DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIELD OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

REQUIREMENTS

Specific admission requirements are shown on the Graduate Program Finder. (http://www.gwu.edu/all-graduate-programs)

Students of outstanding ability are admitted to the doctoral program upon recommendation of a departmental graduate committee and the concurrence of Columbian College.

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#degreeregulationstext).

The requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Program (http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#doctoraltext).

Required: Two research tools, two comprehensive exams covering a primary and supporting field, an original research paper, and a dissertation demonstrating the capacity to undertake original and significant research. The research tools may be selected from reading knowledge of a modern foreign language, a specified level of knowledge in statistics, or two graduate-level courses in a cognate discipline. The research paper, to be completed by the second year in the program, must reflect the student’s ability to conduct original research. Students prepare for the comprehensive exams by taking at least five courses in their primary field and at least four courses in their supporting field, selected according to departmental guidelines. Three primary fields are available: American politics; international relations; and comparative politics. In addition, political theory, public policy, and research methodology are available as supporting fields. Petitions for a self-designed minor field (e.g., political communications) composed primarily of courses not offered by the established fields can be jointly proposed by students and faculty. All students must complete a sequence of courses in research methodology comprising PSC 8101 Introduction to Empirical Political Analysis, PSC 8108 Craft of Political Inquiry, and PSC 8109 Dissertation Development Workshop. Completion of PSC 8120 Nonlinear Models with a grade of B or higher will be taken as evidence that a student has achieved the level of knowledge in statistics necessary to satisfy one of the research tool requirements as outlined above.

A recommendation to the dean for admission to candidacy, or the dissertation research stage, will be considered upon satisfactory completion of all coursework, tool requirements, research paper, field examinations, and successful defense of the dissertation prospectus. Students must pass their primary field examination with a satisfactory pass or higher and must pass their supporting field examination with a bare pass or higher in order to be considered eligible for promotion to candidacy. Admission to candidacy is permitted only if the student’s performance on the examinations and in the coursework gives a good indication of success in the second unit. Passing the field examinations does not in itself ensure admission to candidacy.

The dissertation prospectus must outline the central research question(s), relate the proposed research to the existing literature, detail a research methodology, and explain the nature of the original contribution that the completed project will provide. The prospectus must be presented and defended in an open forum, which all faculty and doctoral students are invited to attend. The full dissertation must be similarly defended. A dual degree program enables students to earn the Master of Public Policy along with the PhD in the field of political science.