

### III. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHD IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

These requirements fall within the framework of the general policies and procedures of the Graduate Students Office as stated in its *Graduate Policies and Procedures* <<http://web.mit.edu/gso/gpp/>>.

#### Guidelines for Progress in the Doctoral Program

MILESTONES	END OF SEMESTER #
All pre-1 <sup>st</sup> colloquium requirements complete	5
First Colloquium	6
Second Colloquium	10
Thesis completion	12

#### A. REQUIRED COURSES AND FIELDS OF STUDY

Each student must complete the following requirements **prior to holding their first colloquium**:

1. A one semester **Graduate Scope and Methods** seminar for first year students
2. 1 class in **Statistics**
3. 1 class in **Empirical Research Methods**
4. 1 class in **Political Philosophy**
5. Reading proficiency in one **language other than English** (demonstrated by 2 semesters of intermediate-level college course work or an exam) **or knowledge of advanced statistics** (demonstrated by 3 semesters of course work or an exam)
6. A **Second Year Paper** and related seminar in the spring semester of the second year

#### Major Fields:

**American Politics; Comparative Politics; International Relations; Models and Methods; Political Economy; Security Studies**

Students are required to elect **two major fields** of study. In each of these fields, students will take a **written and oral general exam**. To prepare for thesis examinations, students are expected to take at least three courses in each field, including the field seminar for each field, if any. Students are encouraged to take a broad array of courses across the two fields. In some special cases, a single course may overlap across the subject matter of both major fields. Students may use no more than one such course to “double count” for the course distribution requirement across the two major fields.

In selecting their major fields students are strongly advised to bear in mind the following:

- a. There should be breadth in the choice of fields. Students planning to enter teaching should choose fields that will enable them to teach a variety of upper level undergraduate subjects. While colleges and universities continue to look for scholars with specializations, they are often concerned that their younger faculty have the versatility to teach undergraduate subjects in several fields. Students intending to seek

careers in government and in research institutions should seek some breadth in their choice of fields so as not to foreclose opportunities for teaching and to expand their opportunities in non-academic institutions.

b. At the same time the combination of fields should enhance the student's capacity to engage in original research. There should be intellectual coherence to the entire program, balancing breadth in the discipline with a degree of specialization.

c. There should not be excessive overlap among chosen fields. Several fields offered by the Department are too closely related to be desirable combinations. See below for a listing of fields; some specific combinations must be reviewed to ensure sufficient breadth before being approved.

d. Irrespective of the fields chosen, students should attempt to incorporate into their fields of study a comparative perspective. Students concerned with American social policy, for example, might do some subject work in the social policies of other advanced industrial countries while students concerned with the U.S. defense and arms control policies might develop some familiarity with the defense and arms control policies of other countries.

## **B. POLITICAL ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS**

The Political Analysis requirements are designed to ensure that all graduate students are able to develop and examine critically their own and other political ideas in their academic and political contexts. Students must also achieve competence in research related skills, including statistics and research methodology, that are essential to a professional political scientist. Familiarity with different philosophies of social inquiry will help students make informed and innovative contributions to their fields of interest. **These objectives are met by three broad requirements specified below: political philosophy, empirical research methods, and statistics.** Many students will already have completed relevant work in political philosophy and statistics prior to admission; those who have not should follow the guidelines below. To satisfy the political analysis requirement all subjects must be completed with at least a grade of B.

### **1. Political Philosophy**

A sense of the relative importance of political problems, guided by an understanding of political values (justice, equality, liberty, the common good), is a prerequisite to sophisticated political argument. A professional political scientist must be able to assess proposals, evaluate contemporary events, and argue political positions in a way that is informed by such values. These abilities would normally be demonstrated by successful participation in at least one graduate-level subject in political philosophy. Students not satisfying this requirement at admission may take Political Philosophy (17.000), or other suitable subjects approved by the Department's faculty representative for political philosophy. We strongly recommend that students fulfill the requirement with courses in the department; otherwise a political theory class at Harvard will suffice, subject to approval by the Department's faculty representative for political philosophy .

### **2. Empirical Research Methods**

The Department emphasizes the importance of acquiring expertise in social science research methods. As professional social scientists, graduates of the program should be familiar with methods of generating, analyzing, and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data. Students should know how to formulate hypotheses, operationalize concepts, construct measures, and test hypotheses with appropriate data. At a minimum, students should master basic statistics and, where appropriate for their interests, a more advanced knowledge of statistics and

mathematical models of politics. Students should also develop, according to their interests, knowledge of various methods of data collection, such as survey methods, field- or other types of experiments, psychological testing, content analysis, documentary research, case analysis, and participant observation, and the appropriate methods for analyzing these data.

The equivalent of two semesters of course work are required of all PhD students, one in each of the following categories.

**a. Empirical Methodology**

One of the following:

17.430 Research Seminar in International relations

17.878 Qualitative Research: Design & Methods

17.802 Quantitative Research Methods II: Multivariate Political Analysis

**b. Statistics**

17.800 Quantitative Research Methods I: Introduction

**Students with advanced prior statistics may be granted permission by Methods field coordinator to replace 17.800 with a more advanced statistics course.**

**C. LANGUAGE OR ADVANCED STATISTICS REQUIREMENT**

**Students must demonstrate reading proficiency in one language other than English *or* knowledge of advanced statistics.**

This competence may be established as follows:

**Reading Proficiency in a Foreign Language**

1. Completion of two semesters of intermediate-level college course work (with a grade of B or better) in a foreign language. (Language study in secondary school, at whatever level, is not acceptable.)

2. Alternatively, students may demonstrate their competence by taking and passing an exam. The Global Studies and Languages department administers exams in French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Portuguese twice a year. In the event that a student is proficient in another language and no faculty member is available to administer an exam to assess the student's competency, the chair of the Graduate Program Committee will locate an appropriate alternative at MIT or elsewhere.

3. International students whose native language is not English are not subject to the language requirement.

**Advanced Knowledge of Statistics**

Completion of three semesters of course work (with a grade of B or better) in statistics.

Approved subjects: 17.800; 17.802; 17.804; 17.806; 14.381; 14.382; or equivalent subjects by permission of Models and Methods field coordinator.