Master of Arts in political science

Program information

College	Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters		
Department or school	Department of Political Science		
Degree abbreviation	M.A.	**CIP code**	45.1001
Program website	www.fau.edu/artsandletters/politicalscience/graduate		

Our commitment to you

This Academic Learning Compact describes the program's mission, what students who complete the program will know and be able to do and how faculty assess that learning. Florida Atlantic University publishes a compact for every degree program and standalone certificate so students, families, employers and the community can see what each program commits to providing its graduates.

Program mission

The Department of Political Science offers undergraduate and graduate courses that contribute to the understanding of American politics, comparative politics and international relations. The master's program offers advanced study in these areas, with small classes and close work with faculty.

Florida Atlantic University's mission

Florida Atlantic University is recognized as an opportunity university and R1 research institution dedicated to transforming lives through education, discovery, and innovation. We empower students to achieve economic mobility, advance knowledge that creates meaningful impact, and forge partnerships that drive prosperity and connection in the communities we serve.

How the program supports the university mission

The program supports the university's mission by transforming lives through education and discovery. Advanced training in research methods and data analysis prepares graduates for doctoral programs, law school and careers in government and nongovernmental organizations.

About the program

Master's students study American politics, comparative politics and political methodology in small classes with regular faculty contact. Students build critical insight, deep knowledge of their fields and research skills. The program is a great fit for students preparing for a doctorate, law school or a public service career.

Student learning outcomes

By graduation, students will be able to demonstrate outcomes in three core areas: content/discipline knowledge and skills (Outcome 1), communication skills (Outcome 2) and critical thinking skills (Outcome 3). Faculty assess all three core outcomes every year.

A. Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills

What graduates will know and be able to do in their field

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Declarative knowledge:** key vocabulary, history, theories and concepts of the field
- ☒ **Research skills:** finding, gathering, analyzing and reporting information the way the field does
- ☐ **Technical skills:** hands-on tools and methods of the field, such as software, instruments, lesson plans or business reports

Graduates will be able to explain the major concepts, theories and facts about political institutions, political behavior and public policy.
Graduates will be able to conduct original research using the scientific method.

How students show it

Original research papers that show knowledge of political concepts and use of the scientific method.

Where it is assessed

POS 6736 Research Design in Political Science; POS 6045 Seminar in American National Government; CPO 6007 Seminar in Comparative Political Processes

B. Communication Skills

How graduates will share ideas and work with others

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Written communication:** clear, well-organized writing suited to the audience and purpose
- ☐ **Oral communication:** well-organized presentations that connect with an audience
- ☐ **Other forms of communication:** visual, media, performance or exhibit work
- ☐ **Team/collaborative communication:** contributing to group projects and shared goals

Graduates will be able to write about political science concepts and theories in a clear, logically consistent way.

How students show it

Original research papers.

Where it is assessed

POS 6736 Research Design in Political Science; POS 6045 Seminar in American National Government; CPO 6007 Seminar in Comparative Political Processes

C. Critical Thinking Skills

How graduates will analyze, create and solve problems

Areas this program addresses (check at least one)

- ☒ **Analytical skills:** weighing evidence, comparing ideas and judging arguments
- ☐ **Creative skills:** combining knowledge to create something new, such as a design, performance or proposal
- ☐ **Practical skills:** applying knowledge to real situations, such as a business proposal, lesson plan or grant

Graduates will be able to analyze quantitative and qualitative data to explain political institutions and events and propose causal connections.

How students show it

The data analysis and interpretation in original research papers.

Where it is assessed

POS 6736 Research Design in Political Science; POS 6045 Seminar in American National Government; CPO 6007 Seminar in Comparative Political Processes

Assessment approaches

Every year, faculty review samples of student work to see how well students are meeting all three outcomes, and they use what they learn to improve the program.

Faculty review the original research that graduate students submit. They look at knowledge of political science concepts and theories, use of the scientific method, analysis of data and quality of writing.

Assessment methods may change over time.