# **Masters of Political Science Thesis Track Packet**



Contents:

Thesis Track Overview

Thesis Track Eligibility

Thesis Track Enrollment

Thesis Track Oral Defense

Thesis Track Submission

**Thesis Proposal Form\***

**Thesis Signature Page\***

**Defense Scheduling Form\***

Statement of No Appeal

Academic Honesty Agreement

Outcomes Assessment

**\*Found on MA Political Science TRACS site or online**

Texas State University

Department of Political Science

355 Undergraduate Academic Center

Elizabeth Graham Summer 2014

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Thesis Track Packet**

OVERVIEW

ELIGIBILITY

ENROLLMENT

DEFENSE

SUBMISSION

STATEMENT OF NO APPEAL

ACADEMIC HONESTY AGREEMENT

Outcomes Assesment

yes No

yes No

yes No

yes No

yes No

yes No

YES NO

YES NO

I have received a copy of the MA Thesis Track Packet with all its contents and agree to all of the policies.

Printed Name Signature Date

This must be completed and returned during the first thesis advising meeting.

**M.A. Thesis Track**

**Overview:**

The thesis may be based on research initially done in fulfillment of course requirements or on a completely new subject. The thesis represents a major research effort. It should range between 75-100 pages, comprehensively review the scholarly literature on the subject treated, and be consistent with a thesis format. The student should begin thinking about potential thesis topics as soon as possible. Students must schedule a meeting will the Graduate Director in their first semester to discuss their interest and which faculty member has an expertise in that area, so the student may choose coursework appropriately and subsequently be paired with him or her in the Directed Reading (POSI 5398).

While enrolled in the Directed Reading students will generate a thesis proposal that must be approved by the Graduate Faculty Writing Supervisor (GFWS) and a review panel. If the proposal is accepted, students will then enroll in Thesis A (POSI 5399A).

In Thesis A, students will produce a full draft of their thesis. Students will then enroll in Thesis B (POSI 56399B) where they will, in consultation with their thesis committee, revise their draft. Students can enroll in Thesis B more than once to finish the thesis, but will receive 3 hours of course credit only after the thesis is completed and approved.

Students must successfully complete an oral defense of their thesis. Students who fail the oral defense of their thesis will have the choice of the non-thesis option.

Students must also submit their thesis to the Graduate College for approval. After approval, the thesis is to be sent to the Alkek Library for binding.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Semester 1 | Must meet with the Graduate Director to discuss thesis ideas, coursework, and identify faculty members with an expertise in the students interest |
| Semester 2 | Enroll in Directed Readings course (POSI 5398) with an MA faculty member with whom they have taken a course and has an expertise in the student’s area of interest, prepare a thesis proposal, submit proposal and revise proposal for approval to move forward on the thesis track |
| Semester 3 | Enroll in Thesis A (POSI 5399A), begin researching and writing, submit thesis draft |
| Semester 4 | Enroll in Thesis B (POSI 5399B), revise and edit thesis draft, submit completed thesis to committee chair, defend thesis, send thesis for approval by the Graduate College, have thesis bound |

**Eligibility:**

Students may apply for the thesis courses after completing 18 hours of graduate political science courses. 15 hours must be in class, graduate political science hours. In rare circumstances, the Graduate Director may allow a graduate course(s) from a related discipline. The directed reading will complete the 18 hour requirement to enter the thesis track. The directed reading must be directed by a member of the MA Political Science faculty. Only students with a minimum of a 3.5 GPA in completed graduate political science course work and with the approval of the MA Graduate Director may begin the Thesis Track.

**Enrollment:**

Students will enroll in POSI 5398 Directed Reading with a professor with whom they have previously taken a course and who has an expertise in the student’s potential thesis topic. In the directed reading course, the student must prepare a thesis proposal including the following: an abstract of topic to be examined containing the problem, research questions, proposed strategies for data collection and analysis; a chapter by chapter description of thesis; a bibliography. Information should be given in sufficient detail to enable the committee to give the proposed thesis intelligent consideration. Students should take the directed reading the semester before they intend to register for Thesis A. Successful completion of 5398 does not guarantee acceptance of the thesis proposal by the GFWS.

The proposal will be submitted to the MA Graduate Director who will record that it has been submitted and then pass it along to the GFWS. The initial target date for the GFWS in the fall semester will be the first work day of November and in the spring of April.

The GFWS will review the proposal and provide comments and return the proposal to the Graduate Director who will place a copy in the student's file and return the proposal to the student.

The student will then revise the proposal and confer with the GFWS for further direction if needed.

The student will submit the revised proposal to the Graduate Director who will confer with the GFWS regarding the student's preparedness to continue the thesis process. Students will have three weeks from the initial target date for the GFWS within which to complete the proposal submission. Please note, the GFWS will be evaluating the proposal for general criteria, not for field content. Field content evaluation should have taken place in the directed readings course and will be pursued further in the thesis proposal review. If the revised thesis proposal is not acceptable, the student will be advised to pursue the non-thesis option.

Following the approval of the GFWS, the Graduate Director will distribute the proposal to a five member panel which reflects the field that corresponds to the thesis topic. At least two of the five members will be from the field within which the thesis proposal falls. Neither the faculty member who advised the student in the directed readings course, nor the GFWS will serve on the thesis proposal panel. Four of the five members of the panel must agree that the student may move forward with the thesis. The review panel will meet in the event of disagreement on the merit of a proposal. The student will be notified of approval status no later than the final class day of that semester.

If rejected, resubmission of thesis proposals will not be allowed.

If the proposed thesis is found to be viable by the department, students must submit a Thesis Committee Approval Form to the Graduate College. The Thesis Committee Approval Form can be found on the Political Science Department website and on the MA Political Science TRACS site. Students then may enroll in Thesis A (POSI 5399A) and begin researching for their thesis.

Students enrolled in Thesis A (POSI 5399A) during the fall semester must submit a draft thesis by December 1. Students in Thesis A during the spring semester need to submit a draft thesis by April 15th.

Students will register for Thesis B (POSI 5399B) the following semester during which time they will, in consultation with their committee members, revise their draft. Thesis A & B are not to be taken at the same time. If the student does not complete the thesis in 5399B, the student can enroll in 5199B. The student will continue to enroll in 5199B as long as it takes to complete the thesis.

The student will receive a grade of “PR,” in progress, until the thesis is completed and submitted to the Texas State Alkek Library. A maximum total of six-semester credit hours (“CR”) will be awarded only after the thesis is filed in the Texas State Alkek Library, the binding fee is paid, and the librarian has electronically returned the thesis card to the Office of the Graduate College.

A master’s degree candidate for graduation may be eligible for a one-time fee reduction under V.T.C.A. Education Code, Section 54.054, if the student is registered for thesis or dissertation credit only and provided such credit is the final credit hour requirement for the degree in progress.

Thesis students must be registered for POSI 5399B or POSI 5199B during the semester in which the degree will be conferred. If a student is registering for Thesis B during the summer, he or she must register for the long summer semester.

The revised and approved thesis (in its final form) must be submitted to the Chair of the committee at least 36 days before the date of commencement at which the degree will be conferred (both electronically and in paper form).

**Defense:**

The student must coordinate an acceptable date and time for the oral defense with their committee members. Candidates must submit an Oral Defense Scheduling Form, which can be found on the department’s website and the MA Political Science TRACS site, that specifies the agreed upon date and time to the Political Science Department at least two weeks before the date of the defense to secure a meeting room. The graduate director will approve the form and schedule a room and time. All thesis defenses will be scheduled in in March for the spring semester and October for the fall semester.

Oral Defense Scheduling Forms are available in the Political Science Department office, on the Political Science Department web site and on the TRACS site.

Students who fail the thesis defense will have the choice of the non-thesis option.

**Thesis Submission:**

Submission to the Graduate College for Review

Prior to submitting the thesis to the Graduate College, the Thesis Committee Approval Form bearing original signatures of the student and all committee members must be submitted to the Graduate College.

The student must then submit the final thesis, approved by the committee, to the Graduate College for review by the posted deadline. Theses are reviewed by the Office of the Graduate College in order of receipt. It is to the student’s advantage to submit the thesis or dissertation as early as possible.

It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the thesis is formatted properly and proofread thoroughly before submission to the Graduate College. Theses submitted to the Graduate College with numerous errors will be returned to the student to resubmit, which can cause delays in meeting semester submission deadlines. The Graduate College does not proofread theses and or format documents for students.

Once the thesis is submitted to the Graduate College, there can be no revision to the document other than formatting and editorial revisions required by the Graduate College. The student’s committee may not request additional revisions and the student may not make any revision of his/her own after the thesis has been submitted to the Graduate College.

Submission Options:

1. Vireo On-line Submission Option: This option is recommended for students because it is more convenient. The Vireo system is accessible 24-7 and students are not required to submit a paper copy to Alkek Library.

The student uploads a PDF of the thesis. The student must also upload the document in its original format (Microsoft Word, LaTeX, etc.) For more information on thesis submission visit the Graduate College’s [Guide to Preparing and Submitting a Thesis](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Thesis_Diss_Guide.pdf).

Following submission, the thesis is reviewed by the Graduate College. If revisions are needed, the student is notified by email. The student makes the revisions to his or her original document and uploads the revised document as a PDF and the revised Microsoft Word, LaTeX or other format document. The Graduate College verifies the revisions have been made. Once the revision process has been completed and the thesis is approved, the student and committee chair will receive email notification. All communication is via Texas State email. The student and committee chair must regularly check their email. The Graduate College transfers the electronic document to Alkek Library.

Hard-copy Submission Option:

The student brings a printed copy of the thesis to the Office of the Graduate College (JCK 280; Office hours M-F 8:00am - 5:00pm). This copy should be printed on regular (non-archival quality) paper for editing. Print on one side of the paper only.

The thesis is reviewed by the Graduate College. If edits are necessary, the Graduate College will email the student and the student will be asked to pick up his or her thesis with revisions marked from the Graduate College. Once the student makes the required revisions, the student will bring the revised document AND the copy of the thesis with revisions marked to the Graduate College. The Graduate College will confirm that the necessary revisions have been made. When the necessary corrections have been made to the thesis and have been verified by the Graduate College, the student’s thesis is approved. The student will be notified in an email to his or her Texas State email address.

Once the Graduate College review process has been completed and the document approved, the student must submit one print copy on archival quality paper (white, 8 1/2 by 11 inch, 20/24 pound bond, archival quality, acid-free, flat-finish paper) to Alkek Library (submissions are accepted M-F, 8am-5pm).

Submission to Alkek Library

1. Vireo On-line Submission Option:

A student submitting in Vireo is not required to submit a paper copy to the Alkek Library. The Graduate College will transfer the electronic thesis to the library. The library will produce a print copy for the circulating collection and a microfilm copy for the University Archives. The print and microfilm copies will be produced even if there is an embargo placed on the electronic version.

1. Hard-copy Submission Option:

A master’s student submitting by hard-copy will take one print copy of the thesis on archival quality paper to the Alkek Library (submissions are accepted M-F, 8am-5pm). The deadline for the thesis to be submitted to the library is by 5 p.m. on the Thursday a week prior to graduation. The student deposits the thesis at the Circulation Desk of Alkek Library.

The Library is not responsible for collation. The student must be sure that his or her thesis is complete, the pages are right side up, and the pages are in the proper order.

Copies for Personal Use

The student deposits the personal use copies of the thesis at the Circulation Desk of Alkek Library (submissions are accepted M-F, 8am-5pm). The Library is not responsible for collation. The student must be sure that his or her thesis is complete, the pages are right side up, and the pages are in the proper order. The student can choose to use regular, non-archival paper for personal copies. The student pays the binding and processing fees for additional copies at the Circulation Desk (M-F, 8am-5pm). To find the exact amount contact Shirley Lipinski, Bindery Manager, preferably via email at sl34@txstate.edu, or call (512) 245-3890.

When bound copies are ready, the personal copies of the thesis will be mailed to an address provided by the student. If the student has a question about their binding request, contact Shirley Lipinski, Bindery Manager, preferably via email at sl34@txstate.edu, or call (512) 245-3890.

For specific deadline dates refer to the [Graduate College website](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Current_Students/Graduation.html#Applying_for_Graduation.).

**Thesis Statement of No Appeal**

Faculty members taking part in the thesis committee will evaluate the thesis and determine if the student demonstrates knowledge at the level appropriate for a master’s degree holder. The thesis can earn credit only if they clearly meet or exceed the department’s standards found in the outcomes assessment.

The evaluation of a thesis is final and cannot be discussed or appealed.

I understand that the evaluation of my thesis for completing my Master of Arts in Political Science is final and that I have no option to appeal the evaluation or to discuss the results with any member of the Department of Political Science.

Printed Name Signature Date

This must be completed and returned during the first thesis advising meeting.

**Academic Honesty Agreement**

The Political Science Department believes that academic honesty is essential for the personal growth of our students. A thorough understanding of academic honesty and plagiarism must exist in order to protect our students from intentional or accidental academic dishonesty in academic work. Please understand that it is often difficult for a faculty member or administrator to distinguish between intentional and accidental plagiarism. For this reason, we want to ensure that every student has knowledge of what constitutes a violation of the Honor Code as defined by the University.

"Violation of the Honor Code" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

1. In general, but not limited to cheating,

“Cheating" means engaging in any of the following activities:

1) Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, or programs, or from any electronic device or equipment.

2) Using, during a test, printed, audio, or electronic materials not authorized by the person giving the test.

3) Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.

4) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test or other academic products (i.e., study guides, etc.).

5) Substituting for another student or permitting another person to substitute for oneself in taking an examination or preparing academic work.

6) Bribing or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test or obtain information about an unadministered test or other academic products.

7) Purchasing or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other assignment prepared by another individual or by a firm. This section does not apply to the word-processing of the rough or final versions of an assignment by a professional service.

8) Submitting the same essay, thesis, report, or other project, without substantial revision or expansion of the work, in an attempt to obtain credit for work submitted in another course.

9) Falsifying data.

1. In general, but not limited to plagiarism,

“Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another’s work and the inadequately or inappropriately acknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own written, oral, visual, or original performative work that is offered for credit.

1. In general, but not limited to collusion,

  “Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing any work offered for credit.

1. In general, but not limited to abuse of resource materials,

“Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft, or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course content.

Once you have carefully read and reviewed the above policy sign where indicated below. If you have questions or concerns regarding plagiarism, its definition, or Texas State University’s policy regarding it, please consult the University’s [Honor Code](http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html).

All students must have this signed document on file in the Department office before taking the comprehensive exam.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the “explanation of plagiarism.” I am in full understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, as well as Texas State University’s policy on plagiarism.

Printed Name Signature Date

This must be completed and returned during the first thesis advising meeting.

**M.A. Political Science Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Evaluation**

**Outcome 1:** Students will demonstrate knowledge in at least one field (including American politics, comparative politics, international relations and/or political theory) of important concepts such as the structure and institutions in American politics; modern democratic systems and developing political systems in comparative politics; international political economy, law, organizations, and security in international relations, and/or the history of Western political thought, liberalism, democracy, and American theory in political theory within the discipline of political science.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary (4) | Good (3) | Acceptable (2) | Unacceptable (1) | Not Observed (0) |
| Concept(s) to be considered critically is/are stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding and analysis. | Concept(s) to be considered critically is/are stated, described, and clarified so that understanding and analysis is not seriously impeded by omissions. | Concept(s) to be considered critically is/are stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. | Concept(s) to be considered critically is/are stated without clarification or description. | Concept(s) to be considered critically is/are not stated. |

**Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of primary scholars and their work within at least one field (including American politics, comparative politics, international relations and/or political theory) in the discipline of political science.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary (4) | Good (3) | Acceptable (2) | Unacceptable (1) | Not Observed (0) |
| Information is taken from scholar(s) with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. | Information is taken from scholar(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. | Information is taken from scholar(s) with some interpretation/ evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. | Information is taken from scholar(s) without any interpretation/ evaluation. | Student does not provide information from scholar(s). |

**Outcome 3:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of normative, empirical, qualitative and/or quantitative approaches used within at least one field (including American politics, comparative politics, international relations and/or political theory) in the discipline of political science.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary (4) | Good (3) | Acceptable (2) | Unacceptable (1) | Not Observed (0) |
| Identifies multiple approaches for answering questions about relevant subjects in the field. | Identifies multiple approaches for answering questions only some of which are relevant in the field. | Identifies only a single approach for answering questions relevant in the field. | Identifies one or more approaches for answering questions that are not relevant in the field. | Does not identify one approach for answering questions relevant in the field. |

**Outcome 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to review and synthesize relevant political science literature in at least one field (including American politics, comparative politics, international relations and/or political theory) in the discipline of political science.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary (4) | Good (3) | Acceptable (2) | Unacceptable (1) | Not Observed (0) |
| Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/ approaches. | Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches. | Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches | Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches. | Presents information from non-political science sources. |

**Outcome 5:** Students will demonstrate the ability to write cogently and explain research effectively and professionally in the discipline of political science.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary (4) | Good (3) | Acceptable (2) | Unacceptable (1) | Not Observed (0) |
| Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order. | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. | Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified. | Conclusion is not tied to the information discussed. |