



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Graduate Program Handbook - 2025/26

Ph.D. In Security Studies

Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the *Security Studies Program within the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs*.

Last updated: June 2025, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs

Letter of Welcome

Welcome to the Ph.D. program in Security Studies in the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs at the University of Central Florida. The doctoral degree is the highest academic degree that one may earn, and the School is delighted and honored to offer an advanced graduate program with an emphasis in an area of extreme relevance not only for the United States, but also for the global community. It is one of the few Ph.D. programs in the country that offer a degree with an emphasis on national and international security, and we seek to prepare students both for careers in the academic world as well as in governmental agencies, non-profits, and private sector entities specializing in security issues.

Our Ph.D. program offers a rigorous curriculum for students who have completed a Master's degree. It includes systematic training for students interested in security studies broadly defined—from food and health to environmental security, and from national to cyber and space security—as well as international affairs, world politics, and transnational problems. The program emphasizes considerable flexibility in terms of the theoretical diversity and intellectual breadth that characterizes security studies, and reflects this diversity in both its course offerings and its broader theoretical and methodological approaches.

As a Ph.D. student, you will learn from the existing research conducted by other scholars, but you will also contribute to the current scholarship by pursuing your own research. Our Ph.D. students are expected to be active members of the School and to participate in the intellectual life of the School and the university beyond the classroom. Research colloquia, guest speakers, and conferences provide outstanding opportunities to learn about current research, broaden your understanding of the discipline, and connect with other students and scholars. Professional conference presentations will enable you to present your research to a broader audience and contribute to the public debate of political science research. You are expected to make the intellectual and personal commitment that is necessary to complete your doctoral degree and uphold the academic and ethical standards of UCF and the discipline of Political Science.

Welcome to the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs' Ph.D. program in Security Studies. I hope you will enjoy the journey as you complete your doctoral degree!

JACOPO ALESSANDRO BAGGIO,
Ph.D.,

Associate Professor, Director of the PhD Program in Security studies *and* Graduate Coordinator,
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs

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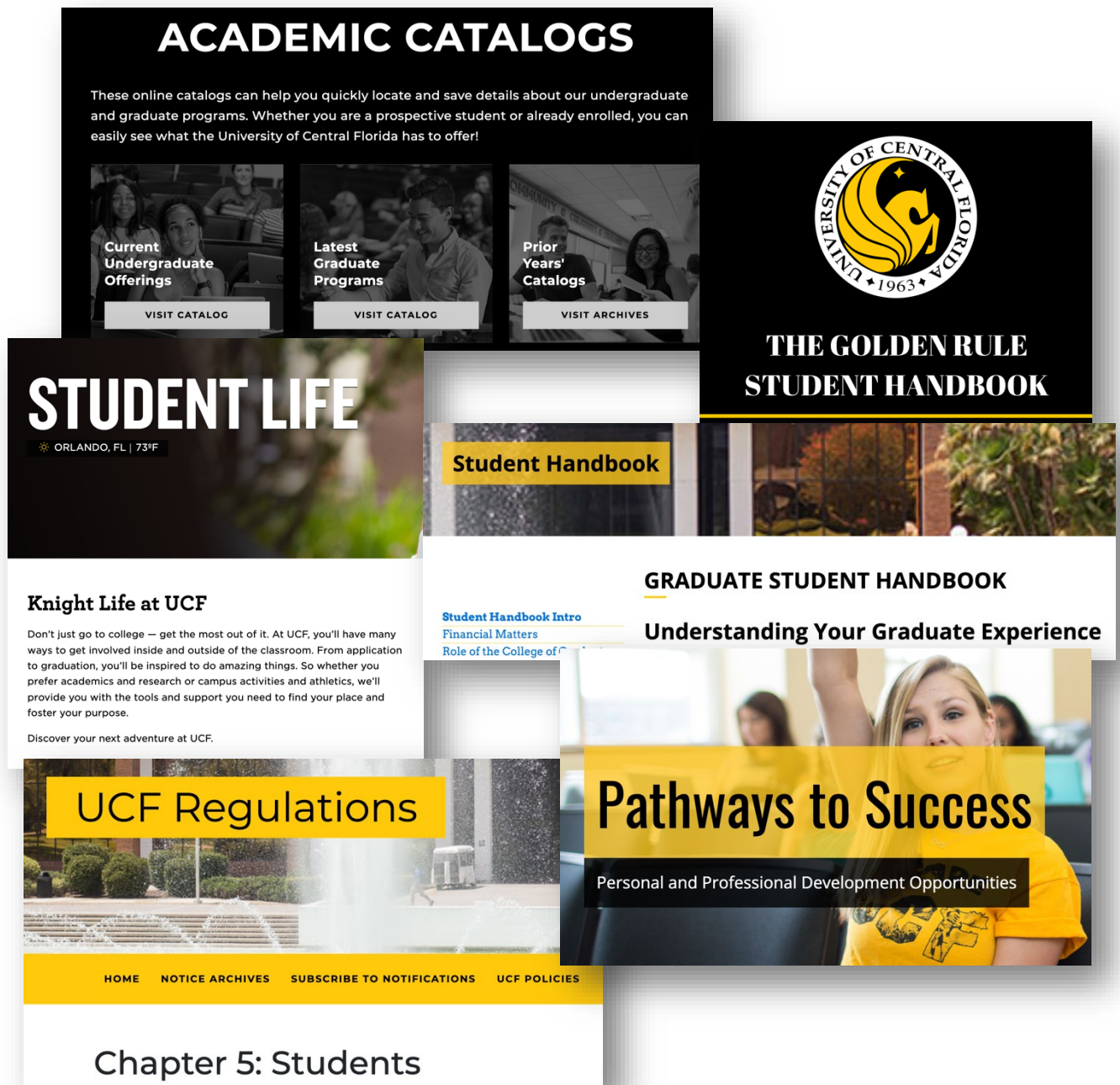
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Navigating Policy and Resources at the University of Central Florida

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at the University of Central Florida.



How to Use This Handbook

The School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs (SPSIA) at the University of Central Florida offers a Ph.D. in Security Studies that is designed to prepare graduates for careers in government, non-profit, and academic settings. To that end, it provides advanced graduate students with quantitative and qualitative research methods skills, exposure to current issues in domestic and international security, as well as electives inside and outside of the School that allow the students to pursue their interest in a specialized area within the field of security studies.

This handbook is therefore a guide for all graduate students enrolled in the Security Studies Ph.D. program that lay down the main policies and procedures of the program.

Who to Contact for Questions

Questions about the program can be answered by multiple sources. From resources present in the Graduate Students Handbook, to official websites that relate to policies and procedures for graduate students. Here are some important links that students must check and go through to be successful during their participation in the Security Studies Ph.D. program:

Graduate Students at UCF:

- Graduate Students Handbook, contains relevant information in relation to UCF policies and procedures, from financial matters to expectations of graduate faculty and students, from your rights to withdrawals: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/student-handbook/start>
- Graduate Studies FAQ: general frequently asked questions related to being a graduate student at UCF: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/faq/#thesis-and-dissertation>
- Thesis And Dissertations: contains general rules for formatting and deadlines for Dissertation requirements: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/>
- Information about graduate studies in the College of Sciences at UCF is available at <http://sciences.ucf.edu/graduate/>
- Required integrity training for graduate students: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/academic-integrity-training>

Security Studies Program and Graduate Catalog:

- Security Studies Program website: <https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/graduate/security-studies-ph-d/>
- Graduate Catalog: contains relevant courses for the Security Studies Program: <https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/#!/programs/rJMaoAgOju?searchTerm=security&bc=true&bcCurrent=Security%20Studies%20PhD&bcItemType=programs> (
- General Graduate Catalog (not program specific) can be found at <https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/#!/home>

Several key positions in this School and on campus are ready to answer your remaining questions. However, please note that it is your responsibility to check first whether the information you are asking is already available from the links posted above.

Graduate Program Staff

Kyrie Ottaviani

Graduate Admissions Coordinator

(Graduate Programs; contracts, comprehensive exams, general questions)

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Director of Graduate Studies

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407-823-5990

College of Graduate Studies Services

For general graduate inquiries and graduate student services from the College of Graduate Studies, please review the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website as an additional resource.

Onboarding

Once admitted, students should make sure that all the relevant documents necessary to start the Security Studies program are submitted on time. Students should register for the first term (normally Fall) classes promptly. Domestic students should enroll by the end of July. International students should enroll immediately after they arrive in Orlando and are able to clear all immigration related “Holds” on their student account. All students should be enrolled full-time, in approved courses, prior to the first day of classes.

New students (first year students) are required to attend the Security Studies PhD Orientation led by the Graduate Program Coordinator, the College of Graduate Studies New Student Orientation, the pre-Fall Methodology Workshop, and, if offered a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA), they are also required to complete an online GTA training module and attend the GTA Orientation hosted by SPSIA. All Orientations and the Workshop are normally held over a two-week period leading up to the first day of classes (beginning of August). Information regarding time and place of the Orientations and Workshops will be sent to students after acceptance into the program.

Introduction/Overview Section

Complete Name of Degree

Security Studies

College

Science

Department

School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs

Program Type

Doctoral

Program Website

<https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/graduate/security-studies-ph-d/>

Program Inception Year

2013

Program Overview Narrative

At the University of Central Florida, SPSIA offers a Ph.D. in Security Studies that is designed to prepare graduates for careers in government, non-profit, and academic settings. To that end, it provides advanced graduate students with quantitative and qualitative research methods skills, exposure to current issues in domestic and international security, as well as electives inside and outside of the School that allow the students to pursue their interest in a specialized area within the field of security studies.

The Ph.D. program admits students who have completed a Master's degree in Political Science, International Studies, or a related field, ensuring that admitted students will have a solid grounding in mainstream political science or international relations and are well prepared to take on the more specialized coursework and research required for a Ph.D. in Security Studies. Students admitted to the program complete 56 credit hours of coursework beyond the Master's degree, including dissertation research, to earn the doctoral degree.

The course work consists of:

- 15 credit hours of required core classes on current topics and theories related to security studies as well as advanced quantitative and qualitative research methods;
- 2 credit hours of professional development courses;
- 15 credit hours of restricted electives in courses on security;
- 9 credit hours of unrestricted electives, which can include a combination of non-SPSIA courses, independent study, and up to 6 hours of internship credits;
- 15 credit hours (minimum) of dissertation research.

Courses outside SPSIA must be approved by the PhD program director and should be relevant to the student's research area in order to apply towards their degree progress. Students have historically been approved to take outside courses in areas such as anthropology, sociology, statistics, criminal justice, women's studies, information systems, and interdisciplinary computing. However, students are not limited to these and should feel free to browse and seek approval for courses relevant to them.

Students should refer to the graduate catalog to see a full statement of the Security Studies PhD Program curriculum.

Student Learning Outcomes/Competencies

Ph.D. graduates will have an advanced understanding of Security Studies and will be able to lead others in research providing solutions to complex security problems. Students that obtain their terminal doctoral degree in the Security Studies Program will have demonstrated the ability to:

- 1) Be knowledgeable about concepts, theories, and methods related to Security Studies.
- 2) Be knowledgeable and skilled in advanced methodological approaches apt to analyze complex problems in security studies and beyond.
- 3) Lead others in applying concepts, theories and methods to develop strategies and plans related to Security Studies
- 4) To be an independent researcher, hence being able to assess a problem statement, devise a research design apt to address a problem statement, devise data collection methods and appropriate analysis, being able to present results and discuss them.

Student Academic Expectations

To be successful in the program, students should achieve the following standards:

- Attend orientation, welcome events, presentations, and workshops organized by the School and the College of Graduate Studies
- Meet faculty and other students—i.e., build their networks
- Practice good time-management
- Adhere to all deadlines set forth by the School and by UCF, including but not limited to those regarding committee formation, exams, and plan of study updates

- Register for core classes at the appropriate time (for the fall semester in June/July and for the spring semester in October)
- Pass all classes with “B” or better and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.
- Avoid Incomplete grades (“I”) for classes you take (or in the rare case that extenuating circumstances make an “I” grade appropriate, to resolve that grade as soon as possible)
- Meet with the program director at least once per year, to discuss progress as well as roadblocks and issues from a program point of view
- Meet with their faculty mentor, chair, co-chairs, or supervisory committee at least once a semester to discuss research goals, semester goals, courses, and progress
- Seek and apply to funding opportunities that come from the School, the College of Science, the College of Graduate Studies as well as government agencies (e.g. NSF Graduate Fellowships) and other professional organizations
- Seek out conferences and other professional development opportunities.
- Start thinking about research questions early and maintain a reading list of items relevant to research topic

The *minimum* standards for a student to maintain good academic standing in the program are the following:

- Maintain a GPA above 3.00
- Pass all Core courses with a “B” or above. Not receiving a “B” in core courses will disqualify a student from taking the Exam section related to that course.
- Pass all other classes with a “B” or above. Note that only one exception of a grade C or above will be made during the whole academic career and will only be allowed for elective courses.
- Resolve any Incomplete grades within one semester from when the incomplete was given. Multiple incomplete grades are highly discouraged. Incomplete grades over multiple semesters will be scrutinized and may impact your good academic standing.
- Abide by deadlines set forth by the program and UCF. Not abiding by deadlines implies not making progress towards the completion of your dissertation. Key deadlines are within this handbook, and reminders will be sent at the beginning of each semester.
- Maintaining a satisfactory performance overall.

For students concerned about meeting these expectations, the **Pathways to Success** program—coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies—offers free development opportunities for graduate students. You are encouraged to attend these workshops that cover topics such as Academic Integrity, Grantsmanship, Teaching, Personal and Professional Development, and Research. You can register for these workshops through your myUCF Student Center. Visit <https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/> for more details.

Student Professional Conduct/Ethics Expectations

Satisfactory performance in the program involves maintaining the standards of professional behavior and integrity, as judged by the Security Studies Ph.D. Program and in accordance with UCF Policies and professional ethics guidelines.

Professional Behavior Standards:

- SPSIA graduate students must treat others (fellow students, faculty, staff, and other University affiliates) with courtesy and respect. This includes using language appropriate to professional settings (especially avoiding vulgar, foul, or otherwise inappropriate expressions), maintaining control of their emotions; respecting the personal space of others, and refraining from disruptive behavior. Bullying, defaming, demeaning or threatening other students, faculty, or staff will not be tolerated.
- SPSIA students must adhere to all UCF policies including those on discrimination and harassment in their interactions with each other, with staff, and with faculty.
- SPSIA graduate students must treat common work areas and other UCF property with respect and promote an environment where others can work efficiently.
- SPSIA graduate students must not engage in academic misconduct, as identified by UCF's Golden Rule or APSA's Guide to Professional Political Science Ethics.
- SPSIA students will obey appropriate human subjects' protection regulations.

Potential consequences for unprofessional conduct include:

- Counselling with program faculty on appropriate conduct.
- Conduct probation, which may involve conditions for appropriate behavior. If students violate these conditions, it may lead to their dismissal from the program.
- Dismissal from the program, either at the end of the current semester or, potentially, effective immediately.

Professional Development

Students are encouraged, but not required, to submit their research to political science conferences and to peer-reviewed journals. Students' academic advisors will alert students who have produced particularly outstanding research in their courses or on their dissertation to existing opportunities. Furthermore, advanced students are encouraged to engage in professional development opportunities by writing book reviews for journals and reviewing journal articles.

Students are also encouraged to join professional societies relevant to the student research. Some examples are the American Political Science Association, International Studies Association, the International Association for the Study of the Commons etc. which will familiarize them with ongoing trends and discussions in the discipline. They can also join teaching/pedagogical sections, if appropriate to their career goals. Many of these sections offer free memberships to

graduate learners; for those that do not, students may have the opportunity to use School development funds for that purpose.

SPSIA offers the Collaborative Research and Networking Exchange (CRANE), a graduate student-centric research lab that meets at least once per month to discuss trends, challenges, and new ideas in security research. The School also offers a Research Colloquium series where faculty members and visiting scholars present ongoing research, and SPSIA's five research centers all host a variety of speakers and events. All graduate students are also highly encouraged to attend these presentations and discussions as part of their professional development.

Advising/Mentoring

Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members.

Your advisor has two main roles: 1) To support you as you acquire the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field, and 2) to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed at an acceptable level in each of your degree milestones. Other roles of your advisor may include tracking your progress in completing your degree, assisting with course selection, planning your academic path, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research opportunities.

Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Be sure to discuss this with your advisor. For SPSIA, the Graduate Coordinator is the official academic advisor for each PhD student during their first academic year in the program. Note that students are free to seek additional advice from other faculty members. During that year, students should also seek preliminary committee chairs and committee members—i.e., the faculty members that you will work with towards your dissertation for the remainder of the program. Note that while the dissertation chair will take over the main advising role academically and professionally, some administrative functions will remain with the Graduate coordinator.

If you are offered the possibility of teaching your own course (typically only offered after you complete your second year) you will also be assigned a teaching mentor.

Finding & Selecting an Advisor

Your advisor should be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and project/research interests match closely with those that you intend to acquire. To learn more about the faculty in your program, consider consulting the following sources:

- Courses and seminars you attend
- Faculty webpages (<https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/people/>)
- Faculty publications
- Students currently working with a prospective advisor

Additionally, you may wish to have a discussion with a prospective advisor. Below are questions to consider asking in this discussion, though it is not a complete list. You should spend time identifying what is most important to you in your graduate training and ask questions accordingly.

Questions to Ask of Prospective Advisors

- What is your philosophy regarding the amount of guidance the advisor should provide to a student during preparation of the thesis proposal, literature seminars, thesis writing, etc.?
- What regularly scheduled activities (e.g., group meetings, joint group meetings, research clubs, individual meetings) do you expect me to participate in?
- Will I have opportunities to receive outside input from other researchers you collaborate with?
- Do you encourage your students to attend seminars and journal clubs, including those that may be outside of their narrow field of interest/research?
- Do you encourage students to attend professional meetings where they can interact with colleagues/researchers from other institutions?
- Do you include your graduate students in professional activities that will familiarize them with their field of interest/research, such as reviewing manuscripts and meeting with visiting speakers?
- How long do you think it should take me to get my degree?
- What are your former graduate students (if any) doing now?
- What is your general philosophy of graduate training and what goals do you have for your graduate students?

No faculty member is obligated to accept a student's request to serve as advisor, though invitations are often accepted unless the faculty member judges that a different advisor would serve your needs better.

Dysfunctional mentoring/advisement relationships should be reported to the program coordinator or School Director, who may take action to address the situation.

Changing Your Advisor

As the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. If you decide that you would prefer working with a different advisor, discuss this with your prospective advisor to seek the change and discuss the change with the Graduate Coordinator.

Annual Reviews

To ensure that students complete their degrees in a timely manner, get the most out of their experience at SPSIA and meet requirements of the degree, School, and the student dissertation committee:

- Advisors will review student progress at least once per year. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may be placed on probation or dismissed from the program, according to university regulations.
- The Graduate Coordinator will send the students a link to the annual review survey in February. The completed survey, plan of study and updated CV/resume are to be submitted by the student by April 15th. Annual review files will be reviewed in April of each year. The Graduate Coordinator and the student Dissertation Chair will review the following documents when assessing students' progress:
 - Transcripts
 - Plan of Study
 - Updated CV or resume (provided by the student by April 15th)
 - Completed Annual Review Survey (provided by the student by April 15th)
 - Overall student progress towards the completion of their Doctoral Studies. Note that the minimum standards for a student to maintain good academic standing are specified in the above section *Student Academic Expectations*.

The Graduate Coordinator, with input from the faculty advisor (if different) will provide to each student, in writing, the results of the annual review. The advisor's comments will be emailed to the student by the graduate coordinator by the end of the spring semester.

NOTE: Annual Review procedures may change. Any changes will be communicated to students in advance of the review rollout date listed above.

Program Costs and Fees

Program costs can vary based on what the student enrolls in. There may be additional fees for online courses, independent study, and other options available. For more information you may want to check the following website: <https://studentaccounts.ucf.edu/tf-graduate/>

Program Assessment

The program is assessed yearly. The assessment examines progress on key metrics defined yearly by the graduate coordinator. These metrics relate to student success (incorporating data stemming from a yearly survey sent to all the students enrolled in the PhD program), student placement and program milestones.

Curriculum Section

Admission Requirements

In order to be admitted to the PhD in Security Studies program, all applicants must have an earned master's degree or it's equivalent in Political Science, International Politics or International Relations, or related discipline. The Graduate Coordinator will evaluate the suitability and applicability of MA degrees in other disciplines for admission purposes.

Beyond the degree requirement, the following is also needed to apply to the program:

- Three letters of reference that evaluate the applicant's academic performance and their suitability and potential for undertaking doctoral study, at least one of which must be written by a faculty member at the institution where the master's degree was earned, preferably the thesis adviser for those applicants who wrote a master's thesis.
- A personal statement of 500 words identifying areas of research interest in political science, faculty with whom they would like to work, and describing the applicant's academic and professional experiences and future career goals.
- A writing sample of the applicant's work that is at least 2500 words long and demonstrates the ability to complete graduate-level research.
- Résumé.
- For international applicants whose first language is not English, a score of 90 or better on the TOEFL internet-based test (iBT); or a score of 232 or better on the TOEFL computer-based test; or a score of 575 or better on the TOEFL paper-based test; or a score of 7.0 or better on the IELTS.
- Applicants to this program, except those that have earned or will earn a Masters or Doctoral degree from an accredited U.S. institution recognized by UCF, who have attended a college/university outside the United States must provide a course-by-course credential evaluation with GPA calculation. Applicants can refer to the transcript evaluation policy in the catalog. <https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/#/content/60a2cffc474d8b001b76552a> .

Admissibility to the Security Study Doctoral Program

Applicants' records will be reviewed on an individual basis and evaluated to assess their potential for success in the program. A School admissions committee that reviews the applicants' credentials will conduct interviews with top candidates (either in-person, on campus, by phone, or Teams/Zoom).

Meeting minimum UCF admissions criteria does not guarantee program admission. Final admission is also based on evaluation of the applicant's abilities, past performance, recommendations, match of this program to the applicant's career/academic goals, applicant's potential for completing the degree, and the interview.

Degree Requirements

In addition to meeting the Academic and Professional Conduct Expectations outlined in the prior section, degree-seeking students are required to complete the following courses:

Core Courses (15 credit hours)

- Complete the following:
 - [INR7139](#) - Issues in Domestic Security (3)
 - [INR7332](#) - Scientific Study of Security (3)
 - [INR7337](#) - Issues in International Security (3)
 - [POS7745](#) - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - [POS7707](#) - Advanced Qualitative Methods in Political Research (3)

Professional Development Courses (2 credit hours)

- Complete the following:
 - [POS7930](#) - Professional Development: Academic Careers in Security Studies (1)
 - [POS7267](#) - Professional Development: The Practice of Security Studies (1)

Elective Courses (15 credit hours in Restricted Electives and 9 credit hours in Unrestricted Electives; 24 credit hours in total)

- **Restricted Electives (15 Credit Hours)**

All students in the doctoral program must complete a minimum of 15 credit hours of course work in approved 'restricted elective' graduate seminars. These courses allow students achieve two distinct but related goals: a broad competence in the variety of methodological, theoretical, and substantive approaches to security studies and advanced proficiency in the areas that are most germane to their research interests.

The list of eligible restricted elective courses follows below; which combination of courses a student chooses will be based on the research interests of the student, the advice of their faculty advisor, and course availability. Approved restricted electives include:

- [CPO6038](#) - Political Development (3)
- [CPO6058](#) - Revolution and Political Violence (3)
- [CPO6091](#) - Seminar in Comparative Politics (3)
- [CPO6206](#) - Comparative Politics of Africa (3)
- [CPO6307](#) - Issues in Latin American Politics (3)
- [CPO6407](#) - Comparative Politics of the Middle East (3)
- [CPO6729](#) - Global Security in the Age of Migration (3)
- [CPO6776](#) - Comparative Rising Powers (3)
- [INR6039](#) - International Political Economy (3)
- [INR6062](#) - Peace Studies (3)
- [INR6065](#) - Seminar on War (3)
- [INR6067](#) - Human Rights and Security (3)
- [INR6068](#) - Politics of Civil Wars (3)
- [INR6136](#) - Seminar in American Security Policy (3)
- [INR6137](#) - Terrorism and Politics (3)
- [INR6108](#) - Seminar in American Foreign Policy (3)
- [INR6257](#) - International Relations of Africa (3)
- [INR6275](#) - International Politics of the Middle East (3)
- [INR6339](#) - Strategic Warning Analysis (3)
- [INR6346](#) - Politics of International Terrorism (3)
- [INR6356](#) - Environmental Security (3)
- [INR6365](#) - Seminar on Intelligence (3)
- [INR6366](#) - The Intelligence Community (3)
- [INR6507](#) - International Organization (3)

- [INR6726](#) - Political Behavior in International Conflict (3)
- [POS6207](#) - Political Behavior (3)
- [POS6415](#) - The American Presidency (3)
- [POS6427](#) - Congress and the Legislative Process (3)
- [POS6686](#) - National Security Law (3)
- [POS6729](#) - Political Network Analysis (3)
- [POS6743](#) - Geographic Tools for Political Science Research (3)
- [POS6747](#) - Advanced Topics in Quantitative Political Analysis (3)
- [POS6757](#) - Survey Design for Political Science Research (3)
- [POS6938](#) - Special Topics/Political Analysis (3)
- [CPO6056](#) - Politics of Authoritarian Regimes (3)
- [INR6007](#) - Seminar in International Politics (3)
- [INR6352](#) - Global Environmental Politics (3)
- [POS6747](#) - Advanced Topics in Quantitative Political Analysis (3)
- [POS6174](#) - Seminar in Southern Politics (3)
- [POS6736](#) - Conduct of Political Inquiry (3)
- [POS6045](#) - Seminar in American National Politics (3)
- [POS6079](#) - The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in the United States (3)

- **Unrestricted Electives (9 credit hours in total)**

All students in the doctoral program must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours of course work in 'unrestricted elective' graduate seminars. These courses allow students to further expand their doctoral training beyond the program's core courses and the restricted electives.

Unrestricted electives may include regularly scheduled graduate courses in political science, graduate-level courses in programs outside the School, independent study courses, doctoral research courses with a highly focused student/faculty research component, and internships that enable students to gain valuable experience in a non-academic setting.

Unrestricted electives may be taken at any point in the student's program of study; However:

- No more than a total of twelve credit hours of graduate course work can be from outside of the School, dissertation research, independent study, or internship combined
- No more than a total of six credit hours can be from either independent study or internship (not that this excludes doctoral research hours).

- A student's faculty advisor and the Graduate Coordinator must approve all graduate courses taken outside of the School, as well as any internships. Note that courses and/or internships are not guaranteed to be approved; students must demonstrate an appropriate applicability of the courses and/or internships to their specific academic research program.

Modern Language or Methods Requirement

- Prior to enrollment in dissertation hours, students are required to demonstrate proficiency in a modern language other than English or one additional methodological course, dependent on the student's intended research area. The language requirement is two years (four semesters) of a relevant single college-level modern language. Students may meet the requirement by providing evidence of four semesters of enrollment or by passing a university-administered equivalent proficiency examination.

The methods requirement is met by taking a methods course as part of the elective course requirements, with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator. The following are examples of pre-approved methods courses, note however that other methods courses are possible with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

- POS6729 - Political Network Analysis
- POS6736 - Conduct of Political Inquiry
- POS6743 - Geographic Tools for Political Science Research
- POS6746 - Quantitative Methods in Political Research
- POS6747 - Advanced Topics in Quantitative Political Analysis
- POS6757 - Survey Design for Political Science Research

Required Candidacy Exams

- Each student is required to take exams to demonstrate their mastery of the appropriate program content. These include:
 - A. Methods Exam: The methods exam is comprised of two sections: qualitative and quantitative methods. It is designed to test students' mastery of the relevant methodological tools for executing original research. Students receive training for the exam's skills in both POS7745 - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3) and POS7707 - Advanced Qualitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - B. Core Literature Exam: The core exam tests students' mastery of classical and contemporary literature across security studies. The core literature exam will be based on readings from Issues in Domestic Security and Issues in International Security as well as readings from Environmental Security and Cyber and Space Security.

Students must pass each part of each exam prior to enrollment in dissertation hours. If they fail any part(s) of any exam, they have a second opportunity to take that part(s). If they fail the exam a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Formal Admission to Candidacy

The following criteria are required to be formally admitted to candidacy, and subsequently to enroll in dissertation hours:

- Completion of all coursework, except for dissertation hours
- Completion of required academic integrity trainings
- Successful completion of all written candidacy exams
- Formation of a dissertation advisory committee
- Submittal of an approved program of study

Dissertation Research (Minimum 15 Credit Hours)

Students must enroll for a minimum of 15 credit hours in POS 7980 - Doctoral Dissertation.

The dissertation is the culmination of this research-based degree. It builds upon the students' prior coursework in the program to introduce a significant theoretical, historical, intellectual, practical, and/or creative contribution to the discipline of security studies. The dissertation will be completed through a minimum of 15 credit hours of dissertation research, during which the student will independently direct their own program of research (in consultation with their Dissertation Committee). Students must maintain enrollment in dissertation hours until the degree is awarded. The dissertation must conform to standard disciplinary, institutional, and School practices.

Consistent with College of Graduate Studies Policies, a dissertation can only be approved after the successful completion of a Dissertation Defense.

Grand Total Credits: 56

Plan of Study/Course Sequence/Completion Timeline

Typical course of study for all majors, concentrations, or areas of emphasis within the program

- **Year 1:**
 - Fall:
 - POS 7745 Advanced Quantitative Methods of Political Research (3)
 - POS 7707 Advanced Qualitative Methods of Political Research (3)
 - Elective (3)
 - Complete 2 required University Conduct of Research workshops
 - Written Methods Exam - Quantitative and Qualitative method exam is normally taken in January.
 - Spring:
 - INR 7139 Issues in Domestic Security (3)
 - INR 7337 Issues in International Security (3)
 - Whichever is offered: POS 7930 Professional Development: Academic Careers in Security Studies (1) or POS 7267 Professional Development: The Practice of Security Studies (1)
 - Elective (3)
 - Summer:
 - Electives (6)
- **Year 2**
 - Fall:
 - INR 7332 Scientific Study of Security (3)
 - Electives (6)
 - Written Core Literature - Quantitative and Qualitative method exam is normally taken in January
 - Spring:
 - POS 7930 Professional Development: Academic Careers in Security Studies (1) or POS 7267 Professional Development: The Practice of Security Studies (1)
 - Electives (6)
 - POS 7919 Doctoral Research (3)
 - Summer:
 - Students must enroll in either 6 hours of Doctoral Research OR 3 hours of Dissertation during their second summer. In order to enroll in dissertation hours, all exams must be successfully completed, and a dissertation committee formation form must be approved before the posted deadline.
 - There can be costs and benefits for entering dissertation hours during the second summer. On the one hand, students are able to begin accruing dissertation credits earlier. On the other hand, students are required to defend their prospectus during the first semester of dissertation hours, and faculty travel during the summer (when many faculty are not on contract) may make this more difficult.

- Note that before enrolling in dissertation research, students must complete all necessary Responsible Conduct of Research workshops.
- **Year 3** (if all coursework is completed successfully, all exams are passed and the necessary Responsible Conduct of Research workshop completed):
 - Fall:
 - Dissertation (9)
 - Spring:
 - Dissertation (6 or 9 hours as needed)
 - Potential dissertation completion and defense.
- **Year 3** (if coursework is not completed or exams are not passed, or a student has not completed the necessary Responsible Conduct of Research Workshops). Note that n is the number of credit hours needed for a student to complete the necessary coursework.
 - Fall:
 - Necessary courses to fulfill the program requirements (n)
 - Doctoral dissertation hours (9-n)
 - Spring:
 - Necessary courses to fulfill the program requirements (n)
 - Doctoral dissertation hours (9-n)
- **Year 4+**
 - If all 56 required credits are complete, students must register for at least 1 credit hour of POS 7980 Doctoral Dissertation every semester, fall, spring, and summer, until they successfully defend their dissertation. The number of credit hours is determined by your dissertation advisor, who may request more than one hour depending on the amount of thesis supervision planned for the semester. 3 credit hours of Doctoral Dissertation qualifies as full-time enrollment.

Students must be aware of and abide by all university/College requirements and policies related to defense and completion deadlines. Failure to do so will delay students' program completion.

Certificate Program Linkages

Some graduate certificates align closely with the Security Studies Doctoral program. Often, students are able to count their core PhD coursework towards part or all of their Certificate program of study; students interested in obtaining such certificates should contact the Certificate program director to learn more.

Details for two particularly aligned Certificate programs are provided below.

Graduate Certificate in Intelligence and National Security:

The Graduate Certificate in Intelligence and National Security provides an interdisciplinary graduate education for people engaged in or seeking professional careers in intelligence policy with a focus on analysis of security threats or crises, both domestic and international. In this certificate, graduate students utilize diverse sources of intelligence alongside various analytic approaches such as game theory, network analysis, nonintrusive measurement, geospatial approaches and quantitative analysis.

In line with [the expectations listed by the U.S. Government for intelligence analysts](#), learners in this Certificate are prepared to perform "key functions including conducting research and gathering information, identifying intelligence gaps, interpreting and evaluating information from multiple (and sometimes contradictory) sources, monitoring trends and events related to a particular country or issue, and preparing written and oral assessments."

The certificate in Intelligence and National Security consists of 18 credit hours at the graduate level, including two required core courses and four electives. For up-to-date information on the Certificate's program of study and its points of contact, visit:

https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/#!/programs/SJFi0g_o_?bc=true&bcCurrent=Intelligence%20and%20National%20Security%20Graduate%20Certificate&bcGroup=College%20of%20Sciences&bcItemType=programs.

In general, in order to earn the certificate a student must:

- Complete at least 1 of the following courses:
 - [POS6736](#) - Conduct of Political Inquiry (3)
 - [POS6746](#) - Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - [POS7745](#) - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - [CCJ6704](#) - Research Methods in Criminal Justice (3)
 - [CCJ7708](#) - Advanced Quantitative Methods for Criminal Justice Research (3)

- Complete at least 1 of the following courses:
 - [INR6365](#) - Seminar on Intelligence (3)
 - [INR6366](#) - The Intelligence Community (3)
- Complete at least 4 of the following courses:
 - [POS6686](#) - National Security Law (3)
 - [POS6743](#) - Geographic Tools for Political Science Research (3)
 - [CPO6058](#) - Revolution and Political Violence (3)
 - [CPO6206](#) - Comparative Politics of Africa (3)
 - [CPO6307](#) - Issues in Latin American Politics (3)
 - [CPO6407](#) - Comparative Politics of the Middle East (3)
 - [CPO6729](#) - Global Security in the Age of Migration (3)
 - [INR6062](#) - Peace Studies (3)
 - [INR6065](#) - Seminar on War (3)
 - [INR6068](#) - Politics of Civil Wars (3)
 - [INR6108](#) - Seminar in American Foreign Policy (3)
 - [INR6136](#) - Seminar in American Security Policy (3)
 - [INR6137](#) - Terrorism and Politics (3)
 - [INR6257](#) - International Relations of Africa (3)
 - [INR6275](#) - International Politics of the Middle East (3)
 - [INR6339](#) - Strategic Warning Analysis (3)
 - [INR6346](#) - Politics of International Terrorism (3)
 - [INR6356](#) - Environmental Security (3)
 - [INR6726](#) - Political Behavior in International Conflict (3)
 - [CCJ6027](#) - Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism (3)
 - [CCJ6027](#) - Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism (3)
 - [CCJ6074](#) - Investigative and Intelligence Analysis: Theory and Methods (3)
 - [CJE6688](#) - Cyber Crime and Criminal Justice (3)

Survey Research Graduate Certificate:

The Survey Research Certificate is designed to prepare students for work as a professional or academic survey researcher. Course requirements ensure that students are well-trained as designers and analysts for diverse public opinion surveys, and that they have an understanding of the implementation of large-scale survey methodology. For current program of study and contact information see:

<https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/#!/programs/B1fCmybdsd?bc=true&bcCurrent=Survey%20Research%20Graduate%20Certificate&bcGroup=College%20of%20Sciences&bcItemType=programs>)

In general, in order to earn the certificate a student must:

- Complete at least 1 of the following courses:
 - [INP6072](#) - Survey Research Methods and Program Evaluation in Indust. and Org. Psychology (3)
 - [POS6757](#) - Survey Design for Political Science Research (3)
 - [STA6223](#) - Conventional Survey Methods (3)
 - [SYA6425](#) - Design and Conduct of Social Surveys (3)
- Complete at least 1 of the following courses:
 - [CCJ6706](#) - Data Analysis in Criminal Justice I (3)
 - [COM6304](#) - Quantitative Research Methods in Communication (3)
 - [POS6746](#) - Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - [POS7745](#) - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - [PSY6216C](#) - Research Methodology (4)
 - [STA5206](#) - Statistical Analysis (3)
 - [SYA6305](#) - Quantitative Social Research Methods (3)
- Complete at least 1 of the following courses:
 - [POS6729](#) - Political Network Analysis (3)
 - [POS6743](#) - Geographic Tools for Political Science Research (3)
 - [POS6747](#) - Advanced Topics in Quantitative Political Analysis (3)
 - [STA6224](#) - Bayesian Survey Methods (3)
 - [STA6226](#) - Sampling Theory and Applications (3)
 - [SYA6452](#) - GIS Applications (3)
 - [SYA7309](#) - Advanced Sociological Research Methods (3)
 - [SYA7407](#) - Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis (3)
- Complete at least 1 of the following courses:
 - [MMC6567](#) - New Media (3)
 - [MMC6600](#) - Media Effects and Audience Analysis (3)

- [MMC6735](#) - Social Media as Mass Communication (3)
- [POS6045](#) - Seminar in American National Politics (3)
- [POS6079](#) - The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in the United States (3)
- [POS6207](#) - Political Behavior (3)
- [SYD6705](#) - Seminar in Race and Ethnicity (3)
- [SYD6809](#) - Seminar in Gender Issues (3)
- [SYP5566](#) - Seminar on Domestic Violence: Theory, Research and Social Policy (3)

Key Deadline Schedule

This deadline schedule is to facilitate progress towards dissertation. It is your responsibility to make sure that deadlines are abided by. Failure to do so may cause delays in your ability to complete the program and may impact your opportunity for funding.

Year 1:

- July 30th: Enroll in Year 1 Fall classes
- August (usually between the 5th and the 15th):
 - Participate in the College of Graduate Studies Orientation
 - Participate in the Orientation offered by the School of Politics, Security and International Affairs
 - Participate in the Pre-Semester PhD Workshop
- October 30th: Register for Year 1 Spring Classes
- November 30th: Submit the preliminary plan of study
- January (usually around the 15th): Take the Methods Exam
- March 15th: assemble your preliminary Dissertation Committee (that must be composed of 3 faculty members within the School, one of whom will be your preliminary dissertation chair) and submit Preliminary Advisory Committee Formation form.
- March 30th: Enroll in Year 1 summer classes
- April 15th: Complete the assessment survey, submit updated plan of study and CV/resume to your faculty advisor and graduate coordinator.
- April 20th: PAC Meeting must be completed, and the Preliminary Advisory Committee Meeting Completion form submitted.

Year 2:

- June 30th: Enroll in Year 2 Fall classes
- October 30th: Enroll in Year 2 Spring classes
- November 30th: Define your Dissertation committee
- January (usually around the 15th): Take the Core Literature Exam
- March 30th: Enroll in Year 2 Summer classes (dissertation hours)
- April 15th: Complete the assessment survey, submit your updated plan of study and and CV/resume to your faculty advisor and graduate coordinator.
- Between April and August: Proposal Defense (if possible)

Year 3:

- June 30th: Enroll in Year 3 Fall classes (if all exams are passed successfully: dissertation hours, if not, doctoral research hours)
- October 30th: Enroll in Year 3 Spring classes (if all exams are passed: dissertation hours, if not, doctoral research hours)
- November 30th: Proposal Defense (if not passed previously)
- If you have completed your Dissertation:
 - Spring: Defend your Dissertation
- If you have not completed your Dissertation:
 - March 30th: Enroll in Year 3 Summer classes (if all exams are passed: dissertation hours)

- April 15th: Complete the assessment survey, submit updated plan of study (if necessary) and updated CV/resume to your faculty advisor and graduate coordinator.

Year 4 and beyond:

Subsequent years will have the following deadlines until the dissertation is successfully defended or a student withdraw or is dropped from the program:

- June 30th: enroll in fall classes (if all exams are passed: dissertation hours, if not, doctoral research hours)
- October 30th: enroll in spring classes (if all exams are passed: dissertation hours, if not, doctoral research hours)
- March 30th: enroll in summer classes (if all exams are passed: dissertation hours if not, doctoral research hours)
- April 15th: Complete the assessment survey, submit plan of study and updated CV/resume to your faculty advisor and graduate coordinator.

Statement of Graduate Research

Research is the key element of your graduate program. As a doctoral candidate you will engage in research and develop an original project. Project originality can stem, but is not limited to, novel methodological approaches to known problems, novel theoretical contribution to a known substantive topic, application of known methods and theories to a new substantive topic, novel theoretical and/or methodological contributions to a new substantive topic.

We expect all students to adhere to the codes of ethics of the American Political Science Association and their respective subdisciplines. All research involving human subjects must be approved by the UCF Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB).

Examination Section

Exam Introduction

To successfully enroll in Dissertation Hours student must pass three candidacy exams to demonstrate their mastery of their field and thus showcase the student readiness to undertake their Dissertation and attest their methodological and theoretical knowledge in the field of Security Studies. Students must pass each exam prior to enrollment in dissertation hours. An exam is considered passed if and only if a student answers and receives a passing grade on all the required exam sections.

The exam student must pass are the following:

1. Methods Exam: A methods exam based comprising two sections: qualitative and quantitative. The exam is based on POS7745 - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3) and POS7707 - Advanced Qualitative Methods in Political Research (3)
2. Core Literature Exam: An exam addressing contemporary literature in security studies. The exam is based on INR7139 - Issues in Domestic Security (3) and INR7337 - Issues in International Security (3) as well as readings pertaining to Environmental Security and Cyber/Space Security.

Each exam has specific pre-requisites that must be completed before a student can take the exam:

1. Methods Exam: Pass with a B or above the following classes:
 - a. POS7745 - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)
 - b. POS7707 - Advanced Qualitative Methods in Political Research (3)
2. Core Literature Exam: Pass with a B or above the following classes:
 - a. INR7139 - Issues in Domestic Security (3)
 - b. INR7337 - Issues in International Security (3)

Students who do not pass the core courses with a B will have to repeat the course over the following year.

Students who do not pass an exam or section of an exam on first taking will need to:

- Meet with the Graduate Coordinator to schedule a re-take within two weeks of receiving the results.
 - The Graduate Coordinator, together with the relevant faculty member(s) will have the final say on the re-take scheduling.
 - Normally the re-take will take place within one semester of the original scheduled exam.
- Will receive written feedback identifying reasons that their attempt was unsuccessful.

Important: If a student does not pass a retake of a qualifying exam the student will be dismissed from the program.

If there are circumstances beyond a student's control (*e.g.*, illness, family situations, etc.) that may interfere with their ability to successfully complete their exams on the dates scheduled, they should immediately inform the program director of the situation.

Scheduling of Exams

Usually the following dates apply for exam scheduling but if changes occur, they will be promptly communicated to students. The exact dates vary by year and will also be communicated to students at least 2 months prior the actual exam date:

1. Methods Exam: Mid-January of Year 1 of the Security Studies Program
2. Core Exam: Mid-January of Year 2 of the Security Studies Program

All exams are taken physically at UCF.

- The methods exam is considered open-book, though the timing and expectations of the exams means that students should anticipate having little time for extraneous reading and/or searching for information.
- For the Core exam students will only be allowed a 2 note page (written in Times New Roman 11 font or equivalent, or handwritten) and a reference list. Both the Methods and Core exam will be taken over the course of two days.
- During the exam day, the Graduate Program Assistant distributes the section of the exam electronically to students at 9:00AM. Students will have 4 hours (unless accommodation is granted by the Student Accessibility Services) and must submit their answer by 1:00 PM (13:00).

Both Methods and the Core Literature exams are uniform for each matriculating class of students.

For retakes:

- In case of a retake for a full exam, the original structure applies (4 hours per question, one question per day) and the exam is to be submitted electronically to the Graduate Program Assistant.
- In case of a partial retake, students will have 4 hours per question to submit their answers electronically to the Graduate Program Assistant.
- It is expected that re-take exams are completed within one semester of the first sitting of the exam.
- If any part of an exam is failed a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

It is the responsibility of students requiring exam accommodations to inform Exam Chairs of their need for accommodation, upon certification by Student Accessibility Services. The student must work alone, including avoiding the use of artificial intelligence software (e.g., ChatGPT), in constructing their responses. They also must not converse with other students during the exams; doing so is a violation of the UCF Golden Rule. Furthermore, graders reserve the right to process the answers using plagiarism detection software. Thus, graduate students completing these exams **must properly and explicitly document their sources**.

Methods Exams

In order to take the exams, students must pass the relevant classes: POS 7745 (Advanced Quantitative Methods) and POS 7707 (Advanced Qualitative Methods).

- The exams are administered, respectively, by the instructors of POS 7745 Advanced Quantitative Methods and POS7707 Advanced Qualitative Methods. If necessary, the graduate coordinator can appoint a replacement examiner.
- Students will have a choice on the qualitative portion of the exam (they will choose to answer one of two questions). All parts of the quantitative exam are mandatory.
- The Graduate Program Assistant distributes the exam electronically (one section per day) to students at 9:00AM on the date of the exam. Students have 4 hours (from 9:00 to 13:00) to submit a response to the exam question(s).
- Qualitative exam answers should have between 2-4,000 words, not including references.
- Students submit their answers to the Graduate Program Assistant **only**.
- The Graduate Program Assistant compiles and sends completed exams to the committee members for grading. When possible, exams are anonymized.
- Faculty with expertise on the topic questions chosen (usually the instructor of POS 7745 and POS 7707) will grade the questions on a pass/fail basis. Failing results are confirmed by a second examiner before the student is notified.
- Students may pass both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the exam, only one section, or both. Students must retake any sections not passed.
- If the graders of both questions agree, the Chair may report that the student passed with distinction.

Core Literature Exam

In order to take the exams, students must pass the relevant classes: INR7139 - Issues in Domestic Security and INR7337 - Issues in International Security

- The exam is administered by the Graduate Committee.
- Students are responsible for making their own 2 page notes – Notes must be in times new roman font size 11 and single spaced with minimum 1” margins. Additionally students can bring a list of references for their use during the exam (in this documents, no notes – i.e. also no abstracts nor excerpts - can be added to the reference list). A reading list will be provided to students in the Fall of their second year. The readings will be based on the Core courses (INR7337 and INR7139) as well as Environmental Security and Cyber/Space Security.
- The exam will consist of two sections.
 - The first section of the exam consists of questions related to domestic security and cyber/space security.
 - The second part of the exam consists of questions related to international security and environmental/food/health security.
 - Students will have to answer one question for each section of the exam.
- The Graduate Program Assistant distributes the exam electronically (one section per day) to students at 9:00AM on the date of the exam. Students have 4 hours (from 9:00 to 13:00) to answer the question of the exam section.
- Answers are typically 2-4,000 words per question, not including references.
- Students submit their answers to the Graduate Program Assistant **only**.
- To promote anonymity in grading, the Graduate Program Assistant compiles and sends completed exams to the Exam Committee Chair, who distributes them to committee members for grading.
- Faculty members with expertise on the topic chosen by the student, normally the instructors of INR7337, INR7139, environmental security and cyber/space security related courses will grade the questions on a pass/fail basis. Students may pass only one section, or both. Students must retake any section not passed.
- If the committee agrees, the Chair may report that the student passed with distinction.

Thesis and Dissertation Section

Doctoral Candidate

The dissertation is the culmination of the set of requirements that comprises this research-based degree. It must make a significant contribution to the student's research area within the discipline.

The dissertation will be completed through a minimum of 15 hours of dissertation credit, which students will use to accomplish original research.

Dissertations may use the “book” format, with a single theoretical argument that is tested across multiple cases or using multiple methods, each of which is a chapter; or the “3 essays” model, which consists of at least three papers that are related but each of which include both a theoretical argument and a test of that argument.

Registering for Dissertation Hours

In order to register for dissertation hours, students must have completed the following:

- Students must have completed POS 7707, POS 7745, INR 7139, INR 7337, and INR 7332 and have no more than 6 credit hours of required coursework remaining.
- Students must have an approved dissertation advisory committee form on file.
- Students should submit the form before the deadline posted on the UCF calendar (usually a few months before the start of the semester). If the committee will include a non-UCF faculty member, the approval process (which must be completed before the dissertation committee form can be filed) can take up to two months.
- Students must have completed the necessary Academic Integrity/Responsible Conduct of Research Workshops before they can enroll in dissertation hours. Students who fail to do so will not be permitted by the University, under any circumstances, to enroll in dissertation hours.
- Students must have completed the foreign language or methods requirement prior to enrollment in dissertation hours.
- Students must successfully complete all qualifying exams

Dissertation Hours

- Students must complete 15 dissertation credit hours. They must maintain enrollment in dissertation hours until the degree is awarded. If they need to break enrollment, they must secure an official leave of absence from the College of Graduate Studies.

Dissertation – Deadlines

Dissertation deadlines vary depending on the semester of intended graduation and year of graduation. Students approaching dissertation submittal will be enrolled in a tailored course that clarifies formatting and deadlines on WebCourses@UCF. Students should also refer to the UCF calendar and use the Thesis & Dissertation Webcourse as their main guide, see also the following websites:

- <https://calendar.ucf.edu/>
- <https://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/>

Dissertation – Committee Details

Preliminary Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting

- No later than March 15th of their first year in the program, students will assemble a Preliminary Advisory Committee of no fewer than three full-time SPSIA faculty members, all of whom should have Graduate Faculty or Graduate Faculty Scholar Status.
- Ideal PAC members are faculty who share the student's interests and/or those with whom the student has taken classes. Students should begin to consider the composition of their committee by the beginning of the spring semester of Year 1 at the very latest.
- The Preliminary Advisory Committee will meet no later than April 1st. Prior to this meeting, the student should think about what their career goals and research interests are and what research questions they would like to pursue with their doctoral dissertation.
- The student should then work with their PAC chair to sketch an outline of these interests and circulate it to the committee before the meeting. During the meeting, the committee will provide feedback and suggestions tailored to the student's research interests and career goals.
- From Year 2, the student will also work with their committee chair to complete their Graduate Program of Study.

Note that college approval for the committee is not required at this time and that students are able to change the composition of their committee at any time (subject to approval by the Graduate Coordinator). Students will not be permitted to take the Field/Area Exam until they have conducted their meeting and finalized a preliminary dissertation advisory committee.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

It is the doctoral student's responsibility to secure qualified members of their dissertation committee. The dissertation committee consists of a minimum of four members who are approved members of the Graduate Faculty or Graduate Faculty Scholars. At least three members must be Graduate Faculty, one of whom must serve as the chair of the committee. One member must be from either outside the School or outside the university. Graduate Faculty members must form the majority of any given committee. A dissertation committee must be formed prior to enrollment into dissertation hours.

Selecting your preliminary and dissertation advisory committee will be one of the most important decisions of your career. As a first step, students should look for faculty in their precise area of interest. The best way to determine this is to examine the most recent and most cited publications of all the faculty members at SPSIA, as well as their CVs and public profiles. Consider substantive areas and methods. Do not use courses taught in the graduate program as representative of the distribution of faculty expertise. After compiling a short list of candidate Preliminary Advisory Committee (PAC) members, consult with them. Feedback from faculty will help students determine compatibility and fit and who might best serve as committee chair. Note that the dissertation advisory committee will require college approval.

Changes to the committee are possible and will need to be approved by the Graduate Coordinator as well as the College of Graduate Studies. Reasons as to why changes are requested should be explicated in written form.

The Role of the Graduate Coordinator/Director

- The Security Studies Graduate Coordinator serves as the program advisor for all PhD students.
- During the first year, the program advisor helps students identify appropriate courses.
- The program advisor provides advice as students complete their Program of Study and as they select their PAC/Dissertation chairs.
- The program advisor is the only one who can authorize course substitutions or any other exceptions to the program of study as specified in the graduate catalog.
- The program advisor needs to be consulted prior to students planning their comprehensive exams and needs to sign all forms relating to completion of the program.
- The program advisor needs to be consulted to ensure that the student progresses appropriately through the program of study.

The Role of the Dissertation Chair

- Predissertation Advisory Committee Chairs begin advising students in the spring of their first year.
- Dissertation Chairs supervise the student's progress to completion of the PhD dissertation.

- Chairs discuss the research necessary to complete the dissertation and may also be involved in mentoring the student's professional development, for example through attendance at professional conferences guidance on publications etc.
- In many ways, the thesis chair serves as the intellectual mentor to the student. Students must select a dissertation chair from the School faculty; the Graduate Coordinator can assist them in identifying an appropriate chair if the student so chooses.
- Generally, dissertation chairs have substantive expertise in the subject area of the student's dissertation. It is essential to begin thinking about potential dissertation topics and chairs during their first year in the program.
- In some circumstances, the selected dissertation chair may find it impossible to see the student through to completion of the dissertation. In that case, the student, with the help of the Graduate Coordinator, may select another dissertation chair.

Advisors, Conferences, and Journal Submissions

Students should consult with advisors before submitting conference abstracts, conference papers, and manuscripts to journals. Abstracts should be approved before submission to conferences.

Dissertation – Proposal/Prospectus

While providing a strict formatting guideline for the dissertation proposal is not possible due to the breadth of topics that a student can research within the Security Studies domain, here are some general guidelines.

The dissertation proposal should:

- State the overarching research question that the dissertation is/will address.
- Describe the original contribution of the dissertation to the literature.
- Describe the research design and methodological approaches that will be used, making sure to explain why they are the appropriate choice.
- Assess data needs and describe in detail how the student will collect the necessary data to address their research question.
- Include provisional chapter abstracts and how they relate to the main overarching research question.
- State the general format of the dissertation (i.e. book or three articles).
- Outline the plan for how the student will complete their dissertation.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

The purpose of the dissertation proposal hearing is twofold:

1. to explain the subject under investigation, place it within the existing scholarly literature, and present the planned approach for writing the dissertation.
2. For the committee to test the candidate's knowledge of the relevant theories, literature and methodological approaches related to their research.

The proposal (also referred to as a “prospectus”) defense is expected to take place in the first semester a student is enrolled into dissertation hours; therefore, students may not schedule a proposal hearing with their dissertation committee until they have completed all coursework and exams in their program of study.

Students work with their dissertation committee to develop and refine the proposal. Students will present the dissertation proposal in a seminar open to the university community. Immediately after this defense, the student’s Dissertation Committee will meet to decide whether the student passed the proposal hearing or whether corrections are needed.

The first time a student presents the proposal the following passing rules apply:

- Pass without correction requires unanimous vote by the committee
- Repeating the proposal or correction are based on majority vote.

The second time a student presents the proposal or completes correction:

- A pass grade requires a majority vote.
- Not passing the proposal defense a second time will be considered reason for dismissal from the program.

A student who passes the proposal hearing then begins the actual research and writing of the doctoral dissertation.

Dissertation – IRB

If the student intends to collect primary data, they will need to obtain the necessary CITI certification and secure the approval for doing research with the Institutional Review Board. Procedures on how to secure IRB approval can be found here: [IRB](#). Note that to submit a study to the Institutional Review Board a student must have obtained the necessary CITI certification.

IRB completion from inception to approval can be a lengthy process, students should plan to commit significant effort to designing and managing their IRB application process.

Dissertation – Defense

- Students must successfully defend their completed dissertation in an oral examination, which takes place in an open seminar.
- Defense dates for the completed dissertation should be set during the first week of the semester in which the defense will take place. This date must be approved by both the student’s advisory committee and the Graduate Coordinator.
- Each chapter of the dissertation should be distributed to committee members in a timely fashion.
 - Note that students should allow two weeks per chapter to the committee for feedback. This implies that chapters should be sent to committee members as soon as they are completed, rather than wait until the full dissertation is completed.

- The full dissertation manuscript must be submitted to all committee members at least **two weeks** before the scheduled defense. However, if all individual chapters have not been previously sent to committee members, the dissertation must be sent to all committee members **45 days** prior the scheduled defense.
- Correction can be requested by any member of the committee and must be abide by.
- The final dissertation must be approved by a majority of the committee. Further approval is required from the Deans of the College of Sciences and of the College of Graduate Studies before final acceptance of the dissertation in fulfilling degree requirements

Dissertation – Submission Procedures

Though dissertation submission and formatting requirements can change, the process of Format Review is designed to support students approaching their final dissertation submittal. More information about Format Review is provided in a training students are offered via Webcourses@UCF.

Students should note that formatting and editing the dissertation is a time-intensive process, and students approaching the end of their dissertation should be sure to engage with that process as soon as is feasible.

Dissertation – Additional Relevant Information: Co-authorship Policies

The School encourages students and faculty to collaborate on research projects as these can provide great opportunities for students. In fact, according to APSA report: Rethinking political science, published in march 2024, “the discipline is increasingly moving towards collaborative research and co-authored publications”, especially as the complexity of current issues in security studies (that can be considered, for the most part, a sub-discipline of political science) require, often, multiple technical and substantive knowledge expertise. For example, theorists may collaborate with methodologists and empirically oriented researchers, field experiments are often implemented in teams, cross-national studies may involve authors from multiple, relevant countries. Yet, at the same time, it is essential that a dissertation showcases a student’s original contribution to research.

While it is important for the student to note that co-authorship of actual dissertation chapters (not journal articles stemming from it) can be viewed negatively by some within the academic community, co-authorship on any part of a dissertation may be appropriate if and only if multiple of the following conditions hold:

- A faculty member uses grant or startup funds to support the student (i.e., stipend + tuition for at least a year) and their research.
- The project involves a wide-ranging and genuinely collaborative data collection effort, in which each co-author makes a significant, specific contribution to the scientific content of a paper.

- When the project involves a highly specialized knowledge (either theoretical or methodological) which a Security Studies PhD student could not adequately master within the confines of the program and which collaborators possess.

The following rules govern co-authorship for dissertation chapters:

- A. Co-authorship plans should be made known as soon as they are established, regardless of what stage the dissertation is in. It is expected those plans will be shared in writing with the Graduate Coordinator. The School expects both faculty and students to be truthful in laying out their contributions and act with integrity.
- B. Student-faculty co-authorship questions and/or disputes should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Coordinator, who may be able to assist in mediating. If Graduate Coordinator mediation fails or the Coordinator is a party to the agreement, questions and/or disputes should be brought to the attention of the School Director.

Beyond dissertation chapters, the Security Studies PhD program encourages co-authorship with faculty and other peers for submissions to relevant peer-review journals. Those submissions may be papers that directly stem from a student's dissertation, or may be from a different project. The following rules govern co-authorship for papers stemming directly from a student dissertation:

- A. If the paper stems directly from a student dissertation, that student must be the lead author and must have contributed substantially to all of the following:
 - research design,
 - methodological design,
 - data collection,
 - data analysis
 - writing.
- B. Dissertation chapters that expand on previously published journal articles must clearly refer to the article, and incorporate further analysis and information than that included in the published article.

Note that the above rules:

- Do not apply for peer-reviewed publications **not** directly stemming from dissertation chapters
- Do not apply to faculty-student collaborations on papers that are not part of a student doctoral dissertation.
- In both cases above, ethical co-authorship rules govern co-authorship, see for example: <https://preprints.apsanet.org/engage/assets/public/apsa/term/policy.htm>

Program and Institutional Policies

Absences

Students who anticipate that they may not be able to enroll continuously due to external circumstances should apply for Special Leave of Absence. Specifically, students who are taking courses should apply for a Special Leave of Absence when they cannot enroll in more than two consecutive semesters. Students who are in thesis/dissertation hours should apply for a Special Leave of Absence when they cannot enroll in every semester (including summer).

To qualify for a Special Leave of Absence, the student must demonstrate good cause (e.g., illness, family issues, financial difficulties, personal circumstances, recent maternity/paternity, employment issues). The specific reason for the Leave of Absence request must be indicated by the student on the Leave of Absence Form. Due to current U.S. government regulations, international students must be enrolled every fall and spring semester. For students in this category, a Special Leave of Absence is only available for documented medical reasons.

Academic Standards/Conduct/Integrity

It is essential that students are aware of appropriate standards of conduct and integrity while a graduate student in your program and at UCF. Rights and responsibilities for students at UCF can be found here: UCF's [Golden Rule](#).

Satisfactory performance includes maintaining the standards of professional behavior and integrity, as judged by the Security Studies PhD Program and in accordance with UCF Policies and professional ethics guidelines.

Accommodations

UCF admits a diverse graduate student population. Some of those students may require an accommodation (or a variety of accommodations) to help them be successful in the program. Students in the program will be provided information related to how the program approaches accommodations for its students. This link to Student Accessibility Services can also be included in your statement here: <https://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/accommodations/>

Academic Integrity (RCR) Training Requirements

All students admitted to doctoral programs must complete training designed to instill an awareness and understanding of the fundamental issues of academic integrity and the responsible conduct of research (RCR) in a manner consistent with federal regulations. Student will not be able to enroll in dissertation hours or be admitted to candidacy until all academic integrity requirements are met.

To achieve this objective, doctoral students must complete required training. Please see <https://graduate.ucf.edu/academic-integrity-training> for details.

Admission to Candidacy

A student must demonstrate their readiness for the PhD program by successfully completing the candidacy examinations before admission to full doctoral status and enrollment into dissertation hours.

In order to register be admitted to candidacy and register for dissertation hours, students must:

- Students must have completed POS 7707, POS 7745, INR 7139, INR 7337, and INR 7332 and have no more than 6 credit hours of required coursework remaining.
- Students must have an approved dissertation advisory committee form on file.
- Students should submit the form before the deadline posted on the UCF calendar (usually a few months before the start of the semester). If the committee will include a non-UCF faculty member, the approval process (which must be completed before the dissertation committee form can be filed) can take up to two months.
- Students must have completed the necessary Academic Integrity/Responsible Conduct of Research Workshops before they can enroll in dissertation hours. Students who fail to do so will not be permitted by the University, under any circumstances, to enroll in dissertation hours.
- Students must have completed the foreign language or methods requirement prior to enrollment in dissertation hours.
- Students must successfully complete all qualifying exams prior to enrollment in dissertation hours.

To further reiterate:

- Admission to candidacy will be approved by the Graduate Coordinator and the college coordinator and forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies for status change.
- Students must complete all academic integrity training as listed above before the College of Graduate Studies can approve their admission to candidacy. Only after admission to candidacy may a student register for doctoral dissertation hours (POS 7980).
- Students must have passed candidacy and have the candidacy and dissertation advisory committee documentation received and processed by the College of Graduate Studies by the date listed in the academic calendar in order to enroll in dissertation hours for that term.
- Students in doctoral candidacy must continuously enroll in at least three hours of dissertation coursework (POS 7980) each semester (including summer) until the dissertation is completed.

Dismissal/Discipline

Discipline can occur for:

- Not maintaining professional and behavioral standards
- Not maintaining a satisfactory work performance (see annual review).
- Not maintaining good academic standing

Dismissal can occur for:

- Not maintaining good academic standing for two semesters in a row or for a total of 3 semesters.
- Automatic Dismissal by the College of Graduate Studies is initiated when students:
 - Do not maintain continuous enrollment. That means 3 semesters go by without them enrolling in a course (this is technically a Discontinue and is not a negative mark on their record)
 - Their GPA drops below a 3.0 and they are placed on probation and
 - a) there is no mathematical way they can raise their GPA with the courses they have remaining as set out by their degree, or
 - b) they have completed 18 credit hours after being put on probation and have not been able to raise their GPA to a 3.0 or higher.
 - Their GPA drops below a 2.0, which initiates automatic dismissal.

In case of discipline or dismissal is required students can follow the appeal/grievance process

Appeals/Grievances

Yearly Assessment:

There will be instances where students will not agree with an assessment related to their development or progress in a program. Note that School procedures are in place for those disagreements that are “subjective” (i.e. not on grades, passing exams, GPA or submitting documentation in a timely manner as those are issues that are objectively assessed).

In these instances, it is essential that students understand the proper course of action to come to a resolution. In SPSIA the following should be attempted before formal resolutions are sought via the [Academic Grievance](#) section under General Graduate Policies in the graduate catalog. Note that grade disputes are addressed using the procedures outlined in the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule can be found at www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/. Section 11, Student Academic Behavior, addresses appeals of graduate program actions or decisions.

- First, communicate and discuss the disagreement with their main advisor
- If the disagreement persists, communicate and discuss this with the Graduate Coordinator who may or may not ask for the meeting to include the primary student advisor.
- Third, if the disagreement persists, discuss it with the School Director.

Personal/Professional

If a student has a conflict with a faculty member or reasonably believes that they have been treated in ways that are unfair or unprofessional by a faculty member in the school, they should speak with the Program Coordinator or the School Director. Note that if their complaint is directed against the Program Coordinator, they should speak with the School Director; if their complaint is with the School Director, they should contact the College of Sciences Dean's office.

Title IX office

Students who believe that they are victims of sex or gender-based discrimination should contact UCF's title IX office (<https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu/get-help/>). Students who believe that they are being discriminated against because they are members of other classes or groups protected by law or UCF policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity (<https://www.oie.ucf.edu/>). SPSIA faculty and staff are obligated to report violations of these policies to relevant university offices rather investigating or intervening in the situation themselves.

General Procedures regarding complaints

For other complaints (not related to Title IX), upon receipt of the complaint, the Graduate Coordinator will notify the School Director of the complaint. If, given the nature of the complaint, the School Director and Graduate Coordinator agree that an informal dispute resolution process is appropriate, the Graduate Coordinator may contact the faculty member and the student to facilitate a resolution of the conflict. In other cases, the School Director will address the matter with the faculty member. Note that in some cases University human resources policies may prevent the School Director from providing student with a full description of the disposition of a complaint.

Professional conduct reviews are held when it is reasonably believed that a student may have engaged in conduct that is unprofessional and inconsistent with the Program's long-standing expectations, traditions, and norms. Final decisions are within the professional discretion of the Graduate Coordinator, with advice from the relevant committee (*see below*). Students who wish to appeal program decisions may use the procedures that UCF Regulations ("Golden Rule") 5.017 establish.

Timing: After being formally notified of a concern about their alleged conduct, students have up to five business days to respond to the Graduate Coordinator to the stated concern. Once they have done so, if the Graduate Coordinator chooses to hold a Conduct Meeting, that meeting shall occur at least five business days after the Graduate Coordinator has received the student's response, as outlined above.

Conduct Meeting Committee Composition: In most cases that necessitate further investigation beyond the initial discussion with the Graduate Coordinator, the Program Student Success Committee shall be the hearing body for these Conduct Committee Meetings; if necessary, other

committee members may be selected by the Graduate Coordinator to ensure that at least five faculty members participate in the hearing. During the summer, the Graduate Coordinator may compose an *ad hoc* committee of faculty who then have active summer contracts. Additional committee members may be selected in concert with the SPSIA Director. The Graduate Coordinator may chair this Meeting and conducts its proceedings. The student may bring with them an adviser to this Meeting; the student's adviser may converse with the student during the meeting but may not address the Committee directly. The student's academic advisor cannot be a member of the review committee to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Meeting Process: The meeting will proceed as follows:

1. The Graduate Coordinator introduces and summarizes the accusations against the student. Evidence, both in support of the accusations and exculpatory, may be introduced. If the student wishes, witnesses who have knowledge of relevant facts of the underlying issue may be permitted to address the committee. If germane, evidence associated with prior, related infractions may be introduced by members of the Committee, including the Graduate Coordinator. Prior infractions may only be discussed if a formal process with a clear finding of misconduct related to them occurred. Members of the committee may ask questions during and after this stage of the presentation.
2. The student has an opportunity to respond to the accusations. By prior agreement with the Graduate Coordinator, the student may present witnesses on their behalf. Witness presentations may only address the specific accusation at hand and not matters extraneous to the question of whether inappropriate and/or unprofessional conduct occurred. Members of the committee and the Graduate Coordinator may ask questions during and after this stage of the presentation. Meetings may go forward in the absence of student participation if they choose not to attend.
3. Once the presentation of evidence is concluded and the Committee members have asked questions relevant to the question of student misconduct, the student and any others who are present and who are not formal members of the Committee are dismissed from the meeting. They then exit the hearing room. The Graduate Coordinator charges the committee and answers questions as to the deliberation procedures that members of the committee may raise; The committee deliberates, reaches conclusions, and decides on its recommendation. Committee members may request additional information from any relevant persons during their deliberations. They have up to five business days to submit their recommendations, in writing, to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator may consult with the SPSIA Director in determining what penalty, if any, to impose on the accused student. This penalty may include sanctions up to and including permanent separation from the Program.
4. The committee recommendation should be clearly stated, based on evidence obtained during the hearing process, and outline the course of action that the committee members believe should be taken. The recommendation should clearly identify the facts and considerations that they relied upon in making their recommendation. If the committee members are unable to reach a consensus, a minority recommendation may also be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator. All recommendations must address only the matters introduced for

consideration by the Graduate Coordinator, and only evidence that was presented at the meeting (by either party).

After the Meeting: Upon receipt of the committee's recommendations, the program director has up to five business days to decide the question. During this time, the Graduate Coordinator may solicit additional information or evidence from the student or others. They may ask committee members questions about their recommendations. They may converse regarding the matter with appropriate school and university officials. Decisions should be communicated to the student in writing. They should also notify, in writing, the SPSIA Director of their decision.

Recusal: The Graduate Coordinator may ask that the School Director appoint an alternate to act in their place for the process if they are an aggrieved party (*e.g.*, if they are the grader for an assignment or examination where there is a suspicion of student academic misconduct). This provision does not limit them from directing a process that they initiate *sua sponte*, but on the basis of evidence that comes from other sources.

Communication

Communication is a key aspect of your training both as future leader and/or researcher, and/or future academic. Students should communicate promptly issues arising during the course of their tenure as doctoral students in the Security Studies Doctoral Program. Note that all communication should be done via appropriate UCF email addresses and/or Webcourses@UCF channels; personal email addresses should not be used.

Student Responsibility for University Communication

UCF uses email as the official means of notifying students of important university business and academic information concerning registration, deadlines, financial assistance, scholarships, student accounts (including tuition and fees), academic progress and problems, and many other critical items for satisfactory completion of a UCF degree program. The university sends all business-related and academic messages to a student's campus email address to ensure that there is one repository for that information. Every student must register for and maintain a campus email account [here](#) and check it regularly to avoid missing important and critical information from the university. Any difficulty with establishing an account or with accessing an established account must be resolved through the [UCF Computer Services Service Desk](#) so that a student receives all important messages.

Additionally, each student must have an up-to-date emergency e-mail address and cell phone number by which they can be reached in case of a crisis on campus. This emergency contact information will be used only for emergency purposes. Also, both permanent and local mailing addresses must be on the record, so that any physical documents that must be mailed can be delivered.

It is critical that students maintain and regularly check their email account for official announcements and notifications. Communications sent to the campus email address on record will be deemed adequate notice for all university communication, include issues related to academics, finances, registration, parking, and all other matters. The University does not accept responsibility if official communication fails to reach a student who has not registered for, or maintained and checked on a regular basis, their email account. Please ensure that this information is current and that any changes in contact information are made online through the [myUCF portal](#).

Continuous Enrollment

All graduate students are required to enroll in at least one class over the span of the Academic year. Failure to enroll in 3 consecutive terms results in dismissal from the program. After candidacy exam is passed for doctoral students, they are expected to enroll in dissertation hours every semester until graduation. Note that according to UCF policy: “Doctoral students who have passed candidacy and have begun taking doctoral dissertation hours (XXX 7980/XXX7987) must be enrolled for at least one semester of every three consecutive semesters in order to maintain active student status”

- Before dissertation hours, students are expected to maintain full-enrollment status for the duration of the program (this is especially important for students under assistantship agreements). Full time status implies:
 - Enrolling in 9 credit hours in the Fall and Spring semester.
 - Enrolling in 6 credit hours in the Summer
- When admitted to candidacy, students must be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation hours per semester to be considered fully enrolled.
- Full-time enrollment is a pre-requisite to maintain and obtain UCF assistantships and fellowships.

Disability Statement

ACCESS matters.

Purpose: We envision UCF to be a fully accessible campus and inclusive environment for people with disabilities. We do this by:

- Acknowledging disability as an aspect of human diversity;
- Cultivating awareness of the environment’s disabling barriers;
- Collaborating on and proactively facilitating accessible environments and experiences;
- Educating faculty and staff to create and maintain access in their spheres of influence;
- Shifting to an inclusive-minded attitude;
- Supplementing with reasonable accommodations as a last resort measure to ensure access.

Other Statements

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at <https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu> and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact [Student Accessibility Services](#).

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE <http://oie.ucf.edu/> & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> & sas@ucf.edu
- Diversity and Inclusion Training and Events – www.diversity.ucf.edu
- Student Bias Grievances – Just Knights response team – <http://jkrt.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – <http://compliance.ucf.edu/> & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- Ombuds Office – <http://www.ombuds.ucf.edu>

Enrollment in Thesis/Dissertation Hours

The university requires all doctoral students to take a minimum of 15 credit hours of doctoral dissertation hours; however, specific programs may require more than this minimum.

Dissertation research is considered to be a full-time effort, and post-candidacy enrollment in at least three doctoral dissertations (POS 7980) credit hours constitutes full-time graduate status.

- Doctoral students who have passed candidacy and have begun taking doctoral dissertation hours (XXX 7980/XXX 7987) must be enrolled for at least one semester of every three consecutive semesters in order to maintain active student status. However, students are encouraged to enroll each term and seek advising from their program.
- At no time may a student register for all 15 minimally required hours of dissertation (XXX 7980) in a single semester.
- Students wishing to enroll in fewer than 3 credit hours must have approval from their advisor.
- Students who need to interrupt their dissertation work for extenuating circumstances must submit a Leave of Absence Form to the College of Graduate Studies. Submission and

approval of the form must be obtained prior to the first day of classes for the term of non-enrollment.

Full-time and Part-time Requirements

In the instance that a student is formally admitted as a Part-Time Student, it is expected that they adhere to the same academic standards as full-time students. It is incumbent on such students to keep advisors and the Graduate Coordinator and staff up to date with their progress. Part-Time students have the ability to enroll in less than 9 credit hours per Spring/Fall and less than 6 credit hours in Summer. However, the same requirements for exam and candidacy apply. Further, the 7-year rule applies to part-time students as well.

Golden Rule

The Golden Rule is the university's policy regarding non-academic discipline of students and limited academic grievance procedures for graduate (grade appeals in individual courses, not including thesis and dissertation courses) and undergraduate students. Information concerning The Golden Rule can be found at www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/. Section 11, Student Academic Behavior, addresses appeals of graduate program actions or decisions.

Grading and Grading Procedures

Specific course grading policies are up to the individual instructors teaching those courses. The usual grade scale is A, B, C, D, F. Of these, for the Doctoral program, only A and B are considered satisfactory grades. Only two B- or one C/C+ grade on elective courses is admitted during the duration of the program. Note that receiving a grade below B in a core course will void the possibility of a student taking the section related candidacy exam (Methods or Core Literature), and the student will have to repeat the core course the following year.

Grade Expectations Summary:

- Core courses: “B” or above. Not receiving a “B” in core courses will disqualify a student from taking the Exam section related to that course
- Electives: pass all classes with “B” or above, only one exception of a grade “C” or “C+” OR two “B-” will be made during the whole academic career and will only be allowed for elective courses. Not passing courses with the grades allowed will affect the student's good academic standing.
- Incomplete grades: Incomplete grades must be cleared within one semester from when the incomplete was given. Multiple incomplete grades are highly discouraged. Incomplete grades over multiple semesters will be scrutinized and will impact your good academic standing.

Withdrawals:

If a student withdraws from a course, this may affect their good academic standings (with funding implications) and could affect their full-enrollment or continuous enrollment status. If a student decides to withdraw from a course, they must do so by the semester's withdrawal deadline. In doing so, the student is still liable for tuition and fees for the course. The [relevant catalog language](#) is found here. For a semester's withdrawal deadline, refer to the Academic Calendar: <https://calendar.ucf.edu>.

Incompletes:

If a student asks and receives an incomplete grade, the student must clear the incomplete within one semester. Incomplete grades over multiple semesters are strongly discouraged and will be assessed by the Graduate Coordinator and affect your good academic standing (with funding implications).

Incomplete grades are not counted as satisfactorily completed courses and are not recognized as such by Graduate Studies for fellowship purposes nor by Financial Aid. Students on financial assistance must check with the Financial Aid office to see if the receipt of an incomplete grade will affect their financial award. All incompletes in courses included in a student's program of study must be completed before a student can enroll in dissertation hours or graduate.

Harassment

The University of Central Florida values diversity in the campus community. Accordingly, discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, parental status, veterans status, sexual orientation, or genetic information is prohibited. Sexual harassment, a form of sex discrimination, is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including any of these three situations.

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or enrollment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or enrollment decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or enrollment, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Occurrences will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines above and university rules. Employees, students, or applicants for employment or admission may obtain further information on this policy, including grievance procedures, from the OIE Coordinator. The Director of the Office of Institutional Equity Programs is the campus Equity Coordinator responsible for concerns in all areas of discrimination. The office is located

on the main campus, in Barbara Ying CMMS Building 81, Suite 101. The phone number is (407) 823-1336. Policies and guidelines are available online at <http://www.eeo.ucf.edu>.

International Students

International students should contact UCF Global and relevant immigration help at UCF. See also <https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-guide/international-admissions>.

Generally international students should:

- Maintain full-time enrollment during the fall and spring semesters (12 credit hours for undergraduates and 9 for graduates).
- Do not work more than 20 hours on campus during the spring and fall semesters, except when classes are not in session.
- Obtain approval from UCF Global to engage in any type of employment outside the UCF campus. This includes internships and volunteer work.
- Maintain valid health insurance at all times.
- Keep information on Form I-20 up to date and keep documents valid during the entire length of study.

Plagiarism

Understanding plagiarism is essential to the academic integrity of both programs and the institution. Programs can use this section to describe their philosophy and approach to plagiarism. Description of the consequences of plagiarism can also be included. Reference to the webcourse: “Pressures to Plagiarize” can be provided in this field. This is offered through the Pathways to Success program and is required for all incoming graduate students. Students will be admitted to the course by the first week of classes and will be required to complete it before the end of their first semester.

Students can be directed to the College of Graduate Studies website for information on the requirement and topic: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/plagiarism/>.

Privacy

At times students may be handling confidential and protected information. Where this occurs, in certain ad-hoc cases students may be asked to sign a Privacy Agreement Form. Students are encouraged to check the following website:
<https://registrar.ucf.edu/ferpa/#:~:text=The%20Family%20Educational%20Rights%20and,current%20and%20former%20UCF%20students>.

Probation

At times a student may not be meeting program and institutional expectation for maintaining good academic standing. UCF has general rules for when this happens. These rules can be found in [the Academic Progress and Performance section from the Graduate Catalog](#).

Satisfactory Progress

In order to be in good academic standing and to make satisfactory progress towards the dissertation students must, at a minimum:

- Maintain a GPA above 3.00
- Pass all Core courses with a “B” or above. Not receiving a “B” in core courses will disqualify a student from taking the Exam section related to that course
- Pass all classes with “B” or above. Only two B- or one C/C+ grade on elective courses is admitted during the duration of the program.
- Incomplete grades: Incomplete grades must be cleared within one semester from when the incomplete was given. Multiple incomplete grades are highly discouraged. Incomplete grades over multiple semesters will be scrutinized and may impact your good academic standing and satisfactory progress.

Beyond course performance, satisfactory progress is assessed by the dissertation chair and the graduate coordinator based on a student's progress towards the completion of the proposal defense and/or the doctoral dissertation.

Time Limits to Degree Completion – 7 Year Rule

There are hard time-limits to complete the doctoral program in Security Studies. Each student must either complete the doctoral program within 7 years from when they start the program, or they will be dismissed by the program. Note also that students must comply with the [Time Limitation and Continuous Enrollment Policy in the Graduate Catalog](#).

Transfer Credit

Credit transfers are possible but usually will not exceed 6 credit hours. Further limitations per UCF policy apply. See also the [Transfer of Credit Policy in the Graduate Catalog](#). Transfer credit is at sole discretion of the Graduate Coordinator, within the limitations of the policies laid out in the Graduate catalogue and assessment of the student request. Student requesting credit transfers should state which courses they want to transfer and the reason behind such credit transfer. The reason must contain a rationale of why such credit-hours are pertinent with the Doctoral program in Security Studies. All requests for transfer credit have to be submitted and approved prior to the completion of a student's first semester in the program.

Review for Original Work (iThenticate)

The university requires all students submitting a thesis or dissertation as part of their graduate degree requirements to first have their electronic documents submitted through iThenticate for advisement purposes and for review of originality. The thesis or dissertation chair is responsible for scheduling this submission to iThenticate and reviewing the results from iThenticate with the student's advisory committee. The advisory committee uses the results appropriately to assist the student in the preparation of their dissertation.

Before the student may be approved for final submission to the university, the dissertation chair must indicate completion of the Review for Original Work through iThenticate by signing the Dissertation Approval Form.

Summer Semesters

All exams, meetings, proposals, and defenses that need to take place during summer semesters MUST be organized and scheduled by the student prior to the last day of classes of the preceding spring term. Note that some faculty are not under contract during summer semesters and are not obliged to participate in exams, meetings, proposals, defenses, directed independent studies, directed research, internships, doctoral research, or doctoral dissertation. This should be taken into consideration when planning for the summer semesters. It is the student's responsibility to be proactive and have these conversations early to avoid disruptions to degree progress.

Additional Program Details

Financial Aid Funding

At the time of admission, PhD students may be offered financial support, although admission does not guarantee financial support. UCF-based financial support can come from a number of different sources: the School; the College of Graduate Studies; other UCF centers, Schools or offices; the University; or grants held by faculty members. Some students are admitted to the program without being offered financial support. Some students' studies are funded by organizations external to the university. Requirement for renewal of such assistantships varies and terms of satisfactory performance should be clearly communicated to students at the beginning of their assistantship.

The [College of Graduate Studies Funding Website](#) provides information of graduate funding opportunities at UCF and beyond. Other sources of graduate funding include government agencies and professional associations. Students interested in pursuing research funding should contact their advisor in a timely manner. The School faculty will communicate opportunities to students when they arise, as some are not possible to foresee. However, here are some research funding opportunities that may be of interest to students in the Security Studies PhD program:

- National Science Foundation (NSF) Decision Risk Management Sciences Doctoral dissertation research grants: <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/decision-risk-management-sciences-doctoral>
- NSF Human-Environment and Geographical Sciences Program Doctoral dissertation research grants: <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/decision-risk-management-sciences-doctoral>
- NSF Methodology Measurement and Statistics Doctoral dissertation research grants: <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/decision-risk-management-sciences-doctoral>
- APSA (American Political Science Association) Dissertation improvement grants: <https://apsanet.org/programs/doctoral-dissertation-research-improvement-grants/>
- United States Institute of Peace, Peace Scholar Program: <https://www.usip.org/grants-fellowships/fellowships/peace-scholar-fellowship-program>

Graduate Assistantship Details: Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Depending on available funding, SPSIA offers Graduate Teaching Assistantships to students in the PhD program. Graduate Teaching Assistants are generally expected to support faculty members by grading and performing other course-related assignments.

Typically, teaching assistantships require 20 hours of work per week during the semester. (Students who are asked to do work that requires more time than they are assigned to do should contact the graduate coordinator.)

Assignments are made by the Graduate Coordinator and may vary by semester; some may be assigned to multiple faculty members at the same time, although their total assigned hours will not exceed 20 per week.

Starting in their third year, Ph.D. students may be assigned to teach their own course as instructor of record in agreement with the School Director.

Most GTAs are funded by university tuition waivers and School funds.

- Students who are assigned to serve as GTAs must complete all necessary paperwork and training in a timely matter and be attentive to the Program Assistant's directions.
- Students are also encouraged to register early for classes in time to process tuition waivers.
- Support from the School will cover no more than the minimum hours required for the students to complete their degree; if the student enrolls in additional hours, no support will be provided for these additional hours.
- Students who serve as GTAs are strongly encouraged to not seek employment outside the University.
- By awarding funding to such students (and students' accepting that responsibility), there is a clear understanding that such students will prioritize their work for the School, while completing the necessary coursework during the term.
- If GTAs do not meet the performance expectations of their supervising faculty member and/or the Graduate Coordinator, their GTA funding may be discontinued immediately or at the end of the relevant semester.
- Students who have concerns about meeting their GTA responsibilities should discuss those matters with their faculty supervisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator.

Assistantships and Tuition Waivers

For complete information about university assistantship and tuition waivers, please see the UCF Graduate Catalogue: <https://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=1477> > Financial Information

To be employed and to maintain employment in a graduate position, the student must be enrolled full time and meet all of the training requirements and/or conditions of employment. To be awarded and continue receipt of a tuition waiver, the student must be enrolled full time and either employed in a graduate position (*e.g.*, GTA, GRA, GA), receiving a University fellowship, or (if employed off-campus) employed in a position where payment is processed through the College of Graduate Studies.

If the student is hired in the position of Graduate Teaching Associate, Assistant or Graders, there are training requirements that must be met in order for the contract to be processed. Associates and Assistants must complete a minimum two-day training and an online GTA Policies and Procedures Module. Associates must also have completed at least 18 hours of graduate courses in the discipline they will be teaching. Students who are employed as Graders

are required to complete the online module. These services are offered by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL; <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu>) and more information can be found at FCTL website: > Events > GTA Programs.

International students who will be hired in GTA Assistant (9184) positions must be proficient at speaking English. This is determined by successfully passing the Versant Test with a 58 or better (Prior to Spring 2018 – 50 on the SPEAK Test). Those who are interested in serving as a Graduate Teaching Associate (9183) in their third year are required to score a 69 or higher. Those scoring less than a 58 on the Versant Test are only qualified to serve as GTA Graders (9187). The VERSANT test (also known as the English Speaking test) is administered by the English Language Institute and takes about 20 minutes. Those who have obtained a degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, from a country where English is the only official language, or from a university at which English is the only official language of instruction or have received a score of 26 or higher on the Speak portion of the INT TOEFL, are exempt from having to take the Versant test. Students must register in advance for the Versant Test. Registration is an online process through the myINTL portal. For inquiries regarding the Versant Test please contact the English Language Institute [English Speaking Test for Internationals - UCF Global](#)

GTA Performance Appraisal

At the completion of each semester the student is employed as a GTA, the student's performance will be evaluated by the faculty advisor. These assessments, together with satisfactory academic progress will be used to review strengths and weaknesses in the student's performance in preparation for future employment. While the School typically offers students financial support for at least three years, continuing support during that period is conditional on satisfactory performance, as determined by the graduate program. Note that breaks from the program do not pause the funding window.

Funding beyond the Third Year

The School cannot guarantee funding beyond the third year. When GTA funding is available for students beyond their third year, the School will offer it to students on a semester-by-semester basis. Priority for this funding will be determined by the program and will be based on a number of factors including the student's time in the program; prior external funding; progress to degree; publication and research activity; and past performance of GTA duties.

External Support

Students are encouraged to pursue external financial support for research (including fieldwork), dissertation writing fellowships which can support them as they work to finish their dissertations, and other purposes.

They should consult with their advisors regarding appropriate foundations, agencies, and other potential funders. Students should note that some kinds of external support applications (particularly those that fund research activities, as opposed to writing fellowships) must be made through UCF's Office of Research or the Research Foundation. These offices must review proposals sent out under their name, and, *inter alia*, may require that you submit proposals in advance of funder deadlines. Students should consult with faculty and the COS pre-award office (<https://sciences.ucf.edu/research/proposal-guidance/>) well before application/proposal deadlines are due.

Professional Membership

Students interested in non-academic careers should begin developing a relevant professional network as soon as possible.

Students may find it helpful to attend the meetings of relevant professional societies, which can be useful for making contacts and further developing their skills. MORS, the Military Operations Research Society, is an example of the kind of professional society that may be relevant to students pursuing non-academic careers. Similarly APSA (American Political Science Association) or IASC (International association for the study of the Commons) or ISA (International Studies Association) are all example of academic professional societies that allow students to network with individuals with similar interests. Professional societies can be beneficial, but the program does not mandate any student to be part of specific societies. See for example the following society links:

- [American Political Science Association \(APSA\)](#)
- [Florida Political Science Association \(FPSA\)](#)
- [International Political Science Association \(IPSA\)](#)
- [International Studies Association \(ISA\)](#)
- [Midwest Political Science Association \(MPSA\)](#)
- [Southern Political Science Association \(SPSA\)](#)
- [International Association for the Study of the Commons \(IASC\)](#)

Graduation Requirements

Please refer to [Commencement](#) details for information on graduation day. In order to graduate a student must have successfully defended their Doctoral Dissertation and fulfilled all other relevant degree requirements. Specific yearly deadlines for dissertation submittal and defense vary and will be communicated in a timely manner at the beginning of each semester or when information is available (whichever comes first).

Job Search and Career Pathways

Multiple career pathways are possible with a doctoral degree in Security Studies, from Academic careers to military and professional careers. [UCF's Pathways to Success Program](#)

has relevant information in this regard. Your advisor and the graduate program coordinator will can be provided

Student Associations

There are multiple student associations you may be interested in. The School of Politics, Security and International Affairs does not have a specific graduate student association, however, details of available associations at UCF can be found her within the [Student Involvement](#) site.

Graduate Student Center

UCF is fortunate to have its own Graduate Student Center. It is a great place to relax, practice a presentation in one of our conference rooms, have your lunch, and to meet other graduate students. A brief description of the Grad Student Center and what can offer can be found on the following website: [Graduate Student Center](#).

Student Research Week/Student Scholar Symposium

UCF hosts an annual poster forum called the Student Scholar Symposium to provide a conference setting for our students to showcase their work with poster presentations. Scholarships are awarded to top projects. If you are interested in this opportunity to present your research be sure to discuss it as soon as possible with your main advisor (Dissertation Chair or Graduate Coordinator). The Student Scholar Symposium is part of Student Research Week, a week-long celebration of student research at UCF. More information can be found here: [Student Research Week](#).

3 Minute Thesis (3MT)

The College of Graduate Studies also hosts a 3MT competition for graduate students in both the Fall Semester. A brief description of what this is and how to be involved can be found here: [3MT](#).

Forms

There are many different forms associated with being in your program and a graduate student at UCF. This is the administrative side of completing a degree. The School and The college of graduate studies provides link to forms required during your Doctoral program:

- [Forms \(https://graduate.ucf.edu/forms-and-references/\)](https://graduate.ucf.edu/forms-and-references/)
- <https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/graduate/forms-resources/>

Useful Links/Resources

Other useful links are listed here (some are repeated from the beginning of this handbook):

- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Parking Services](#)
- [Shuttles](#)
- [Recreation Center](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)]

Graduate Faculty

Graduate faculty professional websites of the School of Politics, Security and International Affairs can be found here: <https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/people/>.

Students should familiarize themselves with current faculty research interests (you can search for institutional and/or personal web-pages)

Students should familiarize themselves with faculty recent publications (i.e. via google scholar, Scopus or Web of Science profiles)

Description of Core Courses

Mandatory Core Courses:

[POS7745](#) - Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Research (3)

- This course presents a survey of advanced quantitative methods used in political science research, including problems in regression analysis and nonlinear models.

[POS7707](#) - Advanced Qualitative Methods in Political Research (3)

- This course presents advanced qualitative methods employed in political science research, including case studies, the logic of comparison, and archival and interview-based research.

[INR7139](#) - Issues in Domestic Security (3)

- This course is centered on the examination of national issues such as domestic terrorism, with a particular emphasis on challenges arising at the state level.

[INR7337](#) - Issues in International Security (3)

- This course presents an overview of international issues such as terrorism, genocide, nuclear proliferation, war, the spread of infectious diseases, fragile and failing states, transnational organized crime and gender.

[INR7332](#) - Scientific Study of Security (3)

- This course is focused on principles of research design and evaluation of studies on domestic and international security; preparation of an empirical research paper.

Mandatory Professional Development Seminars:

[POS7930](#) - Professional Development: Academic Careers in Security Studies (1)

- This course aims to prepare students for teaching, submission of articles to peer-reviewed journals, grant writing, ethics in the discipline, and other questions related to an academic career.

[POS7267](#) - Professional Development: The Practice of Security Studies (1)

- This course aims to address ethics in security studies and prepares students for careers in the security sector, including topics such as ethics in decision making.