



BROWN

# Department of Political Science

# Graduate Student Handbook

# 2025-26

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For more information, go to the following websites.

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool>

<https://polisci.brown.edu/>

# WELCOME

*Welcome to the Political Science Department at Brown University. We expect that you will find your time here both intellectually and personally rewarding.*

*This handbook is intended to give an overview of the Political Science graduate program and to answer some of the commonly raised questions about policies and procedures. This guide features requirements, processes, and resources. Our hope is that the material contained in this guide will help students successfully navigate their way through the degree process.*

*For further information, please refer to the Political Science website,*

<https://polisci.brown.edu/>

*and the department graduate student intranet,*

<https://sites.google.com/brown.edu/politicalscience-grad-students/home>

*the Graduate School website,*

<https://graduateschool.brown.edu/>

*and the authoritative source for Graduate School policies, the Brown Graduate School Handbook:*

<https://graduateschool.brown.edu/academics-research/rules-regulations/graduate-school-handbook>

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(Hitting 'REPLY' will email the entire group.)

# GRADUATE SCHOOL DEANS

Contact the Graduate School Deans at [graduate\\_dean@Brown.edu](mailto:graduate_dean@Brown.edu)

- Janet Blume, Interim Dean of the Graduate School, Deputy Provost, Chief of Staff  
Contact [Dean-of-graduateschool@brown.edu](mailto:Dean-of-graduateschool@brown.edu) for an appt.
- Alycia Mosley Austin, Interim Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Associate Dean of Diversity and Inclusion  
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Dean Mosley Austin's interim responsibilities include academic issues, exchange programs, and leaves of absence. Her other responsibilities include developing initiatives to foster a positive and supportive campus climate and community as well as recruitment planning and outreach, and helping programs to support positive student experiences and retention.
- Vanessa Ryan, Senior Associate Dean of Student Development  
[Vanessa\\_Ryan@Brown.edu](mailto:Vanessa_Ryan@Brown.edu)  
Dean Ryan's responsibilities include student development programming and policy, distinctive opportunities, professional development, and liaison to the Sheridan Center for Teaching and CareerLAB.
- Maria Suarez, Associate Dean of Student Support, Deputy Title IX Coordinator  
[Maria\\_Suarez@Brown.edu](mailto:Maria_Suarez@Brown.edu)  
Dean Suarez's responsibilities include graduate student services, student support services, medical and personal leaves, liaison to Campus Life and Student Services, including SEAS, and Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Ethan Bernstein, Executive Dean of Administration and Finance  
[Ethan\\_Bernstein@Brown.edu](mailto:Ethan_Bernstein@Brown.edu)  
Dean Bernstein's responsibilities include administration management, admissions, and day-to-day operations.

# PhD COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Fourteen seminar courses are required:
  - Students may take more than fourteen courses and are encouraged to do so in consultation with their advisor.
  - Grades of A are expected for all courses though a minimum grade of B is required for credit. Exceptions to take a course S/NC must be approved in advance by the DGS.
  - All courses must be 2000-level graduate seminars
  - Eleven\* courses must be taken in the Department of Political Science
  - Up to two courses may be taken in a related discipline \*though up to two additional courses (for a total of 4 outside POLS courses) may be taken with DGS approval
  - POLS2050 and POLS2051 (together count as one course, required in the third year) This course includes having a Dissertation Chair in place by December and a full committee in place by May, and defending the prospectus by the end of the spring semester.
  - POLS2052 and POLS2053 (together count as one course, required in the third year). This course does not meet during standard times.

Required courses for those in the American Politics, Comparative Politics and International Relations subfields:

- POLS2000 Research Design OR POLS2400 Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research (required in the first year)
- POLS2580 Quantitative Research Methods (required in the first year)
- Two of the four pro-seminars: POLS2100 American, POLS2110 Comparative, POLS2120 Theory, POLS2130 IR (take them as soon as they are offered), plus two electives in each of those subfields with no more than one B grade in each subfield.
- One POLS graduate-level theory course of your choosing

Required courses for those in the Political Theory subfield:

- Methods: POLS2000 Research Design OR POLS2400 Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research OR POLS2580 Quantitative Research Methods (required in the first year)
- Both political theory field proseminars (POLS2120 and POLS2360, take them as soon as they are offered) plus a theory elective with no more than B grade in those three courses
- One other field proseminar: POLS2100 American, POLS2120 Comparative, or POLS2130 IR (take them as soon as they are offered) plus two electives in that subfield with no more than one B grade in those three courses

- First Year Students:  
Six 2000-level graduate seminars. Taking a seventh course is recommended, and students can take a maximum of eight courses. If you have any questions, speak to your faculty advisor.
- Second Year Students:  
Six 2000-level graduate seminars, or as many as necessary to meet the twelve course requirement by the end of the second year
- Third Year Students:  
Two courses:  
A year-long prospectus writing seminar worth one-course credit: POLS2050 (Fall) and POLS2051 (Spring) (required)  
A year-long professionalization course worth one-course credit: POLS2052 (Fall) and POLS2053 (Spring) (required) *Becoming a Political Scientist: Professionalization and Strategies for Thriving.*
- Fourth year students and above:  
Thesis Preparation: POLS2990 (Fall and Spring) (No credit)

Do keep in mind that graduate training is always a partnership. The faculty, through a mix of required and elective courses, puts together a program to help enable you to think, write, and scientifically and/or philosophically support your research projects. But the program here, as is the case elsewhere, presupposes that students will take responsibility for shaping and giving articulation to their own distinct research agendas and projects. And where necessary, we expect students will seek out additional intellectual pathways here at Brown or beyond.

## METHODS

Ph.D. students in the subfields of American politics, comparative politics, and international relations are required to take POLS 2000 OR POLS 2400 AND POLS 2580 (the first in the graduate quantitative methods sequence) AND one graduate course in political theory unless your first field is political theory.

Primary field political theory students are required to take POLS 2000 OR POLS2400 OR POLS 2580. Students should follow the advice of their faculty advisors to gain any additional methods skills they may need, which may call for them to do more than the required courses.

To support these requirements the department will regularly offer the following methods courses:

- POLS 2000 / POLS2400 – a survey of key models of research in political science, including sessions on the philosophy of social science; causality/relationships between variables; process tracing; quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis; experimental logic; and methods of political theory.
- Quantitative methods sequence: POLS 2580, POLS2590, POLS2605, and POLS2610.
- Additional qualitative methods and other methods (e.g., experimental methods, methods in political theory, game theory).

Students may consider augmenting their methods training with courses outside of the department. The four most popular courses are listed below but there is an extensive list linked [here](#). Not all courses will be offered in all years. Please check -

- ECON 2260: Political Economy I
- ECON 2270: Political Economy II
- ECON 2320: Applied Methods
- DATA 2020: Statistical Learning

## INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE

Students may arrange on an individual basis to take a POLS2980 (Fall) or POLS2981 (Spring) Independent Reading and Research course as an elective. Plan to register for the section coordinating with the faculty member you want to work with. Students should propose a course plan to the faculty member for approval prior to registration. Another alternative is to arrange to attend lectures for courses offered by Political Science faculty members at the undergraduate level. In such cases the student will enroll in the graduate level independent study course with the faculty member to run concurrently with the lecture course but with additional special meetings and written assignments appropriate for graduate-level independent study. Though you can take more than one Independent Study course, you cannot register twice with the same instructor.

# REGISTRATION

Students must register for courses in [cab.brown.edu](http://cab.brown.edu) during scheduled pre-registration periods.

Should two graduate courses run back-to-back, the system won't let students register. In those cases, register for the first course. Then email Lisa Mather in the Registrar's office with a request to manually register you for the second course. You must send her the course info, number, title, CRN number and your Banner ID.

## ACADEMIC CODE GRADUATE STUDENTS

As stated in the *Principles of the Brown University Community*: [Academic Code, Graduate Student edition](#):

A student's name on any exercise (e.g., a theme, report, notebook, performance, computer program, course paper, quiz, or examination) is regarded as assurance that the exercise is the result of the student's own thoughts and study, stated in his or her own words, and produced without assistance, except as quotation marks, references, and footnotes acknowledge the use of printed sources or other outside help. In some instances an instructor or department may authorize students to work jointly in solving problems or completing projects; such efforts must be clearly marked as the results of collaboration.

Unless permission is obtained in advance from the instructors of the courses involved, **a student may not submit the same exercise in more than one course**. Students who perceive the possibility of an overlapping assignment should consult with their instructors before presuming that a single effort will meet the requirements of both courses. Where collaboration is authorized, students should be very clear as to which parts of any assignment must be performed independently.

Misunderstanding the Code will not be accepted as an excuse for dishonest work. Brown students are expected to tell the truth. Misrepresentation of facts, significant omissions or falsifications in any connection with the academic process (including Change of Course permits, the academic transcript, or applications for training or employment) are violations of the Code.

# GRADING

Brown University has a unique grading system. The Brown transcript records only full-letter grades of A, B or C (without pluses and minuses) or S (for Satisfactory). There is no grade of D or F. The Political Science Department requires graduate students to take courses for a letter grade not S/NC (Satisfactory/No Credit). A grade of B or better is required to count the course towards the A.M. and Ph.D. degrees but grades of A are expected in all courses. Students must indicate when registering for a course whether they are taking a course for a grade (G) or satisfactory/no credit (S/NC). Some other departments like Philosophy are designated by the instructor as mandatory S/NC. In these cases, students are required to request approval from the DGS.

Within the Political Science Department, faculty are able to issue unofficial pluses and minuses to be recorded by the Graduate Program Coordinator for internal department use. This will help the DGS to evaluate the quality and progress of students during the annual review process.

Students can officially audit courses with instructor permission. Although audits (AU) do not carry course credit, they do appear on the external transcript and count toward the maximum five courses that students may take in any given term. Some instructors require full attendance and the students to complete some or all assignments of the course.

# INCOMPLETES

At some point during your first two years in the program, you may find it necessary to take an incomplete in a graduate course. Please be aware that faculty generally regard incompletes as a warning sign that a student is having trouble balancing the various responsibilities and demands associated with graduate study.

An incomplete is also a mortgage on your future, with the potential to seriously undermine your ability to perform satisfactorily in the ensuing semester. Therefore, you should make every effort to avoid taking incompletes. If it becomes necessary to take an "INC", please discuss the matter with the instructor and with the DGS so that it can be explained at the annual review.

Department deadlines for incompletes are as follows:

- If the incomplete was taken for a course in the fall semester, coursework must be completed as indicated by a grade on the transcript **by the first day of the spring semester** of that academic year.

- If the incomplete was taken for a course in the spring semester, coursework must be completed as indicated by a grade on the transcript **by June 30th** at the end of the current academic year.

If the course is completed by the deadline, the instructor will change the INC to a grade. A course not completed by the deadline will revert to No Credit (NC) on the transcript and a make-up course will need to be taken for credit. Faculty members will enforce the new deadlines and they have the discretion to extend them in consultation with the DGS.

No student with an incomplete shall be allowed to take a preliminary examination.

## ADVISING AND MENTORING EXPECTATIONS

Over the course of their time in graduate school, students make the transition from primarily being consumers of knowledge to being producers of knowledge. As a graduate student, you own your education. This means you have the primary responsibility for actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from faculty mentors, who will support you as partners in your training. Some students work most closely with one mentor, while others work equally closely with a number of faculty. No two mentoring relationships will look the same due to differences in the nature of research, personality styles, and other factors. Nonetheless, a baseline of professional and collegial conduct should be observed, as follows.

### **Student Expectations**

As a student, you should:

- Respect and abide by the Brown Academic Code;  
Adhere to the Departmental Ph.D. program guidelines as outlined in this Handbook;
- Solicit and be responsive to faculty input on course selection, intellectual directions, knowledge of the field, Preliminary Exam preparation, and Dissertation writing and research;
- Make sufficient annual progress in the program, including, as appropriate, completing coursework in a timely fashion, fulfilling teaching obligations, taking the Preliminary Exams, completing the prospectus, research and writing, and producing the Dissertation in a timely manner;
- Once at the dissertation stage, take the initiative in setting up a meeting with each member of your committee at least once a semester and typically more frequently;
- Meet the deadlines for delivering written work that you set for yourself and/or with your advisors;
- Respond to faculty and program emails in a timely fashion;

- Make requests for letters of reference for fellowships, jobs, and other opportunities well in advance of deadlines, and include accompanying materials as early as possible (4 to 6 weeks is standard, unless in exceptional circumstances);
- Participate in an environment of inclusion, respect, and intellectual generosity in the Department and University.

### **Graduate Advisor Expectations**

Faculty members should:

- Remain in regular contact throughout the student's program, including regular meetings when on campus, and regular email or Zoom contact while off campus;
- Remain informed as to the program's structure, requirements, and deadlines, and be in conversation with the student about such dates;
- Support their advisees' professional development and help identify opportunities that contribute to their professional development;
- Produce timely feedback on submitted student writing;
- Write agreed upon letters of reference in a timely manner;
- Conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity and according to the best practices of the profession;
- Continue their responsibilities to their dissertation-stage advisees even while on leave and during summers;
- Clearly and promptly inform the advisee and, if necessary, the DGS, if they are no longer able to discharge any of these duties;
- Participate in an environment of inclusion, respect, and intellectual generosity in the Department and University.

Additionally, graduate advisors should familiarize themselves with the [Graduate School's Advising and Mentoring Resources for Faculty](#) site, along with its recommended [Best Practices for Faculty Advising](#).

## **SUBFIELD WORKSHOPS**

Students are expected to attend all workshops in their primary subfield of interest. There are many workshops available. Department workshops will be advertised to you. In addition, you should be on the mailing list and regularly check the websites of related centers, which, depending on your areas of interest will include the Watson School and its affiliated area studies centers, the Center for Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) and others.

Most workshops are informal. Rarely are subfield workshops counted as courses. Workshops taken for course credit are two sequence courses (Fall and Spring) with each semester worth .5 credit. Workshops may only be counted for credit once. For example, the Comparative Politics Graduate Research Workshop, POLS2111 and POLS2112, which is

held every few years. All comparativists are expected to attend this workshop every time it is offered but can only receive course credit once.

## MASTERS DEGREE

The department does not have a separate master's program; students can earn the A.M. in Political Science on the way to the Ph.D. The A.M. requires passing eight 2000-level Political Science courses, including two research seminars requiring substantial written work, with a grade of B or better.

In order to receive the A.M., students must first request the A.M. be added to their student record. Email [Registrar\\_gradstudentrecords@brown.edu](mailto:Registrar_gradstudentrecords@brown.edu) to request that the A.M. be added to the student's record. Students then need to complete an Application to Graduate through the online Banner system. The deadline to complete the application is in April of the year students wish to receive the Master's degree. For 2023 the deadline is April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## 5<sup>th</sup> YEAR MASTERS DEGREE

This option is only open to current Brown University undergraduates. Prior to receiving the bachelor's degree, students can apply to continue at Brown University for an additional year to receive a master's degree. This program is open to those in all concentrations. Up to two courses of the eight required for the master's degree may be completed while the student is an undergraduate. Students must apply using the online application system prior to their undergraduate graduation. A GRE is not required. The A.M. requires passing eight 2000-level Political Science courses, including two research seminars requiring substantial written work, with a grade of B or better. Transfer credits are not accepted for this program. Advisors must be Political Science faculty.

## CONCURRENT BACHELOR'S/MASTERS DEGREES

This option is only open to current Brown University undergraduates who can apply to combine their last year or two of undergraduate study to complete both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in eight or nine semesters. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of the College. The application form can be found on the Graduate School's website.

# EVALUATION – ACADEMIC STANDING

The Department will conduct one formal evaluation of students in the Ph.D. program each year. First year students will receive a mid-year evaluation as well as one at the end of the academic year. You will receive a written summary of your evaluation from the Director of Graduate Studies at the end of the Spring semester. Students' academic standing can be classified in three ways: Good, Satisfactory, or Warning. Evaluation information will be sought from:

- Current Course Professor(s)
- Current TA Supervisor(s)
- Thesis Advisor(s)

In conjunction with faculty feedback, the following guidelines will be used as a general gauge on the rate of progress in coursework, teaching and research, however students are reviewed as individuals and any special circumstances are also taken into consideration:

**Year One:** Successful completion of six courses, preferably with all 'A' grades.

**Year Two:** Successful completion of six courses for a total of twelve completed courses over two years, preferably with all 'A' grades. Satisfactory teaching evaluations, if applicable.

**Year Three:** Successful completion of the preliminary exam in early September. Successful completion of the prospectus seminar including having a three-person faculty dissertation committee and successful prospectus defense by the end of the spring semester. Satisfactory teaching evaluations, if applicable.

**Year Four:** Significant progress in researching and writing of the dissertation; meeting with dissertation committee members, individually or together as a group, at least once a semester. Satisfactory teaching evaluations, if applicable.

**Year Five and above:** Significant progress in researching and writing of the dissertation; meeting with dissertation committee members, individually or together as a group, at least once a semester, or successful defense of dissertation. Satisfactory teaching evaluations, if applicable.

At the end of the academic year, in order for the DGS to write annual status letters, faculty will complete an assessment for each student they've had in class, as an advisee, and/or as a TA. Students in the fourth year and above are advised to submit new research, draft chapters, etc... and/or meet with their advisors before the faculty complete their assessments.

# PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

Students must declare their primary and secondary fields by the middle of their second year.

## Primary Field:

Students will take an exam (both written and oral) in their primary field following the process described below.

Students are required to take at least 3 courses in their primary subfield. For American Politics, Comparative Politics, and International Relations, this means the proseminar course and two additional elective courses. For Political Theory, this means both proseminar courses and one additional elective.

Students must receive no more than one “B” across the three courses used to fulfill the primary field requirement. More than one “B”, or any grade lower than a B, does not fulfill the requirement, and a student will need to take additional courses in the subfield to fulfill the requirement.

## Secondary Field:

In lieu of the secondary subfield preliminary exam, students must take three courses in their secondary field: one proseminar course (American, Comparative, IR, Theory [either one of the two proseminar courses PT offers]), and two additional elective courses.

Students must receive no more than one “B” across these three courses to fulfill the secondary field requirement. More than one “B”, or any grade lower than a B, does not fulfill the requirement, and a student will need to take additional courses in the subfield to fulfill the requirement.

Students must complete twelve courses as indicated by grades of B or better on their transcript before taking the preliminary examination, no exceptions, with particular course requirements for each subfield as indicated above. No student with an incomplete shall be allowed to take a preliminary exam. All grades must be on the transcript by August 1<sup>st</sup> in order to take the preliminary exam in September. If a student has an incomplete after August 1<sup>st</sup>, their status will be changed to Warning, and they cannot take the preliminary exam in September. Those students will take the exam in Nov/Dec.

The preliminary examination is designed to test your knowledge of the theories and substantive debates in the discipline of political science. The exam is not specifically focused on which courses a student has taken. Graduate students in the Ph.D. program are required to pass preliminary exams (a comprehensive written exam plus a comprehensive oral exam) in their primary subfield. Each subfield sets its own expectations for the content of the written exam. Grading options are: (a) pass with distinction; (b) pass; (c) fail.

Exam committees are set by the Director of Graduate Studies, and students will be notified of their examiners several months before the exam. There is one committee per subfield and each exam committee consists of two faculty members in that subfield. It is possible to have an exam committee composed of faculty with whom students have not taken courses. Typically, written examiners and oral examiners are the same, but in some cases due to emergencies or unavoidable conflicts, we may need to change at least one examiner.

Students should expect to meet with the faculty examiners in advance of the exam. Faculty will discuss the expectations for the exam and make clear exactly what range of material students are expected to master. Each subfield will keep a current reading list for students to use as a guide to exam preparation. The reading list should be a guide to core material for the exam but the exam may also cover material from the relevant proseminar.

Written exams will be in early September on the Tuesday before the start of the fall semester at the start of students' third year in the PhD program. The oral exam is typically scheduled within a week to ten days after the completion of the written exam or as soon as possible based on faculty schedules. Staff will schedule the oral exam date with faculty and notify students as soon as possible.

Students may request an exception to take the exam a few months earlier (in May) rather than September. The DGS will consider this special request only for individual students who have a strong research-based rationale (e.g., they must spend the summer after their second year doing fieldwork and are therefore unable to prepare for exams during that period.) Normally the DGS will consult with the student's advisor(s) to confirm the rationale for a research-based exception.

Delaying the exam: If a student in consultation with the DGS and their advisor requests to delay taking the preliminary exam until December of their third year and is approved, the student immediately moves to warning status for the fall semester and forfeits their chance to retake the exam if they fail. If a student has not completed their coursework by August 1<sup>st</sup>, they move to warning status for the fall and have only one chance to pass the exam in November/December.

Written exam: Each subfield sets its own expectations for the content of the written exam. Each written exam is eight hours long; students receive the exam at 9:00 am and must submit their completed exam by 5:00 pm. The exam is in-person, on campus, and will be proctored. The written exam is open books, open notes but all writing for the exam must be original and new, i.e. no cutting and pasting of previously written notes or material.

**The use of AI tools is forbidden. This includes both multi-purpose generative AI (as in ChatGPT, Claude, DeepSeek, and others) as well as writing and grammar assistance AI programs (such as the free or paid version of Grammarly). The only spelling and grammar checking tools that are permitted are those built into Microsoft Word and**

**Google Docs. A committee may, at their discretion, choose to use an AI and/or plagiarism checker, such as, but not limited to, iThenticate and/or TurnItIn, in an advisory fashion.**

Exams are expected to be short but concise, less than 25 pages. Committees will clearly state on the exam the expected length of responses.

Oral exams: Students are required to take a 60 minute exam with both faculty examiners. Afterwards, the examination committee shall meet in executive session to determine an overall grade for the preliminary examination (written examinations plus oral examination). Once a grade has been determined, the committee shall inform the student immediately of this decision.

It is possible to fail the field examination. If a committee determines that the written exam by itself is unpassable, the committee can cancel the oral exam and fail the student. Students who are judged to have failed all or part of the examination in September are required to retake the exam in question in November/December prior to the last official day of class of the fall semester. If a student fails the examination a second time or fails the exam after taking it for the first time in November/December, they will move to warning status for the spring semester. The student will be withdrawn at the end of the spring semester. Third year students already in Warning status for the Fall semester who fail the exam in November/December will be immediately withdrawn from the program at the end of the fall semester. **The preliminary exam must be passed successfully by the end of the first semester of the third year in the program.**

Students who did not pass the preliminary exam by September of their third year are permitted to register for the prospectus class (POL2050). They should also register for an elective course, most often an Independent Study, for further preliminary preparation.

## PRIOR TO THE EXAM

Choose a primary field and notify the Director of Graduate Studies and Student Affairs Coordinator by December of your second year.

Obtain the reading list and copies of prior exams from the graduate student intranet. Each subfield has a reading list for students to use as a guide to exam preparation. The reading list covers core material for the exam but the exam may also cover material from relevant proseminars and other courses the student has taken.

## DAY OF THE EXAM

Written exam process:

- The exam is 8 hours long. Students will receive the exam at 9:00 am and have until 5:00 pm to complete it.

- Each written exam is open books and open notes but all writing for the exam must be original and new – i.e. no cutting and pasting of previously written notes or material. The use of AI tools is forbidden including both multi-purpose generative AI as well as writing and grammar assistant AI. The only spelling and grammar checking tools that are permitted are those built in to Microsoft Word and Google Docs. Exams are expected to be short but concise, less than 25 pages in length.
- Completed exams are to be emailed to the subfield committees and the Student Affairs Coordinator.

Oral exam process:

- After completion of the written exam, each student shall be required to sit for a 60-minute oral exam.
- Exams will be administered by both faculty examiners.
- The committee shall meet in executive session to determine an overall grade for the combined written and oral exam process.
- Grading options are: pass with distinction; pass; fail.

## ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

Once a student passes the preliminary exam, the student is considered to have Advanced to Candidacy and is officially a Ph.D. candidate.

University policy states that the dissertation should be completed within five years of achieving candidacy. In some cases, a student may require additional time. When faculty believe the student will finish and accepts the reason for delay, candidacy may be extended. Extensions of up to an additional two years beyond the five years since achieving candidacy may be granted by the Graduate School.

Students must write to the DGS and their committee requesting an extension with justification for the extension and to a specific date of completion. Provided the request is approved by the dissertation committee and DGS, the DGS will then write to the Graduate School requesting the extension.

Students who are more than five years beyond achieving candidacy and who have not been approved for an extension of candidacy may be withdrawn from the Graduate School.

# PROSPECTUS

Before commencing work on the dissertation, the Department requires you to write and defend a dissertation proposal, known as the prospectus. Students are required to write and defend their prospectus by the end of the spring semester of their third year (i.e. their sixth semester). Further information pertaining to the prospectus will be disseminated in the prospectus writing seminar (POLS2050 and POLS2051).

## A. Procedures

### 1. Selection of the Dissertation Committee

Dissertation committees are a minimum of three faculty members and a maximum of 4 faculty members. The principal advisor must be tenured in the Department of Political Science and a second committee member must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the Department of Political Science unless you obtain an exception from the DGS. Other committee members may be from inside or outside the Department of Political Science, even outside Brown University.

The dissertation chair must be identified no later than the middle of the fifth semester (fall semester of year three). Oftentimes, students begin lining up their principal advisors during their second year in the program. By the middle of the sixth semester (spring of the third year), students must have their two additional advisors for a minimum of three committee members. All committee members are to be provided prospectus drafts for review and feedback prior to the defense.

### 2. Drafting and contents of the prospectus – please see department website for further details. The prospectus course is designed to further explain the components of a prospectus guide students through the creation of a prospectus. Students should be prepared to read and provide constructive feedback on each other's work in class.

The four basic components are:

- The Question
- Statement of theoretical context
- Research design
- Working bibliography

### 3. The prospectus defense

Formal approval of the prospectus follows a successful oral defense of the proposal, which shall be advertised in advance and open to Political Science Department faculty and graduate students. Normally, the defense will proceed with the participation of all three committee members. In extraordinary circumstances, the defense may proceed with two examination committee members. If fewer than two committee members are able to attend, the defense must be

rescheduled. Prospectus defenses are open to Political Science Department faculty and graduate students only.

- Schedule a date with all of your dissertation committee members, a minimum of two weeks beforehand.
- Notify the Department Manager, who will help reserve a room.
- Defenses must be held in an on-campus location.
- Provide the Department Manager and Student Affairs Coordinator with the following information:
  - Names of committee members
  - Title of prospectus
  - Date, Time, and location
- Format of the defense:
  - Introductory remarks by the Principal Advisor
  - The student provides a 15 minutes presentation of their project i.e. a brief overview of their prospectus
  - The dissertation committee asks questions and provides feedback
  - Time permitting, fellow graduate students ask questions and provide feedback
  - Immediately following the question session, the dissertation committee will ask everyone to leave, including the student defending, in order to meet in executive session to determine a grade. Once the committee reaches a decision, the student is called back into the room and informed of their grade immediately. The committee will inform the DGS of the committee's decision.
- Grading options are:
  - Pass – the committee decides that the prospectus is acceptable as is, and that the student may commence work on the dissertation.
  - Conditional Pass – the committee decides that the prospectus requires additional work prior to final approval. The committee lists concrete suggestions for improvement and a firm deadline for those revisions. The committee will review the updated work and should they approve, a second oral defense is not required.
  - Fail – the committee decides that the prospectus is both unacceptable and unsalvageable in its present form, and the student is required to undergo the defense process again. NOTE: Close and frequent consultations between you and your committee prior to the scheduling of the defense will go a long way toward eliminating the chances of an outright fail.
- Post-prospectus students are required to meet with their dissertation committee members, individually or together, at least once during each semester until the student graduates.

## B. Contents of the Prospectus

The purpose of what follows is to create a set of shared expectations among both students and faculty about the contents and organization of the prospectus. This statement is not meant to be compulsory, but it should work to the advantage of most students and their advisors.

The prospectus is typically 10-20 pages in length; indeed, the shorter the better, since it is then more easily converted into a formal proposal for external funding. The purpose of the prospectus is to pose a precise question, to set the proposed dissertation topic in an appropriate theoretical context, to allude to the relevant literature, and to describe the proposed research methods. The prospectus is not a legal contract, but a proposal. It is a beginning, the first step in a long journey. As your research progresses, you are almost certain to depart from your prospectus blueprint. Knowledge of this fact should make the exercise a less imposing hurdle. The goal of the prospectus is not to demonstrate that you know all the answers in advance. Rather, it is to establish that the question you intend to address is worth asking, and that your proposed course of action is feasible and potentially valuable in terms of its contribution to knowledge.

A satisfactory prospectus contains four basic components: a question; a statement of theoretical context; a research design; and a working bibliography.

### 1. The Question

"What is the dissertation about?" The prospectus should begin by stating the central question or puzzle that is to be addressed in the dissertation. The question should be phrased precisely, since it will determine what is or is not germane to the dissertation. Whether the puzzle is "Does Marx have a political theory?", "Why are some American regulatory agencies more effective than others?", or "What are the effects of the organization of worker training programs in Sweden, Germany, Japan, and the United States?", it should be stated within the first or second paragraph, and as clearly and succinctly as possible. This is also the appropriate place to identify the general approach adopted in the dissertation: historical, interpretive, quantitative, etc. It is also important to qualify the question in terms of geographical, temporal, and/or substantive scope: What country or countries will be examined, and over what time period? What range of an author's works will be evaluated? What kinds of bureaucratic agencies will be studied? What kinds of effects are at issue (social, economic, political)?

Treat this as an opportunity to state with clarity and conviction exactly what the core of the dissertation will be. Do not get carried away with the need to qualify here; there is plenty of time for that in Part C. This section should be no longer than two pages in length. If it feels like writing an abstract, then it's probably coming out right.

### 2. Statement of Theoretical Context

This part of the prospectus addresses the frustrating but important question, "so what?" In other words, why should one devote a thesis to the question set out in the preceding section? An effective answer requires two distinct arguments. First, you should provide a well-focused summary of the current debate(s) in your chosen subfield. This will allow your committee to see how you situate your project in the existing theoretical literature. Second, you should outline in precise terms the specific contribution(s) your dissertation will make to the subfield. If you believe you are studying a neglected yet significant subject, specify what of substance has been missed, and how your study will fill the gap. If you are building on an important literature in the field, say what has been achieved, and how your proposal adds to it. If your proposal is a case study or a comparison of multiple cases (countries, policy areas, etc.), this is an appropriate place to justify your selection of cases with reference to theory.

Five or six pages should suffice for this part of the prospectus, although in cases where the resolution of contending interpretations is an especially important part of the thesis, a bit more detail is appropriate. Whatever you do, do not set out to review the literature in depth here. Instead, write this part on the assumption that both you and your committee are familiar with the field.

### 3. Research Design

This part answers the question, "How will you answer the question set out in Part A?" Part B showed that the game is worth the candle; Part C must show that you will, in fact, finish the contest with some answers in hand. Depending on the field, this part will cover different elements, but all will need to address the following: What do you intend to do, and what does each step contribute to the project as a whole? In what order do you intend to proceed? If your investigation is empirical, what sort of evidence will you consider? If theoretical, what material will you cover and what will you do with it? Are you planning to do library work, field work, and/or quantitative analysis?

Obviously, you will not know everything you would like about this part at the time you have to defend your prospectus. But you should be able to provide your best, educated guess. In the end, your committee will be looking for evidence that (1) if everything goes according to plan, you will be able to complete a satisfactory dissertation, and (2) there is a reasonable chance that everything will in fact go well.

Six to ten pages should be enough to cover this material. You should try to provide the following sorts of information:

Data: What will be the raw material for your analysis? How do you propose to obtain it? Any information you can provide that pertains to reading, coding, interviewing, observing, and the

like is helpful. Feasibility: Is there adequate data or other materials available? Do you know where to find it? Can you obtain it? Do you possess the necessary linguistic and/or quantitative skills, if relevant? Do you have any preliminary hunches or results with which to substantiate your claims?

Selection of Method: If there are other obvious ways to investigate your topic, why is yours preferable?

Chapter Summary: Even at this earliest of stages in the dissertation, it is helpful to construct a chapter-by-chapter organization of the project, however provisional. This will communicate to your committee the relative importance you attach to various aspects of your investigation, and the structure with which you will offer answers to your central thesis.

Timeline: How long do you expect various parts of your proposed research to take? Is there a part of it which is already substantially completed?

Funding Sources: If appropriate, specify the granting/funding agencies to which you have applied or intend to apply in the near future.

4. Working Bibliography- This is self-explanatory, but essential.

#### C. Extension of Candidacy

It is University policy that the dissertation should be completed within five years of advancing to candidacy. A few students require more time. In those cases, candidacy may be extended where the faculty believes the student will finish and accepts the reasons for delay. Annually the Graduate School will remind active students whose candidacy is about to expire that they must write to the DGS, explain why they are taking so long, and request an extension if they intend to finish. If the DGS, after consulting with the principal dissertation advisor, believes an extension is justified, s/he will make a formal request to the Graduate School. Extensions to seven years may be granted by the Graduate School; extensions longer than seven years require a vote of the Graduate Council.

## DISSERTATION

The dissertation is a substantial work of original scholarship usually ranging in length from 200 to 450 double-spaced pages. In special cases and with the permission of the dissertation committee, students may submit a dissertation consisting of three or more individual papers instead of a single book-length project.

PhDs are generally presumed to be single-authored. No more than one-third of the substantive material of a student's Ph.D. dissertation may be co-authored (that is, one paper of a three paper dissertation, or one-third of the substantive chapters of a monograph dissertation).

Co-authorship must have the consent of all members of the dissertation committee. Students must obtain that consent via email. Faculty members may choose not to serve on committees that include co-authorship.

If multiple students co-author a chapter or paper, it may be included in each dissertation.

Students are generally advised against co-authoring with a member of the dissertation committee, as it can lead to confusion or misattribution of responsibility. All committee members are encouraged to be attentive to the importance of the student making a unique individual contribution to scholarship within the dissertation.

Any co-authored chapter or paper must be accompanied by a disclosure statement that clearly notes the student's contribution. This statement must be signed by all co-authors (including any faculty) and forms part of the deposited dissertation. It is the student's responsibility to let all co-authors know this statement will be required.

In the year the student plans to graduate, students are required to submit a full draft of the dissertation four weeks prior to the expected defense date.

Students should plan to defend at the latest a few days to a couple weeks before the final submission deadline to allow for final edits. Graduate students are eligible to have degrees conferred, and to receive their diploma, at three different times over the course of the academic year.

**October:** For students who complete their degree requirements the preceding summer term.

**February:** For students who complete their requirements the preceding fall term.

**May:** For students who complete their requirements over the preceding spring term.

For exact deadlines, please see the [Registrar's Office information on degree guidelines, graduate school](#).

For the written format of the Dissertation: [Refer to the graduate school website for details](#).

In order to schedule a Defense Date:

- Obtain *written* approval from committee for moving forward to the defense
- Establish date ONE month in advance
- Confirm availability of your dissertation committee

- Provide the Department Manager and Student Affairs Coordinator with the following information:
  - Names of committee members
  - Dissertation Title
  - Date and Time
- The Department Manager will schedule a room, zoom link, and advertise.
- At least two weeks prior to the defense, complete a Dissertation Defense Info form available on the Graduate School's website, have the DGS sign it, and submit it to Barbara Bennett in the Graduate School

After successful completion of dissertation defense, candidates must submit all required forms to Barbara Bennett at the Graduate School and review the on-line submission and completion steps carefully. In addition to that, e-mail a copy of your final dissertation to the Student Affairs Coordinator. If you would like to have a bound copy of your dissertation, use [the library service Thesis on Demand](#).

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Graduate School offers incoming doctoral students [five to six years of guaranteed financial support](#), including a stipend, tuition remission, a health-services fee, and a health-insurance subsidy. (This financial support applies to both domestic and foreign students admitted to doctoral programs.) The Graduate School also offers incoming doctoral students five summers of support. The Ph.D. program requires two semesters of teaching assistantship. It may be possible that graduate students take on additional semesters of teaching assistantship. Fellowship opportunities are available. A standard funding package includes one to two years of fellowship and three or four years of Teaching Assistantship. Standard appointments are listed below.

**Year One:** First-year fellowship. No teaching.

**Year Two:** Teaching Assistantship (except where other fellowship support is available.)

**Year Three:** Teaching Assistantship (except where other fellowship support is available.)

**Year Four:** Teaching Assistantship or internal fellowship for dissertation writing and research (must be applied for during the prior year). Students apply for an internal dissertation fellowship in year three or four (not both) for the following year (except where other fellowship support is available.)

**Year Five:** Teaching Assistantship or internal fellowship for dissertation writing and research (must be applied for during the prior year). Students apply for an internal dissertation fellowship in year three or four (not both) for the following year (except where other fellowship support is available.)

**Year Six:** Teaching Assistantship (except where other fellowship support is available). Other fellowship opportunities are available like [Interdisciplinary Opportunities](#) across campus centers but must be applied for during the preceding year.

**Year Seven:** No stipend support will be given beyond the sixth year. Students may submit a Dissertation Extension Proposal (DEP) to request tuition, health insurance and a health service fee waiver. DEP applications are discussed in January of the student's sixth year.

## TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

To qualify for the Ph.D., a graduate student must acquire teaching experience under the supervision of a faculty member. A minimum of two semesters is required.

Prior to the start of each semester, the Student Affairs Coordinator will send a list of available TA assignments asking for your top six preferences of undergraduate lectures you would like to TA for. The DGS considers individual student and faculty preferences, as well as undergraduate student needs and class allocations when assigning TAs. Every effort is made to match students with at least one of their preferences, but this is not always possible. Depending on undergraduate class needs and the pool of TAs, graduate students may TA outside of their primary and secondary fields. If more than one TA is assigned to a course with pre-scheduled discussion sections, those TAs will work together to decide who teaches what section. Section times are pre-assigned by the department. If TAs cannot self-assign themselves to discussion sections, the instructor will assign them to sections.

Holding more than one TAship at a time or more than one appointment (in the same semester) is specifically and directly prohibited by the Graduate School.

International students are required to complete English language proficiency training and certification. This process is managed by the [English for International TA program](#) (EITA). That office will contact new TA's for an evaluation prior to the start of the teaching appointment. Students are required to score a Level 1 (certified for complete responsibility for a course) or Level 2 (conditionally certified for lab, discussion, or recitation section) which indicates a proficiency in English sufficient to teach discussion sections. A score of Level 3 (conditionally certified for lab supervision without responsibility for discussion or recitation section) or above means the student cannot teach discussion sections and is grounds to change their status to Satisfactory. In such cases, students are then required to take English for Internationals (EINT) courses to improve teaching and language skills before retaking the test to obtain a Level 1 or 2.

Final TA assignments are not confirmed until enrollments settle following add/drop period.

The department will contact publishers to provide desk copies (physical or electronic links) for teaching assistants.

Blue exam books are available from the Department Manager. All unused exam books MUST be returned.

Non-Fraternization Policy: The Department expects all teaching assistants to conduct themselves in a responsible and appropriate manner with all students under their supervision. Any inappropriate behavior on the part of a teaching assistant is grounds for termination from the program. Please carefully review Brown University's [Non-Fraternization Policy](#). "No Supervisor shall have or pursue a Consensual Relationship with an employee or student where the Supervisor has the authority or responsibility to hire, promote, discipline, evaluate, assign or direct the employee or student."

## TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES\*

\*May vary depending on the professor

- Attend **all** undergraduate lectures.
- Lead up to two 50-minute discussion sections of up to 25 students per section\*.
- Hold regular office hours of two hours per week.
- Grade papers and exams for not more than 50 students.
  - Papers must be handed back in class.
- Post assignments, course content, etc. on Canvas, as requested.
- Optional, give occasional guest lectures in your assigned lecture course.
- Remind students at the end of the semester to complete teaching evaluations online.
- Spend no more than an average of 20 hours per week on this appointment.

Teaching Assistants are expected to attend all scheduled course lectures, assigned discussion sections, and any other required TA responsibilities (e.g., TA meetings) throughout the semester. Vacations, and/or other time away, including routine medical appointments (if at all possible) should not be planned during these scheduled times. If a TA requests time away from TA responsibilities, it must be cleared with the course instructor ahead of time. The amount of time that can be taken that is not otherwise provided for in the GLO contract is up to the individual course instructor and requests may be denied. It is also imperative to inform the Student Affairs Coordinator of any anticipated time off-campus for tax purposes.

For further details, please refer to the [Department Graduate Handbook](#) on TA responsibilities and relevant sections of [the Graduate School Handbook](#) and [the GLO contract](#), including those on TA appointments, leaves of absence and time off, and non-performance.

\*Regardless of the total lecture enrollment, Teaching Assistants are responsible for no more than 50 enrolled students per course with no more than 25 students enrolled in each discussion section.

Guest lectures: If you are asked and accept to hold a guest lecture in a course that you are not a TA for, you will be compensated.

#### TA Office Hours

These hours are held once a week and are separate from the discussion section hours that complement the main lecture course. Campus space is tight. If the department does not have space to offer, here are location suggestions: reserve space at the Rockefeller Library, use [25Live](#) to request on campus space all semester like classrooms in the Watson School (requests will only be approved after shopping period; if request is denied, try another time), the Blue Room, any green space on a nice day, a local café, etc.

[More information on TAing and scheduling a room can be found on our TA page on the dept intranet.](#)

[SAS \(Student Accessibility Services\)](#) has a [new guide for undergraduate exam accommodations](#). In October 2021, SAS updated their policy. It is now the responsibility of the instructors and TAs to book rooms and arrange exam proctors for those undergraduate students with an exam accommodation. If students need computers during exams, they either have to check out a laptop from SAS (must be reserved in advance) or the instructor/TA can let the student use their own laptop with the caveat that the instructor/TA would help the student download a lockdown software, if there is concern about possible cheating.

The Department strongly urges all of its graduate students to contact the [Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning](#) and to make full use of its programs, literature, and seminars.

## TEACHING EVALUATIONS

Teaching Assistant evaluations are done online as part of the course evaluation. At the end of the semester, Teaching Assistants should remind undergraduates to complete the online evaluation and give them your full name, first and last. It's remarkable that even by the end of the semester, undergraduates can be unsure of their TA's name.

Undergraduates select their TA from a drop down list. Some undergraduates will invariably select the wrong TA. There is no way to change or swap comments from one TA's evaluation to the next. TA's can read their evaluation scores and comments online in [EvaluationKit](#) after the end of the semester.

A TA's responsibilities and teaching is an important piece of graduate training. Therefore, it is evaluated as part of the annual status letter. Currently, the TA evaluations process is under review.

Students interested in further pedagogical training and independent teaching experiences are welcome to explore the following resources and programs:

- [Sheridan Center workshops and Certificate programs](#)
- [Summer@Brown teaching opportunities](#) in the School of Professional Studies
- [Deans' Faculty Fellows Program](#)
- [Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program](#)

## TEACHING AWARD

The P. Terrence Hopmann Award for Excellence in Teaching was created to honor the outstanding work of a Teaching Assistant.

Terry Hopmann, Professor Emeritus and former Chair of Political Science, retired in 2008 after more than 25 years of dedicated service to Brown University. He was known for his tireless commitment to the students of Brown, both graduates and undergraduates. This award is a tribute to his innumerable contributions to students of all ages during his tenure with Political Science.

The Graduate Affairs Committee will select winners based on section leader evaluation scores and comments, and nominations by the students' faculty instructor. This award will be given to a minimum of one student per semester. Award winners will be announced after each semester ends. In order to be eligible, teaching assistants must teach discussion sections and have not won this award in the previous two semesters. This award carries a cash prize of \$350.

## SUMMER TEACHING

[Pre-College at Brown](#) offers graduate students teaching opportunities during the summer. Teaching applications are usually due during the fall. Graduate students who apply to teach should email both their primary advisor (either their early year advisor or dissertation chair) and the DGS, copying in the Student Affairs Coordinator to let them know you're applying to teach and course plus the time and dates. Please also indicate in that email that you have reviewed the [Graduate School rules and regulations](#) on work during the summer and that their teaching would be consistent with those rules.

# UNIVERSITY DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS

University Fellowships (internal fellowships) are available competitively to Graduate School funded dissertation-level students, those engaged in the research and writing of their dissertations (i.e. post-prospectus fourth and fifth year students). Students should apply in either their third year in order to have the fellowship in their fourth year or apply in their fourth year in order to have the fellowship in their fifth year in the program. This is a one-year fellowship for either the fourth or fifth year, not both.

Dissertation fellowships may be awarded for either one semester or a full year.

Students who have not yet defended their prospectus may apply; however, awardees must have defended their prospectus by August 1st or forfeit the award.

The deadline to apply is **March 10** for support in the following year. Students should submit an application to the Graduate Program Coordinator which includes the following:

- A personal statement describing how exactly the dissertation fellowship will be used, why it is crucial to your research, and why you need one semester or two to accomplish it
- An up-to-date vitae
- A current unofficial transcript (a download from Banner is sufficient)
- A one-page (maximum) abstract
- A copy of your (draft) prospectus
- A letter of evaluation (not recommendation) from your advisor indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed project and your ability to carry it out/preparedness to start the research and the likelihood it will be completed within the proposed time frame

The DGS and the Graduate Affairs Committee will review applications and notify students.

## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Any students traveling internationally sponsored by Brown University, that is, their international travel is either fully- or partially-funded by the University, must review [Brown University's international travel information](#). This would include when traveling internationally for field work, conference travel, etc. including personal travel.

Students must register their international trip with [TravelSafe](#) – Brown's international travel registry.

# GRANTS

For help finding grants, writing and submitting grants, etc. contact [Brown's Research Management Support \(RMS\)](#).

## TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

- The Graduate School has a number [of funding opportunities](#) to apply for.
- All reimbursements, no matter what source is providing the funds, must be submitted to Karen Ball. [Karen\\_Ball@brown.edu](mailto:Karen_Ball@brown.edu)
- No more than 30 days after travel, email all scanned forms, approvals, proof of presenting, and receipts to the Karen Ball for reimbursement. **Those submitted after 45 days will NOT be reimbursed.**
- The timeframe for all awards is June 1 – May 31. This means that any awards in June count towards the next academic year.
- International receipts must include currency converter printouts showing the conversion to USD on the date of the transaction.
- Please note: if you rent a car while on a research trip, Brown will only reimburse if you rent from **National** or **Enterprise** car rental companies. See the [Guidelines for Renting a Vehicle at Brown](#).
- Check the [University's travel policy](#) before planning any trips.

### Department funding

- The department has various opportunities for funding for conferences, research, and summer training. Students should refer to the [grad student intranet](#) for details.

## PROFESSIONALIZATION TIMELINE

**Graduate Professionalization Seminars** every year – The graduate program offers two to four seminars per year on a wide range of topics from tips on various stages throughout the PhD to the job market to what's current in each subfield. All students are encouraged to attend. Seminars are announced at the start of each semester.

**Department Job Searches** almost every year – Most years the department has at least one formal faculty job search if not more with job candidates brought in during October and November. Graduate students have always been invited to the job talks, but as of 2012, students are *\*expected\** ie required to attend regardless of subfield. There are two reasons for this expectation. The first is that seeing talks like these is a tremendously important part of students' intellectual development and professional training. For everyone, it's important to

make the most of opportunities to engage the work of scholars from beyond Brown. For students, it's especially crucial. The second reason is that the faculty want student input on hiring decisions. Opportunities for involvement include: (1) attending the talks; (2) signing up and meeting with the speakers for coffee and informal conversations (there will be time set aside for a small group of graduate students to meet with the candidate); (3) signing up to escort the candidate to all their appointments for the day; and (4) convey your views of the various candidates to the Department Chair in the form of a group memo that summarizes the main thinking (registering diverse views where appropriate.) It will be circulated to the full faculty so that student voices can be formally incorporated into the deliberations. Students should select one or two volunteers to coordinate the memo. Sometimes this is done by the graduate representative, other times it is done by a representative from the subfield the search is in.

The Department Manager will send out announcements including names, CV's, talk titles, dates/locations of talks and invitations to volunteer for breakfast, small groups, and as escorts.

### **First Year**

- Discuss with your adviser and other faculty your course plans for the first two years. Your coursework should encourage breadth of study and help you prepare for your preliminary exams as well as help you to determine a dissertation topic.
- Consider attending a regional conference to observe how to present a paper, serve as a discussant, and be part of a panel. The New England Political Science Association, the Northeastern Political Science Association, and the International Studies Association Northeast often have their annual meetings in or close to Providence.

### **Second Year**

- In consultation with your advisor, consider submitting a paper to a conference. This might include a master's thesis, a particularly strong seminar paper from your first year, or co-authored work. Potential meetings include the American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, Western Political Science Association, International Studies Association, Association for Political Theory, Latin American Studies Association, and the African Studies Association, among others.
- Begin identifying external fellowships that you are eligible for and start drafting applications in the spring. Many fellowship applications are due a year to six months in advance; this means that in order to win an external fellowship for fieldwork in your fourth year, for example, you will have to apply in the fall of your third year. After you have drafted a polished application, submit it to your adviser for feedback. Finally, ask for references well in advance (3 months prior to the deadline) for letters. Contact SSRI for grants help.

### **Third Year**

- If you have a polished seminar paper and/or co-authored project, consult with your advisers and consider submitting it for publication. As you prepare to defend your prospectus by the end of the year and start to focus on the dissertation, begin to finalize any side projects.
- Continue to attend and submit paper proposals to conferences.

### **Fourth Year**

- Focus on the dissertation.
- Continue to attend and submit paper proposals to conferences. You might also consider organizing a panel.
- Identify pre- and post-doctoral fellowships you are eligible for and consider applying in your fourth/fifth/sixth year or sooner.

### **Fifth Year (or Fourth Year depending on when you plan to graduate)**

- As you continue to work on the dissertation, start to prepare a stand-alone journal article based on your dissertation. Present the paper at workshops on campus (such as the Development and Governance Seminar, the Graduate Political Philosophy Workshop, or the Comparative Politics and International Relations Workshop). Prior to submission, send a polished version to your adviser for feedback and consult about which journal to send it to.
- Consider enrolling in Teaching Certificate III with the Sheridan Center. In this year-long professionalization seminar, you will draft a teaching portfolio, including a teaching philosophy statement, sample syllabi, sample assignments, and a statement of teaching interests. By the end of the year, you will have a draft teaching portfolio for the job market. A teaching certificate is especially relevant if you want to apply for a Deans' Faculty Fellowship for your sixth year.
- In the spring of your fifth year (or fourth year depending on when you plan to graduate), prepare for the job market in the coming fall semester. Consult with your adviser and committee members. Draft your C.V., cover letter, research statement, and teaching portfolio. Polish your job market paper. Continue to revise these documents throughout the summer.

### **Summer Break Before Final Year**

- Identify fellowships and tenure-track positions. Create an excel file listing the departments and positions you are applying to. Send this file to your committee and the DGS. Consult with your adviser about your job market strategy and types of positions you are interested in applying to.

- If you receive an invitation for a job talk, schedule a practice job talk with the department. Invite faculty, post-docs, and graduate students.

## ACADEMIC POSITION PLACEMENT

The [University's Career Center](#) offers guidance and assistance as well as common websites to find positions, CV samples, tips for navigating the job market, etc. The recommended service for sending job application information is [Interfolio](#), an online file management service. The department does not cover Interfolio costs.

In the summer before you plan to graduate, request confidential letters of recommendation from your dissertation committee members. Enter their emails in Interfolio. Faculty can then upload their letters directly. The department Placement Director will reach out. Please confirm to them that you are on the market (academic or non-academic). They will review your academic job market packet and provide feedback. Those on the academic job market are required to give a practice job talk. The Department Manager will contact you to schedule it, book a room, etc.

Electronic department letterhead for cover letters is available on the intranet. Do not misrepresent yourself. Cover letters should be no more than two pages.

If you would like your profile added to the PhD Job Candidates webpage, please send updated information (bio, CV, photo) to the Department Manager.

BE MINDFUL OF DEADLINES – DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE

## THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

### General Advice from former graduate students

- Plan to submit your job market materials to the department Placement Director and your dissertation committee members by August 1<sup>st</sup> (and ideally earlier) to allow time for feedback and updates to your materials.
- During the summer, begin checking the job boards on the website of the American Political Science Association. Create a spreadsheet listing the positions you plan to apply to, including deadlines, application materials, job description, and contact information.
- Create an Interfolio account.
  - Many departments with open positions use Interfolio, although some will still request that materials be sent via email.

- Save money. You will have to pay for an Interfolio account and for every application you submit via Interfolio. Depending on how many positions you apply to, you should plan to spend \$50-200.
- Polish and proof-read all documents. Make sure you use the same format and font in all documents.
- Ask the Department Manager to add you to the PhD's On the Job Market webpage. Update your CV, bio, and have a professional looking photo for the website.
- List your name on all documents including the writing sample.

### **Cover Letter**

- Begin drafting your cover letter several months in advance. There are many samples and advice available at [The Sheridan Center](#), [The Chronicle of Higher Education Career Resources](#), [The Professor Is In](#), as well as books such as [The Academic Job Search Handbook](#). Many of these sources provide more information on the structure and content of the cover letter.
- The cover letter should be on university letterhead which you find on the intranet. Do not misrepresent yourself as anything other than a Ph.D. candidate.
- It should be clear, free of jargon, and easy to skim. Keep in mind that the search committee will be going through the letter quickly. Your research and its contribution should be clear to those outside of your subfield.
- Proof-read; your letter should be free of errors. Ask multiple people to proof it as well.
- Identify the position you are applying for (the exact name of the search). Some departments have more than one job posting.
- In general, you can use the same cover letter for all the jobs you apply for, though you may wish to tailor your letter slightly for different types of programs (e.g. political science departments vs. policy schools). If you have personal or professional connections to a particular department or location (e.g. if your entire family is based in, say, southern California and you are applying for a job in that region), you might mention these in your concluding paragraph, but don't go overboard.

### **C.V.**

- Many of the sources cited above regarding the cover letter also provide samples and advice on the C.V.
- The C.V. should be easy to read and make clear your accomplishments in order of importance. It should be easy to skim.
- Proof-read; as with your letter, your C.V. should be error-free.

### **Writing Sample**

- Submit your best work as your writing sample. If you have a publication, consider submitting that.
- If you do not have a publication, submit your job market paper based on your dissertation. In general you should not submit side projects or co-authored papers.

- Include an abstract which is free of jargon and clearly communicates the question, argument, findings, and contribution of the paper.

### **Recommendation Letters**

- Plan to submit your latest dissertation chapters/drafts/edits in early to mid-summer to allow them to review before they write the recommendation letter.
- Ask faculty for recommendation letters early. If you do interviews at APSA, sometimes your application including letters has to be in by late August.
- Job applications require at least three letters. It can be helpful to have more than three letter writers.
- Faculty write one general letter for all applications. They do not write custom letters for each place you apply to. This is standard procedure in the industry.
- Send your reference letter writers a spreadsheet listing the positions you are applying to. Keep them updated as this list expands or changes. Your committee should be aware of the positions and fellowships you are applying to. Ask them to call anyone they know at the school you're applying to on your behalf.
- Make sure your references have your polished application packet, including your C.V., cover letter, research statement, writing sample, and dissertation abstract.

### **Teaching Portfolio**

- Some, though not all, departments ask for a teaching portfolio. Of these, some only ask for parts of the teaching portfolio, such as the teaching philosophy statement, sample syllabi, or course evaluations. Consider enrolling in [Teaching Certificate III at the Sheridan Center](#) the year before you plan to be on the job market. By the end of the seminar, you will have a full draft of a teaching portfolio.

### **Practice Job Talk / Interviews**

- If you are on the academic job market, you are **required** to give a formal practice job talk in the fall of your final year in the PhD program.
- Formal practice job talks are scheduled at noon and must be in-person. Talks are to be scheduled before mid-October, ESPECIALLY if there is a department job search that fall. Students should coordinate with their dissertation committee to set a date. Once a date is established, contact the Department Manager to ensure the date is available. She will reserve a room in one of the Watson buildings (111 Thayer or 280 Brook St). Also, send her the title of your talk and who is on your dissertation committee. She will invite the department graduate students and faculty. These guests have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback after the talk. Your talk will be recorded for your review afterwards.
- While you are only required to give one formal practice job talk, ONE PRACTICE TALK IS NOT NEARLY ENOUGH. You should plan to give at least five or six practice

talks during the fall semester, even if you organize them informally with your friends and colleagues. In addition to preparing you for the job market, practice job talks often clarify or reveal aspects of your project that might not have been obvious until you try explaining them to a live audience.

- It is especially important to attend your peer's practice job talks the year before you go on the job market to better prepare for your own talk the following year. You should also attend to support your colleagues.
- Practice, practice, practice.

## DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

Political Science graduate students have a suite in 111 Thayer Street on the first floor, room 129.

111 Thayer Street is open from 8:00am to 8:00pm. Nights, weekends, and holidays, the building is card access. You will need to swipe your Brown ID to enter the building. In order to receive access, you must annually send the Student Affairs Coordinator your contact information and emergency contact information.

Suite 129 is card access at all times and only accessible by political science graduate students and staff.

The suite is open to all political science graduate students as a place to study, collaborate, and socialize. This space is yours to be used daily. It is up to each of you to clean up after yourself to create a clean space for the next user. If you notice the suite needs vacuuming and a professional clean, please let the Department Manager know.

There is a printer available for your *professional use only*. If the printer is out of toner, please see Deirdre Foley in room 314. There is paper in room 350. [Here are directions on how to connect to the printer](#). If you have any issues connecting, please contact Jay Jacques, [Jason\\_Jacques@brown.edu](mailto:Jason_Jacques@brown.edu).

There are books in the suite you may borrow on topics in all four subfields and binders for preliminary exam preparation. ([You can also find information on our intranet](#).) Please do not mark up any of the materials and return them 48 hours after you borrow them. Alumni dissertations are on display for reference and are not to be removed from the suite.

Rules

When entering the suite, the first three rooms to the left and the entrance room are reserved for quiet study only. Please respect your fellow colleagues and keep discussions to a very low whisper. These spaces are unassigned.

There is no assigned seating. Please choose an open space to use. When finished for the day, you may put your belongings on the shelves in the lounge/kitchen room. Please keep in mind, another student or two should also be able to use the same shelf. Keep your belongings to only items that you absolutely do not want to carry to and from the building on a day-to-day basis. If the space is filled, you may use the shelving in the first 3 rooms.

The last room on the left side is reserved for conference space to collaborate with your colleagues. If no one is using it, you may study there. However, if there is a group who would like to use it for a business purpose, they do have priority. Please close the door and keep your voices down to not bother others in the quiet spaces.

The lounge is a space to socialize, relax, and hang out. There is a mini-fridge, microwave, hot water kettle, and Keurig for your use (please use FILTERED water for the Keurig which can be found in the North and South Common Rooms on the second floor).

**IMPORTANT:** Please throw all trash that has contained food in the bins that are outside the North and South Common Rooms on the second floor. The trash bins in the suite are not emptied regularly and food trash there will attract critters. If you suspect an invasion, please contact Deirdre Foley to let her know your suspicions.

Always be mindful of your colleagues who may be trying to get work done in the quiet areas. If you are getting too loud, please shut the door or go to the Starr Plaza green space or the Agora in Stephens Roberts Hall.

Building events: As much as everyone likes a free meal, do not take food from events you are not attending. The Watson Institute holds many events throughout the year where they offer food as part of the event. If you are invited and are attending the event, absolutely partake in what is offered otherwise the food is off-limits. As political science graduate students, you become known and are held to a higher standard than random undergraduates who enter the building. If your budget is stretched and you are in need of a meal, please contact Maria Suarez. She has food passes available for the dining halls.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There are many reasons that a student may need to take a leave of absence. There are five types of leave. The request form is in UFUNDS except for Medical Leaves. The Department Chair and the program DGS will approve the leave request through UFunds to

indicate awareness and approval of the leave request. The completed form will be reviewed by the Graduate School, with approvals made by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

### Leaves of Absence

Medical Leaves - A student experiencing difficulties with their health should consult with the Associate Dean of Student Support (as well as University Health Services and/or Counseling and Psychological Services). Students may request a medical leave at any time. Medical leaves are available only to students whose academic standing permits them to continue in the degree program when they return from leave (students on warning status may have their request for leave denied).

Requests for professional development leave are subject to DGS approval. Students should be aware that professional development leaves of absence are discouraged in the first two years of the PhD program when students are completing coursework. Due to the schedule of required coursework, it is difficult to make up courses that are missed during the leave of absence.

Please note that medical leaves remain available as needed and requests are made directly to the Graduate School.

## RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

There are a variety of offices you may wish to contact for support and well-being while at Brown. Here are some of those resources.

**Academic Support** – If you have a disability or other condition that might require academic accommodation or modification of any course procedures, please speak with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). As part of this process, you should be registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and provide the DGS with an academic accommodation letter from them. For more information, contact SAS at (401) 863-9588 or [SEAS@brown.edu](mailto:SEAS@brown.edu).

**Student Accessibility Services (SAS)** coordinates and facilitates services for students with physical, psychological, and learning disabilities, and temporary injuries (69 Brown Street, Suite 512, 5<sup>th</sup> floor)

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** provides free confidential counseling (J. Walter Wilson, Room 516, 401-863-3476). CAPS offers Saturday appointments for graduate students from 9:00am to 4:00pm during the academic year at Health Services, 13 Brown Street. CAPS offers emergency support 24/7 if needed through (401) 863-3476

or by calling the Department of Public Safety at (401) 863-3322 and asking for CAPS on call.

**Maria Suarez, Associate Dean of Student Support in the Graduate School**, is dedicated to serving master's and PhD students (Horace Mann, room 110, [maria\\_suarez@brown.edu](mailto:maria_suarez@brown.edu), 401-863-1802. If you are having financial difficulties, Dean Suarez will confidentially discuss Brown's available financial resources.

**Health Services** offers medical appointments and flu vaccines. Brown ID required. Call ahead to schedule. Additional weekend appointments can be made but availability is limited. (401) 863-3953. This office also offers 24/7 nursing advice if you call (401) 863-1330. If you have the flu, report it online through Health Services FluWeb. Report missed class time, needs for assistance, and review symptoms through this website.

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** – if you are in need of emergency medical treatment due to sudden sickness or injury, please call (401) 863-4111.

**Sexual Harassment & Assault Resources & Education (SHARE)** is a confidential resource on campus to provide support to any student (undergraduate, graduate, and medical students) affected by issues or experiences related to: sexual assault, sexual and/or gender-based harassment, domestic/dating violence, relational abuse, and stalking. [share@brown.edu](mailto:share@brown.edu), (401) 863-2794.

**Confidential Sexual Assault Line** connects students with confidential crisis support and information. SHARE advocates along with CAPS clinicians serve as 24-hour on-call clinicians for this line. (401) 863-6000.

**The Brown University Ombudsperson, Julie Weber**, offers a confidential, informal, neutral and independent place for faculty, postdocs, medical students, graduate students, and staff to bring concerns arising from or affecting their work at Brown. This can include but is not limited to: Working with an advisor; dealing with conflict; navigating your way through bureaucracy, raising concerns about misconduct – academic, financial or research; finding next steps when communication has broken down; having a confidential, information conversation with an impartial, independent person about issues – big or small. [ombuds@brown.edu](mailto:ombuds@brown.edu) (401) 863-6145.

**The Chaplains Office** is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of J. Walter Wilson and can be reached at (401) 863-2344. Religious life at Brown is wide-ranging and accommodating for students of all faiths. The multi-faith chaplaincy on campus works to ensure that all beliefs can find a home on campus. Manning Chapel, Brown Hillel, and the Brown Muslim Student Center represent some of the more established centers for religious services at Brown. In addition, there are frequent meetings of fellowship and spirituality groups throughout campus.

**The Samaritans of Rhode Island**, a suicide prevention resource center, has a hotline at (401) 753-7936.

**Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender**, founded in 1975, was named in honor of the prominent Rhode Island educator, Sarah Doyle. The SDWC welcomes women and men who have interests in issues of gender and in issues that concern women in particular. The Center offers a variety of services and programs, as well as meeting space for university and community groups. The SDWC houses an art gallery, a darkroom, an extensive library and resource center, and a student lounge. It is a welcoming place on the Brown University campus. 401-863-2189

**Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC)** serves as a gathering place for communities of color. Students are encouraged to build meaningful relationships across difference, develop racial and ethnic consciousness, and enact change at Brown and beyond. The BCSC advances the University's mission of *educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation* by empowering students of color, cultivating leadership, facilitating critical reflection, fostering informed action, and promoting social justice. [BCSC@brown.edu](mailto:BCSC@brown.edu) 401-863- 2120

**LGBTQ Resource Center** is to affirm the existence and development of LGBTQ individuals at Brown, and to support a strong and welcoming community among them and allies within the larger institution. Located in Stonewall House.

**Department of Public Safety** is responsible for the safety and security of students, staff, faculty and guests and governed by its Code of Ethics. The department philosophy places an emphasis on such community policing practices as prevention, problem-solving, and joint police-community responsibility. The department attempts to fulfill its mission through interactive patrol as well as through community education. 401-863-3322

## MISCELLANEOUS

Responding to emails: Students are expected to respond to time-sensitive emails and check-in emails from the faculty and the department within 48 hours of receipt. When you do not respond, that raises alarms. Faculty contact the DGS. In turn the DGS reaches out to the Graduate School and you will receive a wellness check-in.

Invitations: Students should rsvp to all google calendar invites whether its yes, no, or maybe. If you respond 'yes,' though sometimes something comes up, you should make every effort to attend. This is your professional reputation.

Curriculum Vitae and Bio: All Political Science PhD students' names and photos are displayed on the department's website. If you would like your CV and/or personal website published as a link from your name, please send the document to the Department Manager for publishing.

Social Media: Please keep in mind that your social media presence is part of your online brand. Your professional and personal purposes are linked. Nothing posted online is private. Be mindful of what you post.

If you have a social media account like X or Bluesky you can send the link to Deirdre Foley to add to your bio.

Graduate Student Liaison: The person(s) holding this position acts as a liaison between the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC), faculty and fellow students. They are expected to meet regularly with students to solicit their input, plan events for the Political Science graduate student community, and to attend GAC and faculty meetings upon request. They are also responsible for sign-up sheets for TA office hours (if a room in the dept is available), ensuring students attend the group meetings with Dept job candidate appointments, and coordinating the students' written review of job candidates.

Payroll Direct Deposit

- Sign up for direct deposit is in Workday.
- Any reimbursements will be directly deposited.

Save I-9 pink slips. Do not lose them! If you have not yet completed your Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9), you must first complete verification that you have read and received the Academic and Student Conduct Codes. Then for the I-9, go to Human Resources in the Brown Office Building (BOB), 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 164 Angell St.

Proof of enrollment: Order online through the Registrar's Office website under Academic Records – [Enrollment/Degree Verifications](#).

## NO SMOKING POLICY

*[Policy: 20.064](#)*

For reasons of public health, and in compliance with RI law, people may NOT smoke indoors in any building at Brown University. This prohibition extends to all public areas, including but not limited to lounges, hallways, lecture halls, classrooms, conference rooms, restrooms, rental space, private offices, and sports arenas. In addition, smoking is prohibited in all residence halls and dining facilities. Smoking is prohibited in all University vehicles. Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are included in this University prohibition.

## *Guidelines for Determining Outdoor Smoking Areas*

People are permitted to smoke outside, at a distance of **at least 35 feet from the entrance** to any University building, provided that there will be no migration of smoke into a University building or property including vehicles. If smoke is still able to migrate into University buildings or vehicles, people must smoke at a further distance. Violations will be reported.

# INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

### *Office of International Student and Scholar Services(OISSS)*

Ph: 401-863-2427, Fax: 401-863-7543 J. Walter Wilson Bldg, Suite 510, 69 Brown St.

Please utilize this office as a resource for information. Their website is updated regularly to offer a wide range of topics useful to international students and scholars. Their office and website will also provide you information about all the topics mentioned here.

### *Payroll Office*

The Payroll Office also has some important information regarding visa status and payment. Please see their Non Resident Visa/Payment Table for more information.

### *SPRINTAX-Calculus*

All international students and scholars are asked to complete the SPRINTAX-Calculus data entry annually.

### *Applying for a Social Security Number*

For international students to receive their stipend payments, they must apply and receive a social security number. Social Security card applications are available from OISSS and must be filed in person at the office listed below.

Social Security Administration  
One Empire Plaza, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Providence, RI 02903

Once you receive your social security card, you must show it to the Payroll Office, South Street Landing, 350 Eddy Street, fourth floor. 401-863-2361 or email [mailto:specialist\\_payroll@brown.edu](mailto:specialist_payroll@brown.edu).

## *Miscellaneous*

Form 8233 is to claim tax treaty exemption for one calendar year. If you fill out this form in September, you must fill it out again in January.

### *American Holiday – Halloween / Fall Festival*

On Halloween, October 31<sup>st</sup>, between about 5:30pm and 8:00pm, kids go door-to-door in costume saying ‘trick or treat’ at each house and receive individually wrapped candy. The general rule is, if you want to give out candy, turn on the outside lights at your house/apartment. If you don’t want to participate, keep your lights off and keep your house dark like you’re not at home. If you run out of candy during the evening, turn your outside lights off.

#### **Definition of Brown-related travel:**

International and domestic travel for any member of the Brown community (i.e. faculty, staff and students) who is traveling on Brown University business or a Brown University program, regardless of funding source.

Examples include one or more of the following categories:

- For-credit travel through a Distinctively Brown, Consortium (CASA), or an Approved Non-Brown study abroad program;
- For-credit travel that is supervised by a Brown faculty member and is a required part of a course or degree program (e.g. GELT program, Wintersession, MPA-Global Policy Experience, PRIME, IE-Brown EMBA, etc.); or
- Non-credit or non-study abroad program related travel, which aligns with one or more of the following:
  - Fully- or partially-funded by Brown, such as through travel grants or scholarships, and is arranged or supervised by Brown staff, regardless of purpose including but not limited to conferences, internships, UTRAs and other undergraduate research, graduate research pertaining to a master’s program, pre-dissertation or dissertation research for a doctoral program, medical/clinic rotations, field studies, musical or arts performances, athletic or co-curricular competitions, service or other experiential learning experiences, etc.;
  - Affiliated with a Brown student group and that has been approved by the Student Activities Office (SAO) or the hosting academic department at Brown and adheres to the SAO’s [regulations for group activities](#);
  - Pre-arranged or advised through a Brown department, faculty, or staff member (e.g. approval on university documents related to the travel, receiving student group funds via SAO, etc.);
  - Pre-College programs coordinated through Brown Pre-College Programs;
  - Internships, training opportunities, and other work opportunities, etc. organized through and approved by BrownConnect; and

- Related to a Brown faculty or staff member as part of his/her employment (including conferences, training programs, research, invited lectureship series/ symposia/ presentations, etc.).

International and domestic travel for which Brown assumes no responsibility:

- Individual or group student, faculty, staff personal travel for Spring Break, summer, winter or other vacations, or University holidays;
- Student organization group travel that has not been approved by a hosting department or SAO;
- Travel related to unapproved student independent study projects;
- Travel conducted by accompanying volunteers, friends, or family members (that are not a spouse, dependent child, or life partner) of Brown students, faculty, or staff traveling abroad or domestically on an approved, Brown sponsored program