

# **2012-2013 M.A. in Political Science - Academic Assessment Plan**

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

*Office of the Provost*

*University of  
Florida*

*Institutional  
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality  
Enhancement*

## Table of Contents

Academic Assessment Plan for M.A. in Political Science - International Relations .....	3
A. Mission .....	3
B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures .....	3
C. Research.....	5
D. Assessment Timeline.....	6
E. Assessment Cycle .....	7
F. Measurement Tools.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
G. Assessment Oversight.....	9
Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric....	13
University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued.....	14

# Academic Assessment Plan for M.A. in Political Science - International Relations

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

## A. Mission

### **Masters' Program – General**

(<http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/graduate/maprograms.html#mapolisci>)

The M.A. in Political Science program provides education those who have an interest in pursuing graduate level work in political science, but who are not yet ready to begin doctoral level research. Students are introduced to the core fields of political science and develop a high level of expertise in two areas through courses and exams. The goal of the program is to provide a solid foundation for students wishing to work in a variety of professional fields including risk assessment, consulting, or for the government in research and/or analysis. The general MA may also serve as a foundation for future doctoral level training at UF or elsewhere.

### **Graduate Program – Political Science** ([www.polisci.ufl.edu](http://www.polisci.ufl.edu))

The Political Science Department at the University of Florida is committed to training tomorrow's leaders—in government, business, the law, and higher education. From making local governments work better to changing the way we think about the global community, from meeting the environmental challenge to developing a strong sense of ethics in the political arena, our faculty and students are addressing the most critical problems facing the country today. With broad-based instruction and a variety of innovative programs at the graduate level, we also have been at the forefront of the internationalization of the curriculum at UF. Through our rigorous and comprehensive training we prepare our students to critically engage with both theoretical puzzles in political science and real-world policy issues. In this way our students are able to contribute to both academic scholarship and the solution of real world political and policy dilemmas.

### **College** (<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/about/index.html>)

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences constitutes the intellectual core of the university. Its principal mission is to lead the academic quest to understand our place in the universe, and to help shape our society and environment. Through teaching, research and service, the College continually expands our knowledge and practice in the most fundamental questions in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural and mathematical sciences. At the graduate level, students master a specialized body of knowledge and pursue original research under the guidance of outstanding faculty. As a public institution, the College serves society through its research programs to advance our knowledge and capabilities, through its teaching to prepare tomorrow's leaders, and through its outreach programs to ensure dissemination of the state of the art in areas ranging from languages and literatures, to social behaviors, to the fundamental laws of nature. The College captures the brightest ideals of intellectual inquiry and human values as mirrored in society, and remains ever conscious that it must represent and reflect all segments of society to remain the intellectual core of the university.

**University** (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog1011/administration/mission.html>)

The University of Florida belongs to a tradition of great universities. Together with its undergraduate and graduate students, UF faculty participate in an educational process that links the history of Western Europe with the traditions and cultures of all societies, explores the physical and biological universes and nurtures generations of young people from diverse backgrounds to address the needs of the world's societies.

The university welcomes the full exploration of its intellectual boundaries and supports its faculty and students in the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas. This accomplished through **teaching**, which is a fundamental purpose of this university at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, **research** and **scholarship**, which are integral to the educational process and to the expansion of our understanding of the natural world, the intellect and the senses and **service**, which reflects the university's obligation to share the benefits of its research and knowledge for the public good. The university serves the nation's and the state's critical needs by contributing to a well-qualified and broadly diverse citizenry, leadership and workforce. These three interlocking elements — teaching, research and scholarship, and service — span all the university's academic disciplines and represent the university's commitment to lead and serve the state of Florida, the nation and the world by pursuing and disseminating new knowledge while building upon the experiences of the past. The university aspires to advance by strengthening the human condition and improving the quality of life.

**Shared Mission**

The Department of Political Science shares the college and university goals of training our students in teaching, research and service to allow them to excel in their chosen careers and give back to their communities. Through the completion of our program our students learn to be critical consumers of political information and conduct cutting edge research. Graduates will have exceptionally high professional standards and be fully prepared to become leaders in academia, government, non-profit organizations and the professional world.

**B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures**

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	1. Articulate knowledge and comprehension of theories of political science, including the historical evolution of the field, and the primary debates in the field, along with the core literature in at least two of the following subfields: Comparative Politics, International Relations, American Politics, and/or Political Theory.	Satisfactory completion of written assignments in at least two of the following: POS 6045, CPO 6091, INR 6607, and POT 6505.	Campus

Knowledge	2. Identify, interpret, and appraise research in international relations	Satisfactory completion of written work in POS 6736 (Conduct of Inquiry) and STA 6126 (Statistical Methods in Social Research), or equivalent.	Campus
Skills (thesis option)	3. Design and conduct quantitative and/or qualitative research to address theoretical and empirical questions in American Politics, Comparative Politics or Political Theory.	Students will submit and defend a thesis completed according to Graduate School guidelines.	Campus
Skills (exam option)	4. Summarize, compare, and enumerate the current state of the field of American Politics, Comparative Politics or Political theory providing recommendations for future research directions.	Students will successfully complete a two-day written and oral comprehensive examination.	Campus
Professional Behavior	5. Display academic honesty, ethics, collegiality, and cultural sensitivity.	Compliance among employees with FERPA and sexual harassment; attendance at the mandatory department orientation during first year	
Professional Behavior	6. Attend and critique scholarly presentations during regular departmental workshops and speakers' series	Regular attendance and participation in departmental workshop, roundtables and guest speaker presentations throughout graduate career.	Campus

### C. Research

All students are expected to obtain the skills to help them read, digest, and understand research in the field of Political Science. Additionally, all students are expected to obtain a foundation of skills that would help them pursue their own research, both substantive (in terms of knowledge of the field) and methodological (in terms of research processes and tools). Thesis-option students will produce a piece of original research in the field, while exam-option students will focus on critical reading and analysis of a broader subset of the literature in two core fields in

Political Science. In both situations, students are encouraged to actively engage in the intellectual life of the Department of Political Science, the broader Political Science academic community, and other departments of interest on the campus of the University of Florida.

**Preparation:** To support and facilitate these objectives students are assigned a mentor as soon as they matriculate into the program. This faculty member will serve as a guide during the first year of the program, or until a committee chair is chosen (end of the fall semester of the second year at latest). Mentors, and later committee chairs, assist students in selecting their courses, advise as students choose between the thesis and exam options, and provide guidance in all elements of professional development including, but not limited to success in the program and future education or employment interests after completion of the program.

All students complete two required courses covering statistical methods and the conduct of research in the field. In addition, students take at least 2 of 4 core field seminars: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, or Political Theory. In addition, students must complete at least four other courses in from within at least two fields. Students then take six credits of electives, either within Political Science, in related fields, or in language courses.

With these foundations, students work towards the ability to produce well-reasoned and analyzed comprehensive exam answers *or* a Masters’ thesis. For the exam option, students work with their supervisory committees to prepare to analyze the core fields that they have taken courses in comprehensively, parsimoniously, and critically. Students will then take a comprehensive exam and defend it to their committees. For the thesis option, students will work with their supervisory committees (particularly the chair) to develop a feasible original research topic and write a thesis around it. Students will then defend that thesis to their committees.

Departmental support to students is provided through careful advising and mentorship from their first day in the program, annual reviews of their progress in the program and regular evaluations of their work in classes, comprehensive exams and thesis defenses.

#### D. Assessment Timeline

Use this Assessment Timeline template for your plan. Add or delete rows and columns to accommodate your SLOs and assessments.

Program M.A. in Political Science - International Relations      College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Assessment	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
<b>SLOs</b>			
<b>Knowledge</b>			
SLO 1	In-class participation (oral communication skills, demonstration of comprehension)	Written final projects (demonstration of comprehension and ability to interpret material)	Literature Review in thesis or Comprehensive exam answers
SLO 2	Weekly homework (knowledge of basic concepts and tools) in relevant courses	Final exam/project (ability to integrate formal skills into empirical analysis) in	Literature Review in thesis or Comprehensive

		relevant classes	exam answers
<b>Skills</b>			
SLO 3 (thesis option)	Written Masters Thesis (original research well-situated in the field)	Oral defense of Thesis (explain and understand high quality independent research project)	
SLO 4 (Exam Option)	Written field exam (comprehensive general knowledge of fields)	Oral field exam (ability to engage in discourse on subject)	
<b>Professional Behavior</b>			
SLO 5	Successful completion of professional ethics survey	Completion of FERPA and Sexual Harassment training modules	
SLO 6	Tracking of participation in departmental events	Student self-reporting of other professional participation	

### E. Assessment Cycle

Use this Assessment Cycle template for your plan. Add or delete rows as needed to accommodate your SLOs.

Assessment Cycle for:

Program M.A. in Political Science-General College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation: May 1- July 15

Program Modifications: Completed by August 31

Dissemination: Completed by September 30

SLOs	Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
<b>Content Knowledge</b>							
International Relations Knowledge				X	X	X	X
Research Identification and Interpretation				X	X	X	X
<b>Skills</b>							
Performing Research (Thesis Option)					X		X
Critically Analyzing Research (Exam Option)					X		X
<b>Professional Behavior</b>							
Ethics/diversity/privacy training				X	X	X	X
Professional comportment and responsibilities				X	X	X	X

### E. Measurement Tools

Measurement tools vary depending on the skill being evaluated and some skills require multiple methods to effectively assess. The evaluation of core KNOWLEDGE achievements is primarily accomplished through careful review of the materials created by students in their courses en route to their degree. The “General Political Science” knowledge goal will be evaluated primarily by written work in the two core field seminars completed, as well as the remaining subfield courses selected by the students, while the “Research Identification and Interpretation” goal will be evaluated primarily by the written work in Conduct of Inquiry and Statistics courses. This occurs through individual faculty evaluation of research papers completed as part of a course. Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.4 and must not receive 2 grades or more below a B- to remain in “good standing” within the program.

Both KNOWLEDGE goals, however, will also be evaluated by students’ substantive performance either on the comprehensive exams (exam option) or in the literature review for their theses (thesis option). This will take place through committee review and assessment of the written and oral components of the comprehensive exams. Comprehensive exams are scored as “high pass,” “Pass” or “Not Pass.” “High pass” and “pass” are satisfactory performances. To obtain a high pass the two non-chair committee members must independently nominate a student by writing to the chair of the exam committee.

The SKILLS portion of the requirement will be primarily determined by the production and oral defense of a thesis (thesis option) or the written portion and oral defense of a comprehensive exam (exam option). Thesis option students will be asked to perform research and demonstrate knowledge of what they have done; exam option students will be asked to synthesize and critically analyze research. The rubrics for both the KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS portions of both the comprehensive exams (Appendix A for the written portion, Appendix B for the oral portion) and the theses (Appendix C for the written portion, Appendix D for the oral portion) are attached. As mentioned above, comprehensive exams are scored as “high pass,” “Pass” or “Not Pass.” “High pass” and “pass” are satisfactory performances. To obtain a high pass the two non-chair committee members must independently nominate a student by writing to the chair of the exam committee. Thesis defenses are scored with the same rubric, where students receive a “high pass,” “pass,” or “not pass” based on the committee’s recommendation, and “High pass” and “pass” are satisfactory performances. It is necessary for an MA candidate to present and defend either their thesis or exam to the full supervisory committee, which evaluates the student’s work. Students who fail to pass either element may re-present their work as necessary until it is accepted.

Fulfillment of the PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR portion of the requirement is measured by departmental and student feedback. The “Ethics/Diversity/Privacy Training” SLO is measured by successful completion of the departmental and/or university ethics, diversity and privacy training programs/courses. The “Professional Compartment and Responsibilities” SLO requirement of active participation in departmental speakers programs and workshops will be measured by sign-in sheets at Department events and student self-reporting of the attendance at relevant events in other departments, as requested in a survey annually sent out by the International Relations field chair in charge of the program.



## F. Assessment Oversight

Here, list the names and contact information of those who oversee the assessment process in your program. Add or delete rows as needed.

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Amie Kreppel	Political Science- Graduate Coordinator	<a href="mailto:kreppel@ufl.edu">kreppel@ufl.edu</a>	273-2399
Sue Lawless-Yanchisin	Political Science – Graduate Secretary	<a href="mailto:suzily@ufl.edu">suzily@ufl.edu</a>	392-0262
Michael Martinez	Political Science – Department Chair	<a href="mailto:martinez@ufl.edu">martinez@ufl.edu</a>	392-0262

## Appendix A- Evaluation Rubric – Course research paper

<b>Evaluation → Objective ↓</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0pts)</b>	<b>Marginal (1pt)</b>	<b>Acceptable (2pts)</b>	<b>Good (3pts)</b>	<b>Exceptional (4pts)</b>
<b>Paper/research objectives</b>	Absence of any statement of paper or research objectives	Vague or incomplete presentation of paper/research objectives	Summary statement of research/paper objectives, but not fully developed	Clear statement of research/paper objectives, moderately well developed	Clear and thorough presentation of paper/research objectives
<b>Organizational Structure</b>	Absence of any presentation of structural outline of paper	incomplete, vague or confusing presentation of paper structure	Basic outline of organizational structure of paper presented	Full structure of paper clearly articulated	Extremely clear, well-structured and thorough presentation of organization of paper
<b>Literature Review</b>	Absence of any substantive literature review	Partial, incomplete review of relevant literature and/or inclusion of irrelevant literature	Basic survey of most relevant literature with few if any irrelevant works discussed	Well organized review of the majority of the relevant literature, correctly referenced.	Comprehensive well organized and fully referenced literature review of appropriate scholarship
<b>Theoretical framework and/or hypotheses</b>	Absence of discussion of the theoretical framework and or /hypotheses to be tested	Superficial/incomplete presentation of theoretical framework and/or hypotheses to be tested	Basic presentation and discussion of the core theoretical framework and/or hypotheses	Good presentation and discussion of the theoretical framework and/or hypotheses	Extremely clear, very well articulated and structured presentation and discussion of theoretical framework and/or hypotheses
<b>Argumentation and/or data analysis and methodology</b>	Absence of any supporting arguments or data and explanation of methodology	Minimal argumentation and/or data analysis provided to support theoretical framework/hypotheses	Moderate argumentation and/or data analysis provided to support theoretical framework/hypotheses	Good, well developed argumentation provided to support theoretical framework / hypotheses	Clear and comprehensive presentation of supporting arguments and/or data as well as methodology
<b>Overall presentation</b>	Very poorly formatted, no pg #s, title, etc., as well as egregious grammatical and/or spelling errors	Many grammatical and /or spelling errors and multiple formatting weaknesses	Minor grammar and/or spelling errors, small formatting concerns	Thoroughly spell-checked and proof read, few if any errors. Basic formatting rules followed	Nearly perfect in terms of both grammar/spelling and formatting /presentation.
<b>Overall evaluation</b>	<b>0pts - 5pts</b>	<b>6pts - 11pts</b>	<b>12pts - 15pts</b>	<b>16pts - 20pts</b>	<b>20pts - 24pts</b>

## Appendix B- Evaluation Rubric – Comprehensive Exams - MA

Evaluation → Objective ↓	Not Pass (0 pts)	Pass (1 pt)	High Pass (2 pts)
<b>Broad knowledge of field</b>			
<b>Literature</b>	Weak and/or inchoate knowledge, significant gaps in knowledge of core texts	Sufficient familiarity with core texts in the field. Good ability to link diverse texts and knowledge of evolution of the theoretical arguments in the literature	Outstanding and comprehensive knowledge of core literature, as well as familiarity with significant secondary texts. Exceptional ability to link diverse texts and theoretical arguments in the literature
<b>Core debates</b>	inability to fully explain or engage with core debates within the field	Clear ability to explain and engage with core debates in the literature	Thorough knowledge of, and ability to engage with and contribute to the core debates in the field
<b>Outstanding issues</b>	inability to demonstrate knowledge and/or comprehension of significant outstanding issues in the field	Substantial knowledge of areas of outstanding debate within the field, clear ability to contribute to debates	Comprehensive knowledge of outstanding debates, substantial ability to contribute to theoretical debates
<b>Sub-field knowledge</b>			
<b>Literature</b>	Weak and/or inchoate knowledge, significant gaps in knowledge of core texts	Sufficient familiarity with core texts in the field. Good ability to link diverse texts and knowledge of evolution of the theoretical arguments in the literature	Outstanding and comprehensive knowledge of core literature, as well as familiarity with significant secondary texts. Exceptional ability to link diverse texts and theoretical arguments in the literature
<b>Core debates</b>	inability to fully explain or engage with core debates within the field	Clear ability to explain and engage with core debates in the literature	Thorough knowledge of, and ability to engage with and contribute to the core debates in the field
<b>Outstanding issues</b>	inability to demonstrate knowledge and/or comprehension of significant outstanding issues in the field	Substantial knowledge of areas of outstanding debate within the field, clear ability to contribute to debates	Comprehensive knowledge of outstanding debates, substantial ability to contribute to theoretical debates
<b>Overall evaluation</b>	<b>0pts - 5pts</b>	<b>6pts - 9pts</b>	<b>10pts-12pts</b>

## Appendix C- Evaluation Rubric – Thesis - MA

<b>Evaluation →</b> <b>Objective ↓</b>	<b>Not Pass</b> <b>(0pts)</b>	<b>Pass</b> <b>(1pts)</b>	<b>High Pass</b> <b>(2pts)</b>
<b>Paper/research objectives</b>	Absent, vague, incomplete, or insufficiently developed statement of research objectives	Clear statement of research/paper objectives, moderately well developed	Clear and thorough presentation of paper/research objectives
<b>Organizational Structure</b>	Absent, vague, incomplete, or confusing presentation of structural outline of thesis	Full structure of paper clearly articulated	Extremely clear, well-structured and thorough presentation of organization of paper
<b>Literature Review</b>	Absent, partial, incomplete, or overly basic literature review, or one focused on irrelevant works	Well organized review of the majority of the relevant literature, correctly referenced.	Comprehensive well organized and fully referenced literature review of appropriate scholarship
<b>Theoretical framework and/or hypotheses</b>	Absent, superficial, or incomplete discussion of the theoretical framework and/or hypotheses to be tested	Good presentation and discussion of the theoretical framework and/or hypotheses	Extremely clear, very well articulated and structured presentation and discussion of theoretical framework/ hypotheses
<b>Argumentation and/or data analysis and methodology</b>	Absent, minimal, or weak supporting arguments or data and explanation of methodology	Good, well developed argumentation provided to support theoretical framework / hypotheses	Clear and comprehensive presentation of supporting arguments and/or data as well as methodology
<b>Overall presentation</b>	Very poorly formatted, no pg #s, title, etc., as well as many or egregious grammatical and/or spelling errors	Thoroughly spell-checked and proof read few if any errors. Basic formatting rules followed	Nearly perfect in terms of grammar/spelling and formatting /presentation.
<b>Overall evaluation</b>	<b>0pts - 5pts</b>	<b>5pts-9pts</b>	<b>10pts-12pts</b>

## Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric

Related resources are found at <http://www.ua.assessment.edu>

Program:		Year:			Comments
Component	Criterion	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
<b>Mission Statement</b>	Mission statement is articulated clearly.				
	The program mission clearly supports the College and University missions, and includes specific statements describing how it supports these missions.				
<b>Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Assessment Measures</b>	SLOs are stated clearly.				
	SLOs focus on demonstration of student learning.				
	SLOs are measurable.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLO.				
<b>Research</b>	Research expectations for the program are clear, concise, and appropriate for the discipline.				
<b>Assessment Map</b>	The Assessment Map indicates the times in the program where the SLOs are assessed and measured.				
	The Assessment Map identifies the assessments used for each SLO.				
<b>Assessment Cycle</b>	The assessment cycle is clear.				
	All student learning outcomes are measured.				
	Data is collected at least once in the cycle.				
	The cycle includes a date or time period for data analysis and interpretation.				
	The cycle includes a date for planning improvement actions based on the data analysis.				
	The cycle includes a date for dissemination of results to the appropriate stakeholders.				

University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
<b>Measurement Tools</b>	Measurement tools are described clearly and concisely.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLOs.				
	Methods and procedures reflect an appropriate balance of direct and indirect methods.				
	The report presents examples of at least one measurement tool.				
<b>Assessment Oversight</b>	Appropriate personnel (coordinator, committee, etc.) charged with assessment responsibilities are identified				