



Information Set for (prospective) Students in the M.A. Political Science

The “information set” provides an overview of the study programme of the Master in Political Science at the Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät (WiSo-Faculty) of the University of Cologne. In addition to a presentation of the Institute of Political Science’s Chairs and their research focus, you will find information about exams in Political Science for Bachelor students at Cologne. This will help you to gauge what kind of previous knowledge is expected from Master students and in which area you might need to catch up.

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1 General Information on the Application Procedure

Prospective students apply for the M.A. Political Science directly to the University of Cologne, Faculty of Business, Economics, and Social Sciences. The master application portal of the WiSo-Faculty (see below for the link) is the hub where you can find all relevant information.

Please note the **admission requirements** of the master programme. Inter alia, you need to provide evidence of proficiency in the English language. The winter term 2017/18 marked the transition of the M.A. Politikwissenschaft to an English-language programme M.A. Political Science. A thorough active and passive command of English on level B2 (instead of German) is now an admission requirement. However, a number of elective courses will still be taught in German, so proficiency in both languages increases the available choice of courses.

The M.A Political Science can also be studied within a **double master programme with the University of Maastricht**, Netherlands. In this programme, students complete the first year at Maastricht in the Research Master European Studies (M.Sc.). In the second year, students study at the University of Cologne in the M.A Political Science. Against the background that students obtain two master degrees at the end of their studies, two separate applications at the two participating universities are required. You can find further information on the pages of the Centre for International Relations of the WiSo-Faculty (see below).

The following table summarises the **application deadlines** for the M.A. Political Science and the double master programme for the year 2021 (starting in the winter term 2021/2022).

Deadline	Who?	Programme	Where?
30.04.2021	Non German (or University of Maastricht) bachelor's degree	Double Master Programme	University of Cologne, uni-assist
01.05.2021	Non EU Citizens	Double Master Programme	University of Maastricht
15.05.2021	German bachelor's degree	Double Master Programme	University of Cologne, Master Application Portal
01.06.2021	EU-Citizens	Double Master Programme	University of Maastricht
15.06.2021	German bachelor's degree	M.A. Political Science	University of Cologne, Master Application Portal
15.06.2021	Non German bachelor's degree	M.A. Political Science	University of Cologne, uni-assist and Master Application Portal

Source: [Application Procedure](#) of the WiSo-Faculty – please check here for updates and details.

Useful Links:

- [Homepage](#) of the Institute of Political Science at the University of Cologne
- [Information](#) about the admission requirements and the selection procedure in the M.A. Political Science
- [Overview](#) of the M.A Political Science's structure
- The [Master Application Portal](#) of the WiSo-Faculty
- [Homepage](#) of the WiSo Student Service
- [Information](#) of the Centre for International Relations on the Double Master Programme with the University Maastricht

2 The M.A. Political Science

The M.A. Political Science consists of **six thematic areas** which students may combine freely:

- I. [Comparative Analysis of Political Institutions \(Professor André Kaiser\)](#)
- II. [Comparative Analysis of Political Economy \(Professor Christine Trampusch\)](#)
- III. [Empirical Democratic Theory \(Junior Professor Chitralkha Basu\)](#)
- IV. [International Relations and Foreign Policy \(Professor Thomas Jäger\)](#)
- V. [European and Multi-level Politics \(Professor Sven-Oliver Proksch\)](#)

A new thematic area introduced in the winter term 2018/19 encompasses modules on research design as well as quantitative and qualitative methods:

- VI. [Political Science Methods \(coordinated by Professor Ingo Rohlfing\)](#)

Professor Ingo Rohlfing, Chair of Methods of Comparative Political Research, coordinates the Methods branch. However, several chairs contribute to it.

Unlike most Bachelor's programmes, the M.A. Political Science does not contain any obligatory modules (except the colloquium). The master programme intentionally covers the whole range of political science. In contrast to specialised programmes such as "International relations" or "Development policy", it aims to train students such that they acquire in-depth expertise on relevant fields of political science. This orientation notwithstanding, students may specialise by focusing on three of the thematic areas. Although recommended, this is not a requirement.

In the thematic branches I-V, requirements increase from the core to the specialisation section. However, there is no compulsory sequence to the modules. We merely recommend studying a thematic area systematically, starting with the core module, then the advanced core module, and finally the specialisation module. One exception is the new thematic branch VI (Methods of Comparative Political Research). Core, advanced, and specialisation module in this branch all offer introductory courses into a certain method. In other words, there is no consecutive structure to branch VI. A comprehensive overview of the structure of the programme is available at the [homepage of the WiSo-faculty](#).

Students usually choose the topic of their *Master's thesis* (24 CP) from any of the thematic branches within the core- and specialisation sections. Students can register for the master's thesis as soon as they have passed courses worth 60 CP, so it does not necessarily form the final part of their studies. The maximum preparation time of the thesis is six months.

In the following you will find an overview of the requirements and contents of the thematic branches in the field of political science.

3 The Profiles of the Thematic Areas

3.1 Comparative Politics

3.1.1 Profile and Requirements

The Chair of Prof. Dr. André Kaiser focuses on imparting theoretical concepts, quantitative and qualitative methods and central findings of the comparative analysis of political systems to students. In terms of content, the focus is on constitutional democracies. However, courses regularly also touch upon non-democratic political systems and transition countries. As to theories and concepts, the focus is on neo-institutionalist approaches that interpret political behaviour within institutional structures.

Within the Cologne Center for Comparative Politics (CCCP), run together with Prof. Dr. Christine Trampusch, Prof. Dr. Sven-Oliver Proksch, Prof. Ingo Rohlfing, PhD and Jun.-Prof. Chitralekha Basu, PhD, the chair aims for a cross-fertilisation process of the analysis of political institutions and the analysis of policy production, especially of regulatory policies for the labour and the financial market. Most courses are offered in English. For more information please visit the homepage of the Center for Comparative Politics (<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de>).

3.1.2 Core Readings

Lijphart, Arend, 1999: *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries.*

Tsebelis, George, 2002: *Veto Players. How Political Institutions Work.*

Scharpf, Fritz W., 1997: *Games Real Actors Play. Actor-Centred Institutionalism in Policy Research.*

Kaiser, André, 2002: *Mehrheitsdemokratie und Institutionenreform. Verfassungspolitischer Wandel in Australien, Großbritannien, Kanada und Neuseeland im Vergleich.*

Biela, Jan, Annikal Hennl und André Kaiser, 2012: *Policymaking in Multilevel Systems. Federalism, Decentralisation, and Performance.*

3.1.3 Selected Assignments from B.A. Exams

- 1) Describe two fundamental strategies for comparing political systems. Name the basic problems that may arise in the process.
- 2) Explain neo-institutionalism by means of an example.
- 3) What distinguishes parliamentary democracies from presidential democracies?
- 4) Explain Arend Lijphart's typology of democracies. Against this background, elaborate on his ten country indicators.
- 5) Explain the following terms: (a) semi-presidentialism, (b) dual federalism, (c) decentralisation, (d) representation.
- 6) What explains that numerous western European democracies are also monarchies?
- 7) Compare the system of constitutional judiciary in Germany and the USA.
- 8) Explain Inglehart's post-materialism hypothesis.
- 9) Name and explain four models of voting behaviour.
- 10) Compare the German and the British party system.

3.2 International Comparative Political Economy and Economic Sociology

3.2.1 Profile and Requirements

Research and teaching at the Chair for International Comparative Political Economy and Economic Sociology (and bridging chair to the Max-Planck-Institute for the Study of Societies) focus on the empirical-analytical investigation of relations between economy, society and politics. Explaining interests, preferences and strategies of political and economic collective actors plays a pivotal role. How is political action influenced by economic and social factors? Under which political and social conditions is economic action embedded in labour and financial markets? The chair's research and teaching is theory-oriented and methodologically grounded. The theoretical points of reference are political-economic as well as sociological economic approaches, especially: rational-choice, historical and sociological institutionalism, comparative policy-analysis, power resources and corporatist approaches, veto player approaches and varieties-of-capitalism approaches. The methodological spectrum encompasses quantitative and qualitative, case oriented research methods. The chair cooperates in research and teaching closely with the MPIfG (<http://www.mpifg.de>). Together with the chairs for Comparative Politics (Prof. Dr. André Kaiser), European and Multi-level politics (Prof. Dr. Sven-Oliver Proksch), Empirical Democratic Theory (Jun.-Prof. Chitrlekha Basu, PhD) and Methods of Comparative Political Research (Prof. Ingo Rohlfing, PhD), it forms the Cologne Center for Comparative Politics (<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de>).

In order to partake in courses offered by the chair, Master students should have pre-knowledge in the following areas: quantitative and qualitative methods, comparative political science, empiric theories of politics, sociological and economic-sociological theories, European Integration, Europeanisation and Organisation research. Most courses are offered in English.

3.2.2 Core Readings

Busemeyer, Marius R. / Trampusch, Christine: *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012.

Campbell, Kohn: *Institutional Change and Globalization*, Princeton 2004.

Hall, Peter A. / Soskice, David (Hg.): *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, Oxford 2001.

Korpi, Walter: *The Democratic Class Struggle*, London 1983.

Mahoney, James: Path Dependence in Historical Sociology, In: *Theory and Society* 29, 2000, 507-548

Streeck, Wolfgang / Schmitter, Philippe C.: Gemeinschaft, Markt, Staat – und die Verbände? In: Streeck, Wolfgang, *Korporatismus in Deutschland*. Frankfurt am Main, 1999, 191-222.

3.2.3 Selected Assignments from B.A. Exams

- 1) Discuss the differences between liberal and social democratic welfare states.
- 2) What are the differences between Marxist approaches and the New Political Economy?
- 3) What is corporatism? How can corporatist states be distinguished from pluralist ones?
- 4) Which problems does economic sociology try to explain and how does that differ from the economic theory?
- 5) Explain the ideal type of a liberal economy in contrast to a coordinated economy.
- 6) Elaborate on the role of left-wing parties in the creation and development of the welfare state.
- 7) Explain the differences between rational-choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism.
- 8) Explain the concept of path dependence.
- 9) Which function does governance have in political economy and which governance types exist?
- 10) How does European economic integration change national political economies?

3.3 Empirical Democratic Theory

3.3.1 Profile and Requirements

The Chair for Empirical Democratic Theory was established in the winter semester 2019/20 and is directed by Jun. Prof. Chitrlekha Basu, PhD. She succeeds Prof. Dr. Leidhold, who was retired as emeritus professor at the end of the summer semester 2019. With this reorganization, the contents of thematic area Political Science III have also changed in part.

The Chair for Empirical Democratic Theory deals with the design, operation and performance of democracies and elections. Courses offered will introduce students to different theories of democracy and electoral representation, highlight the particular challenges that phenomena like inequality and globalization pose for the operation of elections and for democratic performance, and encourage students to examine if, how, and when, democracies are able to fulfil various normatively desirable criteria.

Methodologically, the courses offered by the chair will make extensive use of quantitative research methods, both formal and statistical. All courses will be offered in English.

3.3.2 Core Readings

Robert A. Dahl. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*.

Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes and Bernard Manin (eds.). 1999. *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*.

G. Bingham Powell Jr. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*.

Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2010. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*.

3.3.3 Selected Assignments from B.A. Exams

- 1) Is democracy intrinsically valuable?
- 2) What distinguishes the mandate and the accountability conceptions of representation?
- 3) Are there circumstances which make it easier for voters to hold politicians to account using elections, and if yes, what?
- 4) How should we empirically evaluate the performance of elections in democracies?
- 5) On the whole, is democracy good or bad for human welfare? Explain your answer.

3.4 International Relations and Foreign Policy

3.4.1 Profile and Requirements

The chair of Prof. Dr. Thomas Jäger offers theory driven empirical analyses to students with a focus on International Relations. Students can engage in the analysis of International Relations and Foreign Policy in didactically diverse seminars. As a prerequisite, they should have the fundamental concepts and terminologies in the fields of International Relations and Foreign Policy at their disposal. Students should understand concepts such as anarchy, sovereignty, power, values and rules, decisions, routines and interests in their relevant disciplinary definitions and they should be able to work with them. Furthermore, they should be familiar with individual theories and be able to differentiate among them or at least have read about them in the relevant literature (see below) in order to participate actively in seminars.

In order to deal with research questions of International Relations students should be familiar with realism and neo-realism, interdependence and institutionalism, the liberal theory of International Relations, the international political economy as well as social constructivism. In order to deal with research questions in the analysis of Foreign Policy students should have acquired basic knowledge in areas of liberal analysis (interest groups, media, public opinion), the two-level approach, the theoretical analysis of bureaucracy- and organisation as well as political psychology and group decision-making.

Based on such diverse approaches, seminars deal with different topics and different states. Students are encouraged to check the chair's archive at <https://ib.uni-koeln.de/>. Language of instruction is mostly German, although readings in English are the norm.

3.4.2 Core Readings

Dunn, Tim, Milja Kurki & Steve Smith (Ed.), 2010: *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*.

Hudson, Valery M., 2007: *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*.

Jäger, Thomas, Alexander Höse & Kai Oppermann (Hg.), 2011: *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*.

Waltz, Kenneth N., 1979: *Theory of International Politics*

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane & Sidney Verba, 1994: *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference and Qualitative Research*

3.4.3 Selected Assignments from B.A. Exams

- 1) Discuss the 'grand debates' in International Relations since the 1930s.
- 2) Write an essay on the role of anarchy in the international system. Elaborate on the different perspectives on anarchy in realist and institutionalist conceptions of International Relations.
- 3) What distinguishes theories of neo-realism and neo-institutionalism in the opinion of Robert Keohane?
- 4) Explain the role of international regimes and the heuristic role of the prisoner's dilemma in the theory of neo-liberal institutionalism.
- 5) Discuss the interdependence theory, focussing on the terms interdependence sensitivity and interdependence vulnerability.
- 6) "The 2006 Libanon war happened because the political system of Israeli abetted it." Assign this statement to one of the levels of analysis Actor, Individual, Ideology, System.
- 7) Discuss the theory of new liberalism in foreign policy research and apply it to a case example in German foreign policy during the past decade.
- 8) Compose an essay on the two-level-approach in foreign policy research and apply it to a case example of British European or foreign policy.

3.5 European and Multi-level Politics

3.5.1 Profile and Requirements

Prof. Dr. Sven-Oliver Proksch focuses on political representation in multi-level political systems such as the European Union, with a special focus on quantitative methods such as quantitative text analysis. The core module European and multilevel politics equips students with a basic toolkit to study advanced democracies (including delegation models, the spatial model of politics, formal reasoning) and to understand both domestic and EU-level policy-making in Europe. It prepares students to participate in the more advanced seminars and research projects offered in the thematic area of European politics and at the CCCP in general.

Besides methodological basics (both qualitative and quantitative), students should be familiar with the political system of the European Union. This includes knowledge about European institutions and knowledge about decision-making processes and procedures.

Most courses are offered in English.

3.5.2 Core Readings

Cini, Michelle / Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, Nieves, 2016: *European Union Politics*, OUP.
Slapin, Jonathan B. / Proksch, Sven-Oliver, 2014: Words as Data: Content Analysis in Legislative Studies", in S. Martin, T. Saalfeld, and K. Strom (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, OUP.

3.5.3 Selected Assignments from B.A. Exams

- A. Explain the following terms. Each answer should include the following parts: (1) definition, (2) example or reference to literature, (3) significance in the context of the course.
- Preliminary Rulings Procedure
 - Negative and positive integration
 - Political groups in the European Parliament
- B. Read the short text excerpt and answer the following questions:

EU initiates legal proceeding against Hungary, Poland, and Czech Republic

The EU Commission has launched an infringement proceeding case against Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic in the dispute over the admission of refugees. [...] The reason is the refusal to participate in a redistribution of asylum seekers from the main countries of origin, Italy and Greece, which was decided in the EU in 2015. The distribution agreed in September 2015 is a legally binding decision, said EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos. The three countries have not done anything in this regard for more than a year. [...] The Hungarian government has already announced opposition to the Commission decision. The government in Budapest considered the opening of the infringement procedure "as blackmail and non-European," said Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto in Parliament. [...] In September 2015, EU Interior Ministers decided to redistribute 120,000 asylum seekers from the main countries of Italy and Greece against the resistance of several Eastern European countries. They should be transferred to other Member States by a quota system by September 2017. [Zeit Online, 13. Juni 2017]

- 1) Explain the role of the European Commission in an infringement proceeding in the European Union. (6 points)
- 2) The Council adopted the decision in September 2015 by a qualified majority. What is the definition of the qualified majority in the Council since the Treaty of Lisbon? (5 points)
- 3) Mention three claims about the democratic deficit in the European Union. Does the extension of qualified majority voting in the Council lead to a reduction or to an increase of the democratic deficit? Explain your answer. (9 points)

3.6 Political Science Methods

3.6.1 Profile and Requirements

Prof. Ingo Rohlfing, PhD, holds the chair of Methods in Comparative Political Research. He focuses on new methods in qualitative and multimethod research and their use for causal inference. This includes work on process tracing and case studies, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and multimethod designs combining statistical techniques or QCA with process tracing.

In line with the MA programme's objective to provide rigorous methods training, a new methods track forms the sixth thematic branch available to students. Prof. Rohlfing is coordinator of the track, while all professors contribute modules to it. Specifically, students may take courses on research design, quantitative methods and qualitative methods. All three method courses – core, advanced, and specialisation module – offer introductions to a methodological subfield (types of designs or methods). Because of the diversity of approaches that the track covers, there is no consecutive structure to branch VI.

Some method courses in the MA Political Science are introductory, but students should nonetheless be familiar with the basics of social science methodology before taking them (e.g. acquisition, processing, analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, including some mathematical and statistical methods).

Most courses are offered in English.

3.6.2 Core Readings

Angrist, Joshua D. and Jörn-Steffen Pischke (2009): *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dunning, Thad (2008): *Natural experiments in the social sciences: A design-based approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, John (2012): *Social science methodology: A unified framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goertz, Gary (2006) *Social Science Concepts. A User's Guide*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rohlfing, Ingo (2012): *Case studies and causal inference: An integrative framework*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schneider, Karsten Q; Claudius Wagemann (2012) *Set Theoretic Methods*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

3.6.3 Selected Assignments from B.A. Exams

- 1) Provide three criticisms of qualitative research methods, and three counter-arguments.
- 2) Discuss the Method of Agreement (J. S. Mill).
- 3) How does the concept of causality on which process tracing is based differ from the classical understanding by D. Hume?
- 4) In order to assess the quality of solutions produced by Quantitative Comparative Analysis, C. Ragin suggests using the measures of "consistency" and "coverage". Explain these measures verbally and graphically.
- 5) What are strengths and weaknesses of natural experiments in the social sciences?
- 6) What is the difference between a standard deviation and a standard error?
- 7) Name three key assumptions concerning the errors ε_i of the model for ordinary-least-squares regression analysis.