

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**PH.D. HANDBOOK**

Approved by the Faculty of the Department of Political Science

on

13 May 2015

Updated on 21 June 2015

Updated on 18 September 2015

Updated on 31 March 2016

Updated on 21 October 2016

Updated on 12 January 2017

## INTRODUCTION

One of the main missions of the Department of Political Science at MSU is the education of doctoral students. This educational process is a cooperative effort involving students, faculty, and administrative personnel. This handbook will serve as a guide to that educational process, detailing opportunities available to students and their responsibilities in the program. It spells out current requirements and the steps associated with normal progress in the pursuit of the doctoral degree.

The faculty and staff are willing and able to assist you in securing an education. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss any problems you may have or any suggestions you may wish to offer.

Charles W. Ostrom  
Professor of Political Science  
Chair of the Department of Political Science

## CONTACTS

Thomas H. Hammond  
Professor of Political Science  
and Director of the Ph.D. Program

Telephone: (517) 353-3282  
FAX (517): 432-1091  
E-mail: [thammond@msu.edu](mailto:thammond@msu.edu)

Karen M. Battin  
Graduate Programs Assistant

Telephone: (517) 355-2167  
FAX: (517) 432-1091  
E-mail: [battink@msu.edu](mailto:battink@msu.edu)

Department of Political Science:

Telephone: (517) 355-6590  
FAX: (517) 432-1091  
Web Page: <http://www.pls.msu.edu>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I	Overview of the Doctoral Program in Political Science at Michigan State University .....	1
II.	Doctoral Program Degree Requirements .....	2
A.	Coursework Requirements .....	2
1.	Required Core Courses in Research Methods, Political Thought, and Formal Theory .....	2
2.	Major and Minor Field Designations and Requirements .....	3
3.	Elective Courses .....	4
B.	Guidance Committee and Program of Study .....	5
C.	Evaluation for Continuation in the Ph.D. Program .....	5
D.	Obtaining an M.A. Degree .....	5
E.	Dual-Major Doctoral Degrees .....	5
F.	Continuing in the Ph.D. Program .....	5
G.	Comprehensive Field Examinations .....	5
H.	Third-Year Review .....	6
I.	Dissertation Topic, Advisor, Committee, and Proposal .....	6
J.	Doctoral Dissertation .....	6
K.	Receiving Ph.D. Degree .....	6
L.	Job Placement .....	6
III.	Doctoral Program Components .....	7
A.	Starting the Ph.D. Program .....	7
B.	Getting Help along the Way: The Selection of a Faculty Advisor and Guidance Committee .....	7
C.	First-Year Evaluation for Continuation in the Ph.D. Program .....	9
D.	Obtaining an M.A. Degree .....	11
E.	Dual-Major Doctoral Degrees .....	11
F.	Continued Progress in the Ph.D. Program .....	11
G.	Passing the Comprehensive Field Examinations .....	12
1.	Eligibility to Take the Comprehensive Field Examinations .....	12
2.	Administration of the Comprehensive Field Exams .....	13
3.	Retaking a Comprehensive Field Examination .....	15
4.	Academic Dishonesty in a Comprehensive Field Examination .....	15
H.	Third-Year Review .....	15
I.	Dissertation Topic, Advisor, Committee, and Proposal .....	16
1.	Selection of the Dissertation Committee .....	16
2.	Dissertation Proposal .....	17
3.	Dissertation Proposals Involving Human Subjects .....	18
J.	The Doctoral Dissertation .....	18
1.	Writing the Dissertation .....	18
2.	Dissertation Defense .....	18
a.	Oral Defense Procedures .....	19
3.	Final Approval of the Dissertation .....	19
4.	Dissertation Completion .....	20
5.	Required PLS 999 Dissertation Credits .....	20
K.	Receiving the Ph.D. Degree .....	20
L.	Placement Services for Doctoral Candidates .....	20
IV.	Academic Policies .....	21
A.	Assessments of Academic Performance .....	21
B.	Academic Credits and Grades .....	21
C.	Academic Standing .....	24
D.	Time Limits .....	24
E.	Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program .....	24

F. Waiver and Transfer Credits .....	25
G. Residence Requirements .....	25
H. Departmental Records .....	26
V. Professional Development and Professional Standards of Conduct .....	27
A. Professional Development .....	27
B. Ethical Standards .....	27
C. Student Responsibilities .....	28
D. Use of Human Subjects in Political Science Research .....	28
VI. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution .....	29
A. Asking Questions; Eliminating Confusion .....	29
B. Resolving Problems and Conflicts .....	29
C. Program Changes .....	29
VII. Work-Related Policies .....	30
A. Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assignments .....	30
1. Departmental Assignments and Assistantship Appointments .....	30
a. Terms of Commitment for Graduate Assistants .....	30
b. English Proficiency Requirement for International Students .....	31
c. Work Assignments for Graduate Assistants .....	32
2. Expectations and Responsibilities of Graduate Assistants .....	32
a. Course Registration .....	32
b. Maintaining Norms of Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct .....	33
c. Training of Teaching Assistants .....	34
d. Mandatory Training on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct .....	34
e. Faculty Supervision and Evaluation of Graduate Assistant Performance .....	34
(1) The Supervisory Relationship .....	35
(2) The End-of-Semester Evaluation .....	35
3. The Criteria and Process for Determining Departmental Financial Support .....	36
a. Termination of Financial Support during the Academic Year .....	36
b. Reappointment of Graduate Assistants from One Year to the Next .....	36
c. Termination of Financial Support from One Academic Year to the Next .....	37
4. Graduate Assistant Benefits .....	37
a. Stipends, Stipend Advancement, and Promotion .....	37
b. Tuition Waivers .....	38
c. Graduate Assistant Offices .....	38
d. Health Insurance for Graduate Assistants .....	38
e. Graduate Assistant Illness/Injury/Pregnancy Leave Policy .....	39
f. Grief Absence Policy .....	39
g. Parking Benefits .....	39
B. Work-Related Policies for All Graduate Students Pursuing Ph.D. Degrees in Political Science .....	40
1. Microcomputer Laboratory .....	40
2. E-mail Facilities .....	40
3. Political Science Graduate Student Association .....	40
4. Health Services .....	40
5. International Travel .....	40
6. Special Services .....	41
VIII. University Resources for Graduate Students .....	42
A. Frequently Contacted Offices .....	42
B. Campus-wide Services and Support for Graduate Students .....	43
C. Useful Publications and Information Sources .....	45
Appendix A: Check-List of Normal Progress in the Ph.D. Program .....	46
Appendix B: Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students in the Ph.D. Program .....	48

Appendix C: Descriptions of Major and Minor Comprehensive Examinations by Field .....	55
Appendix D: First-Year Evaluation Form.....	67