Sabancı University  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  

Handbook for Political Science Graduate Students  
(2012-13)

This handbook provides students with information about the Graduate Political Science Program (POLS) at Sabancı University. It addresses some of the frequently asked questions concerning the requirements for M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The handbook is intended as a supplement to the FASS: An Outline for Graduate Students which contains general information about graduate study in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The POLS graduate program stands out among its competitors in Turkey and abroad with its curriculum offering opportunities for rigorous training in contemporary political science. An exposure to different methodologies in the field of political science during the course of your graduate studies will be an asset in your future career.

Advising System

All new students admitted to the program are required to consult with the Initial Academic Advisor (IA) of the Political Science Graduate Program before registering for courses during the registration period in September.

Currently, Nedim Nomer serves as the program IA (Office: FASS 1052, e-mail: nnomer@sabanciuniv.edu, Phone: 0216-483 9327).

Students are required to choose an advisor for the remainder of their graduate studies. The deadline for this determination is March 30th of the first year for M.A. students and the beginning of the 3rd semester for Ph.D. students.

All new students are required to attend the orientation meeting which is held approximately one week before the classes start in Fall Semester. This meeting is important since it provides an opportunity for the incoming students to learn more about the program and faculty.

Admission:

MA Entrance Examination:

All students who wish to be considered for our MA program must pass our written examination. This examination does not require an academic background in political science. This examination is offered twice year. Applicants who due to legitimate reasons cannot be in Istanbul to take the entrance examination will be examined orally via Skype if their application passes the initial screening.

PhD Entrance Examination (The Gateway):

All students who wish to be considered for our Ph.D. program must pass our “Gateway Examination.” This requirement applies to our current MA students who wish to pursue their
Ph.D. degree in our graduate program as well as to students who hold an MA degree from another academic institution in Turkey or abroad.

The “Gateway Examination” is offered twice during the academic year. The applicants to the Ph.D. program must pass the “Gateway Examination” in their first attempt.

The “Gateway Examination” lasts four hours and it is intended to assess the applicants’ ability to write coherent and meaningful essays reflecting their grasp of the basic methodologies and debates in political science. Applicants who due to legitimate reasons cannot be in Istanbul to take the entrance examination will be examined orally via Skype if their application passes the initial screening.

Degree Requirements

All students who are enrolled in our MA or PhD programs are required to take the following core courses:

- POLS 502 Modern Political Theory
- POLS 510 Comparative Politics
- POLS 529 Political Analysis and Research Design
- POLS 540 International Relations Theory

All of these courses must be taken during the student’s first year in the program. Students may not delay taking these courses under any circumstances.

Students who wish to be exempt from these required courses must prove that the graduate-level courses which they have taken in other universities in Turkey or abroad are equivalent to any or all of those courses. These students should present the following documents to the POLS Program Coordinator for evaluation: the syllabi of the courses, term papers, and other relevant documents. Students should be aware that there is no automatic substitution of the required or elective courses and each request is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

M.A. Degree:

Students who wish to receive an M.A. degree in Political Science may do so either with or without a thesis. It is essential to note, however, that according to a regulation recently accepted by the Council of Higher Education (YOK), students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree at a Turkish university must have written a M.A. thesis.

All M.A. students have to register for POLS 599, Pro-Thesis Seminar, in the second semester of their tenure in our graduate program. This is not a regular graduate-level course; students who are enrolled in this course receive a passing grade simply when they choose their academic advisor and determine the topic of their M.A. thesis or of their project. Once they receive a passing grade in POLS 599, students must enroll in POLS 699 every semester until the end of their graduate studies.

M.A. with Thesis:

Those who wish to pursue an M.A. with thesis must take the following courses to complete a total of 24 credits:
four required courses listed above (12 credits)
two core electives (6 credits)
two free elective courses (6 credits)

The students who wish to write an M.A. thesis are required to choose a thesis advisor by March 30th and submit a thesis proposal by April 30th of their first year. This proposal will be evaluated by a designated committee within POLS faculty. Students are advised to wait for the committee’s decision before beginning their research.

There is no specific length requirement for the M.A thesis. In the past, the M.A. theses have generally ranged between 50 and 100 pages-long (double-spaced, including references and bibliography). Students are advised to discuss the content, methodology and the length of their theses with their thesis advisors.

The M.A. thesis has to be defended before the members of the student’s thesis committee upon its completion. M.A. Thesis Committee is formed by the initiative of the student in consultation with the thesis advisor.

M.A. without Thesis:

Those students who choose the option of an M.A. without thesis must take the following courses to complete a total of 30 credits:

four required courses listed above (12 credits)
four core electives (12 credits)
two free electives (6 credits)

These students are required to complete an “M.A. project” which will be conducted and written under the supervision of an advisor. It is the student’s responsibility to find an advisor by March 30th to work with on her/his project.

Ph.D. Degree

The course requirements for the Ph.D. degree are as follows: Students who start the program with an M.A. degree are required to take eight courses for a total of 24 credits. Students must complete these courses in addition to the four courses required for all entering students (i.e. POLS 502, 510, 529 and 540), which need to be taken and successfully completed. PhD students must also complete two methods courses (POLS 530: Research Methods I and POLS 531: Research Methods II). These required methods courses count toward the 24 course credits needed for graduation. Students may be exempted from these methods requirements if they can prove that the methods course(s) that they had taken at another institution is (are) equivalent to the methods courses offered in our graduate program. The same applies to the Program requirements in other subfields of political science, (i.e., comparative, international relations and political theory) indicated below.

We accept into our PhD program students without an MA degree. Such students must fulfill all the requirements for our MA Program except for an MA thesis or project, in addition to the requirements for a PhD degree in our program. Such students must also pass the “Gateway Examination” to continue in the doctoral program.
All PhD students must register for POLS 610, Thesis Preparation Seminar, in their third semester of their tenure. This is not a regular graduate-level course; students who are enrolled in this course receive a passing grade simply when they choose their PhD thesis advisor and determine the topic of their dissertation. Once they receive a passing grade in POLS 610, students must enroll in POLS 799 every semester until the end of their graduate studies.

After completing the course requirements, students will have to pass comprehensive examinations in two of the four fields in the program. The four fields are:

- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory
- Turkish Politics

Before taking the comprehensives, students are required to take the following, in addition to the core course(s), in their chosen fields. The required courses in each field consist of the following:

**Comparative Politics:**

Core courses:

- POLS 510 Comparative Politics
- POLS 503 Comparative Method

and one of the following area courses:

- POLS 546 Latin American Politics
- POLS 549 Middle East Politics and Governments
- POLS 581 European Politics

**International Relations:**

Core courses:

- POLS 540 International Relations Theory
- POLS 640 Advanced International Relations Theory
- POLS 580 Political Economy

and one course from the following:

- CONF 502 Correlates and War and Peace
- ES 502 Turkey-European Union Relations
- POLS 509 Greek-Turkish Relations
- POLS 543 International Negotiation
- POLS 592 European Union Politics, Policies, and Governance

**Political Theory**

Core course:

- POLS 502 Modern Political Theory
and two courses from the following:

- POLS 507   Political Ideologies
- POLS 524   Continental Political Thought
- POLS 525   Civil Society
- POLS 600   Seminar in Political Theory

**Turkish Politics**

Core courses:

- POLS 550   Turkish Politics
- POLS 555   Turkish Foreign Policy

and a course from the following:

- POLS 700   Reading and Research in Turkish Politics
- ECON 526   Political Economy of Turkey

**Methodology Requirement:**

All students are required to take three core methods courses listed below.

Core courses:

- POLS 529   Political Analysis and Research Design
- POLS 530   Research Methods I (Quantitative Methods)
- POLS 531   Research Methods II (Qualitative Methods)

Methodology electives:

- POLS 532   Survey Research Methods
- POLS 534   Formal Modeling and Political Analysis I
- POLS 535   Formal Modeling and Political Analysis II

Comprehensive exams are scheduled twice a year, in fall and spring semesters. They consist of a written and an oral part. The written field exam lasts four hours during which students are asked to write two essays (out of at least four essay questions). The exam is intended to assess the students’ knowledge of the literature in the field, their ability to a critical perspective on the existing academic literature, and their capability to use the literature in constructing an analytically coherent argument. The comprehensive written exam is prepared by a committee of POLS faculty and it is read and evaluated anonymously.

In the oral part of the comprehensive examination, students are typically asked to advance their arguments which they started developing in the written exam, respond to the gaps and weaknesses in their written answers, provide empirical evidence for their arguments, and demonstrate their understanding of the literature.

Failure to pass the comprehensives in two attempts will lead to dismissal from the program.
After passing the comprehensives, the students should proceed with the preparation and defense of a dissertation proposal and the formation of their dissertation committee. The committee should be formed within a month following the successful completion of the comprehensives. The oral defense of the thesis proposal before this committee should take place within six months after the completion of the comprehensives.

It is the students’ responsibility to choose their thesis advisor by the beginning of their 3rd semester. Students are also required to form their thesis committee in consultation with their thesis advisor. The thesis committee should be formed by five members: the thesis advisor, two POLS faculty, a faculty member from a different field at the SU and a faculty member from another institution.

The last stage in the successful completion of the requirements for the Ph.D is the defense of the completed dissertation. After a successful defense and the completion of the suggestions for revisions and changes by the dissertation committee, the doctoral thesis must be deposited in the SU Information Center in the format that meets the SU’s specifications.

CRITICAL DATES & DEADLINES

a) For the M.A. degree

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choosing your advisor</th>
<th>March 30th of the first year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitting a thesis proposal (for the thesis track)</td>
<td>April 30th of the first year</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD Gateway exam</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
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<td>(End of Fall &amp; Spring semesters)</td>
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b) For the Ph.D. degree

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<th>Students admitted w/ MA</th>
<th>Students admitted w/o MA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choosing an advisor</td>
<td>Beginning of the 3rd semester</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing the coursework</td>
<td>4 semesters</td>
<td>6 semesters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking the comprehensives (earliest)</td>
<td>Following the completion of the coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passing the comprehensives</td>
<td>By the end of the 5th semester</td>
<td>By the end of the 7th semester</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formation of the dissertation committee</strong></td>
<td>1 month after passing the comprehensives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Submitting the dissertation proposal</strong></td>
<td>6 months after passing the comprehensives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum duration of the program</strong></td>
<td>8 semesters (can be granted additional 4 for thesis work)</td>
<td>10 semesters (can be granted additional 4 for thesis work)</td>
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