

Frequently Asked Questions and Advice about the BA MA Advance Track in Political Science

What is the BA/MA Advance Track?

The BA/MA Advance Track program is designed to allow exceptional Political Science majors to enroll in certain graduate courses while they are still undergraduates. These courses would be used to satisfy undergraduate course requirements for the BA in Political Science. Then, assuming formal admission to the MA program, the graduate requirements attached to these courses would be waved. The intention is to allow students to graduate with an MA in Political Science with only 1 additional year of enrollment instead of the usual 2 years.

Who can apply?

- Junior standing (75 credits) by the beginning of their first graduate course taken in the program. (pro tip: Start thinking about how you will do it when you are a sophomore – see advice below)
- 3.5 or better GPA in the Political Science major
- Completion of at least 13 Political Science undergraduate credits including: PSC 101, PSC 200, PSC 211, PSC 231

How do I apply?

There are two stages to applying for the BA/MA. In the first stage you apply to the Political Science Department directly. Admission at this stage will allow you to enroll in 700 level courses on a limited basis. The second stage is the formal application to the MA program. Admission at this stage will elevate you to graduate status and allow you to complete the MA program.

- Stage One Materials: Completed Application Form ([LINK](#)), Two Letters of Recommendation from UNLV Faculty (at least one from Political Science), Transcripts from UNLV and other colleges attended. All materials should be submitted via email to the Political Science Graduate Coordinator (psc.gradcoord@unlv.edu) before the end of the semester of the semester prior when you wish to begin taking 700 level classes.
- Stage Two Materials: Two new letters of recommendation (both from UNLV Political Science Faculty), Transcripts from UNLV and other colleges attended, Personal Statement addressing why you wish to enter the MA program. The GRE would be waved for students who have participated in the BA/MA Advance Track. All materials to be submitted via the Graduate College application portal here (<https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/futurestudents>)

What graduate courses can a participant in the program take?

The program is limited to introductory graduate seminars and the Introductory Research and Design course: PSC 701, PSC 710R, PSC 740, PSC 760R, PSC 780R.

Courses available are:

- PSC 701 - Research Design and Methodology
- PSC 710R - Proseminar in American Politics
- PSC 740 - Proseminar in International Relations
- PSC 760R - Proseminar in Comparative Politics
- PSC 780R - Proseminar in Political Theory

710R, 740, 760R and 780R can be used to satisfy 400 level course requirements for the BA in the corresponding subfields.

For example: 710R for any 400 level American Politics course. 740 for any 400 level International Relations course etc. PSC 701 can be used to satisfy the PSC 302 requirement for the BA

What if I take graduate courses but do badly in them?

Students do not receive graduate credit for courses if they earn a B- or lower. That said, an undergraduate who earns a B- in a 700 level course can still use that course to satisfy undergraduate requirements so long as they earn above a C-. So, for example, if you took PSC 710R (Pro-Seminar in American Politics), and received a B-, you would not be able to count that course towards a future MA degree, but you could still use it to count towards your BA in Political Science.

ADVICE:

While you are still an undergraduate, only take one graduate class a semester!

Graduate seminars are much more demanding than 400 level courses. A typical reading load for a graduate seminar could be 4 to 6 demanding articles or an entire book and 2 to 3 articles per week per course. *You should only take graduate course at a time until you are fully admitted to the MA program.* You can take other undergraduate courses in the same semester you take a graduate course but you should be strategic about which courses you take. Don't load up a semester with several highly demanding courses at once.

It is possible to take PSC 701 instead of PSC 302.

PSC 701: Research Design and Methodology is the graduate version of PSC 302. It is a more in depth and faster paced version. But PSC 302 is not a prerequisite for PSC 701 and instructors for PSC 701 do not assume any prior research methods training. If you are especially worried about taking research methods classes, perhaps you should take PSC 302 as an undergrad and take PSC 701 your first semester as a fully admitted MA student. But if you are comfortable with research design and research methods, consider taking PSC 701 as an undergraduate instead of PSC 302.

Be aware of how many 400 level courses you have already taken for your BA!

Remember that your BA requires you take 2 400 level courses in 3 subfields, and 1 400 level course in the other 3 subfields. If you have already taken 2 400 level courses in, for example, American Politics and then take PSC 710R (Proseminar in American Politics), you will not be able to count PSC 710R towards any 400 level American courses (because you've already taken them). In practice this means you need to think about your course selections before you begin the BA/MA Advance Track.

Take the Pro-seminar for your expected major field in MA while you are still an undergraduate:

The MA requires you to take 6 credits (2 courses) of upper level graduate seminars in your major field (American, Comparative, International Relations, or Theory). Satisfactory completion of the pro-seminar is required to enroll in these courses. So if you intend to make American Politics your major field, you should take *PSC 710R - Proseminar in American Politics* while you are still an undergraduate.

Be aware that graduate seminars are not offered every semester.

Typically, the Political Science Department offers its core courses on a set schedule.

FALL: PSC 701, PSC 710R, PSC 760R

SPRING: PSC 702, PSC 740, PSC 780R

You are encouraged to frequently discuss your interests with faculty

Graduate programs are smaller than undergraduate programs and students are encouraged to seek one-on-one advice from faculty. Students in the BA/MA program should especially seek out the advice of faculty who teach graduate courses in their areas of interest.

Sample Degree Plans:

Focus in Comparative Politics, International Relations or Political Theory (finished in 1 year even)		
Semester	Graduate Credits	Course(s)
Spring Jr. Year	3	PSC 740: Proseminar in International Relations (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall Sr. Year	3	PSC 760R: Proseminar in Comparative Politics (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Spring Sr. Year	3	PSC 780R - Proseminar in Political Theory (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall 1st year	9	701, PSC 710R, 1 upper level in major field
Spring 1st year	12	702, 1 upper level in major field, 2 directed reading
Total	30	

Focus in Comparative Politics, International Relations or Political Theory (finished in 1 year plus one part time term)		
Semester	Graduate Credits	Course(s)
Spring Jr. Year	3	PSC 740: Proseminar in International Relations (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall Sr. Year	3	PSC 760R: Proseminar in Comparative Politics (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Spring Sr. Year	3	PSC 780R - Proseminar in Political Theory (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall 1st year	9	PSC 701, PSC 710R, 1 upper level in major field
Spring 1st year	9	PSC 702, 1 upper level in major field, 1 directed reading

Summer following 1 st year	3	1 directed reading
Total	30	

Focus in Comparative Politics, International Relations or Political Theory (finished in 1 year even)		
Semester	Graduate Credits	Course(s)
Spring Jr. Year	3	PSC 701 - Research Design and Methodology (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall Sr. Year	3	PSC 760R: Proseminar in Comparative Politics (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Spring Sr. Year	3	PSC 780R - Proseminar in Political Theory (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall 1st year	9	PSC 710R, 1 upper level in major field, 1 Directed Reading
Spring 1st year	12	PSC 702, PSC 740, 1 upper level in major field, 1 directed reading
Total	30	

Focus in Comparative Politics, International Relations or Political Theory (finished in 1 year even)		
Semester	Graduate Credits	Course(s)
Spring Jr. Year	3	PSC 701 - Research Design and Methodology (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall Sr. Year	3	PSC 760R: Proseminar in Comparative Politics (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Spring Sr. Year	3	PSC 780R - Proseminar in Political Theory (along with a manageable selection of undergraduate course)
Fall 1st year	9	PSC 710R, 1 upper level in major field, 1 Directed Reading

Spring 1st year	9	PSC 702, PSC 740, 1 upper level in major field,
Summer following 1 st year	3	1 directed reading
Total	30	