

Name: _____

1st Year Checklist

Tasks (Things to do this year):

- Identify advisor: _____
- Select 3 fields: (1)_____, (2)_____, (3)_____ (2 must be substantive)
- Which field workshop(s) will you attend? _____
- Plan course schedule to accommodate field requirements and course prerequisites
 - Will you have sufficient courses to complete all of your fields?
 - Will you have at least one course in 3 substantive fields?
 - If you are planning to “course out” of a field, will you have the 3 courses necessary to do so?
 - How will you satisfy the language requirement: _____
 - Have you signed up for Introduction to the Study of Politics?
 - If you are planning to apply for transfer credit, submit necessary material to Colleen:
- (If necessary,) seek additional English language training, pass SPEAK test?
- (If possible,) complete one field exam by the end of your 1st year summer: _____
- (If possible,) become involved in conducting research, perhaps as an RA and/or co-author.

In the Spring and Summer:

- Identify Research and Writing advisor for 2nd year paper and begin work on project :

- Acquire additional language or research skills via summer program
(See dept. and grad school websites for details on deadlines for funding, including easy to miss deadlines.)
- Work as an RA and/or co-author with faculty member
- Prepare for and take field examination(s): _____

Trouble spots to avoid:

- Failing to plan out two years of course offerings to prepare for three fields and one course in each of three substantive fields
- Falling behind with incompletes/etc. (No more than 1 per semester, 2 overall)
- Not taking at least one exam after the first year
- Failing to regularly attend subfield workshop
- Not becoming involved with research in “spare” time

Looking ahead:

Think about how you are going to transition to scholar/researcher from student. What skills will you need to undertake research? What substantive knowledge will you need to engage the topics that interest you? How will you demonstrate competence on the academic job market?

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Miscellaneous Advice:

1. This is a collaborative enterprise. View your fellow students and professors as future coauthors. Treat one another well.
2. Treat staff and faculty with respect, especially junior faculty and administrators. Bad reputations have consequences.
3. Don't be shy about taking (for a grade or auditing) undergraduate courses (e.g., linear algebra, microeconomics, languages, etc.) or courses outside of political science to fill necessary gaps.
4. No faculty member "owns" any subfield. Faculty disagree about what is worth doing and why. Figure it out for yourself.
5. You will feel pressure to begin conducting research, but you shouldn't do so if you are still learning and/or you aren't ready. Serving as an RA is a worthwhile way to learn how faculty go about their work.
6. Select topics for seminar papers that both fulfill class requirements and feed into your own research interests.

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2nd Year Checklist

Background (Things you have already done/updates)

- Advisor: _____
- Which field workshop(s) do you attend? _____
- What is your certification status in each of your 3 fields? (2 must be substantive)
 - (1) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
 - (2) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
 - (3) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)

Tasks:

- Complete certification (by exam or course) in three fields and all required coursework
 - Language requirement? , 16 courses? , 1 course in each of 3 substantive fields?
 - 2 Honors grades? , Introduction to the Study of Politics? , Research and Writing?
 - High Pass Average? (In Dept. courses: Overall:)
- Prepare Research and Writing paper suitable for publication
 - Research and Writing Advisor: _____
- Work as an RA and/or co-author with faculty member
- Pass SPEAK test if required to be eligible for 3rd year teaching

In the Spring and Summer:

- Prepare for and take final field examination
- Revise Research and Writing paper and send out for review
- Acquire additional language or research skills via summer program
(See dept. and grad school websites for details on deadlines for funding, including easy to miss deadlines.)
- Work as an RA and/or co-author with faculty member
- Begin prospectus research by thinking about committee and topic
- Fill out MA paperwork if wish to obtain degree
- Submit preferences for fall TF positions

Trouble spots to avoid:

- Failing to complete required courses and certification in three fields
- Failing to regularly attend subfield workshop

Looking ahead:

What topic are you thinking of working on for your dissertation? Who are you thinking of working with? Apart from your dissertation project idea, do you have a stand-alone piece of research that you can consider working on and submitting for publication? Are there funding applications for dissertation research that will require you to have material ready to submit in the fall of the 3rd year?

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3rd Year Checklist

Background:

- Advisor: _____
- Which field workshop(s) do you attend? _____
- Completed all outstanding coursework requirements?
Language requirement? , 16 courses? , 1 course in each of 3 substantive fields?
2 Honors grades? , Introduction to the Study of Politics? , Research and Writing?
High Pass Average? (In Dept. courses: Overall:)
- Certified in 3 fields? (2 must be substantive)
(1) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
(2) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
(3) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
- Are there any additional courses you plan to take this year? _____
- Pass SPEAK test if required to be eligible for teaching?

Tasks:

- Identify 3-person Prospectus Committee by October 1:
(1) _____ (Dissertation Advisor)
(2) _____
(3) _____
- Draft short prospectus ideas memorandum and share with Committee by October 15
 - Hold group meeting with Prospectus Committee by November 1 to discuss ideas
- Draft full prospectus by January 15
 - Hold group meeting with Prospectus Committee to discuss draft by February 15
 - Submit revised draft no later than May 1
 - Once prospectus is approved, submit petition for candidacy by June 1
- Teach (For those without outside funding)
 - Attend Teaching @ Yale Day
 - Consider obtaining teaching certification through Graduate Teaching Center
- Consider presenting Research and Writing paper or other research project at appropriate conference
- Apply for funding for dissertation (field) research
- Complete additional MA degrees, if any

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Trouble spots to avoid:

“Wasting” the 3rd year: Failure to structure the 3rd year so as to transition to active dissertation research is among the greatest impediments to timely PhD completion. You should view completion of the prospectus (and any outstanding program requirements) as your primary task beginning September 1. There are no immediate rewards for dissertation research at this time, but that will change as the project develops.

Reading forever: There is no limit to how much you can read before writing a prospectus. Your job is not to know everything, but to propose a project that contributes positively to the body of human knowledge. This will require focusing and making a decision that you know enough to proceed.

Overinvesting in teaching: Teaching is important, but if you find yourself spending 2 full days a week or more on teaching, you aren't spending enough time on your dissertation.

Looking ahead:

If you are planning to go to the field in your 4th year, you will need to arrange to delay teaching and register in absentia. This may also require you take your University Dissertation Fellowship in your 4th year.

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4th and 5th Year Checklist

Background:

- Advanced to candidacy
 - Completed all outstanding coursework requirements?
 - Language requirement? , 16 courses? , 1 course in each of 3 substantive fields?
 - 2 Honors grades? , Introduction to the Study of Politics? , Research and Writing?
 - High Pass Average? (In Dept. courses: Overall:)
 - Certified in 3 fields? (2 must be substantive)
 - (1) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
 - (2) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
 - (3) _____ (Completed via Exam or Coursework)
 - Prospectus Completed and Approved
 - 3-person Dissertation Committee:
 - (1) _____ (chair)
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
- Which field workshop(s) do you attend? _____
- When are you taking your University Dissertation Fellowship? _____

Tasks:

- Make a website and a C.V.
- Conduct dissertation research
- Meet with entire dissertation committee at least once per semester (if in the field, are you providing regular dissertation progress updates to the entire committee?)
 - Fall
 - Spring
- Consider presenting dissertation research at in-house or outside conference
- Teach if not supported by dissertation fellowship or outside funding
 - Consider obtaining teaching certification through Graduate Teaching Center
- Consider participating in Academic Job Search Seminar run through Graduate Career Services

Trouble spots to avoid:

Are you meeting with your advisor and dissertation committee on a regular basis? If you aren't collecting data, are you writing?

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Looking ahead:

If you are planning to go on the job market or have a good part of your dissertation ready, you should consider preparing a practice talk (paper or dissertation presentation) for the appropriate seminar series in Fall. Schedule this in the spring—the seminars book up early.

If you will be on the job market in the fall, consider working with Graduate Career Services to prepare and review CV/Cover letters and with the Graduate Teaching Center to prepare and review teaching statement/syllabi.