M.A. in Political Psychology

Graduate Student Handbook

Effective May 2020
# Table of Contents

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK..............................................................................3  

ASU POLICIES

  Student responsibilities..................................................................................4  
  Professional ethics and academic integrity..................................................4  
  Discrimination complaints............................................................................5  
  Crisis services................................................................................................5  
  Title IX..........................................................................................................6  

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES..................................................................................6  

OVERVIEW OF THE M.A. IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

  Goals, vision and objectives of the program.................................................7  
  Admissions......................................................................................................7  
  Course requirements......................................................................................7  
  Transfer/Pre-Admission credits......................................................................8  
  Course descriptions.......................................................................................8  
  Enrollment.....................................................................................................10  
  Creating the Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)...............................................11  
  Incomplete grades.........................................................................................12  
  Satisfactory academic progress/GPA requirement........................................12  
  Academic grievance/grade appeal.................................................................13  
  Degree time limit..........................................................................................13  
  Graduation....................................................................................................13
Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to assist students in navigating the M.A. in Political Psychology program at Arizona State University (ASU). It includes specific information about the requirements and policies associated with graduate study at ASU as well as useful information about the goals and structure of the programs.

The handbook serves as an initial resource to provide guidance and answer questions. Students are also encouraged to consult with the program directors, staff and faculty and to take full advantage of the resources at ASU to ensure student success as part of a productive professional and educational environment. Graduate students are expected to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations found in the ASU Academic Catalog at [http://catalog.asu.edu/](http://catalog.asu.edu/) as well as the Graduate College Policies and Procedures Manual available at [https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/policies-forms-and-deadlines/policy-manuals](https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/policies-forms-and-deadlines/policy-manuals).

Should questions arise that are not answered in this Handbook, students should consult the following faculty program director and staff:

Mark Ramirez, Associate Professor  
School of Politics and Global Studies  
[Mark.Ramirez@asu.edu](mailto:Mark.Ramirez@asu.edu)

Jenna Roelle, Graduate Program Coordinator  
School of Politics and Global Studies  
[Jenna.Roelle@asu.edu](mailto:Jenna.Roelle@asu.edu)
ASU Policies

Student Responsibilities
It is the responsibility of each student to understand and observe all procedures and requirements specified by ASU’s Graduate College and the School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS). It is a requirement for all students to read and understand the Political Psychology M.A. Graduate Student Handbook, the ASU Academic Catalog, and Graduate College Policies and Procedures. While program faculty and staff provide academic advice and assistance, the ultimate responsibility for meeting degree and other requirements rests with the student.

All ASU students are required to have an active ASU e-mail account and to check it frequently, as it will be used for official university and program communications. Students may forward their ASU email to another preferred account but are still responsible for frequently checking their official ASU email account for correspondence. Instructions on how to forward email can be found on the ASU Service Center tab via the MyASU page.

Information is provided to students via MyASU (http://my.asu.edu) and students should frequently check the MyASU page for information regarding their status, holds, and list of “to do” items.

Professional ethics and academic integrity
As a graduate student, you have joined a community engaged in the quest for knowledge and understanding within a complex and challenging world. By entering this graduate program, you are committing yourself to an honest, ethical, and cooperative style of learning and inquiry. You represent the university within this community in many ways and should consider that responsibility in your conduct. Course work must reflect individual effort and integrity. Your and capstone project work must be original, accurate, and documented, and must reflect individual effort and integrity. When in doubt about appropriate conduct, students should consult a faculty mentor to seek clarification. Additional information about ASU’s academic integrity policies is available at http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity. The School of Politics and Global Studies has a zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct. Penalties for unethical behavior range from being placed on academic probation to dismissal from the program or university.

The highest standards of academic integrity and compliance with the university’s Student Code of Conduct (https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct) are expected of all graduate students in academic coursework and research activities. The failure of any student to uphold these standards may result in serious consequences, including suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of individual colleges as well as the university.

Breaches of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Plagiarism – using another’s words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source.
• Cheating on academic evaluation or assignment.
• Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information.
• Falsifying academic work, research, or records.
• Aiding another student in academic integrity policy violations.

Discrimination complaints
It is a violation of ASU policy to discriminate against any employee or student on the basis of that individual’s race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, Vietnam-era veteran status, special disabled veteran status, and other protected veteran status, newly separated veteran status, or any other unlawful discriminatory grounds. Complaints should be filed within 120 days of the last act of alleged discrimination. The director of the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities may waive or extend this timeframe for good cause such as holidays or times that classes are not in session.

An employee or student (or member of the public in cases of disability complaints) who believes that they have been unlawfully discriminated against may discuss his or her concerns with the director or an assistant director of the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities, file a report, and/or file a complaint of unlawful discrimination with the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities (https://urr.asu.edu/).

The Office of University Rights and Responsibilities’ review of complaints is a confidential process because it involves personnel matters. The parties to the complaint are guaranteed confidentiality except as noted in the policy and as necessary to conduct a thorough and fair investigation of the complaint. All witnesses in a complaint investigation are guaranteed confidentiality. All documentation and reports received and/or developed as part of the report/complaint process, including investigative reports are considered confidential unless otherwise noted in the policy.

To review the official policy, see “ACD 401: Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation” in the Academic Affairs manual (https://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd401.html).

Crisis services
ASU Counseling Services prioritize immediate access to services to ensure that all students who request or need services can be seen the same day – no appointment is necessary. You can call or walk in and be seen anytime at one of four campus locations between Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m (see https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling/location). If you need assistance outside of business hours, please call EMPACT’s 24-Hour ASU-dedicated Crisis Line: 480-921-1006.

If you are concerned about a student/Counseling services:
Faculty, staff, and parents can be very helpful in supporting a student in distress to access counseling services. ASU Counseling Services staff offers consultation assistance to concerned parents, faculty, staff, and other students who have concerns about a student. By speaking with
one of our counselors, you can receive information about how to talk with a student experiencing
difficulties and how to access various resources. You may call any ASU Counseling Services
location and ask to speak to a counselor who will help you decide what options are available (see
https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling/location). If a crisis occurs on or near campus students, faculty,
and staff may be affected. ASU Counseling Services staff will schedule meetings with groups of
faculty, staff, and students who have been affected by a crisis. You may call any ASU
Counseling Services location and ask to speak with a counselor who will talk with you about
your needs.

Title IX
Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from
participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education
program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and
harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to
sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and
academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the
basis of sex or sexually assaulted, additional information and resources are available for you at

University Resources

ASU Counseling Services: https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling
ASU Health Services: https://eoss.asu.edu/health
International Student Services: https://issc.asu.edu/
Disability Resources: https://eoss.asu.edu/drc
Graduate and Professional Student Association: https://gpsa.asu.edu/
Tuition and Fees: https://students.asu.edu/tuitionandfees
ASU Graduate College: https://graduate.asu.edu/
ASU Online: https://asuonline.asu.edu/
ASU Academic Calendar: https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar

Veteran, Military and Active Duty students:
Pat Tillman Veteran Center: https://veterans.asu.edu/
Overview of the M.A. in Political Psychology

Goals, vision and objectives
The M.A. in Political Psychology provides students with the tools to effectively understand how voters think about politics and respond to political information; training individuals to effectively organize local, state, and federal political campaigns.

Developed as an interdisciplinary program between Political Science and Psychology, the M.A. in Political Psychology aids in the professional advancement of electoral and issue advocacy campaigns, government and private sector careers, and careers in non-profit organizations. Students learn skills necessary to mobilize voters and social movements, advance governmental programs, design successful political communication strategies, and effectively market political candidates for local, state, and federal offices.

The program's mission is to educate students in the most recent insights from evidence-based research; prepare students with innovative tools and knowledge that gives them an advantage over their peers; and encourage hands-on training that ensures what they learn inside of the classroom applies outside of the classroom.

Admissions
Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor’s or master’s degree in any field, from a regionally accredited institution. Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.0 = A) in the last 60 hours of a student’s first bachelor’s degree or in an applicable master’s degree.

Applicants should submit an online application through ASU Graduate Admissions (https://admission.asu.edu/graduate/apply). Applications also require a personal statement and official transcripts. Applicants whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency (see https://admission.asu.edu/international/graduate/english-proficiency).

Course requirements
To complete the M.A. in Political Psychology program, students must successfully complete 30 credit hours, including the capstone course.

The following courses are required for the degree:

- PPS 501: Fundamentals of Political Psychology
- PPS 502: Cognition and Emotions in Political Thinking
- PPS 503: Prejudice, Stereotypes and Intergroup Relations
- PPS 504: Attitudes and Persuasion
- PPS 505: Biopolitics
• PPS 506: Experimental Design
• PPS 550: Capstone

Students should take PPS 501 in the early stages of the program, preferably in the first semester. PPS 550 is an individually structured class and is the culminating experience within the program. Students should take PPS 550 in the final semester in the program.

The remaining nine credit hours in the program are considered electives. Any PPS 3-credit class will fulfill the electives. Please consult with the faculty advisor or graduate coordinator on any advising questions. Please note that not all elective courses listed below may be offered during a particular student’s time in the program.

Transfer/Pre-Admission credits
Students may petition to have up to nine graduate-level credits applied to the M.A. program if they were completed with a B or above, within the last three years, and not applied to a previously completed degree. Specific situations may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Students should contact the Graduate Coordinator for more information.

Course descriptions
Please find below descriptions of the M.A. in Political Psychology courses (required courses are in bold):

**PPS 501 Fundamentals of Political Psychology (3 credits)** – This course focuses on the interdisciplinary study of political psychology and teaches the tools necessary to evaluate the application of political psychology to political marketing, campaigns, and policy advocacy. It covers both the theoretical foundations underlying research in political psychology as well as foundational and contemporary applications. The course examines topics including personality, emotions, and genetic bases of behavior as well as approaches to the design and interpretation of experimental research.

**PPS 502 Cognition and Emotions in Political Thinking (3 credits)** – This course focuses on key concepts in cognitive psychology and the scientific study of mental processes. It covers how people acquire, store, transform, use information. Topics may include perception, attention, language, memory, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, and attributions. The relation between emotions and cognition is also covered.

**PPS 503 Prejudice, Stereotypes and Intergroup Relations (3 credits)** – This course interrogates various theoretical approaches to intergroup conflict, why stereotypes and prejudice exist, the different forms these attitudes take (e.g., ethnocentrism, racial attitudes), and their implications for politics. The course also introduces students to Social Identity Theory and demonstrates how this theory can elucidate group processes. Moreover, the course covers theoretical arguments for and concrete examples of how prejudice can be reduced and tolerance increased.
**PPS 504 Attitudes and Persuasion (3 credits)** – This course focuses on the individual and contextual factors responsible for changes in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The course first covers the concept of attitudes and their measurement before examining in depth various theoretical approaches that explain how people come to change their attitudes. It also covers meta-cognitive as well as implicit factors in persuasion. The course ends with a more applied look at persuasion, focusing on how persuasive messages can be crafted.

**PPS 505 Biopolitics (3 credits)** – This course builds a foundational understanding of biological, evolutionary, genetic, and neurobiological perspectives in political psychology. It draws on these perspectives to explain political attitudes and behavior, considering literature on non-human animals, developmental psychology, personality, psychophysiology, neurobiology, genetics, hormones, disgust sensitivity, and mating.

**PPS 506 Experimental Design (3 credits)** – This course focuses on the experimental paradigm that permeates political psychology research. Students are introduced to the logic of experimentation and learn how to design and evaluate experimental studies. The course focuses on a variety of different experimental designs, highlighting the various benefits and drawbacks of laboratory experiments, survey experiments, and field experiments. Readings combine both theoretical and methodological pieces on the design, analysis, and interpretation of experiments with empirical applications.

**PPS 511 Public Opinion (3 credits)** – This course provides an advanced examination of the political opinions of citizens. It covers how citizens structure their opinions and what factors can cause these opinions to change. In so doing, the course also evaluates various theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches used to study public opinion. Topics include political knowledge, ideology, partisanship, and values. Moreover, the course will provide insight into how these factors shape people’s evaluation of government and how individual-level opinions are aggregated to produce public opinion.

**PPS 512 Political Polarization (3 credits)** – This course is an advanced exploration of the concept of political polarization from a political psychology perspective. The course introduces the concept of political polarization and provides an overview of recent trends in polarization in the U.S., while covering debates such as whether polarization has increased over time, whether Americans are polarized around issues or social identities, and how value divergence can cultural conflict. It also explores how the media and other external factors can affect citizens in ways that can either fuel or attenuate polarization.

**PPS 513 Elite Decision Making (3 credits)** – This course provides a comprehensive examination of political psychology approaches to understanding and evaluating elite decision-making. Students are introduced to paradigms for analyzing elites’ decisions that focus on the role of personality, leadership styles, and prospect theory among others. The course also focuses on covering frameworks that students can apply to systematically study how elite actors will make decisions on the domestic and international stage. It combines conceptual readings explaining
these approaches with applied readings that analyze the decision-making processes of elites through a range of case studies.

**PPS 514 Campaigns and Elections (3 credits)** – This course provides a political psychology perspective on campaigns and elections. Topics include the effect of election rules, campaigns, social networks, and the media on turnout and vote choice. Students engage with research that addresses these topics through psychological lenses focusing on the role of emotions, negativity, persuasion, and learning. The course combines theoretical literature with applied papers leveraging a variety of experiments conducted in campaign contexts. Implications for campaign organization and management are also discussed.

**PPS 515 Advances in Media Effects (3 credits)** – This course provides an advanced examination of contemporary research and debates on media effects. It covers the paradigms of agenda-setting, priming, and framing. The course considers key issues in the field of media effects by paying particular attention to the underlying psychological mechanisms through which the media can affect citizens’ attitudes and social judgment. It draws on a variety of examples to demonstrate both the power and limits of media to affect citizens.

**PPS 550 Capstone (3 credits)** – This course serves as the required culminating experience of the M.A. in Political Psychology. In this capstone course, students are able to apply the theories, frameworks, and evidence encountered during the course to explore a novel question or contribute to a contemporary research debate. In the process, students will apply a multitude of tools to which they were exposed during the course of the program. Final products are developed individually or in a small group based on consultation with course faculty.

**PPS 584 Internship (1-3 credits)** – Students will participant in an internship of their own choosing with approval from the graduate coordinator. Internships must relate to the M.A. in Political Psychology degree with students expected to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the academic program to the professional environment. The internship serves as an important bridge to facilitate the transition from the role of student to the role of professional.

**Enrollment**

Once admitted to M.A. in Political Psychology program, students must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour during each fall and spring semester until they complete the program. Summer enrollment is optional. Students pursuing a summer graduation must be enrolled for at least one graduate credit in the summer (either session). To maintain continuous enrollment the credit hour(s) must either be a graduate-level course approved within the program or be listed as continuing registration (PPS 595). Courses with grades of “W” and “X” are not considered valid for continuous enrollment purposes. Students completing work for a course in which they received an Incomplete (I) grade must maintain continuous enrollment during the time in which they are completing the work for that course.
Students are advised to register for between 1 and 4 courses each semester, with the recommendation to enroll in 1-2 courses per session. Nine or more credits in a semester (combined in A and B sessions) is considered full-time graduate enrollment.

A student planning to discontinue enrollment for a semester or more must submit a Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment via the student’s iPOS. The request must be endorsed by the Director of the program and the Director of SPGS and must be approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education. This request must be filed and approved before the start of the anticipated semester of non-enrollment. Students considering this request should research how this may impact financial aid or other benefits. Students may request a leave of absence for a maximum of two semesters during the entire program. There is no maximum for students requesting a leave of absence due to military orders. Students requesting military leave should contact the graduate coordinator for appropriate forms.

If the student fails to enroll for a fall or spring semester without an approved Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment or other approved leave, the student is considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason must reapply for admission to resume the degree program.

Students should maintain enrollment in the Political Psychology program continuously, even if the student is co-enrolled in multiple programs. At least one PPS course should be completed in each of the fall and spring semesters. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the program faculty director.

Students who would like to withdraw from the degree program are encouraged to first notify the faculty program director and graduate coordinator. Information on how to cancel admission or withdraw from the program can be found here: https://admission.asu.edu/graduate/cancel-defer.

Creating the Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)
Each student should review the course offerings in the program in relationship to their schedule and their plan for completing the degree. The student is required to file and maintain an online, Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS) with the ASU Graduate College. The iPOS is accessed through the student’s MyASU, under the “My Programs” section. The iPOS serves as an agreement between the student, the academic unit, and the Graduate College to verify the type, quality, and acceptability of the coursework and culminating experience required for the degree. The iPOS is extremely useful for student and program planning. Students should complete the iPOS as soon as possible but not later than when the student has completed 15 credit hours (5 classes at 3 credits/class) within the program.

A list of projected course offerings and instructions for completing the iPOS can be found on the program’s website for planning purposes: https://spgs.asu.edu/mapp-resources. If a student requires additional help or has other questions regarding the iPOS, they can contact the Graduate Coordinator, Jenna Roelle at Jenna.Roelle@asu.edu, for assistance.
Incomplete grades
Students may request an Incomplete (I) grade from an instructor if they are earning a passing grade in the course but extenuating circumstances such as illness or documented family emergency prevent them from finishing the course work on time. The specific length of time to complete the course work is determined by the course instructor, up to one year from the end of the course. If the I grade is not replaced with a final grade within one year of the end of the course, it will automatically be changed to a failing (E) grade. Students are discouraged from having more than one I grade on their transcript within a one-year period.

Satisfactory academic progress/GPA requirement
Graduate students are expected to make steady progress toward completion of their degree. This involves meeting the standards and deadlines of the ASU Graduate College (see https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/policies-forms-and-deadlines/policy-manuals) as well the requirements established by the School of Politics and Global Studies.

A student’s progress through the M.A. in Political Psychology is assessed at the end of each semester. The standard for satisfactory progress is completion of all course requirements with an overall graduate GPA of at least a 3.0, no more than one Incomplete grade in a one-year period, and the student is on track to complete the Capstone requirement within the six-year time limit for the completion of the M.A.

If, in the progress review, the faculty program director determines any deficiency in a student’s progress or performance, an academic probation notification will be sent to the student, which will outline a required course of action. These requirements might include completing Incompletes (see Incomplete Polices), raising the GPA, or beginning the Capstone. If the student does not comply with the requirements within the given timeframe, the student may be recommended for dismissal to the Graduate College. Only the Vice Provost for the Graduate College or their designee can dismiss a student from their graduate program. This dismissal may be appealed if done within 10 days of the student receiving the dismissal recommendation. A student may also voluntarily withdraw at this point to avoid having a dismissal on their records.

A student can be placed on probation for a variety of reasons including; failure to maintain an iPOS, allowing the overall graduate GPA to fall below 3.0, having more than one Incomplete (“I”) grades within a one-year period, or failure to meet degree program requirements and deadlines.

A student should take being placed on probation as a strong warning that continuing status in the program is in jeopardy unless corrective action is taken. A student can be placed on probation by the faculty director of the graduate program. The student may appeal this action in writing to the Director of SPGS within 10 days of the written notification. Appeals should be based on unusual circumstances, hardships, or error in the student’s record. Any supporting documents from the student’s professors should be included.
The student will be removed from probation when the conditions of the probation have been satisfied by the stated deadlines. The student will then be considered in good standing. Failure to satisfy a condition by the deadline will result in the actions specified in the original probationary letter. If the latter actions are pursued, the student will be notified in writing by the faculty director of the program and will have 10 days to appeal the decision in writing, to the Director of SPGS. The student will be notified in writing of the final decision. Upon recommendation from the program director and the Director of SPGS, the Graduate College can withdraw a student who is not progressing satisfactorily.

A graduate student who has been withdrawn from a graduate program at ASU due to lack of satisfactory academic progress is eligible to apply for admission to the same program only after one year from the term of the withdrawal.

Academic grievance and grade appeals
Students who have a grade dispute or other academic grievance should first address the concern with the relevant faculty instructor. If the dispute or appeal is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the faculty program director per the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades (see https://catalog.asu.edu/policies/liberal_arts).

General grievances can be routed to the faculty program director or the graduate coordinator. If the grievance is related to one of these individuals, students can contact the Director of SPGS.

Degree time limit
A student may work towards completing the degree at their own pace. However, according to ASU policies, the maximum time to complete an M.A. is six consecutive years. The six years begins with the semester and year of admission to the program. Graduate students must remain continuously enrolled in at least one graduate credit hour in fall and spring semesters from the start of a program to degree completion. Students are strongly discouraged from taking more than two courses in any one session, meaning that no more than four courses should be taken any given fall or spring semester.

Graduation
To graduate from the M.A. in Political Psychology program, a student must successfully complete all program requirements. Once a student has reached the semester of intended graduation, the student must follow the graduation deadlines and procedures outlined by the ASU Graduate College which can be found at: https://graduate.asu.edu/current-students/completing-your-degree

Each student should review the iPOS against their current ASU transcript continually, and at the beginning of the last academic term. Any changes necessary to make the iPOS match the official transcript should be done through the iPOS link in MyASU (http://my.asu.edu).
Students must apply for graduation and pay the graduation fee. From the MyASU page, select the “Graduation” tab from “My Programs” and follow the online instructions. If application for graduation is made after the deadline, the student will be assessed a late fee (see https://students.asu.edu/graduation).

Students may opt to participate in commencement and/or convocation ceremonies through the ASU Ceremonies office. An official RSVP must be submitted to participate in ceremonies. Commencement ceremonies take place in fall and spring semesters. Students graduating in the summer may opt to participate in spring or fall ceremonies; however, the degree will not be officially conferred until all program requirements are met. Please see the MyASU page, “Graduation” tab or https://students.asu.edu/graduation for information on ceremonies.