POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, M.A.

Saint Louis University’s Master of Arts in Political Science and Public Affairs program allows academically talented students to advance their knowledge and analytical skills by focusing on an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented area of interest within political science.

SLU’s M.A. in political science and public affairs is open to individuals who have previously earned a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree in political science or a related social science discipline from an accredited university and demonstrate outstanding potential. Students admitted for M.A. study must have an outstanding undergraduate record and demonstrate the potential for senior leadership in political science.

Curriculum Overview

The M.A. in Political Science and Public Affairs requires 30 credits.

M.A. students on the St. Louis campus may choose one of three formal concentration areas—American politics, international affairs or public policy and administration. Alternatively, they may design an individual plan of study in consultation with a faculty mentor and the coordinator of graduate studies. All M.A. students on SLU’s Madrid Campus (http://www.slu.edu/madrid/) complete a concentration in international relations and crisis.

Students enrolled on either the St. Louis or the Madrid campus may take some elective courses on the other campus.


American Politics Concentration

This concentration provides a substantive grounding in the academic study of American politics, strong methodological skills and options to focus on particular areas of interest, such as public law. This concentration is appropriate for students with a variety of interests and goals, including additional graduate study in political science and related fields or law school.

International Affairs Concentration

This concentration provides theoretical and substantive grounding in international relations and comparative politics. Some of the topics covered are the process of democratization, international security, warfare and economic development.

International Relations and Crisis Concentration (Madrid Campus)

This concentration familiarizes students with the key theoretical, political and social dimensions of the global governance of insecurity and the emergence, management and consequences of crises today.

Public Policy and Administration Concentration

This concentration is designed for students interested in gaining a practical understanding of how political and social policies are developed and administered. Like a Master of Public Administration, it prepares students to work in local and national government, non-profits and the private sector.

Careers

An M.A. in political science and public affairs prepares students for careers in government, foreign service, national or international business, nonprofit organizations and NGOs, as well as future graduate study. Possible careers include campaign aide, diplomat, nonprofit manager and labor relations specialist.

Admission Requirements

A B.A. or B.S. with at least 18 credits of undergraduate courses in political science or a related social science field is strongly encouraged.

Successful applicants usually possess a GPA of 3.40 (overall and in political science courses) and sufficient TOEFL score (for international applicants).

Applicants are not required to submit GRE scores, but may do so if they wish to have them considered as part of their application.

Application Requirements

• Online application and fee.
• Two letters of recommendation written by people who can speak to your academic and/or professional skills. These letters should come from someone in a supervisory position, for example a professor, academic advisor, or workplace supervisor.
• Transcript(s). Provisional offers of acceptance can be made based on unofficial transcripts. Admitted students will need to submit an official transcript upon enrollment.
• A statement of purpose in which you detail why you wish to pursue a Master's degree, how your background prepares you for this academic program, and how you plan to use the skills or knowledge you learn in the program to achieve your future goals. Please also include a brief note if you wish to be considered for departmental need- or merit- based funding. The total statement of purpose should not exceed 4 double-spaced pages, and may be shorter.
• A writing sample which demonstrates your academic writing abilities. This may be a term paper you wrote for a course, an honors thesis or other independent research, or a policy brief. If you do not have a suitable writing sample, please choose a policy area or research topic in which you are interested and write a research memo in which you introduce the topic, identify a compelling research question or questions, explain how you might go about conducting research on the topic, and identify implications of studying this topic. Writing samples should be at least 5 double-spaced pages, and may be longer.
• Curriculum vitae or résumé

Requirements for International Students

All admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students. International students must also meet the following additional requirements:

• Demonstrate English Language Proficiency
• Financial documents are required to complete an application for admission and be reviewed for admission and merit scholarships.
• Proof of financial support that must include:
  • A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the student’s time at Saint Louis University
A letter from the sponsor’s bank verifying that the funds are available and will be so for the duration of the student’s study at the University

Academic records, in English translation, of students who have undertaken postsecondary studies outside the United States must include:

- Courses taken and/or lectures attended
- Practical laboratory work
- The maximum and minimum grades attainable
- The grades earned or the results of all end-of-term examinations
- Any honors or degrees received.

WES and ECE transcripts are accepted.

**Assistantship Application Deadline**

For full consideration for a University-wide fellowship or assistantship, applicants should submit their application by Jan. 10. For consideration for a Department of Political Science graduate assistantship or tuition hours, applicants should submit their application by April 1 (for enrollment beginning in August).

**Review Process**

Applications are reviewed by a committee of political science department faculty members. Complete applications received by April 1 (for enrollment beginning in August) or November 1 (for enrollment beginning in January) will receive full consideration. We will continue reviewing applications after these deadlines if space allows. If applying after the priority deadline, you are welcome to contact the graduate program coordinator to see whether applications are still being considered.

**Scholarships, Assistantships and Financial Aid**

The Department of Political Science has two sources of funding available for graduate students, tuition hours and graduate assistantships. Tuition hours provide recipients with free tuition for one or more courses in the semester they are awarded. Graduate assistantships provide tuition for full-time study, a stipend to cover living expenses, and health insurance. In return, graduate assistants work up to 20 hours per week within the department on tasks like faculty research.

The department awards tuition hours and graduate assistantships based on merit and/or need. New applicants to the program who wish to be considered for these funding sources should submit their application for admission by the listed priority deadline and mention in their Professional Goals Statement that they wish to be considered for funding. There is no separate process for applying for funding. Funding decisions will be made at the same time as admissions decisions, and it is not possible to guarantee funding before an offer of admission has been made.

The university has additional sources of funding for graduate students. Information on these sources as well as instructions for applying can be found here: https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-scholarships-fellowships-assistantships-awards.php

Information on need-based financial aid is available here: https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/

Students wishing to request a waiver of the university’s application fee should submit their request to graduate@slu.edu, as application fees are not charged by individual departments.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Graduates will be able to explain how political systems operate within the context of their chosen M.A. concentrations.
2. Graduates will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study.
3. Graduates will be able to design original research and seminar projects that investigate political processes with appropriate methodologies and contribute to ongoing scholarly debates.
4. Graduates will be able to explain the results of their research in public forums and justify their methodological choices.
5. Graduates will be able to analyze the values that inform political institutions, behavior, and policies.
6. Graduates will be able to demonstrate honest and ethical research practices.

**Requirements**

Students on SLU’s St. Louis campus will choose one of the three formal concentrations, or they may choose a general M.A. designed around an individualized plan of study. All students on SLU’s Madrid campus (http://www.slu.edu/madrid/) complete the concentration in international relations and crisis.

All students will complete a total of 30 credits for the M.A. degree. All students are required to pass a field exam on their formal concentration or individual topic of interest administered at the beginning of the student's final semester of coursework.

No more than 12 credits of the M.A. may be taken outside political science, and no more than 6 credits may be independent study classes or internships. Some classes have prerequisites. Depending on their undergraduate preparation, students may be required to take specific undergraduate classes prior to enrolling in post-baccalaureate classes. Exceptions will be allowed only with the approval of the coordinator of graduate studies for the department.

**Cognate Fields**

St. Louis M.A. students may choose to complete some of their coursework in a cognate field. A cognate field is made up of three courses (9 credits) in departments other than political science that are relevant to the student’s areas of interest.

Some possibilities for cognate fields include:

- Coursework toward a graduate minor or certificate program, for example, in women's and gender studies (https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/womens-studies/womens-studies-minor/) or geographic information systems (GIS) (https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/earth-atmospheric-sciences/geographic-information-systems-certificate/)
- Graduate classes in another discipline, like economics (https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/business/economics/applied-finance-economics-bs/)
- Three courses in different disciplines all touching on the same subject area, like Asian studies (https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/interdisciplinary/asian-studies-minor/)

**General M.A. in Political Science and Public Affairs**

Students who choose the general M.A. instead of a formal concentration work with a faculty mentor and the graduate coordinator to design a
coherent plan of study on their topic of interest. An individual curriculum plan for the general M.A. (30 credits) includes the same general requirements as a formal concentration:

1. a foundational course or courses on the content of the student’s topic of interest
2. a foundational course on methods of inquiry related to that topic
3. a political theory course
4. a range of elective courses constituted as a coherent domain of study

**American Politics Concentration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5100</td>
<td>Seminar in American Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 5750</td>
<td>American Political Thought: Meanings of Citizenship</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Research Methods**

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5020</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Required Courses**

Three more American politics or Public Policy courses

**Political Science Elective Courses**

Select 12 credits

Six credits may be an internship or MA thesis

**Total Credits** 30

**International Affairs Concentration**

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5500</td>
<td>Seminar in American Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5530</td>
<td>Authoritarian Politics: Rigging Elections and Clinging to Power</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 5840</td>
<td>Global Health Politics &amp; Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comparative Politics Classes**

Select two courses numbered between POLS 5500 and 5599 or POLS 5840 †

For example:

POLS 5530 Authoritarian Politics: Rigging Elections and Clinging to Power
POLS 5840 Global Health Politics & Policy

**International Relations Classes**

Select two courses between POLS 5600 and 5699 or POLS 5840 6

For example:

POLS 5650 War, Peace, and Politics
POLS 5690 Theories of World Politics

Choose an additional course in either Comparative Politics or International Relations 3

**Research Methods**

POLS 5020 Advanced Topics in Research Methods 3

**Political Science Electives**

Select 9 credits

Six credits may be an internship or MA thesis

**Total Credits** 30

† Madrid campus only

‡ St. Louis campus only

**International Relations and Crisis Concentration (Madrid Campus)**

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5590</td>
<td>Crisis of Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5662</td>
<td>International Contemporary Challenges</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5663</td>
<td>Key Contemporary Crises</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Methods**

POLS 5020 Advanced Topics in Research Methods 3

**Other Required Courses**

POLS 5610 International Relations: Theory & Practice † 3
POLS 5630 The European Union: Politics and Political Economy † 3
POLS 5910 Graduate Internship 3

**Political Science Electives**

Select 9 credits

Six credits may be an internship or MA thesis

**Total Credits** 30

† Madrid campus only

‡ St. Louis campus only

**Public Policy and Administration Concentration**

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<td>Seminar in American Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
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Select one of the following:

POLS 5310 Issues in U.S. Public Administration
POLS 5350 Issues in Public Policy
POLS 6310 Policy Process

**Research Methods**

POLS 5020 Advanced Topics in Research Methods 3

**Political Theory**

Choose one from:

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</table>

POLS 5730 Contemporary Political Ideologies
POLS 5740 Marx’s Capital
POLS 5750 American Political Thought: Meanings of Citizenship
POLS 5760 Feminist Theories
POLS 5770 Feminist Epistemologies

**Political Science Electives**

Select 9 credits of Political Science courses 9
Non-Course Requirements

- Students may complete an internship for up to six credits as part of the M.A. in political science and public affairs. Students will work under the direction of a preceptor at the internship location and a faculty member in the department. The internship should involve 200 hours of work central to the organization students are working with, and students will also need to write an extensive paper related to the work.

- Students who choose to write master’s theses will work closely with a faculty director and a committee of two other faculty members chosen with the director’s guidance. The M.A. thesis is a two-semester project. Students will complete a thesis proposal in the first semester and the thesis itself during the second semester. Students who are not able to defend their proposal successfully during the first semester will not be allowed to continue to the second semester of thesis work. The length of the thesis varies according to the nature of the project, but most theses fall between 40 and 75 pages.

- All students in the political science M.A. program must sit for a field exam during their last semester of coursework. All students must pass the written portion of the exam. An additional oral exam will be required at the discretion of the exam committee.

Continuation Standards

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate/professional courses.

Roadmap

International Affairs Concentration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 5690</td>
<td>Theories of World Politics ¹</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5020</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Research Methods ²</td>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 5510</td>
<td>Democratization ¹</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5730</td>
<td>Contemporary Political Ideologies ⁴</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>POLS 5840</td>
<td>Global Health Politics &amp; Policy ⁵</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS 5910</td>
<td>Graduate Internship ⁵</td>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IA Concentration Field Exam ⁶</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS 5650</td>
<td>War, Peace, and Politics ³</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>POLS 5350</td>
<td>Issues in Public Policy ³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
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<td>30</td>
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</table>

¹ International affairs concentration core requirement; students choose two core courses from a list of comparative politics courses and two courses from a list of international relations courses.

² IA concentration required research methods course.

³ Elective.

⁴ IA concentration political theory requirement; students choose one course from a list.

⁵ Elective. (As an alternative, these three elective credits may be taken in a fourth semester.)

⁶ Students take the field exam for their concentration at the beginning of their final semester in the program.

Program Notes

The Master of Arts in Political Science and Public Affairs offers a number of concentrations, including international affairs, public policy and administration and American politics. Each concentration combines core requirements and electives.

The roadmap above is for the international affairs concentration. Core courses (in boldface in the shaded areas above) can be taken in a different order, but students should plan to complete core requirements during the first two semesters in the 30-hour M.A.

Contact Us

For additional information, please contact:

Matthew Nanes, Ph.D.
Coordinator of Graduate Studies
Madrid

SLU-Madrid offers an M.A. in political science and public affairs, with a concentration in international relations and crisis.

Learn More (http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics/degrees-and-programs/political-science.php)