

**Study guide  
for  
the Master of Science (MSc)  
in Political Science (English)**

**September 2017**



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## 1. OVERVIEW OF THE DEGREE PROGRAMME

### 1.1 Master of Science (MSc) in Political Science (Eng).

**The Master of Science (MSc) in Political Science (Eng)** is a two-year and completed degree programme giving students the right to the title of Master of Science in Political Science (in Danish cand.scient.pol).

Master of Science in Political Science (Eng) (120 ECTS credits in total)

**The 120 ECTS credits are divided between the following courses:**

1. Mandatory political science seminars 30 ECTS
2. Elective Political Science Seminars: 30 ECTS
3. Elective Social Science Seminars: 30 ECTS
4. Master's Thesis: 30 ECTS

#### **Mandatory political science seminars**

*Advanced Political Analysis I: Designing Political Research:*

- The focus of the course is on research design rather than on specific techniques for analysing data. Hence, it covers the initial and fundamental steps of any research process: How to ask important research questions? How to connect theory and propositions? How to choose an appropriate research design? How to conceptualize and operationalize theoretical constructs?

*The Contested Concepts and the Approaches of Political Science:*

- More than a traditional concepts & approaches course, it focusses on the rational contestability of both – and on contestation as a constitutive feature of the discipline. The most important analytical concepts of Political Science are also the terms of everyday political discourse, and stringent use of shared concepts is the bread and butter of the discipline. Scholars may reasonably disagree over conceptualizations, applications and operationalization, but disagreement is not absolute.

*Advanced Political Analysis II: Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques for Causal Analysis:*

- The course is divided into an introduction and two main parts. The introduction presents two different approaches to causality: counterfactual and mechanisms. Part I of the course presents the counterfactual approach, which seeks to identify what would have happened if something else (the cause) had not happened. The gold standard within this approach is experiments, where treatments or absence of treatments are randomly assigned to subjects. The logic behind experiments is introduced, as well as possible complications and pitfalls. However, many causes of interest are not easily experimentally manipulated due to ethical, practical or economic concerns, and the course will therefore introduce several techniques that seek to identify causal effect using observational data, e.g. within-subject regression, difference-in-difference regression, regression discontinuity designs and instrumental variables approaches.

### **Political Science Seminars**

Seminars may fall within one of the following subject areas: Comparative politics, political behaviour and attitude formation, public administration, political institutions and public policy, international politics, political theory and political sociology.

### **Social Science Seminars**

In addition to the political science seminars, the students may complete 30 ECTS credits within the field of social sciences. If the student chooses to take a course outside the Department of Political Science, this must be approved by the board of studies.

Read more below under *double seminar* and *project seminar*.

### **Double seminar**

Students may register for double seminars (however, no more than one each semester).

The double seminar often concerns core subjects that correspond to 20 ECTS.

### **Project seminar**

The aim of the project module is to offer a group of at least three students the opportunity to conduct an intensive and independent piece of work on a topic of their choice under the supervision of a permanent member of academic staff. In terms of the topic of the module and the level of learning, the project module is no different from an ordinary MA-level module.

### **Individual Political Science Seminar**

The seminar allows the student to work independently with a topic of the student's own choice, which must be approved by a supervisor. The seminar offers an advanced and thorough treatment of a topic relevant to the field of political science on the basis of a review and discussion of the literature and issues within the subject area. The topic of the seminar may fall within one of the following subject areas: Comparative politics, political behaviour and attitude formation, public administration, political institutions and public policy, international politics, political theory or political sociology. The seminar will conclude with a take-home assignment.

**The specific form of exam** will vary between the seminars/electives

### **Master's Thesis**

There is automatic enrolment for thesis writing at the beginning of the 4th semester after the student has been admitted to the Master's programme.

The student must be able to complete the Master's thesis within 4½ months of full-time study from the start of the semester.

The thesis is written under the supervision of a tenured lecturer at the Department of Political Science. The first meeting is set up with the supervisor on the student's behalf, after which individual agreements regarding supervision must be made.

The thesis concludes the programme.

Regarding approval of courses outside the Department of Political Science, please see section 2.

## **2. ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

### **2.1. Courses completed at other departments either at or outside Aarhus University. Credit transfer**

Credit subjects include both political science and social science seminars passed outside the Department of Political Science at Aarhus University. In each individual case, the board of studies must approve and weigh the course. The approval depends on a specific evaluation of the academic content, level and scope of the course in question. In addition, there must be no overlaps between the course and any compulsory or already completed courses on the programme. The course is expected to be at Master's level. If the course was taken at an institution covered by the ECTS-system, the scope is documented through ECTS credits. 10 ECTS credits are equivalent to one seminar.

When approving political science seminars, the *political science content and aim* of the course must be at a certain level.

If the student is awarded a mark on the 7-point marking scale at the institution in question, this grade is transferred. If this is not the case, for example if the course has been completed at a foreign institution, the examination result will be transferred as "Pass." The student cannot be reassessed for a course passed outside the department.

Applications for the approval of courses completed at other departments at AU are submitted to the Board of Studies for Political Science and Social Science. Course description, syllabuses, teaching plans as well as any written work must be attached to the application. Courses completed at foreign educational institutions cannot be finally approved before the evaluation form has been filled in. Please see section 5.2.

Applications.

We recommend that before the start of the semester, you explore the possibilities for getting courses passed at other departments approved. This way you avoid completing courses which the board of studies do not find relevant for the degree programme and thus reject.

If you have any questions, please contact the Student Counsellors' Office or Aarhus BSS Studies Administration.

### **2.2. Guidelines for internships**

Students on the Master's degree programme have the option of replacing up to two social science seminars (20 ECTS) with an internship. In addition, the student may choose to write an internship report, focusing on either social science or political science (10 ECTS). Such internships must be approved in advance by the board of studies.

The purpose of the internship is to give the student specific work experience and experience solving political and public administrative tasks outside the realm of the university. The duties performed during the internship must be at a sufficient academic level. The instructor (supervisor) from the Department of Political Science must assess and evaluate the internship.

The internship must be approved by the board of studies before commencement. In addition, approval is subject to the following requirements:

- there must be a supervisor from both the internship host organisation and from the Department of Political Science
- the internship must be a formalised position
- the position must be of a certain duration/extent
- the work to be undertaken must be of academic relevance and on a certain scientific level
- the internship must be structured as a teaching course
- the student must prepare a final report in accordance with the current guidelines
- the student must answer an internship questionnaire.

Approval of credits for one seminar requires a workload of at least 250 working hours. Approval of credits for two seminars requires a workload of at least 500 working hours. The student must prepare an internship report, which is subject to approval by the internal supervisor. If the student submits an internship report of 6,000 words, which is subject to assessment by an external co-examiner, he/she may obtain an additional 10 ECTS equivalent to / which can substitute one social science seminar or one political science seminar. The deadline for submitting the exam paper is 1 March or 1 October, immediately after the expiry of the internship.

The internship report should include a summary of the organisation, a description of the working tasks carried out and the academic outcome of the internship (maximum five pages). If the student has authored or co-authored major written assignments during the internship and submits the work in an appendix to this report, there will be no need for further reporting. If the student is not able to document such work, he/she is required to write a report in the form of an essay in which he/she reflects on the internship. This may include an account of the relevance of the internship in relation to selected theories or a selected political science issue. The internship report must not exceed 4,000 words, equivalent to approximately 10 pages. The report is subject to approval by the internal supervisor.

In the Student Counsellors' Office, you can find a folder on internships and voluntary work.

### **3. THE PRACTICAL ORGANISATION OF THE TEACHING**

#### **3.1. Teaching periods and holidays**

The ordinary teaching periods at the University are as follows (all days included):

- In the autumn semester: 28 August - 15 December
- In the spring semester: 29 January - 15 June

The holidays are as follows (all days included):

- Autumn break: week 42
- Christmas holidays: 22 December - 2 January
- Summer holidays: 1 July to 31 July
- On Denmark's Constitution Day, 5 June, there are no classes or lectures.

#### **3.2. Teaching plan**

Before each semester, a teaching plan will be published. The plan consists of two parts - a course catalogue and a timetable, which includes time and venue of all teaching activities offered during the semester. In the timetable, each student can see his or her own personal timetable for the entire semester.

An overview of the courses offered is available from 15 April and 15 October respectively at <http://kursuskatalog.au.dk>.

### 3.3. Registering for courses

When registering for courses or exams, students must actively request a seminar via the self-service system [mit.au.dk](http://mit.au.dk).

According to the rules, you must be registered for all teaching to be able to take the exam. In practice, this means that you will automatically be registered for the exam as soon as you are informed via [mit.au.dk](http://mit.au.dk) that you have been accepted on a specific course.

You **cannot** apply for admission to seminar courses beyond the prescribed number of ECTS credits, i.e. 90 ECTS, including core courses and if relevant, internships and credit transfers.

### 3.4. Seminar teaching

The course catalogue contains an overview of the seminars offered at the department to Master's students in the following semester. Apart from a course description and a tentative list of literature for each course, the catalogue includes information on

- type of examination
- language of instruction (Danish or English)

Please note if the language of instruction is English. The Examination Order no. 867, 19 August 2004, section 5(2) states that: "If the teaching on a course has been conducted in a foreign language, the exam must be conducted in this language. The university may depart from this rule."

### Active enrolment requirements – Electives

Form(s) of instruction;

Normally, the course will consist of three/six lessons per week over the course of 15 weeks. The 45/ 90 hours of teaching, which a core course/seminar course should always consist of, may, however, be executed differently.

The form of instruction may vary, including how the students are expected to contribute in class.

However, regardless of the selected form, active enrolment on the part of students is required. Active enrolment means:

- Participation in teaching activities, and the student has an obligation to notify the lecturer/instructor if he/she is unable to attend class.
- Participation in teaching activities to a reasonable extent, e.g. preparation of presentations, written assignments etc. In the first lesson of the seminar, the lecturer/instructor will present the teaching activities that the seminar will consist of.

The lecturer/instructor is obliged to notify the student if he/she does not meet the requirements for active enrolment throughout the semester (warning). If the student is

able to meet the requirements after having received this warning, the student will be allowed to participate in the form of examination for the seminar in question.

If the student does not meet the requirements, even after the warning has been issued, he/she must complete the course by taking a six-hour written exam without aids. This form of examination will also apply to all re-examinations (regardless of other provisions in the academic regulations).

### 3.5. Writing the thesis

Registering for the Master's thesis is compulsory and must be done via the self-service system mit.au.dk. The periods in which students write their Master's thesis start on 1 September and 1 February, after the supervisor has agreed to supervise the student and has approved the title of the Master's thesis.

If the deadline falls on a weekend or on a national holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next working day. The exact date will be announced.

The supervisor must approve the thesis proposal for each Master's thesis and at the same time decide on a supervision plan. The Master's thesis must be completed and submitted within the time frame stipulated in the academic regulations for the degree programme in question. (30 ECTS).

If the student does not submit the thesis within the time frame specified, the supervisor approves a modified thesis proposal within the same field and sets a new three-month deadline for submission. If the student does not submit the thesis by the new deadline, the student may be granted a third attempt (see the Examinations Order) under the same rules which govern the second attempt.

The department has a number of study spaces available to Master's thesis students over a six-month period. If necessary, the student may apply for a new three-month period. When applying for a study space, you must apply by the 15th in the month before you start writing your thesis (the six-month period). The application must be submitted to the department on a separate form. You can only get a study space if you have registered for the Master's thesis.

At the beginning of each semester, the Student Counsellors' Office will hold a **course on how to write your Master's thesis**. The seminar is aimed at students who are about to start writing their thesis or who have already started.

The course includes information on the formal requirements, the special conditions offered at the library for Master's thesis students as well as on how to search for literature. During the course, you will also have the chance to hear how former students have dealt with the Master's thesis. And you will get good advice from a lecturer about how to approach the Master's thesis, how to avoid the most common pitfalls and about the student-supervisor relationship. The course also includes an introduction to writing and brainstorming techniques.

The time and venue of the course will be announced in plenty of time before the course is held.

## 4. EXAM

### 4.1. Registration for exams

You will automatically be registered for the ordinary exams and if necessary, one re-examination. You can withdraw from the exam no later than two weeks before the exam starts.

During the time periods mentioned below, the student is required to check if the automatic exam registration has been done correctly via the self-service system.

Deadlines for exam registrations:

Summer exam: 1 - 15 March

Winter exam: 1 - 15 October

Registration for the exam is done via the self-service system. Registration after the expiry of the deadline requires that the student is granted a dispensation from the board of studies. If you have any questions regarding the exam registration, please contact the BSS Aarhus BSS Studies Administration (UVA/EKA).

When uploading and submitting written exams, the students must use the programme WISEflow.

You can find information about the exam via the self-service system <https://mit.au.dk>. Students who turn up at the exam without being registered will not be allowed into the exam room. Students cannot access exam assignments if they are not registered for the exam.

### 4.2. Duration of the exam and the scope of take-home assignments

**Core courses: Oral examination based on synopsis:** The examination lasts approximately 40 minutes including evaluation, the first half of which focuses on the synopsis (a maximum of 3,000 words), and the second part on the overall syllabus. There is no preparation time. The examination at the re-exam is the same as the ordinary examination.

**Oral examination based on seminar synopsis:** The examination lasts approximately 30 minutes, the first half of which focuses on the synopsis (800 - 1,200 words, equivalent to 2-3 pages) and the second part on the overall syllabus. There is no preparation time.

**Oral examinations in seminars:** The examination lasts approximately 30 minutes. The students are also given 30 minutes of preparation time. No aids are permitted during the preparation.

**Written examination:** All written exams are of a six-hour duration.

#### **Take-home assignments:**

In all take-home assignments, the stipulated number of words and pages includes appendices and footnotes, but does not include the table of contents and the list of references. Assignments that exceed the prescribed length will be rejected.

In *seminars (10 ECTS) with a take-home assignment*, the scope of the assignment is a maximum of 6,000 words equivalent to approximately 15 pages. Up to three students are allowed to submit the assignment as a group. The assignment must be submitted in a form that enables individual assessment. The scope of the assignment increases by 50 per cent per student in the group.

In *political science seminars (20 ECTS), which always include a take-home assignment*, the scope of the assignment is a maximum of 12,000 words equivalent to approximately 30 pages. Up to three students are allowed to submit the assignment as a group. The assignment must be submitted in a form that enables individual assessment. The scope of the assignment increases by 50 per cent per student in the group. Counts as two take-home assignments.

In seminars with a *7-day take-home assignment*, the scope of the assignment is a maximum of 4,000 words equivalent to approximately 10 pages. The exam must be taken individually. All seminars with this exam type are held in the same week. Therefore, it is only possible to sign up for one 7-day take-home exam per semester.

In seminars (30 ECTS), *Take-home assignment on topic of student's choice + Topic of student's choice, oral exam* The assignment is a maximum of 12,000 words equivalent to approximately 30 pages. Up to three students are allowed to submit the assignment as a group. The assignment must be submitted in a form that enables individual assessment. The scope of the assignment increases by 50 per cent per student in the group. The assignment serves as a basis for an oral exam. The examination lasts approximately 30 minutes, the first half of which focuses on the assignment and the second part on the overall syllabus. There is no preparation time. An overall mark is given for the performance of the task and the oral exam. Counts as three political science seminars and counts as two take-home assignments.

### 4.3. Execution of the exam

At the end of each semester, the board of studies develops an exam schedule which contains:

- date, time and venue of the written exams
- information about oral exams
- date for when take-home assignments are handed out
- deadline for withdrawing from an exam
- deadline for submitting take-home assignments
- information on aids permitted during the exam and
- date for when the assessment will be announced.

The exam schedule can be found on the website

<http://studerende.au.dk/studier/fagportaler/statskundskab/eksamen/eksamensplaner/>  
in the beginning of April/November.

Please note that if you wish to withdraw from an exam, you must do so **no later than two weeks before the first day of the exam**. If you withdraw later or do not attend the exam, it will count as an exam attempt. You can withdraw from exams via the self-service system: <https://mit.au.dk>.

#### **4.4. Make-up examination**

If a student is ill during or in connection with an exam, he or she can apply for permission to take a make-up examination. Applications for make-up examinations must be submitted to the board of studies immediately after the exam was held. When applying for a make-up examination, a doctor's certificate dated no later than on the day of the exam *must* be enclosed.

If the student fell ill before the exam, it must be clearly stated on the doctor's certificate that the doctor found that the student was too ill to take the exam.

If the student falls ill during the written exam, and the student is not able to complete the exam, he or she must inform the exam supervisors of the illness before leaving the exam. On the same day, the student must contact his or her doctor and ask for a doctor's certificate. This certificate must be attached to the application for permission to take a make-up examination.

#### **4.5. Re-examination**

Participation in the re-examination requires that the student fail to pass the ordinary exam.

Re-examinations are held on all courses and in all semesters.

In special cases, the board of studies may decide on a different exam type in the re-examination.

The exam type in re-examinations is always a take-home assignment. However, if the student has not met the requirement of being actively enrolled on the degree programme, the exam type is a six-hour written exam with no aids permitted.

### **5. DISPENSATIONS, APPROVALS, ETC.**

#### **5.1. Dispensations**

The Board of Studies for Political Science and Social Sciences may grant dispensations from the provisions in the academic regulations if these provisions have been determined solely by the board of studies.

The following provisions in the academic regulations have been determined solely by the Board of Studies for Political Science and Social Sciences:

- Particular requirements regarding teaching and working methods
- The exam type of the individual courses/seminars.
- Deadlines for exam registration and withdrawal.
- Rules relating to the approval of courses taken outside the Department of Political Science.
- Rules relating to credit transfer.
- Rules relating to the approval of internships.
- Rules relating to the Master's thesis

In case of documented exceptional circumstances, the board of studies may allow a student to register for the exam for the fourth time, cf. the Examination Order, section 13.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Science may grant a dispensation from the current Examination Order if exceptional circumstances apply.

Applications are submitted via the Board of Studies for Political Science and Social Science.

## 5.2. Applications

Applications for dispensation or credit transfer must be submitted to:

**The Board of Studies for Political Science and Social Science  
Aarhus University  
Aarhus BSS (SNUK)  
Tåsingevej 3, 1st floor, bldg. 1443  
8000 Aarhus C.**

The application form can be found at <https://mit.au.dk>.

Applications must include the following information:

- Clear identification (name, address and student registration number).
- Documentation (exam certificates, course description, syllabus, doctor's certificate, etc.)
- Clear indication of what the student's application concerns and from which provisions the student is applying for dispensation.
- Applications for dispensations must be well-founded and include relevant documentation.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

If you have any questions regarding the provisions in the academic regulations, please contact the Aarhus BSS Studies Administration, Political Science and Social Science or the Student Counsellors' Office.

The Student Counsellors' Office as well as the Aarhus BSS Studies Administration (UVA/EKA and SNUK) are open on all weekdays.

You can find the opening hours of the Student Counsellors' Office on the website. Aarhus BSS Studies Administration (UVA/EKA and SNUK) are open from 10am to 2pm.

*Phone numbers:*

Student Counsellors' Office: +45 871 50000 or +45 871 65242  
(between 10 and 11am). Email: [stvejl@ps.au.dk](mailto:stvejl@ps.au.dk)

Aarhus BSS Studies Administration, Political Science and Social Science:  
871 50000, or 871 extension 52201, 52197 or 53295.  
e-mail: [studienaevn.statskundskab@au.dk](mailto:studienaevn.statskundskab@au.dk)