

Department of Political Science

Graduation with Honors in Political Science

1. Eligibility:

Undergraduate majors in the department with senior standing, a minimum 3.5 GPA in political science and a minimum 3.25 overall GPA, are eligible to enroll in departmental honors work. These GPA levels also must be achieved at the end of the candidate's final semester, for both in-residence and combined work.

2. Procedures:

Majors wishing to pursue the honors program must file a declaration of intent form with the department's Undergraduate Studies Coordinator no later than at enrollment for the final semester of undergraduate study. Normally students enroll at the beginning of their senior year of study, for two consecutive semesters.

Students pursuing honors will enroll in **POLS 498, Honors Thesis**, with an individual faculty member who has agreed to serve as thesis adviser, thus accepting responsibility for directing the honors research project. Enrollment for 3 hours for two consecutive semesters in **POLS 498** is typical. In unusual cases, students may obtain permission to enroll for 6 hours in one semester, doing all the thesis work in that period.

3. Requirements for graduation with honors:

Completion of a written research project that has been read, defended orally, and approved by a committee of at least three members of the College faculty (of whom at least two must be political science faculty). The committee will then certify successful completion of the honors thesis enrollment. Work considered by the project director to be less than "A" quality will not be considered for honors and will not be presented to the committee for approval. The written report is more than an extended term paper, while something less than a graduate-level thesis. It must reflect analysis and perceptive understanding of the subject matter under study.

4. Research timetable:

We recommend that students follow a relatively strict schedule in completing their research studies, in order to avoid having the honors oral examination come very late in the final semester. The following timetable is recommended:

- A. A research design should be submitted by the middle of the first semester of enrollment.
- B. At the latest, the first draft of the written report should be completed approximately two months before the end of the semester in which honors are to be awarded (e.g., March 15, or October 15).
- C. At the latest, the final draft of the written report should be orally defended at least one week before the end of the semester in which honors are to be awarded.