

# GUIDELINES FOR DOCTORAL STUDY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (POIR)

(Updated 08/1/23)

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These guidelines present degree requirements to be placed in the USC Catalogue (Part 1) and supplementary information to help students and faculty navigate through the program. The catalogue should be consulted first; the supplementary sections do not repeat those provisions. Finally, a simple chart summarizes key program and field requirements, steps and deadlines.

## **PART 1. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1.1. USC Graduate School Requirements**

The PhD degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the disciplines of political science and international relations and the ability to make an original research contribution. The degree requirements are fulfilled by successfully completing a **minimum of 66 units** beyond the B.A., the PhD screening process, three fields of concentration, a substantive paper, a foreign language requirement (if applicable), qualifying examinations, a dissertation proposal and its oral defense, and a written dissertation and its oral defense.

### **1.2. Admissions**

The faculty of the Department of Political Science and International Relations welcome talented candidates from a variety of academic backgrounds. Although a prior degree in political science or international relations is not necessary, it is strongly recommended that applicants have completed at least some course work in related fields, including political theory, statistics and social science research methods.

Admission decisions are based on consideration of applicants' prior academic performance, as reflected in course grades, the results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), letters of recommendation, and a research statement that also demonstrates a seriousness of purpose, a high level of motivation and a desire to benefit from our faculty's areas of expertise or interest. Applicants are also required to submit a sample of their written work in English, preferably a research-oriented paper. Business, government and other practical experiences may also be taken into account. Applicants whose native language is not English must take either the TOEFL or IELTS examination.

### **1.3. Screening Process**

Before completion of 24 units, students will be reviewed by a screening committee made up of the Director of Graduate Studies and the faculty who taught the core courses. This committee will review the student's progress, including grades and written faculty evaluations of course work and participation in class and professionalization activities.

The committee will be responsible for deciding, at an early stage in the student's career, whether the student is likely to finish the PhD program. After reviewing the student's record, the

committee may decide to (1) continue the student, (2) not continue the student and admit the student into a terminal M.A. degree program, or (3) fail the student's performance in the screening process, i.e., not continue the student in either the M.A. or PhD programs.

### 1.4. Course Requirements

All doctoral candidates must complete an approved sequence of three courses in core methodology, including a multivariate statistics course (POIR 611), a philosophies/methodologies of social inquiry course (POIR 610), and an approved 4-unit course in advanced research methods.

The selection of additional courses should be guided by the distribution requirements of the PhD program. The student will choose three fields of concentration, of which two will be examined fields. Each examined field of concentration requires completion of four graduate-level courses (12 units total), including the core courses in standard fields, with an average grade consistent with university and program requirements. The third non-examined field of concentration requires the completion of three graduate-level courses (12 units total) with an average grade consistent with university and program requirements. Students have one elective course they can take in any field. Students who will be teaching assistants are also required to complete a teaching practicum course, POIR 593, in the fall of the first year in which they TA. Students are also advised to take an independent study course in their second year to work toward their substantive paper requirement. Additional courses necessary to complete the 66 units required by the *Guidelines for Graduate Study in Political Science and International Relations* should be taken in consultation with faculty advisers.

Program Core	Examined Fields	Non-Examined Field	TA Practicum & Dissertation
<b>3 required courses (12 units total)</b>	*Students must select two fields <b>8 courses (4 per field) (32 units total)</b>	*Students must select a customized or standing field <b>3 courses (12 units)</b>	5 courses (10 units total)
<b>Methods</b> POIR 610 (required) POIR 611 (required) One advanced methods elective (4 units)	<b>American Politics (AP)</b> POIR 620 (required) POIR 621 (required) And two AP electives  <b>Comparative Politics (CP)</b> POIR 640 (required) POIR 641 (required) And two CP electives  <b>International Relations (IR)</b> POIR 660 (required) POIR 670 <i>or</i> 680 (required) And two IR electives Foreign language requirement*  <b>Methods and Research Tools (MRT)</b> POIR 617 (required) And three MRT electives	<b>Standing Field</b> Three electives in AP, CP, IR or MRT  <i>OR</i>  <b>Customized field</b> 3 electives (Requires DGS Approval)	<b>TA Practicum</b> POIR 593 (required)  <b>Dissertation Credits</b> POIR 794a-d (required)

## 1.5. Fields of Concentration

All students must complete two examined fields of concentration and one non-examined field of concentration. Students must declare their two examined fields as soon as possible and no later than their first year in the program and their third non-examined field no later than the end of their second year in the program.

The standing fields of concentration include American Politics (AP); Comparative Politics (CP); International Relations (IR); and Methods and Research Tools (MRT). Students may also select a customized field of concentration as their non-examined field with permission from their faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students must complete a total of four courses in each selected examined field, including the field core courses, and pass a written and oral qualifying examination.

Students may satisfy the third non-examined field by completing one of the following set of requirements: (1) complete at least three courses in either the AP, CP, IR or MRT field; (2) complete at least three courses in a proposed customized field of study to be approved by the relevant faculty and the Director of Graduate Studies. For example, students can design a third field that cuts across disciplinary boundaries or focuses on specific areas of political science and international relations beyond the standing fields. Part 3 of these *Guidelines* and Director of Graduate Studies can provide illustrations of this type of third field.

## 1.6. Foreign Language

The student is required to demonstrate intermediate proficiency in a language other than English if the student's primary field and/or dissertation research requires it. Students should consult the *Guidelines* and with their faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

## 1.7. Substantive Paper

To show evidence of the capacity to conduct original research and as part of the qualifying exam process, each student will submit a substantive paper. The student will submit the draft of their substantive paper to the chair of the Qualifying Exam committee one month prior to the written qualifying examinations. After consultation with the chair and necessary revisions, the student is to distribute the paper to all member of the Qualifying Exam Committee at least 14 days prior to the oral qualifying examination. The substantive paper should be presented and defended in the oral component of the qualifying examination as if it were a viable journal submission to a peer-reviewed professional journal.

## 1.8. Qualifying Examinations

Students will be examined in two of their three fields of concentration. In order to be eligible to take their qualifying exams, students must have completed a minimum of 24 overall units, including the completion of POIR 610, POIR 611 and at least three of the four required courses in each of the examined fields, including all of the core courses for each examined field. The other required courses for each examined field can be completed after the student's qualifying exam if there is still outstanding coursework to be taken.

Exams are offered three times each academic year: after the 4<sup>th</sup> semester of classes (usually the second week in August); after the 5<sup>th</sup> semester (usually early December); or during spring break of the 6<sup>th</sup> semester (mid-March).

Ordinarily, students will take their written qualifying exams no later than the fifth semester in the PhD program. Written exams occur on different days and are typically scheduled during the second week of August before the start of the student's 5<sup>th</sup> semester in the program or in early December after the 5<sup>th</sup> semester. Students must complete the oral portion of the qualifying exams within a maximum of 60 days from their last written exam. Requests for time extensions are reserved for extenuating circumstances and require the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Dornsife Vice Dean of Academic Programs, and the Graduate School.

The field representative for each field being tested will prepare the examination questions in consultation with the relevant faculty in the field. The student's Qualifying Exam committee will evaluate the quality of the written exams as evidence of the capacity to define and complete a PhD dissertation.

The oral portion of the student's qualifying examination will be administered by their Qualifying Exam committee. The oral examination will be based on the student's written field exams and the substantive paper.

The Qualifying Exam committee will be made up of five members; in consultation with their principal advisor, the student will select a chair, two members (one from each standing field they will be examined), an outside member (a USC tenure/tenure-track faculty outside of the POIR program) and an additional member of the Qualifying Exam committee. Final approval of the Qualifying Exam committee requires the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Dornsife Vice Dean of Academic Programs. Changes to the Qualifying Exam Committee may be made according to Graduate School rules published in the USC Catalogue. Students who wish to add a faculty member from outside of the university must request permission in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies. The request must include a brief written statement justifying the reasons why adding an external member is ideal and a recent copy of the faculty member's CV. Final approval of an external member is given by the Dornsife Vice Dean of Academic Programs and the Graduate School. Under no circumstances can an external member substitute the role of the outside member (a faculty member who is outside of POIR, but within USC).

Students will pass the qualifying examinations if no more than one member of the Qualifying Exam committee dissents after reviewing the student's record at USC and performance on the written and

oral parts of the qualifying exams. At the discretion of the Qualifying Exam committee, students who do not pass the exams may be allowed to retake the qualifying exams the next time they are offered. If a student fails the exams the second time around, they will be terminated from the PhD program and will be given the option to graduate with an MA in POIR once the MA requirements have been met. Students are admitted to candidacy for the PhD when they have completed the university residency requirement, passed the written and oral portions of the PhD qualifying examinations, and completed all the required courses except for the dissertation units (794a-d).

## **1.9. Dissertation**

As soon as possible after the qualifying exam has been passed but no later than within 120 days after taking the examination, the student should ask at least three professors to join the dissertation committee. The chair and second member of this committee must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the POIR faculty; and the other a faculty member from outside the program. A committee may consist of more than three members. Thereafter, once every 12 months this committee must report to the Director of Graduate Studies based on the student's self-evaluation whether the candidate has made sufficient progress toward degree completion in the past year, and to report any problems. The PhD is earned upon the submission of the written dissertation and its successful defense before the dissertation committee.

Consult the [Requirements for Graduation section](#) and the Graduate School section of the catalogue regarding time limitations for completion of the degree and other Graduate School requirements.

All graduate students considering an academic career should generally have research, teaching and advisement experiences as part of their program of study.

## PART 2. STANDING FIELD FACULTY, REQUIREMENTS, AND COURSES

### 2.1. Program Core Requirements

All incoming POIR students, regardless of their research interests or fields of concentration are required to take a set of three core courses on methods. We require all students to take two of the methods courses (POIR 610 and POIR 611) in their first year. The advanced methods course can be taken anytime before

#### *Methods*

Methods, or more broadly, research design and methods courses, are courses that are primarily methodological rather than substantive in nature, and that help graduate students in the POIR program become familiar with a range of issues regarding research design and methods relying for the most part on methodological texts and articles. Methods are understood to include standard options used in experimental, quantitative and qualitative research, including matters related to data collection and field research, as well as formal methods of theorizing.

Advanced courses in methods beyond POIR 610 and POIR 611 can be taken with POIR faculty or in other departments. Petitions to have a course counted as an “advanced course in methods” must be approved by the MRT field representative in consultation with the faculty members of the MRT field and ideally the petition should occur before a student takes the course. In general, the criterion used to decide whether a course qualifies as a methods course is whether the course is explicitly focused on methodological issues and introduces students to the methodological literature and debates on these issues. Methods courses regularly rely on applications to illustrate methods. But courses that are primarily substantive in nature (e.g. on democratization) and that address methodological issues in the context of the discussion of substantive questions will be considered as substantive and not methodological.



## 2.2. Field Descriptions, Requirements and Faculty

### *American Politics (AP)*

#### **Field Description**

The POIR Program features a distinguished faculty in the field of American politics, whose work covers a broad range of topics in the study of political behavior, political institutions, and other topics. Faculty research specialties include congressional and legislative politics; electoral behavior; judicial politics; political communication; political institutions; political psychology; public law and courts; public opinion; race, ethnicity, and politics; rationality and politics; and voting behavior.

The graduate course work in American politics includes two core courses (POIR 620 and POIR 621) that provide an overview of the field and its theoretical and empirical debates, as well as electives on such topics as attitudes and behavior; courts and judicial politics; legislative and executive politics; public law; race and ethnicity in U.S. politics; voting behavior; and other topics.

The intellectual hallmark of faculty in the American field is investigating political phenomena at the intersection of political institutions and ordinary people. Neither strictly behavioral nor institutionalist, the faculty address research questions that cross the traditional subfields of American politics and political science. While diverse in substance and approach, the research is informed and enriched by broad concerns within democratic theory. In terms of methodology, no single approach predominates and scholars in the American field use experimental methods, in-depth field interviews, observational data, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, and survey research methods. Given the nature of their work and their substantive interests, the faculty seek creative and intellectually diverse students. The faculty help students develop analytic tools needed to produce rigorous scholarship.

#### **Field Requirements**

##### *Overview*

Students who select AP as their examined field are required to complete four courses in the field, of which three must be completed prior to taking the qualifying examination. All students must take a core sequence that consists of POIR 620 and 621, which are designed to reflect the faculty's commitment to rigorous and thorough training of its students and to place their interests within the broader context of theoretical questions and recurring empirical puzzles in American politics.

Students must also minimally take two other courses in the field consisting of either (a) a graduate seminar in the field of American politics or (b) a directed research seminar developed in consultation with the student's advisor and approved under the Program's rules. It should be stressed that these are the *minimum* requirements needed for students to take the qualifying examination. Students are strongly encouraged to take further courses in American politics, work with faculty to generate reading lists in their areas of interest and develop a research design or substantive paper that can be presented to the core faculty in American Politics prior to their fifth semester.

Students are strongly encouraged to develop the relevant methodological skills needed to read the literature critically, prepare for the qualifying examination, and conduct original research in the field. Students should consider taking the core methods sequence prior to the field exam.

<b>American Politics Field Course Requirements</b>	
<b>2 Core Courses</b>	<b>POIR 620: American Politics and Policy Processes</b> <b>POIR 621: American Politics Field Seminar Part II</b>  * Both core courses must be completed prior to qualifying exams.
<b>2 Electives</b>	<b>Any 2 AP seminars</b>  * One elective must be completed prior to qualifying exams.

*Core Field Sequence*

Every student in American politics will be required to take a core sequence that consists of two seminars. The first seminar (POIR 620) will provide students an overview of key substantive areas of American politics, such as voting behavior, public opinion, Congress, the Presidency, the courts, the bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups, the media and mass movements. The primary goal of this course is to introduce the students to classic works in the field, situate the classics relative to important contemporary works, and provide an overview of approaches to the study of American politics.

The second seminar (POIR 621) builds upon the first semester by presenting students with various theoretical approaches to the study of American politics, such as rational choice, political psychology, behavioralism, and new institutionalism. It will then look at enduring problems and questions in American politics, such as representation, collective action, delegation, coordination problems, moral hazard, and institutional stability and change.

*Courses in American Politics*

The list of courses that have been considered as American politics courses are:

- POIR 620: American Politics and Policy Processes (Required)**
- POIR 621: American Politics Field Seminar Part II (Required)**
- POIR 540: Law and Public Policy (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 545: Critical Issues in Politics and Policy
- POIR 546: Seminar in Environmental Policy (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 618: Seminar in Problems of American Politics (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 619: Seminar in Supreme Court Politics
- POIR 622: Seminar in Political Attitudes and Behavior (Offered Regularly)**

POIR 623: Seminar in Public Law

**POIR 624: Seminar in American Constitutional Law and Theory (Offered Regularly)**

POIR 625: Seminar in Party Politics

**POIR 626: Seminar in Executive and Legislative Processes (Offered Regularly)**

POIR 627: Seminar in Urban Politics

### *Field Reading List*

The faculty will maintain a reading list to help students prepare for the qualifying exam. The field representative has the responsibility of maintaining and regularly updating the reading list in consultation with the field faculty.

### *Field Qualifying Exam*

The field representative will prepare the examination questions in consultation with the relevant faculty in the field.

### *Third Non-examined Field*

Students selecting American Politics as their third non-examined field will take three courses in the field, including POIR 620 and POIR 621.

### *Language Requirement*

There is no language requirement in the American politics field. If necessary for their research interests, students are encouraged to develop language expertise but it is not required. If American Politics is not the student's primary field *and* language is required in the student's primary examination field, the student must satisfy the relevant language requirement in the primary field before taking the qualifying examinations.

## *Comparative Politics (CP)*

### **Field Description**

Comparative politics includes democratization, political economy, law, subnational politics, state-society relations, and women in development. POIR faculty have regional expertise in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, Europe, Russia, the Middle East and Africa.

### **Field Requirements**

#### *Overview*

Students concentrating in Comparative Politics are required to take two core seminars (POIR 640 and POIR 641) and two elective courses (from the list of courses provided by the field representative; only one elective can be cross-listed in the field of Comparative Politics and another field). Three of these four courses must be completed prior to taking the qualifying examination. To earn credit, a grade of B or better is needed on each course. A field examination is required except for students who take comparative politics as a third field. Proficiency in a language other than English is strongly recommended.

<b>Comparative Politics Field Course Requirements</b>	
<b>2 Core Courses</b>	<b>POIR 640: Comparative Politics, Part I</b> <b>POIR 641: Comparative Politics, Part II</b>  * Both core courses must be completed prior to qualifying exams.
<b>2 Electives</b>	<b>Any 2 CP seminars</b>  * One elective must be completed prior to qualifying exams. * Only one elective can be cross-listed in the field of Comparative Politics and another field.

#### *Courses in Comparative Politics*

The list of courses that have been considered as comparative politics courses are:

**POIR 640: Comparative Politics (Required)**

**POIR 641: Comparative Politics II (Required)**

POIR 525: State and Society in International Politics

POIR 526: Migration and Diaspora in International Politics

**POIR 534: East Asian Security Issues (Offered Regularly)**

POIR 535: Seminar in No. African & Middle Eastern Politics

POIR 540: Religion and Conflict

POIR 545: Critical Issues in Politics and Policy  
**POIR 546: Seminar in Environmental Policy (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 548: International Political Economy of Development (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 551: International Political Economy of the Pacific Rim (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 555: Democracy and Democratization (Offered Regularly)**  
 POIR 556: Latin America and US Foreign Policy  
 POIR 557: Africa and US Foreign Policy  
**POIR 561: Japanese Foreign Policy and International Relations of East Asia (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 563: Chinese Foreign Policy (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 581: International Relations of the Middle East (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 599: Special Topics (Offered Regularly)**  
 POIR 625: Seminar in Party Politics  
 POIR 626: Seminar in Executive & Legislative Processes  
 POIR 630: Seminar in European Politics  
 POIR 632: Seminar in Latin American Politics  
 POIR 633: Seminar in East Asian Politics  
 POIR 636: Seminar in African Politics  
**POIR 637: Seminar in Chinese Politics (Offered Regularly)**  
 POIR 641: Seminar in Comparative Judicial Policies, Processes & Behavior  
 POIR 643: Seminar in Problems of Comparative Politics  
**POIR 642: Institutions in Comparative and International Politics (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 648: International Human Rights Law & Policy (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 649: Seminar in International Law (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 650: Comparative Politics of East and Southeast Asia (Offered Regularly)**  
**POIR 662: Governance in International Relations (Offered Regularly)**

In addition, courses in religion and conflict, democratization, and human rights, have been considered comparative courses.

Any course that will be counted toward the Comparative Politics field requirement must focus predominantly on the comparative explanation of politics within countries. Faculty members are encouraged to request that courses they teach be included in the field. In order for a course to be included, the syllabus for the course must be approved by the field representative in consultation with the relevant faculty member. Faculty may appeal the decisions of the coordinators to the full Comparative Politics faculty.

An annual meeting will be held to coordinate the offerings in comparative politics. The timing of this meeting would be just ahead of the time when the unit heads decide on the courses to be taught.

### *Field Reading List*

A recommended reading list for the field exam is maintained by the field representative and updated periodically, in consultation with faculty teaching in the field. As new areas of scholarship evolve, these will be included in the reading list. However, addition to the list should be balanced through the removal of some items.

### *Field Qualifying Exam*

The field representative will prepare the examination questions in consultation with the relevant faculty in the field. The exam is designed to test mastery of a broad coverage of research programs and areas within the field, along with overarching concepts, themes and approaches.

### *Third Non-examined Field*

Students selecting Comparative Politics as their third non-examined field will take three courses in the field, including POIR 640 and POIR 641. The third elective courses cannot be cross-listed with another field.

### *Language Requirement*

Language training is strongly encouraged but not required. To ensure language competence, prospective students are encouraged to begin development of language skills for their area of specialization before entering the program. Faculty advisors may encourage individual students to acquire additional language or methodological skills for specific research programs.

## ***International Relations (IR)***

### **Field Description**

The POIR Program has faculty in International Relations distributed across the subfields of International Security and Foreign Policy (ISFP) and International Political Economy (IPE). Students will be examined in both ISFP and IPE.

Faculty in ISFP collectively research a wide variety of issues pertaining to security broadly defined and focus on various security actors including both state and non-state actors. Our faculty's interests reflect the growing interaction between security studies and foreign policy analysis as well as the broader intersection between international relations and comparative politics more generally.

We define security broadly, as economic and environmental as well as political/military, and as threats to individuals as well as to states. Our faculty employ a range of theoretical approaches for explaining these various security issues, including realism, liberalism and critical security studies. In addition to materialist, power-based explanations, some faculty explore the role of psychology culture, gender, ethnicity and religion as forces contributing to security and insecurity. To this end our faculty use a variety of methodologies including archival and field research, quantitative analysis, case studies, foreign policy analysis, and diplomacy studies. Faculty publications appear in leading peer-reviewed journals.

Given the multi-disciplinary nature of their research, the ISFP faculty stands ready to work with a wide range of students. Our faculty are aware of the changing nature of the International Relations discipline in light of globalization, the role of non-state actors, the importance of international law and norms, regional integration and transnational interactions. These factors impact foreign policy choices and national and international security policies in new and challenging ways.

Faculty in IPE analyze the interaction between politics and economics within a global context. Together, the POIR course offerings for this field provide an overview of those conceptual approaches, critical turning points, and key issues that have characterized the international political economy since the first wave of globalization in the 19th century. Candidates master the most influential bodies of theory in international relations and in IPE. Other key points of analysis include, but are not limited to, major IPE issue areas such as finance or trade, international institutions such as the World Bank or World Trade Organization (WTO), and the manner in which a given issue or institution has affected specific countries or sub-regions of the global economy.

The IPE field requires students to take two core courses. One course is POIR 660, which is the common core course for two IR fields. The other core course is the IPE gateway course (POIR 670) that includes: a comparison of the two waves of globalization in the 19th and 20th centuries; study of the inter-war years and the effect of this period in shaping the design and content of the Bretton Woods order; a detailed analysis of the post-World War II Bretton Woods era and beyond, including the design of formal rules and institutions to oversee heightened flows of international trade and finance; and, a review of those main themes and burning issues that have dominated late 20th and early 21st century academic and policy debates. The latter covers, for example, the proliferation of regional integration agreements, the eruption of numerous financial crises, the changing profile of multinational corporations and foreign direct investment, those political economic challenges related

to the rise of China, India and other emerging market countries within the IPE, and the most pressing collective action dilemmas that have slowed recent efforts to deepen the globalization process.

IPE faculty are engaged in research on a number of these topics. Apart from the gateway course, POIR faculty offer seminars in special topics like Economic Bargaining in Theory and Practice, IPE of the Pacific Rim, IPE and Development, and Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States. Students who wish to combine IPE with a regional or specific country focus have access to a rich array of courses offered in the field of Comparative Politics. Candidates can deepen their expertise in Economics and their competitiveness in the job market by presenting a special third field in Economics (see Part 3).

## Field Requirements

### Overview

Four courses are required for the IR field, of which three must be completed prior to taking the qualifying examination. The first is the graduate seminar in IR Theory (POIR 660). Students are also required to take *either* the seminar in International Political Economy (POIR 670) *or* the seminar in International Security and Foreign Policy (POIR 680). The third and fourth courses may be either the other of the two preceding seminars (i.e., POIR 680, if the student took POIR 670, or vice versa) and another seminar from the approved list. It is strongly recommended that students take both 670 and 680 as preparation for the qualifying exams.

<b>International Relations Field Course Requirements</b>	
<b>2 Core Courses</b>	<p><b>POIR 660: International Relations Theory</b></p> <p>and</p> <p><b>POIR 670: International Political Economy</b>  <b>or POIR 680: International Security and Foreign Policy</b></p> <p>* Both core courses must be completed prior to qualifying exams.</p>
<b>2 Electives</b>	<p><b>Any 2 IR seminars</b></p> <p>* One elective must be completed prior to qualifying exams.            * In the case POIR 670 is taken as a required course, POIR 680 can be taken as an elective (and vice versa).</p>



### *Courses in International Relations*

The list of courses that have been considered as IR courses are:

- POIR 509: Culture, Gender & Global Society
- POIR 521: Foreign Policy Analysis
- POIR 525: State and Society in International Relations
- POIR 526: Migration and Diaspora in International Politics
- POIR 531: Strategy and Arms Control
- POIR 534: East Asian Security Issues (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 539: Seminar in International Politics – Conflict Processes
- POIR 541: Politics of the World Economy
- POIR 542: Foreign Economic Policies of Industrial Capitalist States
- POIR 543: Politics of International Money and Trade Relations (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 544: Seminar in International Politics – Religion and Conflict
- POIR 547: The Political Economy of Global Space and Environment
- POIR 548: International Political Economy of Development (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 550: Economic Bargaining Theory and Practice
- POIR 551: International Political Economy of the Pacific Rim (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 556: Latin America and American Foreign Policy
- POIR 557: Africa and US Foreign Policy
- POIR 561: Japanese Foreign Policy and International Relations of East Asia (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 563: Chinese Foreign Policy (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 581: International Relations of the Middle East (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 660: Introduction to International Relations Theory (Required)**
- POIR 642: Institutions in Comparative and International Politics (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 648: International Human Rights Law & Policy (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 661: International Relations Theory: Advanced
- POIR 662: Governance in International Relations (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 670: International Political Economy (Quasi-Required)**
- POIR 671: Political Psychology (Offered Regularly)**
- POIR 680: International Security and Foreign Policy (Quasi-Required)**

### *Field Reading List*

A recommended reading list for the field exam is being developed and when ready will be maintained by the field representative. Each year the IR coordinator will consult with the other IR faculty in updating the reading list, adding new items and deleting others.

### *Field Qualifying Exam*

The field representative will prepare the examination questions in consultation with the relevant faculty in the field. Students will be examined based on readings from seminars in the field. The exam

will test students on the international relations field as a whole, including both international political economy and international security as well as other topics.

### *Third Non-examined Field*

Students selecting International Relations as their third non-examined field will take three courses in the field, including POIR 660 and POIR 670 or 680.

### *Language Requirement*

IR students must satisfy the language requirement as defined in these guidelines. The student may petition to waive this language requirement on the grounds that they do not plan to write a dissertation in this field.

## ***Methods and Research Tools (MRT)***

### **Field Description**

The methods and research tools field (MRT) for the POIR program focuses on formal, qualitative, and quantitative techniques that help students to better understand substantive problems in political science. The new field also accommodates advanced language study for those who require those skills for field research. The MRT field to provide better purpose and rigor for methodological training, broadly understood, and is not intended to displace substantive coursework. For those choosing methods and research tools as a field, the coursework will be completed in their first two to three years. The field supplants the previous methods certificate program, and there is significant flexibility for students to customize their coursework to meet field requirements while reflecting their own research interests.

### **Field Requirements**

#### *Overview*

Students concentrating in methods and research tools are required to take POIR 617, along with three other elective methods classes. Three of these four courses must be completed prior to taking the qualifying examination. General program requirements in methods (POIR 610, 611 and an Advanced Methods Elective) do not count toward the four courses required by students who select MRT as an examination field. All courses must be completed with a grade of B or higher. Students are strongly encouraged to complete their course requirements for the field via POIR courses but can petition to complete the requirement using coursework from other departments. For courses listed below that are offered outside of POIR, students will need to seek the permission of the respective faculty and department before registering. We cannot guarantee enrollment permission in courses outside of POIR.

<b>Methods and Research Tools Field Course Requirements</b>	
<b>1 Core Course</b>	<b>POIR 617: Maximum Likelihood Estimation</b> * Core course must be completed prior to qualifying exams.
<b>3 Electives</b>	<b>Any 3 MRT seminars</b> * Two electives must be completed prior to qualifying exams.

#### *Courses in Methods and Research Tools*

The list of courses that have been considered as MRT courses are:

**POIR 612: Qualitative Research Design (Offered Regularly)**

**POIR 613: Topics in Quantitative Analysis (Offered Regularly)**

**POIR 614: Experimental Political Science (Offered Regularly)**

POIR 615: Formal Models of Politics

POIR 616: Advanced Quantitative Methods

**POIR 617: Maximum Likelihood Estimation (Required)**

ANTH 410: Ethnographic Field Methods and Practicum

ANTH 475: Ethnographic Film Analysis

ANTH 562: The Practice of Ethnography

COMM 552: Qualitative Research Methods in Communication

COMM 620: Studies in Communication Theory

CS 570: Analysis of Algorithms

CS 585: Database Systems

CSCI 548: Information Integration on the Web

CSCI 572: Information Retrieval and Web Search Engines

CSCI 587: Geospatial Information Management

CSCI 653: High Performance Computing and Simulation

CSCI 567: Machine Learning

CSCI 573: Probabilistic Reasoning

CSCI 686: Advanced Big Data Analytics

ECON 584: Consulting and Applied Managerial Economics

ECON 601: Microeconomic Theory I

ECON 615: Applied Econometrics

ECON 620: Experimental Methods

EDUC 651: Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods

HIST 500: Introduction to Graduate Historical Studies

INF 549: Introduction to Computational Thinking and Data Science

INF 552: Machine Learning for Data Informatics

INF 553: Foundations and Applications of Data Mining

INF 554: Information Visualization

ISE 520: Optimization: Theory and Algorithms

MATH 467: Theory and Computational Methods for Optimization

MATH 501: Numerical Analysis and Computation

MATH 505a: Applied Probability

PM 542: Social Network Analysis

PSYC 502L: Analysis of Variance and Experimental Design

PSYC 625: Advanced Big Data Methods

PSYC 575L: Multivariate Analysis of Behavioral Data

SOCI 520: Qualitative Research Methods

SOCI 620: Advanced Methods --- Qualitative Research

SOCI 621: Quantitative Methods and Statistics II

SOCI 656: Social Demography

Other methods and research tool courses offered at USC are encouraged and can be approved on a case-by-case basis.

### *Field Reading List*

A recommended reading list for the field exam is maintained by the field representative and updated periodically, in consultation with faculty teaching in the field.

### *Field Qualifying Exam*

The MRT field will have a written exam, in which they answer two questions from a choice of questions that are divided into two sections: one on a common core (e.g. research design, ethics in research, data collection), and one that will allow students to focus on the methods they have selected (e.g. quantitative or qualitative).

The field representative will prepare the examination questions in consultation with the relevant faculty in the field.

The exam will be an open book exam.

### *Third Non-examined Field*

Students selecting American Politics as their third non-examined field will take three courses in the field, including POIR 617. General program requirements in methods (POIR 610, 611 and an Advanced Methods Elective) do not count toward the three courses required by students who select MRT as a third non-examination field.

### *Language Requirements*

An option to complete some of the elective courses using advanced language courses is available to students intending to conduct field research abroad. Language courses at level 4 and above (i.e. ARAB 252, EALC 206) can be counted towards the elective requirement. While some of the language courses at USC that are below the 400 level might fulfill the content requirements of the MRT field, students may need to take additional elective courses at the doctoral level to ensure they meet the required 70 units for the degree. Also, only courses taken during the period that students are enrolled at USC may count, and transfer credit for advanced language courses taken prior to enrolling at USC will not be given.

### **PART 3. A CUSTOMIZED THIRD FIELD**

A POIR student can choose to propose a customized third field, which is not an examined field. These customized fields should be created to help each student deepen their knowledge of a particular topic that cannot be acquired through the standing fields. We list below examples of customized fields, but other possibilities could also be imagined.

American Political History  
Culture, Gender and Global Society  
East Asia  
Economics  
Global Health Policy  
Human Rights  
International Economics  
International Law  
Law and Public Policy  
Political Psychology/Communication  
Public Law  
Race and Ethnic Politics  
Religion & Politics  
Environmental Policy  
Latin America and IPE

## PART 4. OTHER RULES AND PROCEDURES

### 4.1. Transferring Credits from Other Institutions

Students who have completed graduate-level courses at other institutions prior to entering the program may petition to have such work counted toward their USC degrees. With approval from the Program Director and the respective field representatives, the student may transfer up to 24 units from outside POIR's offerings. Students must complete at least nine four-unit USC courses (known as "courses in residence") within the POIR program. Students wishing to receive credit for courses taken at other universities should consult with the Program Administrator regarding submission of materials, particularly syllabi and transcripts. The field representatives evaluate a course transfer based on the literature covered in the outside course as well as the correspondence between the course and similar courses at USC POIR. Each transfer course with the corresponding credit must be applied to one of the three fields chosen by the student. If the graduate courses being transferred were completed at an institution outside of the US, the transcripts must first be evaluated through an approved agency as required by Degree Progress and the Graduate Admissions Office. The student will need to pay any fees associated with the evaluation and verification of international transcripts.

### 4.2. Satisfying the Foreign Language Requirement

If the primary field of concentration has the foreign language requirement, this requirement can be met by two years (four semesters) of college-level foreign language training (with minimum average grade of a B), or by establishing native-speaker status. Course work from any accredited institutions will be considered. Course units covered by POIR-funded fellowships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships may be used for the language study required to develop proficiency. Language courses are not counted towards the PhD total course/unit requirement, unless they are at 400 level and above and used towards the MRT field or third customized field

### 4.3. Good Standing

The student is expected to remain in good standing, which includes making sufficient regular progress toward completing the degree every year toward a PhD. Students must accomplish the following in order to maintain good standing:

Good standing benchmarks:

- Before completing the 66-unit course requirement, students are expected to take three courses per semester when on fellowship and at least two courses while working as a TA or RA.
- **Maintain a GPA of 3.0 to meet graduate school requirements and 3.5 to meet expectations of the POIR program.**
- Submit the first annual report to take part in the screening process by March of the first spring semester.
- Take qualifying exams by the 5<sup>th</sup> semester in the program.

- Prepare one's substantive paper before the qualifying exam, and submit the paper to an academic journal approved by the chair of one's dissertation committee within one year from the exam.
- Perform satisfactorily as a TA or an RA.
- Master the necessary foreign language sufficiently to conduct the dissertation research which normally starts by the end of one's third year of the program.
- Submit an annual report to the dissertation committee and the Program Director detailing the progress toward completion of the degree.
- Participate in seminars, job talks, professional conferences and professionalization workshops.

If a student does not follow the good standing practices, the Program Director and faculty advisors will meet with the student to provide guidance. If improvement is not observed, sanctions may be imposed, the maximum of which is dismissal from the program. Failure to meet any of the good standing benchmarks could also lead to (a) lower priority for assistantship assignment and/or departmental funding, or (b) suspension or termination of funding for those who are beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> year in the program.



**PART 5. CHECKLIST**

## **PART 6. GOVERNANCE**

### **6.1. The POIR Faculty**

Faculty who wishes to teach and supervise doctoral students in this program must write a letter of application. The criteria for selection of faculty members will include: knowledge of POIR requirements; teaching of graduate courses in the program; participation in seminars and professionalization events for grad students; active participation in field related work e.g., working on reading lists, writing of questions for relevant field exams; providing timely feedback on grad student work; commitment to mentor and help place students. Selection decisions are reviewed every three years by a committee of 3 full professors including the Chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations. The chair of POIR will consult with each full professor and appoint one full professor who has widespread support as the third member of the selection committee. The committee's decision to reject a professor from membership in the POIR program may be appealed by writing first to the POIR Steering Committee.

### **6.2. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Steering Committee**

The Chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations appoints the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS works with the Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives of the four core fields (AP, CP, IR, MRT). The steering committee is responsible for overseeing the program in accord with the agreed rules, calling on the assistance of the department chair as needed. The committee's top priority is the welfare of the PhD program as a whole, not only the respective specialties.

### **6.3. Recruiting and Admitting New Students**

The responsibility for recruiting talented applicants' rests on the whole POIR faculty. The Steering Committee coordinates this recruitment process and makes admission decisions, considering advice from their colleagues. The primary criterion for ranking applicants is applicants' merit. After producing this merit rank order, the committee may depart from it modestly if necessary to correct an imbalance across subjects of study that has appeared during the past two or three years. We also strive to recruit an outstanding group with diverse backgrounds and interests, and students whose stated interests find a match in our faculty. The committee does not use fixed quotas by department, field, or subject in choosing admits, except as required by donor restrictions on fellowship accounts. Final admission decisions are made by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Steering Committee. The number of admissions offers is determined by the Dornsife Vice Dean of Graduate Programs in consultation with the Graduate School in early fall.