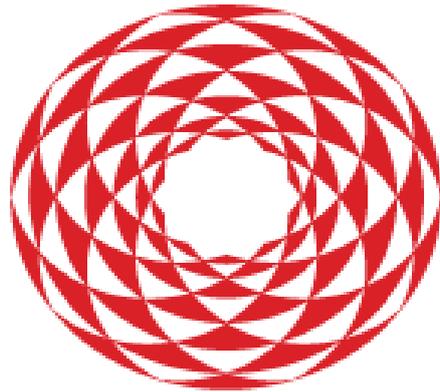


# POLITICAL SCIENCE HANDBOOK



**ASHOKA**  
UNIVERSITY

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

MONSOON 2020

## Department of Political Science

The undergraduate program of Political Science at Ashoka University aims to equip students with the ability to detect, critically analyse and reflect on the omnipresence of the “political” in the world we live in. Through a comprehensive grounding in the foundations of the discipline, we shall examine the nature, distribution and dynamics of power – both at the macro level of national and international politics and also at the micro level of the individual, family and community. We will map the ways in which knowledge systems and challenges to particular power relations have been constructed over specific vectors of time and space. We will study both Aristotle and Plato, Gandhi and Iqbal; complementing studies on comparative politics with an exploration of South Asia politics. The Political Science undergraduate curriculum at Ashoka exposes students early on to research methodologies, both qualitative (the ethnographic methods and qualitative modes of political analysis) and quantitative (statistics, political data handling, data visualization). Some of our courses put a lot of emphasis on experiential learning through fieldwork and field trips.

### Faculty Members:

- Ali Khan Mahmudabad
- Bann Seng Tan
- Gilles Verniers
- Malvika Maheshwari
- Matthew Baxter
- Madhav Khosla
- Neelanjan Sircar
- Pratap Bhanu Mehta
- Vinay Sitapati (Head of Department)
- Priyamvada Trivedi (Visiting)

### Requirements for Major:

Each student will take a total of 12 courses towards the major. For completing a major in Political Science, one must take the following courses (4 required courses +8 electives):

- Western Political Thoughts (I) **or** Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to Indian Politics
- Quantitative Research Methods **or** Qualitative Research Methods
- Eight electives in Political Science (including a maximum of three cross-listed courses)

### **Requirements for Minor:**

Each student will take a total of 6 courses towards the minor. For completing a minor, a student has to take the following courses (3 required courses +3 electives):

- Western Political Thoughts (I) **or** Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to Indian Politics
- Three electives in Political Science (including a maximum of 2 cross-listed courses)

### **Requirements for Concentration:**

Each student will take a total of 4 courses towards the concentration. For completing a concentration, a student has to take any two of the required courses and two other electives (2 required courses + 2 electives):

- Two required courses other than the methods' courses
- Two electives in Political Science (including a maximum of 1 cross-listed course)

### **Requirements for Major in Politics and Society:**

A student needs to take a total of sixteen courses, out of which one needs to take eight courses in Political Science. Out of those eight, four courses are mandatory, while rest four will be electives (4 required courses + 4 electives). The required courses from the Political Science side are:

- Western Political Thoughts (I) **or** Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to Indian Politics
- Quantitative Research Methods **or** Qualitative Research Methods (in either Sociology & Anthropology or Political Science)
- Four electives in Political Science (including a maximum of 2 cross-listed courses)

### **Requirements for Major in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE):**

Each student needs to take a total of sixteen courses, out of which one needs to take a minimum of four courses in Political Science. If a student takes a minimum of eight courses in Political Science, then it would qualify for a Degree in PPE with a specialization in Political Science. The mandatory courses from the Political Science side are (3 + 1/5):

- Western Political Thoughts (I) **or** Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to Indian Politics
- One elective in Political Science (4)/Five electives in Political Science (8)

Note: In case of 4 courses in Political Science, a student can take a maximum of 1 cross-listed course. In case of 8 courses in Political Science, a student can take a maximum of 2 cross-listed courses.

### **Structure for the ASPs (4<sup>th</sup> Years):**

For obtaining an Advanced Diploma in Political Science, students need to submit an initial statement of interest in April in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year, with the name of the preferred advisor(s). This statement of interest should approximately be of two pages, highlighting preliminary details about the project. By the beginning of the ensuing summer break, students will be matched to an advisor, who may assist in structuring a thesis project over the summer.

In the first week of courses in the Monsoon semester of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, students will be expected to submit a thesis proposal that is 3000-5000 words. These proposals will be assessed by the appointed advisor and a department-selected second reader (who is not an advisor) for quality, feasibility and clarity. Students will be given feedback on the proposal by the second week of courses, with one of three decisions: (i) *reject*, (ii) *revise and resubmit*, or (iii) *pass*. If the student is given a *pass*, then she or he may continue to the thesis program without qualification. If the student is given a *revise and resubmit*, then she or he may continue to the thesis program *conditional on completing the requested revisions within one week*. If the student is given a *reject*, then she or he may not continue into the thesis program.

Upon gaining entry into the thesis program, there are four requirements for the year:

- Attendance at a Year-Long Thesis Seminar
- End of Monsoon Semester Presentation
- Final Thesis Presentation (End of Spring Semester)
- Final Thesis Submission

The grading scheme across these requirements and relevant schedules will be shared with students before course enrollment commences for the Monsoon Semester. The final thesis will be graded by the advisor(s) and a department-selected second reader (who is not an advisor).

The thesis will be for 8 credits overall (4 in each semester). Students are expected to take at least three courses (12 credits) in Political Science during their advanced major. They can also choose to TA for Political Science courses instead of an elective and gain credits. Beware that TAs are either for 2 credits or 4 credits so make sure that your credits tally properly. The number of credits for TAship is determined by the faculty before the term.

The department advises students to TA for only one course in a semester.

Additionally, each student will be provided a fixed research budget, which can be claimed upon incurring the expenses. Additional budget can be provided upon request to the advisor and the Head of the Department.

## Course Levels and Pre-requisites:

Generally, the 100 level courses are entry-level or introductory courses, while the 300 level courses are advanced. The department doesn't impose a sequence of course as per the level, but strongly recommends that you clear entry-level courses before taking advanced level courses. Some advanced electives will require you to take Quantitative Research Methods as a prerequisite.

For example (non-exhaustive list):

- **Quantitative Research Methods 2:** Students must have completed Quantitative Research Methods 1.
- **Theoretical Political Economy:** Students should have completed Quantitative Research Methods 1. They should have either completed or be enrolled in Quantitative Research Methods 2.
- **Empirical Political Economy:** Students should have completed Quantitative Research Methods 1. They should have either completed or be enrolled in Quantitative Research Methods 2.

In the event that a course apart from these has some pre-requisites, it will be communicated at the starting of the semester.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q1: What are the compulsory courses for a Political Science major?

1. Western Political Thought I or Introduction to Political Theory
2. Introduction to Indian Politics
3. Introduction to Comparative Politics
4. Quantitative or Qualitative Research Methods

### Q2: What are the compulsory courses for a Political Science minor?

1. Western Political Thought I or Introduction to Political Theory
2. Introduction to Indian Politics
3. Introduction to Comparative Politics

### Q3: Is there a sequence in which I should take the required courses?

No.

### Q4: How many 100/200/300 level courses do I need to take?

There is no such requirement to take a specific number of courses of each level. Only the required courses are mandatory and can be taken in any sequence, irrespective of levels.

**Q5: I'm going on a semester abroad. Can I substitute the required courses with a summer abroad course?**

No. Required courses cannot be substituted by summer courses.

**Q6: Are Political Ideologies and WPT II compulsory courses?**

No.

**Q7: What if I have done Political Ideologies/Introduction to Political Theory/Dynamics of State Formation in the past as a part of the requirement?**

In case you have done Political Ideologies in Spring 2017 or Introduction to Political Theory in Spring 2018, you need not do WPT I. If you have done Dynamics of State Formation with Prof. Vinay Sitapati in the past, you fulfill the requirement for Introduction to Indian Politics. However, if you pursue these courses in any other semester, they will count only as electives and not as requirements, except for Introduction to Political Theory.

**Q8: Can I take Political Ideologies/Introduction to Political Theory (electives) if I have done WPT I (required course) and vice versa?**

Yes.

**Q9: Is WPT a pre-requisite for WPT II?**

No. We do recommend that you take WPT II after WPT I, but it's not a pre-requisite.

**Q10: Can I take a methods course in any other discipline?**

Yes, you can, with validation from Prof. Sircar for quantitative courses and from the HoD for qualitative courses. In any case, you have to inform the HoD, the OAA and the Department Manager about this change.

**Q11: How many cross-listed courses can I take?**

Cross-listed courses are those courses which arise out of a discipline different from Political Science but are cross-listed with Political Science. Students can take upto two cross-listed course in any semester, provided all other rules are satisfied. The following is a summary of the rules around cross-listed courses:

- **Pure Major** in Political Science: Maximum **3**
- ID Major in **Politics and Society**: Maximum **2**
- ID Major in **PPE with 8 courses** in Political Science: Maximum **2**

- ID Major in **PPE with 4 courses** in Political Science: Maximum **1**
- **Concentration** in Political Science: Maximum **1**
- **Minors** in Political Science: Maximum **2**

**Q12: How can I get a course from another department cross-listed?**

Write to the professor teaching that course to express your individual interest. Request the professor to directly email the course syllabus to the Head of Department, Political Science. The department will then take a collective decision, communicate with the professor directly, and then inform the students.

**Q 13: I took a course which was cross-listed with Political Science. It is being offered again but is not showing as cross-listed. Is this a problem?**

No. It is normal for courses to not be cross-listed with other departments in every semester that they're offered. If you took a course, which was cross-listed in the semester that you took it, it will count towards your degree. Please cross-check the course code of such courses in your LMS.

**Q14: Can I write a thesis in the third year?**

No. Only ASPs can write a thesis with the department. But you can do an ISM (Independent studies Module) with faculty. Some faculty offer ISMs – individual or group-based – others take proposals from students.

**Q15: I'm interested in TAing for the Spring semester. How should I proceed?**

Only ASP students are eligible to TA for courses. The department notifies all ASPs of TA requirement at the beginning of the semester and calls for applications. But in recent years there has been a scarcity of courses available for TA-ship. So students are advised not to depend upon it.

**Q16: Can 4<sup>th</sup> year students opt out of an advanced major at a later stage**

Yes, provided you fulfil other requirements meant for graduation.

**Q17: Can students re-take the same course to get a higher grade.**

Yes, but this is at the discretion of the professor offering the course. In case the new course is being offered by another professor (for example, because the original professor has left), the decision lies with the professor of the new course.

**Q18: Whom should I contact for further queries?**

You can email them to the Student Representative Vaibhav Parik <vaibhav.parik\_asp21@ashoka.edu.in> or the Department Manager **Anjali Panwar** at [anjali.panwar@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:anjali.panwar@ashoka.edu.in) .