# MA Students’ Handbook

2018-19

Department of Political Studies

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Master’s program of the Department of Political Studies at Queen’s University! The Department’s faculty and staff are committed to ensuring that your time as a graduate student at Queen’s will be both challenging and rewarding. This handbook aims to provide a comprehensive guide to the M.A. Program offered by the Department.

The handbook is intended to supplement and expand on the general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies that may be found in the SGS Calendar. In addition, all graduate students should consult the information provided at: www.queensu.ca/sgs

We are here to assist you. Please reach out to Dr. Andrew Lister, Graduate Coordinator, for any questions about academics and funding, and to Kristina Fennell, Graduate Assistant for everything else.

Once again, welcome to Political Studies at Queen’s.

Zsuzsa Csergo

**OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT:**

Department Head, Prof. Zsuzsa Csergo

UnderGraduate Coordinator, Prof. Andrew Grant

Departmental Manager, Michelle Knapp-Hermer

Undergraduate Assistant, Cynthia MacIntosh

**GRADUATE OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT:**

Graduate Coordinator, Prof. Andrew Lister: andrew.lister@queensu.ca (Mac-Corry C426)

Graduate Assistant, Kristina Fennell: gradpols@queensu.ca (Mac-Corry C318)

Field Convenors

- **Canadian Politics:** Janet Hiebert
- **Comparative Politics:** Grant Amyot
- **International Relations:** David Haglund
- **Political Theory:** Andrew Lister
- **Gender and Politics:** Eleanor MacDonald

Unit Research Ethics Board, Chair: Grant Amyot
2. **THE M.A. PROGRAM**

We offer a twelve-month MA in Political Studies. We also offer a collaborative MA in Political and Legal Thought with the Department of Philosophy and the Faculty of Law.

**MA Degree**

The objective of our MA program is to refine and hone critical and analytical skills, primarily through course work and a major piece of written work.

The M.A. program in Political Studies at Queen’s requires the completion of six three-unit courses and a Master’s Research Project (MRP).

For more information on courses, see Section 3.

For more information on the Master’s Research Project, see Section 4.

**MA Collaborative Program in Political and Legal Thought**

The Collaborative Master’s Program in Political and Legal Thought (PLT) builds on the strengths and expertise of the faculty members of the contributing academic units (the Department of Political Studies, the Department of Philosophy, and the Faculty of Law).

Students develop skills and knowledge in the analysis of basic normative concepts such as justice, equality, liberty, authority and legitimacy; the elaboration of these concepts in philosophies such as liberalism, libertarianism, Marxism and feminism; the historical development of these ideas in the relevant intellectual traditions; and the application of concepts and theories to current problems of law and policy such as trade, immigration, and religious accommodation.

For students in the PLT Program, 4 out of their 6 courses must be from a list of designated PLT courses offered in Political Studies, Philosophy, and Law. PLT students also complete a Major Research Paper on a topic relevant to the specialization.

3. **COURSE SELECTION AND GRADING**

**Course Selection**

Students take three courses during the Fall term and three courses during the Winter term. Each incoming graduate student will meet with the Graduate Coordinator during the first week of September to discuss course selection. Students may take one course from outside the department, or in extenuating circumstances two, subject to approval by the Graduate Coordinator (to ensure that the student’s background in political science is adequate), and with permission of course instructor.

Check individual departments’ websites for availability of courses. Some departments you may consider are: School of Policy Studies, Law, Philosophy, Global Development Studies, Gender Studies, Geography, and History.

Graduate students cannot register themselves in their courses through the student system (SOLUS); all course requests must go through the Graduate Assistant, Kristina Fennell. Registration in courses from other departments may require an Academic Change form; for more information, please contact Kristina.
The non-credit Course of Research Ethics (CORE) is mandatory for all graduate students who will engage in research involving human subjects. It is a web-based tutorial providing familiarity with and practical application of Canada's national standard of ethics for research (as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement). For more information and to access the course please go to the Government of Canada's website: www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/.

Course Marks

Final course marks are given in letter grades. Where instructors enter percentage grades: “Fail” means below 70 per cent; B- = 70-72; B = 73-76; B+ = 77-79; A- = 80-84; A = 85-89; A+ = 90+.

Minimum Performance

To proceed to the Master’s Research Project, students must pass (i.e. obtain a B- or above) each of their six courses. Students who fail to meet this requirement may be required to withdraw from the program. Students who fail one course may be allowed, if the School of Graduate Studies agrees, to substitute another course for the failed course. Students who fail two courses must withdraw from the program.

Late Assignments and “Incomplete” Grade (IN)

The department expects all students to submit assignments by the declared deadline. Without prior agreement, instructors are not required to accept late papers and will submit a grade at the end of term based on work actually received. In the event of unforeseen circumstances that prevent submission of work, students should notify their instructor immediately, and request academic consideration for extenuating circumstances. Normally, such arrangements will be worked out on a case-by-case basis with the instructor, following the guidelines establish by the School of Graduate Studies: https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/accommodation-and-academic-consideration

In any case, missing work must be submitted no later than 15 May for Fall Term courses, or 15 August for Winter Term courses. If the missing work has not been submitted by these deadlines, a partial mark will become the final mark. University regulations are that a grade of IN will automatically lapse to an F (Fail) at the end of the term following the term in which the course was taken, if no change of grade has been submitted by then. The period for which an IN may remain on the record can sometimes be extended, in exceptional cases and with the agreement of the School of Graduate Studies.

Appeals of Grades

If a student wishes clarification about, or is dissatisfied with, an assigned grade in a graduate course, they should first discuss the matter with the course instructor, who will review the work in question. This discussion should take place within 14 days of the grades being available. If the instructor agrees to change a grade, a change-of-grade form shall be processed in the usual manner.

If the instructor confirms the original grade, and if the student is still dissatisfied, the student should appeal in writing to the Graduate Coordinator, stating the grounds on which the grade should be raised. The Graduate Coordinator will initiate a review of the grade. The review process is for the paper to be graded / regraded by two faculty members in the field, one of whom is the original instructor. These two grades plus any comments or supporting materials then go to the Head of department, who decides what the final grade will be. In principle, this grade could be higher or lower than the original grade. The Graduate Coordinator or Head will inform all parties of the result of the review in writing, with a copy to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Further appeal of an assigned grade can be made only on the basis of a specific procedural error(s) made in the grade review procedures of the department. Such an appeal would be lodged with the Academic Appeal Board of the School of Graduate Studies as outlined in the Graduate Calendar.
4. **THE MASTER’S RESEARCH PROJECT**

Students complete a Master’s Research Project (MRP) by the end of the summer term.

The MRP is normally based on a term paper written for a course, though it may also be written on a topic not covered by a term paper, providing the department has faculty expertise to supervise the project. The MRP topic should be identified and agreement reached with a supervisor by mid-March. The Head then formally appoints the supervisor.

The MRP should be 50-60 pages in length, including footnotes and bibliography. While a table of contents should be included, it is not necessary to include an abstract, vita, or acknowledgements. The style rules followed for a regular term paper also apply to the MRP. When it is ready to be graded, two double sided copies and one electronic version of the project should be submitted to the department. Binding is not required for MRPs.

In accordance with the School of Graduate Studies regulations, “the research must be of high scholarly standard” and the project “should demonstrate that the candidate is capable of original and independent work”. This demonstration can take different forms in different fields. A project using primary sources clearly satisfies this requirement. One based on secondary sources only may do so if an original argument or approach is developed. A project that simply reviews and systematizes existing literature will not satisfy requirements. The project should, however, include a literature review in one of the preliminary chapters. Students should bear these requirements in mind when planning their term papers, since in some graduate courses the purpose of the papers is to review the literature in the field. At the same time, students should be careful to make their projects of manageable scope, choosing a suitable research question or hypotheses.

The MRP is marked by two readers: the supervisor and another member of faculty who has general knowledge of the subject. The Graduate Coordinator selects the second reader once the project has been submitted. Each reader arrives at a mark independently and submits it to the Graduate Coordinator. If there is a discrepancy of 5 marks or less, the average of the two marks constitutes the final grade. If the discrepancy is greater than 5 marks, the readers try to reach an agreed final grade; if they cannot, the Head will appoint a third reader to decide on the final grade within the range of the two readers’ marks.

Because the final grade has to be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies no later than the end of the calendar month following that in which the project was submitted, the Graduate Coordinator may in exceptional circumstances appoint another reader to take the place of a supervisor who is on leave, vacation, or authorized absence in order to ensure compliance with this deadline.

**Ethics Approval**

If an MRP topic involves living human participants, a submission to the General Research Ethics Board is required. Research that relies only on publicly available information does not require ethics review, but research based on interviews or any other gathering of data that is not publicly accessible generally does. Students who think they may be affected should consult with their Faculty Advisor and / or the Chair of the Unit (POLS) Research Ethics Board. Ethics guidelines and the forms for the submission are available at: [https://www.queensu.ca/urs/ethics/general-research-ethics-board-greb](https://www.queensu.ca/urs/ethics/general-research-ethics-board-greb)
Students who will be engaged in research involving human subjects must take the web-based course of Research Ethics (CORE): http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/

**Field Work Safety**

MRPs involving field work will require a Field Research Safety Planning Record. Guidelines and forms are available at: https://www.safety.queensu.ca/ocasp/

**The Role of the MRP Supervisor**

The Supervisor oversees the preparation of the MRP, providing guidance on the scope and content of the project, as well as monitoring the student's progress. The timeframe for completing various tasks should be a frequent topic of conversation between supervisor and student. Although the student has the right to decide when the project is ready for submission, normally the supervisor will play a major role in this decision; students should expect the work to go through several revisions. The turnaround for drafts of the MRP submitted to the supervisor should be quick, e.g. within two weeks. Student and supervisor should agree on a realistic timeframe for submitting and commenting on drafts so that the August deadline for submission can be achieved. While supervisors are committed to facilitating student progress, responsibility for meeting deadlines rests with the student.

For more information on the respective roles and responsibilities of supervisors, supervisory committees, students, graduate coordinators and departments please refer to the ‘Guide to Graduate Supervision’ on the School of Graduate Studies website: http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/current-students/graduate-supervision.

**Appealing MRP Grade**

A student who wishes to appeal a grade on an MRP must advise the Graduate Coordinator (or the Head, in the event the Graduate Coordinator is one of the markers) within two weeks of receiving the grade. The appealing student must provide a written explanation for why the reassessment is justified. A meeting will then be convened for the student to discuss the grade with the two markers. The Graduate Coordinator will attend this meeting (or an alternate, in the event the Graduate Coordinator is one of the markers).

After the meeting, each marker will reassess the MRP and decide, within one week, the appropriate grade. The normal process for resolving disagreements between two markers remains in place. The grade awarded at this stage is final (subject to appeal by the SGS appeal process, described in SGS’s General Regulations under “Appeals Against Academic Decisions”).

5. **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

**Funding Packages**

Offers of admission to the Master’s program in Political Studies at Queen’s University include a guaranteed minimum level of financial support which may come from a variety of different sources, including Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships, Queen’s Graduate Awards or Fellowships, and/or external scholarships or awards. Receipt of an external award may lead to funding from internal sources being reduced, but the student’s total funding package will be at least as high as their guaranteed minimum. The funding guarantee applies only as long as the Master’s student is registered full-time, active, and making satisfactory progress in their program. In accordance with the regulations of the School of Graduate Studies, Master’s students are guaranteed funding for their first year at the level indicated in their offer of admission, provided that they make themselves available for Queen’s
employment as specified in their offer of admission (normally a TAship or RAship). Please note that if a student declines an offer of employment from the University or any other component of their funding package, the student forfeits that component of their funding package for that year and their funding will be adjusted accordingly.

Students should take care to budget their finances to last twelve months. This is especially important in relation to stipends for teaching assistantships, which are paid in equal monthly installments for the duration of the TAship. The department does not have the funds to assist students who encounter financial emergencies during the summer months.

**Teaching Assistantships**

Offers of financial support typically include a TAship. A full TAship is for 260 hours over two terms; a half-TAship is for 130 hours, either over one term or over the academic year. TAships involve duties such as preparation of course materials, library support work, tutoring, marking, and undergraduate counselling. Included in TA hours will be a mandatory TA-training session, to be held at the beginning of the school year.

Teaching assistants are typically assigned to courses in August for the academic year, in accordance with the posting provisions of the PSAC 901 Collective Agreement (Art. 12.12). The department's instructional needs are the primary determinant of assignments and are usually based on enrolments in first and second year undergraduate courses as well as the prospective TA's ability to assist in different courses. All TAs are evaluated by means of a student questionnaire at the end of each term. The professor in charge of the course will discuss evaluations with the Teaching Assistants following the end of term.

In its decisions on hiring Teaching Assistants, the department adheres to the Collective Agreement (CA) between the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) on behalf of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows and Queen's University, which can be found on the Human Resources website. Please ensure you become familiar with all aspects of the Collective Agreement.

**External Components of Financial Support**

University and Departmental regulations encourage all students thinking of going on to graduate studies (master’s and doctoral levels) to apply for external funding, particularly Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS). The deadlines for these two usually fall in October/November; information and assistance are provided by the department, but students are responsible for meeting the deadlines.

International students are not eligible for SSHRC funding. However, international students are eligible for a separately established OGS competition which takes place in May/June of each year. Visa students are also urged to approach their home governments, Canadian non-governmental organizations, and international organizations and foundations.

Students should consult the awards section of the Calendar of the School of Graduate Studies: https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/prospective-students/awards-scholarships.

**Travel Awards**

Full-time graduate students are eligible to apply for the student conference travel award of each academic year (September 1 to August 31). Awards may be used to provide partial support for travel, accommodation, food and registration fees associated with a recognized conference at which the student is presenting an authored or co-authored paper or poster. The student must be registered full time and in their funding eligible years in a graduate degree program within the School of Graduate Studies at the time of the conference. The application form is available on our forms webpage http://www.queensu.ca/politics/forms and must be submitted and approved prior to the conference.
**Other Employment**

Students must consult with their Supervisor and the Graduate Coordinator before accepting any employment that will or might bring their hours of paid employment, including any Teaching or Research Assistantship, to a total greater than ten per week (averaging the hours worked over an academic year). If it is judged that the employment would make it impossible for the student to maintain his/her studies on a full-time basis, the student will be required to apply to transfer to part-time status. For more information about employment as a full-time student, please see: [https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/graduate-calendar/admission-and-registration](https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/graduate-calendar/admission-and-registration) under “Study Status.”

6. **FACILITIES**

**Student Space**

The department provides office space for all MA students. Assigned office space may be shared with other graduate students depending on the number of available offices. All graduate students’ offices are connected to the university’s network. The department has a lounge for faculty and graduate student use. Students should contact Departmental Manager Michelle Knapp-Hermer (MC C316) for their office allotment.

**Mailboxes**

Each graduate student on campus has a mailbox in the General Office.

**Photocopier**

All incoming graduate students are issued an account number for use of the photocopier in the Political Studies general office. As of September 1, 2017, the department has adopted a new policy for use of the photocopier: the department will allow each student to photocopy up to 250 copies at no cost. When a student has reached the 250-copy limit, they are required to purchase an additional 250 copies, for which there is a charge of $15. Students are provided with a letter at the beginning of the term which provides their account number, information on photocopy charges, and further information about use of the photocopier.

7. **RESEARCH CENTRES**

The department is affiliated with a number of research centres that focus on some of our main strengths. These centres bring in guest speakers, hold seminars, and more broadly, provide an opportunity for established scholars and students to engage in intellectual activity around shared interests. Sometimes, additional Research Assistantship opportunities become available through the centres. Be sure to get involved!

**The Centre for International and Defence Policy (CIDP)**

The Centre was established in 1975 as an interdisciplinary research centre within the School of Policy Studies. The Centre’s research interests focus on defence policy, homeland security policy, and Canada’s international policy. The Centre offers no courses but welcomes the active involvement of graduate students who have complementary research interests.

**The Centre for Studies on Democracy and Diversity (CSDD)**
The Centre for Studies on Democracy and Diversity moved to the Department of Political Studies in 2015. Its research focus is on democracy and democratic development in societies divided along ethnic (broadly defined) and national lines. The Centre brings in guest speakers and welcomes the involvement of graduate students who share the Centre’s interests. The Centre is also usually involved in the bi-annual summer school on Politics in Divided Societies. In 2015, the department sponsored the participation of five of our students in the summer school in Bolzano, Italy.

The Institute of Intergovernmental Relations (IIGR)
This Institute was established to provide a centre for research into the problems of intergovernmental relations in Canada and elsewhere. The Institute is pleased to support the work of graduate students with an interest in federalism keeping in mind that the Institute does not offer courses or grant degrees.

Canadian Opinion Research Archive (CORA)
The Canadian Opinion Research Archive makes available commercial and independent surveys to the academic, research and journalistic communities. Founded in 1992, CORA contains hundreds of surveys including thousands of discrete items collected by major commercial Canadian firms dating back to the 1970s. The CORA website includes readily accessible results from these surveys, tracking Canadian opinion over time on frequently asked survey questions, as well as tabular results from recent Canadian surveys, and more general information on polling. Individuals conducting research for non-commercial purposes can obtain access to the CORA electronic holdings and conduct searches of the database. Researchers can conduct the full range of bivariate and multivariate analysis on data through the Nesstar interface.

8. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate students are subject to the Student Code of Conduct:


The Preamble to the Code states that “students are expected to adhere to and promote the University’s core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and personal responsibility in all aspects of University life, academic and non-academic. It is these core values that are intended to inform and guide Student conduct as they foster mutual respect for the dignity, property, rights and well-being of others.”

As Teaching Assistants, or Research Assistants, many graduate students will also be employees of the university. As such, student employees are covered by Ontario human rights law, as well as the province’s Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the University’s (interim) workplace harassment policy:


Labour relations are governed by the Collective Agreement (CA) between the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) on behalf of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows and Queen’s University. The procedure for grievances is governed by Article 11 of the Collective Agreement:

“11.03 Informal Discussion: Before a grievance is filed formally and whenever it is possible, the Employment Supervisor where the Employee works will be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in accordance with the following:
a) The matter shall be brought to the attention of the Employment Supervisor within fifteen (15) Business Days after its occurrence, or from the date the Employee ought reasonably to have been aware of the occurrence of the circumstance giving rise to the matter.

b) After the matter has been brought to the attention of the Employment Supervisor, the Employment Supervisor and the Employee shall discuss the matter, and the Employee may be accompanied by a representative of the Union if she/he wishes. The discussion shall take place within five (5) Business Days after the matter is brought to the attention of the Employment Supervisor. If requested, the Employment Supervisor shall give a reply in writing within five (5) Business Days of the discussion. Any written reply from the Employment Supervisor will be without prejudice to the Employer’s position on this or any similar matter.

If a matter is not resolved by the Informal Discussion with the Employment Supervisor as provided for in Article 11.03 above, a formal grievance may be submitted. Please consult the Collective Agreement (CA), found on the Office of the Provost and Vice Principal (Academic) website:

https://www.queensu.ca/facultyrelations/teaching-assistants-and-fellows/collective-agreement

for details on the grievance procedures.”

**Student Advisors**

The Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS) maintains a student advisor program. Graduate and/or professional students are available to students to act as their advocates in a wide variety of challenging situations in which students may find themselves. The advisors are trained in mediation practices, human rights issues and crisis counseling. For more information, see [https://sgps.ca/sgps-student-advisor-program/](https://sgps.ca/sgps-student-advisor-program/).

International students may also avail themselves of the services of Queen’s University International Centre, or “QUIC”: [http://quic.queensu.ca](http://quic.queensu.ca).

QUIC conducts drop-in advising sessions for international students Monday to Friday between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm. Students may also contact an International Student Adviser at isa@queensu.ca.

**Privacy of Student Files**

Student files are held in the Main Office. In accordance with the Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), a student’s file is accessible only to the student herself/himself, the Graduate Assistant, the Head, the Graduate Coordinator, and faculty members who sit on committees requiring examination of the files (normally the Graduate Studies Committee).

In accordance with FIPPA, students have access to all the contents of their file except documents written in confidence about them, such as letters of reference. Faculty members other than those mentioned above must have the student’s written permission to consult his/her file.
## APPENDIX I: MA Timeline

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<th>Prior to Arrival</th>
<th>• Think of possible research topics for MRP</th>
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| September (Term 1) | • Discuss courses and possible supervisors with Graduate Coordinator  
  • Register in 3 courses for Fall term |
| October - November | • Consider whether seminar work could lead to MRP topic  
  • Submit doctoral scholarship / fellowship applications, if applicable  
  • Attend MRP workshop held by department |
| December Break | • Give serious thought to MRP topic |
| January (Term 2) | • Register in 3 courses in Term 2 |
| February - March | • Decide on research topic for MRP  
  • Discuss topic with potential Supervisor and secure his / her agreement  
  • Submit MRP form with Supervisor’s signature and to Kristina. Student and supervisor agree on a date for submission of first draft of MRP, normally in July.  
  • Head of department formally appoints Supervisor at end of March |
| April – June | • Complete all research for MRP, and begin writing |
| July | • Complete writing  
  • Submit first draft of MRP to Supervisor by date agreed upon date.  
  • Make revisions based on Supervisor’s comments |
| August | • Submit final draft of MRP (two hardcopies and one electronic) by MRP deadline in early August.  
  • MRP graded by two faculty members |
| Early September | • MRP grade submitted by Department to SGS. |