

## First-Year Graduate Curriculum

In 2018, UCSD's Department of Political Science instituted a major reform of its graduate program to include a first-year core curriculum required of all PhD students. This curriculum is composed of two quarters of courses in Analytic Theory (203A-B) and two quarters of Research Methods (204A-B) courses.

The ambition of this reform is to unify the curriculum and provide all incoming graduate students with a common base of knowledge from which to analyze the enduring issues of politics, regardless of substantive specialization and background. A hallmark of our program is the willingness and ability of both faculty and graduate students to work across sub-disciplinary boundaries. We as a department believe that political science is a coherent discipline, not four subfields loosely grouped under an umbrella. We seek to break down traditional barriers and build bridges across all the subfields in the discipline.

Accordingly, we offer a set of four first-year courses that emphasize common problems of politics across fields, as well as the similarities (and differences) in how different subfields and approaches address them. These core courses are co-taught by faculty from different subfields and perspectives, and each teaching team is responsible for the actual syllabus used in each course. Course summaries and a typical first-year course plan are provided below.

Our graduate program is a unique statement about the discipline of political science. No similar attempt to unify the curriculum has been undertaken in any other department in the country. We expect that our students will not only have a broader command of the discipline as a result of this first year curriculum but will be able to see problems of politics in their more specialized areas of study through new and, we hope, clearer lenses. We also anticipate that the first-year curriculum, and especially the co-teaching of the principles courses, will invigorate the intellectual environment of the department, highlight the distinctive nature of a UCSD graduate education, and keep us at the frontiers of the discipline.

### Analytic Theory

#### **203A – Analytic Theory I**

The first in the two-course sequence on the essentials of game theory and fundamental concepts in the social sciences. This course examines the philosophy of modeling, and introduces social choice theory, decision-making under uncertainty, and games of complete information. Applications include: representation and democracy, social dilemmas and collective action, principal-agent problems, self-enforcing agreements, and institutions as equilibria.

#### **203B – Analytic Theory II**

The second in the two-course sequence on the essentials of game theory and fundamental concepts in the social sciences. This course introduces multistage and repeated games, as well as static and dynamic games with incomplete information. Applications include axiomatic and strategic models of negotiations, bargaining in legislatures, auctions, adverse selection problems, market failures, signaling and screening reputation, conventions, and cheap talk.

## Research Methods

### **204A - Research Design**

This course will study various approaches to knowledge accumulation in social science. A basic outline of scientific method will be used to examine the difference between theories as assumptions and axioms and hypotheses as “if-then” statements derived from theory. Experimental, quasi-experimental, and qualitative designs will be discussed.

### **204B - Quantitative Methods I**

The use of quantitative methods (particularly multiple regression and its extensions) in political science. Emphasis on understanding the methods and using them in political science applications.

## Typical First-Year Course Plan

### **Fall**

- 203A Analytic Theory I
- 204A Research Design
- Field Requirement or Skills Course\*
- Integrated Workshop

### **Winter**

- 204B Quantitative Methods I
- Field Requirement or Skills Course\*
- Field Requirement or Skills Course\*
- Integrated Workshop

### **Spring**

- 203B Analytic Theory II
- Field Requirement or Skills Course\*
- Field Requirement or Skills Course\*
- Integrated Workshop

*Key Objectives:* Complete nine courses and to start writing a seminar paper.

\*Skills courses refer to game theory/formal modeling, econometrics, foreign languages, or electives (lower division foreign language courses do not count toward PhD credits)

Please note that courses may be offered in different quarters than outlined above. Core courses recommended for the first year should be taken in the first year regardless of which quarter they are offered.