



Political Science  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

September 19, 2014

Milan Ilnyckyj  
Department of Political Science

Dear Milan:

**RE: Public Policy Field Exam Results – August 2014**

I am writing to officially confirm that you received a passing grade of “A” in the Public Policy Field Examination which, according to Graduate Office Records, is your 2nd field. Please accept my congratulations on behalf of the Department and best wishes with the rest of your program. The graders of your exam, Professors’ Bashevkin, Skogstad and Triadafilopoulos, commented on your exam as follows:

- The three MFE essays are uniformly well written, and display a commendable ability to not only grapple with the scholarly literature but also draw in relevant contemporary examples. Overall, the exam text provides lucid and compelling responses to the questions as posed. Assessors highlighted the nuanced treatment of stages versus conceptual frameworks approaches to teaching public policy in question #1, and the comprehensive response to question #4 on explaining radical versus incremental policy change. All three essays demonstrate the capacity to develop clear, well-argued and persuasive lines of reasoning that thoughtfully draw on the relevant literature. The MFE is, in short, an impressive effort that displays remarkable fluency and breadth of knowledge.

Enclosed is a brief outline of Departmental expectations regarding PhD program requirement completion. I would advise that you also review the graduate supervision guidelines, on the School of Graduate Studies website (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/track/superv.htm>), which will be useful in planning the next phase of your work. If you need assistance with regard to the preparation of your proposal, designation of a supervision committee, or completion of remaining degree requirements, please feel free to be in touch.

Sincerely

Ryan Balot  
Director of Graduate Studies

## **Guidelines for the Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal in Political Science**

The School of Graduate Studies requires all Ph.D. students to get approval for a dissertation proposal by the end of their third year (fourth year for direct-entry). The department asks that you aim to submit it by the end of year two or early in year three, in order to give you enough time to complete your degree inside five years.

Although the proposal may seem daunting at first, you should keep in mind that it is not the end product of your research, but simply the first step on the journey toward the completion of your dissertation project. No one expects you to know the results of your research; rather, the proposal is your signal to your committee that you have a clear idea of what you want to investigate and a plan of how to proceed.

We strongly recommend that you aim to have a supervisor in place early in the proposal writing process. Your supervisor will clarify her/his expectations for the proposal, but in general a proposal should contain the following components:

- The research question your dissertation will address.
- How that question is situated in the relevant literature. (In most cases, an extensive literature review is NOT required. Rather, situating your question involves a discussion of how it contributes to or builds on existing literature or responds to puzzles left unexplained or unexplored. There is no need to identify and read everything that has already been written on the topic.)
- The research design. (You should discuss how the research will proceed and why the approach you are taking is appropriate to address the question you want to address. This will vary quite a bit depending on your topic, subfield, and approach. As appropriate, you should address issues such as your theoretical framework, text selection, and approach for textual interpretation, case selection, hypotheses, and research methodology.)
- A preliminary chapter breakdown.
- A preliminary timetable for the completion of the research.

The entire proposal should be about 25 pages.

Beyond these general guidelines, you should consult your prospective advisor to discuss any further expectations concerning the proposal and the initial stages of embarking upon your research. For example, you should clarify what level of detail is expected and whether to include a bibliography beyond the works cited in the proposal. Especially in political theory, many students find it helpful to construct an extensive bibliography of the relevant literature as a roadmap. This bibliography can be attached to the end of the proposal and need not be already read.

Once you actually embark on your dissertation research, it is very common to modify your project. The proposal does not need to be re-approved if this happens, unless the change is significant enough to result in change in composition of the thesis committee (and even then only if deemed necessary by the supervisor and the Graduate Director). The proposal is simply to get you started. The dissertation is where those modifications will appear.

If your research involves working with human subjects (e.g. interviews), you will need to apply for ethical review through the University of Toronto's Office of Research Services. This process must be completed before your thesis proposal is finally approved.