

MASTER OF ARTS IN GOVERNMENT  
Student Information & Program Guide  
2022-23

New Mexico State University  
Department of Government  
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### **Introduction**

The Master of Arts (MA) in Government is one of two graduate degree programs offered by the Department of Government at New Mexico State University.

For information on the MA in Government, see: <https://deptofgov.nmsu.edu/academic-programs/ma.html>

For information on the Masters in Public Administration Program (MPA), see: <https://deptofgov.nmsu.edu/academic-programs/mpa.html>

The MA in Government provides course work in each of the major fields of political science and prepares students for a variety of careers in teaching, public service, and the private sector, as well as for further graduate study. Many courses are scheduled in the evening, enabling students to complete the program on a part-time basis.

Pursuing versatility and policy relevance, the MA degree program offers course work and supervised student research in the fields of American politics, comparative politics, international relations, political theory, public law, public administration and public policy. Specialized fields are periodically redefined in light of current developments and faculty/students' interests. In developing their programs of study, some MA students take advantage of NMSU's location on the US-Mexico border and the active involvement of the university in many international programs. In addition, the MA program offers three certification areas for interested students, as well as a graduate minor in Security Studies.

The graduate program encourages a supportive environment for individual growth through seminars and close faculty supervision. The presence of students from throughout the country, nearby military bases and abroad provides ample opportunities for cross-cultural contact in a stimulating learning environment.

We welcome your interest in the Department of Government at NMSU. For additional information concerning our graduate programs, please contact:

Dr. Sabine Hirschauer, MA Program Coordinator  
Department of Government  
New Mexico State University  
Box 30001/3BN  
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Web: <https://deptofgov.nmsu.edu/>

### **Staff and Faculty Profiles**

For information about staff and faculty, including current research interests, see:

<https://deptofgov.nmsu.edu/facultydirectory/faculty-profiles.html>

### **Admission to the Program**

The department seeks applicants whose interests and experience demonstrate abilities appropriate for advanced work in political science. When making admissions decisions, the MA Program Committee considers each applicant individually.

Prospective graduate students are expected to have at least a 3.0 undergraduate grade point average (GPA), as determined by the NMSU Graduate School. Applicants who graduated with a GPA of 3.0 or less are required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) if they received their undergraduate degree within the five years prior to submitting this application.

Applicants who graduated more than five years before this application are not required to take the GRE. In addition, a writing sample and three letters of recommendation from persons familiar with the applicant's academic work must be submitted via the online application system described on the next page.

Applicants must also include a personal statement describing any relevant academic training and work experience, as well as their interest in pursuing the MA in Government at NMSU. While there are no formal application deadlines, complete applications are required for admission. As a condition of admission, candidates with inadequate preparation may be required to take appropriate undergraduate course work.

### **Application Process**

For information about the application process and how to submit your application, see:

<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/future-students/Admission.html>

Follow these steps:

1. Complete the Application for Admission.
2. Upload the supporting documents required by the academic program you are applying for (see below for the documents required for the MA in Government). You can review the departmental application requirements on the department website or the Graduate Programs page.
3. Submit the application fee. You can make payment within the online application system using a credit card. However, if you select to pay by check and then change your mind and want to pay by credit card use this link. Pay by credit Card
4. Review your application and the supporting documents before you submit your application. You are unable to make changes to your application after it has submitted.
5. Submit the application. Upon submission, the academic department will have full access to all of the documents you have submitted. The MA faculty will review your application. Once the department has made a decision, you will receive an email notification. If you are admitted to the program, the Office of University Admissions will contact you about the next steps in the process, including the submission of official transcripts and other required documents.

Applicants to the MA in Government need to submit the following documents in the online system

- Personal Statement
- Writing Sample
- Current Resume
- Three (3) Letters of Recommendation
- Unofficial Transcripts
- GRE Scores (if Applicable)

For general questions about admission to NMSU, please contact:

NMSU Student Affairs & Enrollment Management: University Admissions

[admissions@nmsu.edu](mailto:admissions@nmsu.edu)

(575) 646-3121 or 800-662-6678

Educational Services Building, Suite G, MSC 3G / P.O. Box 30001, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001

### **Financial Assistance**

The department offers graduate assistantships to support qualified full-time students (minimum of 9 graduate-level credits per semester). You can indicate your interest in being considered for an assistantship when you complete the application form online. The department also sends out a call for graduate assistantship requests in early October and early March of each year. Students must be admitted to the MA program in order to be eligible for a graduate assistantship.

Graduate assistants in the Department of Government receive a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time assistantship (15 hours per work week). Students work under the direction of Government faculty to support teaching and research. Assistants pay their own tuition and fees; however, out-of-state students who receive a graduate assistantship qualify for in-state tuition rates.

The department may also provide financial support through scholarships and other funds for research and conference participation.

Information of student loans and other types of financial assistance is available from:

<http://fa.nmsu.edu/>

### **MA Degree Requirements**

All candidates must complete 36 credit hours of work, including one of the following courses in research methodology (3 credit hours):

POLS 502	Research Methods in Government
POLS 503	Qualitative Research Methods

Those who consider pursuing doctoral work after their MA are encouraged to take both methods courses. MA students must complete either POLS 502 or POLS 503 with a B- or better.

In addition, all candidates must take three of the following six government core courses (9 credits). MA students must complete their three core classes with a B- or better.

POLS 530	Seminar in Public Policy
POLS 550	Seminar in American Politics
POLS 560	Seminar in International Relations Theory
POLS 570	Seminar in Comparative Politics
POLS 580	Seminar in Political Theory
POLS 590	Seminar in Public Law and Legal Systems

Students complete their academic program with 18 additional credit hours of elective courses, plus 6 hours of thesis or special research (non-thesis) credit. All courses are to be selected with the approval of the student's graduate advisor. Advisors are assigned during the admissions process; applicants are informed of the advisor assignment in the letter of acceptance. Students are also permitted to select their own advisors. It is the student's responsibility to remain in contact with his or her advisor.

During the semester when students are completing their first 18 credits, each MA student must complete the following steps:

1. Select a faculty member in the Department of Government who agrees to serve as chair of his/her graduate committee. Normally the chair will be the graduate faculty member most professionally qualified to supervise the work.
2. In consultation with his/her chair, develop a Program of Study that indicates any minors being pursued (for example, the graduate minor in Security Studies), which will be submitted to the Graduate School with a copy to the Department of Government.
3. Meet with his/her chair to choose between the thesis and non-thesis options. These options are provided to facilitate individualized programs of study.

### Thesis Option

The thesis option is strongly suggested for students who have career objectives that can be enhanced by the deep and careful analysis of a thesis topic. For the student interested in pursuing a doctoral degree, the thesis provides an excellent opportunity for exploring themes and ideas that might serve as the foundation for a dissertation proposal. Under the thesis option students complete 30 credits of course work plus 6 hours of master's thesis credit (POLS 599).

Thesis Committee: In consultation with the student's thesis committee chair (see above), the candidate will select **one** other department member to serve on the committee and oversee the research. An additional committee member from a discipline outside the department must be included as the third committee member, to serve as the Dean's Representative. The committee chair will advise the student on how to choose an outside member who can offer relevant insight and support. The student and the committee chair will also discuss the most appropriate time for inclusion of the outside member, which may not occur until the scheduling of the final oral examination. Changes in the composition of the committee must be approved by the student's committee chair.

Thesis Prospectus: Working with his/her thesis chair, the candidate is responsible for completing a prospectus of the proposed thesis and submitting it to his/her thesis committee prior to registration for thesis hours (POLS 599). The thesis committee will then meet with the candidate to discuss the proposal, make recommendations and – if acceptable to all committee members – approve the prospectus. Registration for thesis hours is not permitted until the prospectus is approved. A prospectus is ordinarily 10 to 12 pages in length. It should explain the rationale and research question(s) guiding the proposed thesis, specify major theoretical orientations, summarize relevant literature, outline tentative methodologies, and provide a preliminary bibliography. In addition, a brief biography of the student's background (for example, relevant courses taken, papers written, etc.) should be included. Once the committee has approved the prospectus, the student will work with his/her thesis chair until completion of a rough draft of the thesis. In some cases, the draft will be circulated to the entire committee who will make suggestions for changes. Once the thesis chair notifies the student that there is a defensible draft, the student will schedule a thesis defense with all of his/her committee members.

Thesis Committee Review: Committee members will receive copies of the draft at least 10 working days prior to a scheduled thesis defense. The defense will constitute a major part of the student's final oral examination (discussed below). Following a successful defense, the student will produce bound copies of the thesis that meet Graduate School deadlines and style requirements. Bound copies of the thesis will then be submitted to the Department of Government, the Graduate School and the university library.



### **Non-thesis Option**

Designed for flexibility, the non-thesis option provides an opportunity for the qualified student to develop – with the approval of his/her committee – a unique academic and/or internship project tailored to meet specific academic and/or career goals. Students pursuing this option complete 30 credits of course work plus 6 hours of special research credit (POLS 598) or 6 hours of approved internship credit (POLS 510).

**Project Committee:** In consultation with his/her committee chair (see above), the candidate will select two other department members to serve on the committee and oversee the project. An additional committee member from a discipline outside the department must be included as the third committee member, to serve as the Dean's Representative. The committee chair will advise the student on how to choose an outside member who can offer relevant insight and support. The student and the committee chair will also discuss the most appropriate time for inclusion of the outside member, which many not occur until the scheduling of the final oral examination. Changes in the composition of the committee must be approved by the student's committee chair.

**Project Proposal:** Working with the committee chair, the student is responsible for developing a proposal that describes the specialized academic and/or internship project, and submitting the proposal to his/her committee for review. A proposal is ordinarily 10 to 12 pages in length. In addition to information that may be requested by the chair, the proposal should explain the rationale and significance of the project, and outline steps for completion. In addition, a brief biography of the student's background (for example, relevant courses taken, papers written, etc.) should be included. A proposal for a research project (as opposed to an internship) should also indicate the likely venue(s) for public presentation of the research findings, such as a professional conference or symposium organized by the Graduate School at NMSU; the student and his/her committee will decide on the most appropriate venue for this presentation, which may include publication in a professional journal. Committee members may require revisions to the non-thesis proposal prior to approval. The proposal must be approved by the student's committee prior to registration in either POLS 598 or POLS 510.

**Project Committee Review:** It is the responsibility of the candidate to meet periodically with his/her chair for the purpose of reviewing the progress of the work and receiving suggestions for improvement. The review stage will continue until the chair believes the student has produced a defensible project (e.g., a report, conference paper, manual, etc.). Committee members must receive a draft of the project at least 10 working days prior to the final oral examination.

**Written Examination:** All non-thesis candidates must pass a written departmental examination during their final semester to demonstrate mastery of the discipline. Students must remove all incompletes before taking the exam, and must pass the exam in order to take the final oral examination. At the beginning of the final semester, the student will meet with his/her chair to set a date for the written exam. The written exam must be scheduled at least 10 working days prior to the final oral examination. The student's committee chair is responsible for soliciting questions from committee members for the final written exam, scheduling the exam time and room, and distributing the exam answers to the corresponding committee members for grading. Each departmental member of the non-thesis committee will submit a question, for a total of three. The candidate is expected to communicate with each committee member from the Government Department regarding the main topic areas to be covered in the written exam.

Candidates will be given three hours to complete the exam. Copies of the completed exam will be distributed to the committee members from the Government Department. Each member will grade and comment on the answers to his/her question. The committee chair will collect the members' evaluations and notify the student and the MA Program Coordinator of the results. The student needs to pass at least two questions to proceed to the oral examination. Students who fail two or more questions will be allowed to retake the examination one time in a different format. A second failure will result in removal of the student from the program.

### **Final Oral Examination**

All students, regardless of option, are required by the Graduate School to take an oral examination during the final semester in residence. Students must remove all incompletes prior to taking the oral exam. The final draft of the thesis or specialized academic project must be formally submitted to the committee at least 10 working days prior to the oral exam date. As required by the Graduate School, a faculty member from another department will serve as a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School and must participate in the oral exam and receive copies of the thesis or academic project. Candidates are encouraged to meet with his/her committee members prior to the oral examination to discuss their comments on the thesis, academic project and/or written examination.

The oral exam provides a second opportunity for the student to demonstrate his/her mastery of the subject. Typically, the examination will involve a discussion of the student's major research findings or major components of the specialized academic project, and will include a question and answer period focusing on the thesis or project/written examination, and overall mastery of the discipline. A student who fails the oral examination will be permitted to retake the examination once. A second failure will result in the removal of the student from the program.

## **GRADUATE MINORS**

### **Graduate Minor in Public Administration**

This minor addresses some of the specific needs of those pursuing a career in governmental or non-profit administration. Most courses are offered in the evenings, and the program is designed both for individuals who recently completed undergraduate degrees as well as returning students. It is intended to foster public service leadership by teaching students how to confront theory with practice and practice with theory.

***Twelve (12) semester credits of graduate courses from the following:***

Required (3 Credits):

POLS 540: Seminar in Public Administration

At least one of the following MPA core courses (3 Credits):

POLS 541: Public Budgeting

POLS 542: Public Sector Human Resource Management

POLS 547: Government Organizations

POLS 549: Ethics in Government

Additional credit hours from core above (recommended) or from list below (6 Credits):

POLS 530: Seminar in Public Policy

POLS 531: Public Program Evaluation

POLS 537: Issues in Public Policy (subtitled course)

POLS 543: Skills Workshop \*(subtitled course)

POLS 544: Public Policy Analysis

POLS 548: Public Sector Leadership

POLS 591: Law for Administrators

\* No more than three credit hours of GOVT 543 may count toward a minor.

### **Graduate Minor in Security Studies**

***Nine (9) semester credits of graduate courses from the following:***

POLS 468        Rebels, Guerrillas and Terrorists in Modern Latin America

POLS 549        Ethics in Government

POLS 560        Seminar in International Relations Theory

POLS 561        Nations and Soft Power

POLS 562        Advanced Issues in Security and Intelligence Studies

POLS 563        Introduction Security Studies

POLS 564        Advanced National Security Policy

POLS 566        Advanced Issues in American Foreign Policy

POLS 569        Advanced Issues in Globalization

POLS 573        Resistance Movements in World Politics

POLS 574        Terrorism

POLS 574        Human Security

POLS 574        Contemporary Comparative Studies

POLS 596        International Law

Students may double-count MA course credits for the security studies minor. Additional classes for the Graduate Minor in Security Studies: Other graduate courses may become available during the year which may be substituted for the above-listed courses for this minor. Consideration may be made on a case-by-case basis.

If you are seeking a minor, you should submit a program of study and obtain the necessary signatures. The Program of Study can be downloaded here:

<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>

Make sure you know the steps need to file for graduation and the deadlines provided each semester by the Graduate School. See: <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/>

### **Equal Opportunity Statement**

New Mexico State University, in compliance with applicable laws and in furtherance of its commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, or protected veteran status in its programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs and activities. Inquiries may be directed to the Executive Director, Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity, P.O. Box 30001, 1130 E. University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88003; 575-646-3635; [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)

NMSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. To request an accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services, Corbett Center Student Union, Room 2008, Las Cruces, NM 88003; 575-646-6840 or [sas@nmsu.edu](mailto:sas@nmsu.edu) or the Office of Institutional Equity, P.O. Box 30001, 1130 E. University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88003; 575-646-3635; [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu). One week advance notice is appreciated. To request this document in an alternate form, please contact Dr. Neil Harvey, Academic Department Head, Department of Government, NMSU, 575-646-4936, [nharvey@nmsu.edu](mailto:nharvey@nmsu.edu).