

**Unofficial, Non-Sanctioned Handbook of the Graduate Political Science Association**  
**Georgetown University, Department of Government**

This document is meant to *supplement* (not replace!!!) the Official Georgetown University Department of Government PhD Handbook. That handbook is great, and chock full of information, but every year students seem to have the same questions about issues not covered in the department's PhD Handbook. This extremely unofficial handbook was created by GPSA, in efforts to provide some of the information that seems to only get passed on through institutional memory from generation to generation of PhD student. Hopefully this handbook can act as a sort of formal institutional memory – to be revised as needed!

Welcome to Georgetown, y'all.

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**Who are all of these people and why do they all have weird acronyms?**

*GPSA (Graduate Political Science Association)*: The student-run organization meant to create a robust community of graduate scholars in the department. Also acts as a liaison between the student community and the department, in a more official capacity.

*DGS (Director of Graduate Studies)*: The DGS (currently Diana Kapiszewski) is responsible for general academic oversight and coordination of the PhD program. Most of the work is behind-the-scenes, but you will need to interact with the DGS for things like signatures on forms, academic advising, clarifying policies, requirements, and expectations, and any other concerns you may have that would not be better addressed by a student colleague or a staff member (how's that for vague?).

*A&F (Admissions and Fellowships)*: The A&F chair (currently Lahra Smith) is responsible for overseeing (drum roll please!) admissions and fellowships. You're already here, so during your time at Georgetown, you will mainly interact with the A&F chair about the fellowships portion of the position. This person will coordinate all of the issues you have about TA or RA placements and other funding opportunities.

*Paula Evans (PhD & Graduate Programs Officer)*: Paula is your one-stop shop for most questions relating to the grad program. If you're not sure who to go to, it's probably Paula (and if it's not, she'll redirect you).

*Erin Sharkey (MA & Graduate Programs Officer)*: This person serves as the coordinator for the MA program in American Government, and also assists with PhD program administrative tasks. S/he is the one to go to if you have a conference travel request (or receipts), or want to book a room in Car Barn. S/he also helps out with all of our events, so definitely say hello!

*Placement Director*: The placement director (currently George Shambaugh) is responsible for helping those of us on the job market to set ourselves up for success in finding a post-Georgetown job. As we can see from our ever-increasing placement record, this position is very important!

*Angela Jenkins (Office Assistant)*: Angela sits at the front desk of the department, and if you don't already know her you should go introduce yourself! She is the person to go to especially if

you want to book a room in ICC, but she's also got things like keys and access to calendars and printer or water cooler repair people and is just generally good to know.

You will also get occasional emails from Ileana Aguilar (Chief Administrative Officer), Maricruz Luna (American Government MA Program Coordinator), TBA (Administrative Coordinator), and David Myles (Office Assistant). Although we have less direct contact with them day-to-day, they're good people to know too!

### Resources

There are already a ton of resources available to us, so before you ask someone, check this handbook and the following places:

- 1) Graduate (PhD) Handbook (the official one!):  
<https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/nclmzg79i34y9bla7k3pvwtamzjdsg77>
  - a. This handbook has all of the official information about progress through the program, including requirements (by subfield) such as coursework, language exams, comps, advanced standing, qualifying appraisal, second year paper, progress to dissertation, fellowships and funding, and TAing. I highly encourage everyone to read this handbook in full and to come back over time to ensure you are hitting all of the appropriate milestones.
- 2) PhD in Government subpage on the Department of Government website (<https://government.georgetown.edu/phd>). Under this tab, you have resources for:
  - a. Professional development: <https://government.georgetown.edu/phd/prodev>
  - b. Pedagogy: Under construction
  - c. Forms: <https://government.georgetown.edu/phd/forms>
- 3) GPSA website
  - a. Comprehensive exams: <http://gpsa.georgetown.domains/comps/>
  - b. Teaching resources: <http://gpsa.georgetown.domains/resources/teaching/>
  - c. Other resources: <http://gpsa.georgetown.domains/resources/government-department/>
  - d. Other useful things: <http://gpsa.georgetown.domains/resources/useful-links/>

### DC is big – where do I live?!

Our students live all over the DMV (DC-Maryland-Virginia – it would be weird if our students lived in the Department of Motor Vehicles). Some have families and live in nice houses that the rest of us envy, but most of us live in either studios or shared apartments/houses. Some of the most popular neighborhoods include (this list is not exhaustive, please don't get mad if your neighborhood isn't listed!):

#### DC

Glover Park\*

Burleith\*

Foxhall\*

Dupont\*

Columbia Heights/Parkview/Mount Pleasant

Adams Morgan

VA

Rosslyn\*

Arlington (the rest of it that isn't Rosslyn)

Crystal City/Pentagon City

\*Either close enough to campus to walk or has a GUTS bus (yes, we agree, that is the worst acronym ever)

### What's with this course schedule??

Scheduling classes at Georgetown can sometimes be a bit like a game of Tetris – when you need the long piece, all you get is the square. The good news is, we have all gone through this before you and have come out the other side relatively unscathed. There are a few things you should know about scheduling classes:

- 1) No classes are offered every semester, and only a handful of classes are guaranteed to be offered every year. The gateway courses (740, 760, 780, 720 series) and 701 are offered each year. 704 is offered most years.
- 2) Many classes are only offered every other year, so if it's there and you want to take it – take it!
- 3) Get advice from your peer mentor (and others!) about classes that you're considering, and how to make sure you get the classes that are best for you!
- 4) If you are signed up for fewer than 9 credits and are still in coursework (this often happens during spring of 2<sup>nd</sup> year for those with advanced standing), make sure to sign up for TR 999 (Thesis Research) Section 03 (if you don't, you drop to part-time status and bad things start happening). If you are finished with coursework completely, make sure to register for TR 999 Section 01 (usually every semester after 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

Many classes are offered approximately every other year (sometimes even less frequently!), so watch out for these examples of rare(r) courses if they come on the roster! (NB: This list is neither exhaustive nor guaranteed!):

- IPE (TBD)
- Interpretive methods (Charles King)
- Democracy (Marc Howard)
- War, Peace, and the State (Lise Howard)
- The State (Dan Nexon)
- Political Parties (Hans Noel)
- Many PT courses (you can always count on 780 and can often count on Political Theory Research Methods in the spring, but other than that...)

We are also allowed to take classes at our consortium universities (GW, AU, UMD). To take classes outside Georgetown, you need to finish the following steps before the end of the registration period\*:

- 1) Fill in the Consortium Registration Form, which you can access here: <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/zpdn3pnag30dvnyeotymih4w0dymkuca>
- 2) Obtain approval and signature from the DGS; you need to show the syllabus of the course you want to take, which means you need to contact the instructor of the class to get this before you start the process
- 3) Get a signature from the Graduate School office (in Car Barn)

4) Submit the form to the Registrar's office

\*If your fellow international students are also thinking about taking classes outside Georgetown, tell them that they should start the process a bit earlier to ensure their visa status.

### *Bureaucracy, red tape, and other super boring but important stuff*

Overall there is a very similar process for every piece of paperwork that you will ever fill out: you give it to the DGS for signature (or to Paula who gives it to the DGS for signature), the DGS signs it and gives it back to Paula, and Paula sends it on its way (e.g., to the registrar, Grad School, etc.). If you have questions about the status of paperwork you gave to Paula, please ask her. Get your paperwork in early – sometimes (often) these things can take a while!

There are some processes that exist. Here's how to do them.

- 1) *Advanced Standing*: if you have an MA (or equivalent), you can use a maximum of 12 credits from that degree towards your Georgetown PhD. The process for requesting Advanced Standing is outlined in the PhD Handbook – please follow that process, which includes consulting with the field chair prior to the DGS. You may begin the process after you have successfully completed one semester of coursework.
  - a. This is the form to fill out:  
[https://m.box.com/shared\\_item/https%3A%2F%2Fgeorgetown.box.com%2Fs%2Fhp1hdwvb3hynbr5w48hmi1cppc0uqj32](https://m.box.com/shared_item/https%3A%2F%2Fgeorgetown.box.com%2Fs%2Fhp1hdwvb3hynbr5w48hmi1cppc0uqj32)
  - b. Also on the Department Website under PhD in Government → Forms → [Student Petition for Change to Program Form](#))
- 2) *Transfer credits*: you can transfer credits in to count towards the PhD in Government if you did graduate work elsewhere that did not result in a graduate degree. The process and paperwork are the same as above; the only thing you don't need is an official transcript from the other institution (unofficial is fine).
- 3) *MA-in-Passing*: When you're done with coursework, if you'd like your MA-in-passing, make sure you fill out the Petition for Master's in Passing/Terminal Master's form, available at <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/56l0vwt00oto90cr6rpiavc9y0fbdmry>
- 4) *Scheduling Exams*: Paula will send out an email towards the beginning of each semester for how to schedule your comps or language exam. For comps, figure out who else is taking it at the same time and work together with Paula to find a date. See the PhD Handbook for your subfield's requirements regarding language exams.
  - a. If your native language is a non-English language, you do not need to take a language exam but *do* need to go through a process to fulfil the language requirement. The department wants you to do this early in your graduate career (i.e., your first year). See the PhD Handbook for details.
- 5) *Defenses*: To schedule your prospectus defense, first sort out the date and time with your committee. Next, let Paula and Angela know so that you can get a room and the paperwork that needs to be filled out. There are more forms to fill out for your dissertation defense, which are on the website and need to be filled out correctly so that you can actually graduate (<https://government.georgetown.edu/phd/forms>). Scheduling is a similar process to the prospectus.

### *How long is this actually going to take?*

The department has been working hard to make sure that we are able to finish the program in a reasonable amount of time. This means that we have 2 service-free years (Year 1 and Year 5,

although the latter can be flexible if you can show the need to have Year 4 free for fieldwork), 2 TA years (Years 2 and 3) and one RA year (Year 4, or 5 if you make the swap). There is *no longer guaranteed funding* beyond Year 5, and getting funding beyond Year 5 will be difficult.

In addition to this, it makes sense to get organized early. Many students have found it useful to create a “backwards calendar” – thinking through from the end forward. For example, if you want to finish in five years but are planning for some fieldwork, you will need to do that by your 4<sup>th</sup> year. To do this, you will need to apply for grants mainly during the fall of your 3<sup>rd</sup> year, so you’ll want to have finished coursework and comps if possible by the end of your 2<sup>nd</sup> year. The first 2 years are coursework so there’s not much flexibility there. However, this is a great way to start some planning so you don’t miss critical deadlines and ensure you are able to get everything together in time!

### Service: Being a TA or an RA

Almost everyone who comes through the program will have service at some point during their time here. During your service years, you can work up to 15 hours a week. Being an RA is relatively straightforward: you will be assigned to a particular professor and then assist them in a variety of ways with their research. However, many of us are teaching for the first time and have some nerves and hesitation around this point. But don’t despair! There are many resources available to help you:

- 1) First, before you begin to teach there is a mandatory pedagogy training held by the department. This usually occurs just before classes start in both August and January. Please plan ahead because you are required to attend this training.
- 2) There are many pedagogy resources available online, which you can access from the GPSA website: <http://gpsa.georgetown.domains/resources/teaching/>
- 3) CNDLS at Georgetown is an entire institute here dedicated to helping you with teaching resources. They also host the Apprenticeship in Teaching program (<https://cndls.georgetown.edu/atprogram/>), which might be relevant to those who want to really hone their pedagogical skills. More details are on their website.
- 4) We recently switched over to a new online evaluation system through Qualtrics. In order to begin, you’ll need to request an account with Qualtrics ([https://georgetown.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e2ImEmdRLf1nxIP](https://georgetown.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e2ImEmdRLf1nxIP)), after which you can follow the guide provided during the pedagogy workshop to distribute your evals.

### What in the world do I do with my summer?

Many students wonder what to do with their summer. Besides the various summer funding opportunities that are available from the department (email for those goes out in mid-fall semester), students have done all sorts of stuff:

- 1) There are RA and TA opportunities on campus, though you often have to go digging to find these (some are sent to us by email, but usually not until spring semester when you might already be getting slightly frantic about how you’re going to pay rent). Spend your first semesters really getting to know some of your professors, you never know when an opportunity for RA work might arise! There is also this website that posts campus jobs: <https://seo.georgetown.edu/>
- 2) Get a “regular” job – people have done all sorts of stuff, from retail to leading DC tours.
- 3) Short-term consultancies at the World Bank

- 4) Other sorts of internships/fellowships/consultancies at think tanks, NGOs, or other organizations around town. There are a plethora, and you are allowed to work at them even as a foreign student if you can make the case that they are relevant to your degree.

### International Students

There are a number of things that are more confusing or different for international students. The Office of Global Services should be able to help for many of your various questions (for example see their website with resources: <https://internationalservices.georgetown.edu/resources>), but there are some things that are still daunting. Here is a non-exhaustive list:

- 1) *Taxes*: GPSA is not the IRS or a tax attorney, but hopefully this website should help with some of the more confusing information about how to file taxes (and when in doubt, go seek professional guidance!)  
[https://internationalservices.georgetown.edu/tax#\\_ga=2.70425875.2079957243.1536340445-1626936340.1523376854](https://internationalservices.georgetown.edu/tax#_ga=2.70425875.2079957243.1536340445-1626936340.1523376854)
- 2) *Work*: International students can work up to 20 hours per week – this means that while TAing/RAing (15 hours), you can work an additional 5 hours per week somewhere else (this is true for everyone, but sometimes international students don't think this applies to them). Summer work is more flexible, but you need to apply for OPT/CPT in advance (unless you're working for the department, in which case you don't need to do this). Again, if you can show that your summer work outside of the department is helping you to work towards your degree, you are allowed to do it. So those STCs at the World Bank (and elsewhere) are OK. Check out this website (<https://internationalservices.georgetown.edu/employment>) for more information.
- 3) *Healthcare*: Welcome to America. Insurance is confusing and there are piles of jargon that no one understands. Here are some FAQs that might help get you started: <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/ft7qt4i9nfa6kfy21oy2zpb5jhzz8hxs>
- 4) *Visa*: Please work with the OGS to sort out your visa issues, this should be relatively straightforward (I haven't heard many complaints about visa issues being confusing).