Learning Outcomes for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

The Political Science doctoral program is designed to produce broadly educated and well-trained scholars and teachers. Our aim is to produce Ph.D.s who have the breadth and vision to grapple with large questions, the training to make original contributions to research that addresses those questions, and the ability to communicate research results to students, their peers, and society at large. We thus strive to strike an appropriate balance between:

1. Exposure to theoretical models in political and social research,
2. Sophisticated training in the methods and techniques of social science,
3. The development of expertise within a student’s primary area of interest,
4. Exposure to classroom teaching, and
5. Exposure to the discipline’s professional norms and practices.

More specifically, every Illinois Ph.D. should:

1. Be well-grounded in the social sciences. This includes familiarity with the philosophy of science issues that underlie social scientific inquiry. It also includes exposure to or an acquaintance with the literature and approaches of at least one other discipline as they pertain to inquiries in political science and specifically to students’ particular areas of interest.
2. Be familiar with the breadth and diversity of models, approaches, and intellectual traditions within a student’s major subfield of expertise (major fields in the department are American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory).
3. Be competent in at least a second substantive area of political science (minor fields in the department are the same as the four major fields, with the addition of political methodology).
4. Be highly competent in research skills appropriate to his or her research endeavors. An Illinois Ph.D. should be exposed to a broad range of methodologies (including both quantitative and qualitative approaches) and have some deeper familiarity with particular sets of research skills (e.g. statistical analysis, formal modeling, game theory, the comparative case study method).
5. Fully understand the research enterprise. This includes an ability to critique others’ work and an ability to be a contributing scholar by producing original research.
6. Be prepared to teach graduate courses in his or her primary subfield and undergraduate courses in at least two subfields of the discipline, and understand best practices for student engagement.
7. Be familiar with disciplinary norms and standards, including understanding issues related to ethical practices in research, professional and public engagement, and instruction.