

**Sabancı University**  
**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**

**Handbook for Political Science Graduate Students**  
**(2024-25)**

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 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 September 28-30, 2022.

**Oya Yeğen** is the program IA (Office: FASS 2116, e-mail: oya.yegen@sabanciuniv.edu, Phone: 0216-483 9335) for the 2022-2023 academic year.





Students are required to choose an advisor for the remainder of their graduate studies. The deadline to determine your advisor is the end of the first semester for M.A. students and the end of the 2nd semester for Ph.D. students. (The exact dates will be announced later in the semester.)

**All graduate students are expected to use the ROADMAP graduate student system and follow their deadlines through the Academic Milestones tab.**

All new students are required to attend the orientation meeting which will be held on **September 28, 2022**. This meeting is important since it provides an opportunity for the incoming students to learn more about the program and faculty. The details of the orientation program can be found on the faculty and program websites.

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. These courses are offered within the Scientific Preparatory Program to PhD w/ MA program students.

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 course instructor for evaluation: the syllabi of the courses, transcript, 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.

#### For M.A. and Ph.D. Theses:

The required citation style for theses/dissertations of Graduate School of Social Sciences is Chicago 16.

Use of "Latex" is also mandatory. We advise you to participate the Latex training session(s) that will be provided throughout the academic year.





#### 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 the regulations of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree at a Turkish university must have written an M.A. thesis.

All M.A. students have to register for POLS 599, Pro-Thesis Seminar, in the first 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 (S-Satisfactory) simply when they choose their academic advisor at the end of the first semester. Once they receive a passing grade in POLS 599, students must enroll in POLS 699 every semester (starting with the third 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 **27 SU credits**:

-  four required courses listed above (12 SU credits or 40 ECTS)
-  four GR (501 555 502 503) courses (academic training courses) and the pro-seminar course (POLS 599) (38 ECTS)
-  three core electives (9 SU credits and 30 ECTS)
-  two free elective courses (6 SU credits and 20 ECTS)

The students who wish to write an M.A. thesis are required to choose a thesis advisor by the end of their first semester and propose a thesis topic by the end of May in their first year.

Students are also strongly encouraged to take *one* of the following methodology courses:

-  POLS 530      Research Methods I (Quantitative Methods)
-  POLS 531      Research Methods II (Qualitative Methods)

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. The thesis committee is formed by the initiative of the student in consultation with the thesis advisor. (The committee is composed of three members. One needs to be an external member – a faculty member from another university.)

All course requirements must be completed in 4 semesters. The program must be completed in 6 semesters.

#### 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 33 SU credits:

-  four required courses listed above (12 SU credits)
-  three GR (501 555 502) courses (academic training courses) (21 ECTS)
-  five core electives (15 SU credits 50 ECTS)
-  two free electives (6 SU credits)

The program and coursework must be completed in three semesters.

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 the end of their first semester 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). These four courses are offered through the Scientific Preparatory Program and must be completed in the student's first year in the PhD program. Students can take other courses while they are completing the Scientific Preparatory Program. PhD students must also take two methods courses (POLS 530: Research Methods I and POLS 531: Research Methods II) during their first two years in the PhD program. Students who do not take POLS 530/531 in their first year, should take that course in their second year. These two required methods courses count toward the 24 course credits needed for graduation. Students may be exempted from these course requirements if they can prove that the course(s) that they had taken at another institution is (are) equivalent to the courses offered in our graduate program. The request must be approved by the course instructor.

All PhD students must register for POLS 610, Thesis Preparation Seminar, in their second semester of their tenure. This is not a regular graduate-level course; students who are enrolled in this course receive a passing grade (S-Satisfactory) simply when they choose their PhD thesis advisor and determine the topic of their dissertation. After they successfully fulfill their course requirements and successfully complete their Ph.D. qualifying (comprehensive) exams, students must enroll in POLS 799 every semester until the end of their graduate studies.

It is the students' responsibility to determine his or her thesis advisor and thesis subject by the end of his or her 2nd semester.

After completing the course requirements in four semesters (or six semesters if the student was admitted without an M.A. degree), if the students do not take the Comprehensive exam at the end of the fourth semester, they have to take the **“QL 700 – Qualifying Exam Preparation”** course until they successfully pass the Comprehensive (Qualifying) Exam. In the Comprehensive Exam, the student will have to pass 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 complete the courses offered through the Scientific Preparatory Program (i.e. POLS 502, 510, 529 and 540) and take the following list of courses in their exam fields:

#### I. Comparative Politics:

Core courses:

-  POLS 510      Comparative Politics

And at least two of the following courses:






-  POLS 503      Comparative Method
-  POLS 513      Comparative Party Systems and Electoral Behavior
-  POLS 565      Rise and Fall of Democracy
-  POLS 557      The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes
-  POLS 580      Political Economy

#### II. International Relations:

Core courses:




-  POLS 540      International Relations Theory

and at least two of the following courses:

-  ES 505      European Foreign Policy
-  POLS 589      Human Rights in the World Politics
-  POLS 592      European Union Politics, Policies, and Governance
-  CONF 500      International Conflict and Peace
-  POLS 555\*      Turkish Foreign Policy

### III. Political Theory

Core courses:




-  POLS 502    Modern Political Theory
-  POLS 504\*    Turkish Social and Political Thought
-  POLS 700    Reading and Research in Political Theory

### IV. Turkish Politics

Core courses:

-  POLS 550    Turkish Politics
-  POLS 553    Current Issues in Turkish Politics

and at least one of the following courses:




-  POLS 555\*    Turkish Foreign Policy
-  POLS 700    Reading and Research in Turkish Politics
-  POLS 504\*    Turkish Social and Political Thought

\*Can only count towards the requirements for the exam in one area.





### Methodology Requirement:

All students are required to take the 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
-  POLS 537    Adv. Research Methods and Data Analysis in Political Science

Comprehensive (qualifying) exams are scheduled twice a year. They consist of a written and an oral part. The written field exam lasts at least five hours during which students are typically asked to write two essays out of a list of several questions or topics.-The exam is intended to assess the students' knowledge of the literature in the field, their ability to provide 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 members. Written exams are read and evaluated anonymously.

In the oral part of the comprehensive examination, students are typically asked to advance their arguments which they developed 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 (composed of 3 members) 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. The student must send a written proposal to the committee fifteen days before the defense date. (Guidelines for the proposal can be found in this document's appendix and in the Roadmap system.)

Students are also required to form their dissertation committee in consultation with their thesis advisor. The dissertation committee has three members: the thesis advisor, another member of the POLS program and a SU faculty member from a different field or an external member from another university (can be either from Political Science or from a different field).

If the proposal is not approved, the student must defend it again in three months if his or her advisor remains the same. If the student changes his or her advisor, the proposal defense must take place within six months. Failure to pass the proposal defense in two attempts will lead to dismissal from the program.

There must be at least three successful dissertation progress meetings before a Ph.D. dissertation can be defended. The dissertation committee has to meet every 6 months. The student must send the committee a written progress report one month before the meeting. (Guidelines for the progress report can be found in this document's appendix and in the Roadmap system.) If the thesis committee finds the progress unsatisfactory twice consecutively or three times in total, student is dismissed from the program.

Students must write and present **a research paper in a faculty seminar** with the participation of thesis committee, faculty members and students before their thesis defense.

Successful defense of the PhD dissertation is the final requirement of the PhD degree. The defense jury consists of five members including the three members of the dissertation thesis committee. Two members need to be from other academic institutions. After a successful defense and the completion of the suggestions for revisions and changes by the dissertation committee, the doctoral thesis must be deposited to the Graduate School of Social Sciences in the format that meets the SU's specifications. The student should also submit the Conference Presentation Form to the Graduate School of Social Sciences together with the final copy of the dissertation. The form is available in the Roadmap system.

CRITICAL DATES & DEADLINES**a) For the M.A. degree**

Choosing your advisor	End of the first semester of the first year
Proposing a thesis topic (for <u>the thesis track</u> )	End of May of the first year
<b>Completing the coursework</b>	4 semesters (with thesis) or 3 semesters (without thesis)
<b>Completing the program</b>	6 semesters (with thesis) or 3 semesters (without thesis)

**b) For the Ph.D. degree**

	<b>Students admitted w/ MA</b>	<b>Students admitted w/ BA</b>
<b>Choosing an advisor and a thesis subject</b>	End of the 2nd semester	
<b>Completing the coursework</b>	4 semesters	6 semesters
<b>Taking the comprehensives (earliest)</b>	Following the completion of the coursework	
<b>Taking the comprehensives (latest)</b>	By the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> semester	By the end of the 7 <sup>th</sup> semester
<b>Formation of the dissertation committee</b>	1 month after passing the comprehensives	
<b>Submitting the dissertation proposal</b>	6 months after passing the comprehensives	
<b><u>Maximum duration of awarded scholarships</u></b>	10 semesters (Scientific Preparatory year included)	12 semesters (Scientific Preparatory year included)

## Appendix:

***Structure of a Dissertation Proposal Report***

- Title page
- Abstract (max. 200 words)
- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Dissertation statement
  - Statement can take the form of a hypothesis, research question, project statement, or goal statement
    - the dissertation statement should capture the essence of your intended project and also help to put boundaries around it
  - Implications of research
    - what new knowledge will the proposed project produce that we do not already know?
    - why is it worth examining, what are the major implications?
- Approach / Methods: an overall description of your approach, materials, and procedure
  - which methods will be used?
  - description of the data that will be analyzed (if any)
  - description of any other materials to be used
- Work plan, including a time table
- List of references

***Note: Chicago 16 citation style (author-date or notes-bibliography) is used throughout the Proposal Report.***



***Structure of a Dissertation Progress Report***

- Table of contents
- Introduction, objectives of research outlined in the Dissertation Proposal
- Objectives for the preceding six months according to the Dissertation Proposal
- Work achieved during the last six months (state of research)
- Changes in the work plan, methodology, etc. (if any), causes of these changes
- Time table that clearly indicates the work to be completed before the next progress meeting
- Scientific publications & conference contributions

***Note: Chicago 16 citation style (author-date or notes-bibliography) is used throughout the Progress Report.***