral defense.
- If the examiners are satisfied with both the written and the oral portions of the examination, the candidate shall be declared to have passed, and the chair of the examining board will so advise the Graduate Chair.
- Students are permitted to have a copy of their written comprehensive exam answers. No additional aids will be permitted.

### Procedures for Exam Evaluation and Failure in the Exams

- If one or both examiners in a field do not pass the student, the student fails the exam. The student will be given one opportunity to re-write the failed field exam and defend that exam in an oral exam. An additional member of the field or related field will be appointed by the Graduate Chair, approved by the Graduate Committee, to serve on the examining board. The decision to pass or fail will be determined by the majority.
- Failure on the second attempt will result in removal from the PhD program.
- In the situation where both exams are failed on the first attempt, the oral exam for the second attempt will proceed whereby the fields are examined separately but on the same day.

### Exam Preparation

Preparation for the comprehensive examinations is intended to be a self-directed process to work through the field reading lists, during which the faculty supervisor provides advice about the material covered. Each supervisor will provide the student with a 1-2 page document outlining expectations and the reading list. Students and supervisors are expected to agree upon the topics that the student will be examined on by May 15th of the student's first year, following the guidelines set out above. Students

should consider their preparation time (18 weeks from May 1st to August 30th) to be the equivalent of three *full year* courses, and to dedicate their time accordingly. As there are no research papers or similar assignments required of the students, the workload for preparation for each of the two examinations should approximate a full-time course load during these months.

As the student proceeds with the reading, the supervisors will provide feedback about the student's progress after either written or oral communication (the details of which should be mutually agreed to by the student and supervisor). It is strongly recommended that, as part of their preparation for the examinations, students should write short critical summaries of the readings. Supervisors should evaluate these critical summaries (by reading or discussion) to ensure satisfactory progress during the summer term. Students and supervisors should agree on the number of required summaries to be done during the period from May 1<sup>st</sup> through August 30th. This ensures a common general practice for all examiners and students, and provides evidence that the student is prepared to go ahead with the examinations at the start of the fall term of the second year.

Each field has common reading lists. Please request the common list for the relevant fields from Teresa McLauchlan. The lists are expected to comprise about 80% of the reading required in preparation for the comprehensive exams. The remaining 20% will be developed by the student in consultation with the exam supervisor for that field and should normally reflect the student's specific interests in that field.

### **Cognate Skill**

PhD candidates must complete one cognate skill by the end of the Winter term in Year 3. The supervisor will decide if a language or methods skill is more appropriate. PhD candidates will complete one of the following options:

- Demonstrate proficiency in a second language (i.e. French for Canadian Politics or a relevant regional language for Comparative Politics or IR). This can be demonstrated either by passing (or having previously passed) an undergraduate level course in the relevant language or by completing a proficiency exam (consisting of a translation of 2 pages of text with the assistance of a dictionary and where a pass requires reasonable grammar and verb form).
- Demonstrate proficiency in methodology This can be demonstrated either by passing (or having previously passed) an additional graduate-level methodology course (beyond the required scope and methods course) such as PS9591 Quantitative Methods in Political Science or a course in Qualitative Methods offered in another Social Sciences Department (with the approval of the Graduate Chair).

### **Dissertation Supervisor, Committee and Examination Board**

The dissertation supervisory committee, which assists in the preparation of the dissertation, includes:

- 1 supervisor:                      who must be a full-time faculty member of the Department of

- 1 member: Political Science and a member of SGPs who must be a full-time faculty member of the Department of Political Science and a member of SGPS
- 1 optional member: who must be full-time faculty at UWO and a member of SGPS

**The supervisor and mandatory member of the dissertation committee cannot serve on the examination board.** The optional member of the dissertation committee can serve on the examining board (as a program examiner) only if they have not had significant involvement in the preparation of the dissertation (i.e. they cannot have read more than 2 chapters). Students and supervisors should consider this regulation, and the need to have 2 program examiners from Political Science, when deciding whether and whom to have as an optional member to avoid ‘using up’ potential examiners.

The examination board, which examines and passes or fails the dissertation, includes:

- 1 chair: appointed by SGPS to oversee the examination (usually from another Faculty)
- 2 program examiners: who must be full-time faculty members of the Department of Political Science, a member of SGPS and only one of whom can have had any involvement as a member of the dissertation supervisory committee (with only minimal involvement as above)
- 1 university examiner: who must be full-time faculty not from or cross-listed with Political Science and a member of SGPS
- 1 external examiner: who must be an expert in the dissertation’s subject matter from another university

### **Dissertation Proposal**

PhD students will be required to write a 20-25 double-spaced page (exclusive of bibliography) thesis proposal. The proposal must be orally defended before a committee of three Faculty members. The thesis supervisor and committee members should read, comment on and signal readiness of the thesis proposal to proceed to an oral defence. The oral defence committee will include the supervisor and two additional faculty members who would normally comprise the dissertation committee. The proposal will be adjudicated on a Pass/Fail basis and all members of the committee must ‘Pass’ the proposal for the student to proceed. The oral defence of the dissertation proposal must be completed by the end of the Winter term in a PhD student’s second year. Permission from the Graduate Chair is required for extensions.

Should the student fail the oral defence, an opportunity will be provided for the student to revise their proposal to address the faculty member’s concerns. An additional oral defence is not required. To have the failed proposal receive a ‘Pass’, all the faculty members on the committee, upon being satisfied with the revisions, must provide written approval of the revised proposal to both the thesis supervisor and Graduate



Chair. This revision process should normally be completed within two months of the failed oral defence. Permission from the Graduate Chair is required for extensions.

Students and supervisors are strongly encouraged to combine the oral defence with a presentation of the thesis proposal in a Departmental PhD seminar to obtain feedback from others in the Department. This has proved highly beneficial in terms of getting advice on methodology, theory, contacts for field research and in identifying potential program examiners. At the conclusion of the Departmental seminar, the members of the defence committee will then meet with the student to formally approve/fail the proposal (bearing in mind that all committee members have already indicated the readiness of the proposal to proceed to the oral defence).

### **Ethics Review**

All students conducting field research that involves any human participants (i.e. survey respondents, interviewees, those being observed, etc) must complete an ethics review and have it approved by the university Non-Medical Ethics Review Board (NMERB) before the start of any field research. For details see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/nonmedical\\_reb/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/nonmedical_reb/index.html)

Note: the NMREB only meets once a month and many applications require revisions. Students should start preparing their ethics reviews in conjunction with their dissertation proposals and submit them as early as possible before scheduling field research.

### **The Dissertation (PhD Thesis)**

#### **General**

- The dissertation is a significant and original scholarly work of approximately 250 pages of text.
- However, PhD dissertations vary greatly in scope, length, approach and method and the precise format will be determined in consultation with the supervisor
- Examples of recent PhD dissertations are available from Teresa McLauchlan and students are encouraged to consult them to better understand the content and format requirements.
- Students are strongly urged to begin selecting a dissertation topic, and conducting a literature review for it, during and/or as part of their coursework.

#### **Dissertation Format and Regulations**

- Go to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) website at: [http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/8.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html)

#### **Completion of the Dissertation**

- Students should not expect to defend their dissertation shortly after a first draft is submitted. Most dissertations go through two drafts until acceptable standard.
- The dissertation should be first approved for examination by the thesis supervisor

and committee before an examination board is requested (however SGPS regulations do allow the supervisor or student to request an examination board on their own).

- An examination board must be requested at least 7 weeks before the scheduled oral exam. The final approved draft of the dissertation should be completed before the examination board is requested and should be uploaded to the Scholarship@Western at least 6 weeks before the scheduled oral exam.
- The supervisor is responsible for organizing the Examination Board (including the 2 Programs Examiners, the University Examiner and the External Examiner) as well as the oral exam date.
- Prior to the oral exam, each examiner will decide whether the dissertation is ready to go to defense or not

### **The Public Lecture and Oral Exam**

- Effective May 2012, all students are now required to complete a public lecture based on the dissertation
- The public lecture should normally occur within 24 hours before the oral exam and ideally on the same day to best facilitate attendance by the examiners.
- The public lecture should be similar to a seminar series or job talk presentation where the candidate presents their work for approximately 30 minutes followed by approximately 30 minutes of Q & A.
- The supervisor should attend and chair the lecture to introduce the candidate and their work.
- The examiners normally attend but generally do not ask questions during the Q & A.
- The public lecture is open to the public and will be advertised on the SGPS website, in the Department of Political Science and in Western News.
- The oral exam is normally 2 hours and generally proceeds as follows:
  - The chair will introduce everyone and ask the student to leave so that the examiners can determine the order of questioning
  - The student can make a short 10-20 minute presentation on the thesis. This can combine summary, process, strengths and weaknesses as determined by the supervisor.
  - There will be a first round of questions and answers where each of the 3 examiners has 15-20 minutes of Q & A time. There will then be a second round of questions where each of the 3 examiners has 5-10 minutes of Q & A time. The precise number of rounds and Q & A time can vary and will be determined by the examiners at the start of the examination board.
  - The student will then be asked to leave the room while the examiners discuss the thesis and the oral defense. They will then vote to determine a pass or fail and if any revisions are required.
- The oral exam is closed to the public unless an open exam is requested by the candidate.

## Pass/Fail/Revisions and Final Submission

- For details on the pass, fail and revisions options, as well as final submission procedures, go to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) website at: [http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/8.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html)

## Fall Registration and Department Regulations and Policies

### Course Registration

- You will receive an email regarding self-registration through the student centre. Teresa McLauchlan can also register students into courses each term if assistance is required.
- For Graduate students taking undergraduate courses or audits, department approval must be obtained. Forms are available at: [http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/course\\_enrollment/index.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/course_enrollment/index.html)
- To take graduate courses outside of the department or a reading course, approval must be granted by the Graduate Chair. **(no more than one allowed)**

### Payment of Fees

- WGRS recipients are paid in two ways. For MA students, payment is made in two installments, (September and January), and is applied **DIRECTLY TOWARD YOUR FEES**. PhD students are paid in three installments. The 'Annual Financial Support Package' form will be provided to you before September providing exact details of your funding package. The current policy – which is in line with most universities – is that, when a student wins a major award such as a CGS, OGS, or SSHRC, the university reduces the internal funding package by \$5,500 (CGS-M), 5,000 (OGS), \$8,000 (SSHRC-D), \$17,000 (CGS-D). This reduction of WGRS will be in two equal instalments during the Fall and Winter term. For CGS-D, this reduction of WGRS will be in three equal instalments during the Fall, Winter and Summer term and a reduction of the TA assignment. Credit balances are forwarded to the student in the week after tuition payments are due.
- All fees must be paid as indicated in your Student Center. Fees are expected to be paid by the deadline. There are three registration periods each year: **Fall** (September 1), **Winter** (January 1) and **Summer** (May 1).

### Fall Orientation

- You will be sent an email regarding the date of an orientation session with the

Graduate Chair.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA)**

- An email is sent to both the graduate student and their supervisor regarding the TA assignment, normally late August. Communications between the student and supervisor can then begin regarding meetings.
- All GTAs are required to read the following guide “Teaching Students with Disabilities” <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/pdf/AODA-FacultyGuide.pdf>
- The University’s Collective Agreement with the Teaching Assistants’ union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, sets out both rights and responsibilities for teaching assistants. Each year, the Department offers guidance of a more detailed kind at an orientation meeting held in early September; specific assignments of tasks will be made by supervisor and agreed to in a Duties Specification Letter completed before the third week of the term and again at the mid-point.
- As part of your workload, you are required to **proctor exams as needed** for Political Science classes in addition to those for the course you TA for. If you cannot complete your assignment, it is your responsibility to find an alternate or switch assignments with another graduate student.

### **UWO Student Card**

- Obtain your Western One photo ID card from the Student Central – Room 1120 in the Western Student Services building (WSS).

### **Office Space**

- Shared office space is provided to all Teaching Assistants.
- MA graduate students are assigned offices in SSC 4110 to be vacated in July.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Year PhD students (who are TAs) are given space in SSC 4110.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Year PhD students (who are TAs) will be assigned shared offices. After the completion of final TA assignment, office space must be vacated.
- For individual space, students may apply for a study carrel in DB Weldon Library. Information on the Policy for Assignment of Study Space is at the Reference Desk, DB Weldon Library.

### **Email**

- Department communications are sent to a listserv of graduate student email addresses:
  - [polisci-grad@uwo.ca](mailto:polisci-grad@uwo.ca) - all Political Science graduate students
  - [polisci-grad-phd@uwo.ca](mailto:polisci-grad-phd@uwo.ca) – all Doctoral Political Science graduate students

## **Payroll**

- Teaching Assistants are paid monthly (September to April) on the **2nd last BANKING day of the month**. Payment is made by "direct deposit" into the student's account at the bank, credit union or trust company of their choice. To set up your direct deposit, go to <http://www.uwo.ca/hr/>
- T4s are mailed to the address listed in your HR account. Your HR address should be updated before leaving UWO (a parental address) to ensure receipt of a T4 in February after you finish.

## **Graduate Reading Courses**

Student may only have one graduate level reading course on their student record. In order to take a reading course approval from the Graduate Chair **must** be obtained. Students may develop reading courses with faculty members in subject areas that are not offered as regular courses for graduate students. The total amount of reading assigned should be as close as possible to that of equivalent half- or full-year graduate seminars, and that the course grade should be assigned largely, if not exclusively, on the basis of a major paper (25 to 30 pages). In most instances, the written requirements for a reading course will be in the form of a draft chapter of the student's thesis. The written requirements for reading half-courses should not be less than one essay of at least 15 pages or the equivalent. Flexibility in these requirements is acceptable, within reason, but it is imperative that the grades for reading courses be based substantially on students' written work. Once approval is obtained, the Graduate Advisor can register you into the reading course.

## **Graduate Grades**

Grades are obtained in your Student Centre. MA Students cannot receive any grade below 70% and must maintain an overall coursework average of 75%. A grade that is lower than 70% is grounds for removal from the program, but the final decision is at the discretion of the Graduate Chair and/or the Graduate Committee. PhD Students cannot receive any grade below 70% and must maintain an overall coursework average of at least 80% (determined after second term) to remain in the program.

Grades of "Incomplete" will not be assigned without the instructor setting a deadline for the outstanding work to be completed. The INC will be changed to a grade if the work is completed by the grade submission deadline for the term following the one in which the INC was awarded. If a grade is NOT submitted by this deadline, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' regulations mandate that the INC becomes a Failure. The student would then be withdrawn from the program.

## **Grade Appeals**

- All appeals must be initiated with the appropriate course instructor. This means you **must** speak to the instructor about the mark.

- The Request/Consent Form for Appeals, with the procedure is posted in SSC 4110 and copies can be obtained from Teresa McLauchlan. Note - Appeals are deadline sensitive.

### **UWO Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects**

- All MA students must receive formal approval from the Department's Sub-Research Ethics Board for research involving human subjects.
- All PhD students must receive formal approval from Western's Office of Research Ethics for research involving human subjects. If the research will include interviews or surveys involving human subjects, approval must be given by the relevant REB **before** these can take place.
- Federal regulations and university policy require that all research studies involving human participants receive approval from a research ethics board prior to the start of the study. Please see Western's Office of Research Ethics <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/education.html> - to determine when is ethics approval required? Which board do I submit to? What is the protocol submission and letters of information?
- This process takes time, so make sure to begin well in advance.

Graduate Program Advisor:  
Graduate Chair:

Teresa McLauchlan, SSC 4150  
Professor Cameron Anderson, SSC 4217

## **Appendices**

1. MA Thesis Application and Initial Proposal Template
2. MA Thesis Detailed Proposal Format
3. Example Format of a PhD Dissertation Proposal

#### 4. PhD Progress Report Template

### **MA Thesis Option: Application and Initial Proposal**

This application and initial proposal for the MA thesis option must be completed, signed by your supervisor and emailed to the Graduate Chair by 1 December. If the Graduate Chair believes the proposal lacks sufficient detail, it will be returned to you for revisions. To be approved for the MA thesis option, you must achieve a Fall term minimum average of 83% (no exceptions) and have a proposal that demonstrates you have a clear and specific research question, main argument/initial hypotheses, theoretical approach, methodology and basic literature review. If approved, you will be required to submit a more detailed thesis proposal by 30 January to your supervisor and the Grad Chair. The points outlined below represent your initial proposal and it is recognized that they may evolve over time. You can leave some sections blank if deemed not applicable by your supervisor.

**Student Name**

**Student Signature**

**Supervisor Name**

**Supervisor Signature**

**Initial Thesis Title**

**Initial Research Question**

**Main Argument/Initial Hypotheses**

### **Theoretical Approach**

*Provide a one paragraph statement of your theoretical approach and how it relates to your main argument/hypotheses.*

### **Methodology**

*Provide a one paragraph statement of your methodology. For example, if you are using cases, mention which specific cases you are using, not using and why.*

### **Literature Review**

*Provide a one or two paragraph outline of some of the literature related to your research question followed by a bibliography of no less than 10 sources.*



## **MA Thesis Option: Detailed Proposal Format**

### **General:**

The detailed MA thesis proposal is due to your supervisor and the Graduate Chair on 30 January. It is meant to build on your initial proposal to create a more detailed outline of your thesis as well as a research plan for completing it. Your job is to provide your supervisor and the Graduate Committee with enough information that they can be confident you are undertaking a feasible project that meets the standards required for an MA thesis. You are strongly encouraged to examine MA theses from previous years to get a sense of the format and standards that are required for the overall thesis. Follow the format outlined below. The page lengths listed are only an approximation and you can leave some sections blank if deemed not applicable by your supervisor.

### **Format:**

#### **1. Cover Page (1 page)**

- Same as for an essay: title, your name and student number, date, who it is for (list your supervisor and the Graduate Chair)

#### **2. Introduction (0.5-1 page approx)**

- Similar format to an essay introduction
- Start with some quick background on the issue and identify the debate or gap in the literature that your project will seek to address
- State the purpose of your project in terms of your key research question:
  - the research question is key
  - you should decide whether your question is explanatory or normative i.e. are you seeking to explain why a decision or event occurred or are you seeking to make a case for or against a particular policy or set of policies
- State your key hypothesis/argument
- Provide a brief outline of the thesis

#### **3. Literature Review (4-5 pages approx)**

- Your initial literature review should go through what has been written academically on the topic you are examining, with a particular focus on those works, if any, that focus on your specific research question. A literature review is not a review of the literature related to your own broader theoretical approach. This material will be in the 'Theoretical Approach' section.
- The literature review needs to synthesize material and not simply summarize author by author. Better is to group existing work into theoretical camps. (Many authors are not explicit about their theoretical approach and part of the value added provided by your literature review is to determine what their approach is based on its underlying assumptions).
- For example, if your research question was to explain why the international climate

negotiations have failed, you would review everything that has been written on why it has failed and then group these works according to what variables the author thought was most important. Thus realists say it failed because it went against the national interests of the great powers. Institutionalists say it failed because the specific institutional procedures related to the negotiations were flawed. Class theorists say it failed because it went against the interests of business. Etc. Overall, you are trying to outline how different theoretical approaches (other than your own) have answered your question. You are also, ideally, trying to find actual authors and not simply say “An institutionalist would argue...”.

- That said, if little has been written about your specific question, you can ‘zoom out’ a bit and review the slightly more general literature. Thus, if little or nothing had been written on why international climate negotiations have failed, you could look at what other theoretical approaches say about why international negotiations in general often fail or why negotiations in another area (i.e. trade) have failed and then use it to show what these approaches would say about why international climate negotiations failed.
- The purpose of the literature review is to demonstrate where your thesis fits in terms of the existing literature on the specific empirical topic and the final paragraph of your literature review should address this explicitly. Thus, in the above example, you should briefly state what your approach is and what it might add to the existing literature. For example, possibly you will take a postcolonial approach and argue that the failure of climate negotiations is mostly about North-South conflict.
- The above example is for an explanatory research question. If you were doing a normative question on a similar topic, your question might be: Is a global agreement on climate change a good idea? Here you would review the more normative literature from different theoretical/ideological perspectives. Thus free market theory might say governments should intervene. Interventionist theory might say they should and that a global agreement is necessary to overcome collective action problems. Your approach might then, from a postcolonial normative position, argue that a global deal is needed but that the existing approach is flawed as it places too great a burn on developing countries.

#### **4. Theoretical Approach and Key Hypotheses (3-4 pages approx)**

- This section outlines the key assumptions of the theoretical approach you are using (or approaches you are synthesizing etc).
- You should basically provide a quick outline/summary of the approach mentioning key authors and works, the approach’s key assumptions and how it explains (which variables it views as most important) or what it advocates.
- Where applicable, explain how your theoretical approach informs your main argument or hypotheses.
- Using the previous example, you would state that your postcolonial approach assumes that north-south conflict is a key feature of international relations and thus you hypothesize that it will also be a key variable in international climate negotiations and the likely cause of their failure.

#### **5. Methodology (2-3 pages approx)**

- Your hypothesis leads directly to your methodology. Your hypothesis is your answer to your research question and it must be tested against how other theoretical approaches have or might answer that question.

- Determining your methodology means figuring how you will test your argument and demonstrate that you are either right or wrong (or at least more right or wrong than hypotheses from other theoretical approaches).
- You should then outline your general methodology and cite sources on it from a methodology text. For example, you might explain the general method you are using such as a comparative case study, process tracing or genealogy. You then need to explain how you are specifically applying the methodology to your research question. For example, if you are using cases, you need to explain the specific cases you have selected and why you selected them and not other possible cases.

#### **6. Initial Chapter Outline (2-3 pages):**

- Approximately one short paragraph per chapter outlining the chapter's key purpose and how it relates to your overall argument.

#### **7. Bibliography**

- 30 sources minimum

#### **Reminder of MA Thesis Timeline**

30 January	Detailed proposal to Graduate Chair
Early June	Complete first draft submitted to supervisor
1 August (latest)	Final draft submitted to Department
24 August (latest)	Oral defense complete (after this date you will have to pay Fall tuition)

## Example Format of PhD Dissertation Proposal

### General:

The dissertation proposal is meant to be the overall plan that guides your dissertation project. When putting it together, your job is to create an actual research plan rather than simply completing an abstract exercise. Your job is to provide your supervisory committee with enough information that they can be confident you are undertaking an original and feasible project and that you have a solid plan for how you will conduct the research, organization and writing. As a result, the page lengths listed are only an approximation.

### Format:

#### **1. Cover Page (1 page)**

- Same as for an essay: title, your name and student number, date, who it is for (list your committee members)

#### **2. Introduction (1 page approx)**

- Similar format to an essay introduction
- Start with some quick background on the issue and identify the debate or gap in the literature that your project will seek to address
- State the purpose of your project in terms of your key research question:
  - the research question is key and you should decide whether your question is explanatory or normative i.e. are you seeking to explain why a decision or event occurred or are you seeking to make a case for or against a particular policy or set of policies - in general, explanatory are better
- State your key hypothesis/argument to be tested
- Provide a brief outline of the dissertation

#### **3. Literature Review (3-4 pages approx)**

- Your initial literature review should go through what has been written academically on the specific empirical topic you are examining with a particular focus on those works, if any, that examine your specific research question. A literature review is not a review of the literature related to your own broader theoretical approach. This material will be in the 'Theoretical Approach' section.
- The purpose of the literature review is to demonstrate why your dissertation will be original. Either you are examining a specific research question that hasn't been examined before (a gap in the literature) or you will look at a question that others have examined but whose views you will challenge with a different theoretical approach or new empirical evidence.
- The literature review needs to synthesize material and not simply summarize author by author. Better is to group existing work into theoretical camps. (Many authors are not

explicit about their theoretical approach and part of the value added provided by your literature review is to determine what their approach is based on its underlying assumptions).

- For example, if your research question was to explain why the international climate negotiations have failed, you would review everything that has been written on why it has failed and then group these works according to what variables the author thought was most important. Thus realists say it failed because it went against the national interests of the great powers. Institutionalists say it failed because the specific institutional procedures related to the negotiations were flawed. Class theorists say it failed because it went against the interests of business. Etc. Overall, you are trying to outline how different theoretical approaches (other than your own) have answered your question. You are also, ideally, trying to find actual authors and not simply say “An institutionalist would argue...”.
- That said, if little has been written about your specific question, you can ‘zoom out’ a bit and review the slightly more general literature. Thus, if little or nothing had been written on why international climate negotiations have failed, you could look at what other theoretical approaches say about why international negotiations in general often fail or why negotiations in another area (i.e. trade) have failed and then use it to show what these approaches would say about why international climate negotiations failed.
- The above example is for an explanatory research question. If you were doing a normative question on a similar topic, your question might be: Is a global agreement on climate change a good idea? Here you would review the more normative literature from different theoretical/ideological perspectives. Thus free market theory might say governments should intervene. Interventionist theory might say they should and that a global agreement is necessary to overcome collective action problems. Your approach might then, from a post-colonial normative position, argue that a global deal is needed but that the existing approach is flawed as it places too great a burn on developing countries.
- The literature review also needs to explicitly explain why what you are doing is original based on a gap in the literature or a new argument or evidence and explain what debates you will contribute to either on your specific research question or on the larger empirical issue.
- You should therefore frame the literature review as an argument. Your argument should basically be what the gap in the literature is that you would like to address. This includes stating a clear question and thesis statement in the introduction to the literature review. For example: “The purpose of this section is to conduct a literature review on the question of: Do representations of the other play a significant role in perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? In doing so, it will argue that a significant literature exists on this question and that it can be usefully categorized in terms of A, B and C. It will further argue that a gap in the literature exists related to X that will form the starting point for this dissertation.

#### **4. Theoretical Approach and Key Hypotheses (1-2 pages approx)**

- This section outlines the key assumptions of the theoretical approach you are using (or approaches you are synthesizing etc).

- You should basically provide a quick outline/summary of the approach mentioning key authors and works, the approach's key assumptions and how it explains (which variables it views as important) or what it advocates.
- Your theoretical approach is what provides you with your key hypotheses. If you are addressing a gap in the literature, you want to think of how your theoretical approach would answer your research question and how other theoretical approaches would answer it differently. The answer your theoretical approach gives is your key hypothesis or argument to be tested. If you are addressing a question that other theoretical approaches have looked at, your theoretical approach – and the new answer it gives to the research question – is your key hypothesis to be tested. Your key hypothesis may also involve a number of sub-hypotheses.
- Using the previous example, you would state that your post-colonial approach assumes that north-south conflict is a key feature of international relations and thus you hypothesize that it will also be a key variable in international climate negotiations and the likely cause of their failure.

### **5. Methodology and Data Collection (1-2 pages approx)**

- Your hypothesis leads directly to your methodology. Your hypothesis is your answer to your research question and it must be tested against how other theoretical approaches have or might answer that question.
- Determining your methodology means figuring how you will test your argument and prove that you are either right or wrong (or at least more right or wrong than hypotheses from other theoretical approaches).
- You should then outline your general methodology and cite sources on it from a methodology text. For example, you might explain the general method you are using such as a comparative case study or process tracing. You then need to explain how you are specifically applying the methodology to your research question. For example, if you are using cases, you need to explain the specific cases you have selected and why you selected them and not other possible cases.
- In addition to your general methodology, you also need to outline your data collection method. For example, if you are doing case studies, what sources and data will you use such as primary documents (and from which institutions); interviews (with whom, from which organizations, types of questions you will ask or information you will seek); archives you might utilize and what information you would seek, etc. Your data collection method must be safe as well as feasible in terms of access, costs and time.
- If you are using interviews or other methods involving human subjects, you will need to complete a separate ethics review - this takes time so start it early.

### **6. Research Plan (1-2 pages)**

- Outline a basic 2-3 year schedule of your general plan for research, including research trips (where, when, for what) and writing (which chapters, when).
- Explain how you plan or hope to fund any research trips.

### **7. Anticipated Contribution (1-2 pages approx)**

- Explain why your project is original in terms of the gap in the existing literature or new approach as mentioned above.
- Explain the original contribution you anticipate making in terms of some or all of the following (as applicable): theoretical innovation; new empirical research/data; and/or practical or policy relevant recommendations.

### **8. Initial Chapter Outline (2-3 pages):**

- Approx one short paragraph per chapter outlining the chapter's key purpose and how it relates to your overall argument.

### **9. Bibliography**

30 sources minimum

**Progress Report for PhD Students in Political Science**

All PhD students, in PhD Year 2 and above, must submit a PhD Progress Report in the Fall and Spring of each academic year using this standardized template. The reports are due to the Graduate Program Advisor by the last day of September and March each year. Please complete Part A and B.

Date:

**PART A (to be completed by student)**

Name	
Month/Year PhD started	
Name of Supervisor	
Names of other committee members	
All courses completed (no/yes – and dates final courses were completed)	
Courses remaining (list)	
Comprehensive exams passed (no/yes – and date)	
Comprehensive exams remaining (list)	
Cognate skill- how completed and date (if not complete please indicate how you plan to complete.)	
Dissertation proposal submitted	
Dissertation proposal approved (no/yes – date approved)	
Dissertation topic or working title	
Ethics review (yes/no/not applicable)	
Number of chapters completed	
Percent of writing completed	
Frequency of meetings w/ supervisor	
List dissertation progress achieved in past year (i.e. research trips, writing, etc <u>not</u> conferences, teaching)	



Target date for submitting dissertation (only for those finished Comp exams)	
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This information below is now being required by the Ministry and is for aggregate purposes only

List of <u>all</u> publications not just for the last 6 months	
List of <u>all</u> conferences attended	
List of <u>all</u> exchanges, courses taken, etc. outside of Canada	

**PART B Student Comments on Over Past 6 Months/Since Last Reporting Period**

**Please comment on your progress over the past 6 months including any reasons for slower progress.**

**PART C Supervisor Comments on Student Progress**

**Please check one and provide comments if desired. Those not returned to the Graduate Program Advisor are recorded as satisfactory progress.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I am satisfied with the student's progress over the past 6 months

\_\_\_\_\_ I am NOT satisfied with the student's progress over the past 6 months

**Comments:**