

University of Toronto  
Department of Political Science

Introduction to Incoming Graduate Students

by Current Students  
1999-2000

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***I. Introduction***

Welcome to the Department of Political Science. This guide is a supplement to the official literature about the Department and graduate program, and is written by current Ph.D. students. It's intended to introduce the Department and graduate life, in a frank and friendly manner, and to answer some of the common questions that aren't covered in any other guide (e.g. "Where are the books at Robarts Library?").

We like living in Toronto and studying at U of T, and hope that you will too. The city has an amazing diversity of cultures, and the university and the Department are striving to reflect the same heterogeneity. Whether you're coming from elsewhere in Canada, from the United States, or anywhere in the world, we want to welcome you warmly and help you as you settle in.

This guide covers aspects of the department community, the graduate program, the campus, and student groups. It certainly is not comprehensive and nothing in here should be taken as definitive. In particular, questions on the graduate program, registration, funding, TAships and other big issues should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies and administrative staff.

## ***II. Overview of the Department Community*** [\[back to top\]](#)

### **The Faculty**

The Department of Political Science is one of the largest in the world. There are approximately fifty full-time faculty and numerous adjunct faculty, cross-listed professors and professors emeriti. (Note that the Department website does not distinguish between different categories of faculty.) The running joke is that no-one except the department chair knows every faculty member, and this could actually be true.

Most grad students who have studied elsewhere agree that Toronto faculty are approachable and personable. There is a happy absence of huffiness or prickly attitudes. Office hours and appointments are kept, doors are left open at other times and faculty are generally willing to chat at length with you about your work. Faculty/student relationships are fairly equitable - professors do not barge ahead of you in the bar lineup at the fall reception or expect grad students to take the less desirable seats at department seminars and meetings.

On the other hand, Toronto faculty tend to be very professional in their relationships with students; don't expect to be invited to faculty homes very often or for professors to join students for a beer after weekly seminars (with a few exceptions). One thing to note is that Toronto professors have strikingly different levels of formality and informality when it comes to addressing them the best way to approach this is to address a professor by their formal title until invited to do otherwise.

### **Your fellow students**

A big faculty means a big graduate community, with approximately 130 Ph.D. students and 60 M.A.s and qualifying M.A.s. About twenty Ph.D.s and forty M.A.s are admitted each year. Roughly a quarter of graduate students are from outside Canada, about half of them from the United States. Women comprise about a third of the graduate student population. While hard to estimate, about thirty or so Ph.D. students are parents.

Most M.A. students come straight from their bachelor's degrees, although a number have come back to school after considerable absences. Because the M.A. is an eight-month program, turnover is rapid. Most students come and go in a very short time, with a few

second-years finishing up courses, starting the doctoral program, or entering the actual M.A. program after a qualifying year. Most M.A. students report having a "whirlwind" year, and warn that new students have to work particularly hard at getting to know others in September before getting bogged down in coursework.

A majority of Ph.D. students also come directly from previous studies, but there is more variety than the M.A. level. Many entrants have highly eclectic backgrounds, and often took a year or two (or more) away from academia before diving into the Ph.D. However, the "traditional" Ph.D. (straight through from undergraduate and master's studies) is still the norm.

While 130 Ph.D.s may sound large, the "hard core" of doctoral students active in department events and affairs is much smaller - around twenty or so. Once they've finished their coursework, most Ph.D.s spend more time in the library than in the department. And, once they've finished their two year residency requirement, some Ph.D.s will move to other cities and countries. Since many Ph.D.s have partners and families, they also spend less time just hanging around campus or going to social events (although we try to have family-friendly events). Because Toronto is such a large and diverse city, most people have plenty of things to do without coming near the university campus.

## **The Staff**

There are two kinds of people in the world - those who get to know administrative staff, and those who are stupid. Your life will be considerably more hassle-free if you get acquainted with the Department's administrative staff - the Graduate Administrator and Secretary, the Undergraduate Administrator, the photocopy clerk and the main office staff. They are the institutional memory of the Department and can help you with a wide variety of problems and tasks.

### ***III. The Graduate Programs*** [\[back to top\]](#)

## **The Directors and Staff**

There are four critical individuals in the graduate program - the Director of Graduate Studies (Professor Ronald Beiner), the M.A. Director (Professor Ronald Deibert) and the Graduate Administrator (Joan Kallis) and Graduate Secretary (Carolynn Branton).

Professor Beiner has overall responsibility for the program and advises Ph.D. students; guess who the M.A. Director advises. Joan Kallis oversees all administrative aspects, working especially with the Ph.D. students, and Carolynn Branton works more directly on the M.A.

program.

## **The Programs**

Like most Canadian universities, Toronto offers the M.A. and Ph.D. separately. A few students are admitted directly to doctoral studies from the B.A. Most Ph.D. students have earned their M.A.s elsewhere.

The M.A. degree is intended to take eight months, leading to graduation in May. Students take the equivalent of four two-term courses. Not only are theses not required, but they are discouraged. **Do not expect to write an M.A. thesis.**

Course requirements in the Ph.D. vary according to choice of field and previous M.A. courses, but most people take the equivalent of three two-term courses. There is one written comprehensive examination in the major field, a language writing test and, oh yes, a dissertation.

As you've probably read elsewhere, the department is divided into five fields: Political Theory, Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics - Industrial, Comparative Politics - Developing, and International Relations. There are also four cross-cutting areas: Political Economy, Political Behaviour and Democratic Theory, Public Law and Federalism, and Public Policy and Administration.

M.A. students can select courses from all fields and areas. Ph.D.s must choose a major field and a minor field or cross-cutting area, and take at least 2 two-term courses in each, including the field "core courses" (except in Theory). All students must take a two-term Theory course. The comp is written in the major field.

The official "expected" time for a Ph.D. degree is four years, but nearly all dissertations take longer. The average completion time for Ph.D.s graduating in 1996-98 was 77.2 months - six and a half years. This is normal for most political science doctoral programs in North America, regardless of what their promotional literature says.

The Department wants people to graduate faster, a feeling shared by most Ph.D.s. Apart from the usual problems of funding and office space, the two chief obstacles are overly patient faculty ("Go and think about this for a few months") and students themselves ("I'll just read one more book, and then I'll start writing.") A little more on this later.

## **Courses**

U of T runs on four-month terms and offers one- and two-term courses, usually referred to as "half" and "full" courses respectively. 2 one-term courses are the equivalent of a "full" two-term course.

Very few graduate courses are offered in the summer term, and students admitted to part-time M.A.s should not expect that there will be courses offered in the evening (although there are usually a few).

Each field has a "core course" which is generally open only to Ph.D. students. The exception is the Theory core course which is also open to M.A. students. On average, the core courses have four to six students and two instructors. The core courses are reading-intensive and designed to prepare Ph.D.s for their comprehensive exams. The comprehensive exams are marked by the core course instructors and one outside marker.

To increase the range and variety of courses offered, a number of courses are "cross-listed" and open to fourth-year undergraduates. Generally this is not a problem, as numbers are kept small and instructors are sensitive to graduate students' needs. However, be aware so you aren't surprised on the first day.

Like any university, many courses listed on the calendar are not offered. This is not a deliberate plan of false advertising, but is because if a course is removed from the calendar listings, only the Dean can approve its re-listing. If you're wondering about a particular course, phone or e-mail to confirm that it's available. A current timetable is posted outside the Grad Office.

Graduate students can usually take the equivalent of 1 two-term course from another department or the Faculty of Law, as long as it is clearly relevant to their program and doesn't duplicate a course offered in Political Science. (In some of the specialized and collaborative M.A. programs, you will almost certainly take some non-polisci courses from their approved lists).

There are zillions of university regulations around taking non-departmental courses, but there are really only three things you must do. One, talk to your advisor and the graduate office staff to make sure the course counts toward your degree. Two, *directly contact the professor* of the course you want and get their approval, rather than relying completely on administrative channels (particularly in the Law Faculty, who will almost certainly tell you there's no room in the course). And three, always be nice and cheerful.

### **The Comprehensive Exam**

Technically called a "qualifying exam", these are three hours and are normally written in May or August of your first academic year. There is no oral component (apart from eight months of seminar discussions in the core course). Designed to test your knowledge of the literature and general analytical ability, exams usually involve three answers and give some choice. Past exams are available in the Graduate Office.

### **Language requirement**

Ph.D. students are required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of another language relevant to their work. The most popular language is French. In order to complete the French language requirement you may either complete an undergraduate French course, or pass one of the French Department's reading exams (with 70% or higher) that are offered twice a year. Most other language departments also offer special reading tests. These involves translating passages from newspapers, journals or novels, usually with a dictionary at hand.

#### **IV. Getting Oriented Around the University** [\[back to top\]](#)

##### **The Three Campuses**

The University has three campuses: St. George (downtown) and Scarborough and Mississauga (in the suburbs of the same name). Mississauga was formerly called the Erindale campus.

The suburban campuses are each an hour or so from downtown by public transit. About ten Political Science faculty are appointed to each of the suburban campuses and teach undergraduates there. Suburban faculty also teach graduate courses downtown and have offices on the St. George campus. Unless you have a teaching assistant position there, it is unlikely you'll ever set foot on the suburban campuses.

The Department of Political Science is on the third floor of Sidney Smith Hall (100 St. George Street). The graduate mailroom is in room 3038, and other graduate rooms are on the third floor and in the basement of the building. There is a lounge for faculty and graduate students and two small computer rooms - one of which is shared with undergraduates (see "Computers" below).

A number of faculty have offices in University College, Trinity College's Munk Centre for International Studies, New College's African Studies Program and St. Michael's College.

##### **Graduate Space**

Space is a precious thing on a downtown campus, and graduate students do not automatically get their own carrels or shared offices. The Department has identified the lack of graduate space as a key problem and the situation appears to be improving. Here's what's available:

*Sidney Smith Rooms* - A set of rooms in Sidney Smith has been designated for quiet study or TA office hours. While there aren't enough desks to give every student their own permanent spot, some people have their "favourite desks" which are respected. The Department wants to

encourage students to use these rooms as much as possible in order to secure this space (we are currently "squatting").

*Library Carrels* - The main library, Robarts, has hundreds of small, lockable carrels for humanities and social science graduate students. In recent years the waiting list has been horrendous - most current occupants only received carrels in their third Ph.D. year. In 1996, a new three-year limit was imposed so that beginning in 1999, there will be much greater turnover, and carrels should be available much earlier in the Ph.D. While they only fit one at a time, carrels can also be shared between two people. Books can be signed out to the carrel for ninety days.

*Research Centres*: Faculty affiliated with research centres sometimes secure space for their graduate students, particularly if they are also research assistants. The new Munk Centre for International Studies will have some space for international studies students, and various research centres such as the Peace and Conflict Studies Program have some office space.

## **The Libraries**

The main library on campus is the fourteen-floor John P. Robarts Library, the largest library in Canada with approximately the sixth-largest university library collection in North America. Robarts and the U of T library system are incredibly comprehensive; if they don't have a book, good luck finding it anywhere.

Visiting scholars gush endlessly about Robarts, probably because they don't have to work there every day. A landmark in Brutalist architecture, Robarts was originally designed exclusively for faculty and graduate students - as a result, the building is woefully inadequate for the number of users. Elevator waiting times are long and the place is crawling with undergraduates, particularly in the crunch months of November and March. The astoundingly ugly exterior has led to the nicknames "Fort Book" and "the Ministry of Truth."

For a greater degree of sanity, try the college, Law and Management libraries. Each undergraduate college has a library; the collections vary enormously in size and emphasis, but all offer better chances for peace and quiet. The newly revamped Trinity College Library emphasizes international affairs (and theology); the Victoria (Pratt) and University (Laidlaw) libraries concentrate on Canadian studies and literature; and New College's Ivey Library specializes in feminism and race issues. St. Michael's has a good general collection (with a strong religion section) and Innis library - while small in holdings - is the quietest and most innovatively designed. The Law Library (named after former Supreme Court Chief Justice Bora Laskin) and the Management "Information Centre" (named after Joe Rotman, who writes big cheques) are - surprise, surprise - the most well-to-do libraries, with decent furniture and lots of bells and whistles.

A few tips on Robarts which, for all its evils, is still the place to go:

1. The regular elevators don't stop at the second, third or fifth floors there is a separate elevator beside the regular ones. (The escalators are usually faster.)
2. To get to Government Publications on the fifth floor, take the Floors 1-5 elevator or walk up the concrete stairs hidden in the middle of the Reference Area.
3. Government Publications shares space with the Map Library and they have a common help desk - service varies considerably depending on whether a GP or Map officer is there ("I can't help you find those Australian parliamentary reports, but I've got some great maps of northern Queensland.")
4. The Interlibrary Loan Office is on the fourth floor just off the Reference area.
5. Microfilm and microfiche readers and holdings are on the third floor.
6. And when you're exhausted from all this running around, the cafeteria is on the second floor.

A few other library questions:

*Where do I get a library card?*

The first floor of Robarts Library. They will take your picture and issue you an electronic photo card. This is also the basic card used in photocopy machines and more and more other places on campus. Note undergraduate and graduate "student cards" are different and the procedures keep changing anyway. For reliable advice, ask at the Information Desk right at the Robarts first-floor entrance.

*Where are the books at Robarts Library?*

Don't laugh it's a common question. To get to the actual Robarts books on floors nine through thirteen (the "stacks"), use the elevators on the first or fourth floor. You have to show your library card every time.

*Where are the journals at Robarts?*

Current journals are kept on the fourth floor and shelved alphabetically by title. Bound journals are kept in the stacks by Library of Congress call letters. Journals cannot be taken out of the library. Note that other libraries also carry journals, including some not available at Robarts.

*Why don't they have newer journals such as **Millennium** or **Governance**?*

Due to funding constraints, the library system decided in 1986 that it would not take out new journal subscriptions without cancelling another subscription of similar cost. (Yes, since 1986 with only a couple of exceptions.) Note that many faculty will lend copies from their own collections. **Governance** is available at the Mississauga library. **Millennium** will soon be available at the new and improved Trinity Library.

*How can I renew books?*

Computer renewals are available through the on-line catalogue, or over the phone at 978-8450.

*What are the loan periods and fines?*

Graduate students are allowed to take books out for two weeks, with up to two renewals (undergrads get only one). If you have a library carrel (see "Space" above), you can get three-month loans. Fines are usually 50 cents a day for ordinary materials.

## **Research Centres**

There are various research centres of interest to Political Science graduate students, including the Munk Centre for International Studies, the Centre for Urban Studies, the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, and the Peace and Conflict Studies Centre. The definition of "research centre" varies widely - some have very substantial facilities and resources of their own, while others have no space at all, and are more like coordinating committees for teaching programs and collaborative research.

## Computing Services

As a graduate student, you should own your own basic computer for word processing, if nothing else. The Department and University can supply more high-end needs, but it is assumed that graduate students will write papers on their own equipment. Cheap but perfectly good used computers are often available we've heard good things about PCUsed on Dupont St. (<http://www.pcused.com>).

All graduate students have e-mail accounts through the Computing in Humanities and Social Sciences ("CHASS"). CHASS e-mail is a bare-bones, text-only system using the PINE program, but this simplicity means it almost never goes down, can be easily accessed from numerous "dumb" terminals on campus and, through telnet, easily dialed-up from anywhere in the world with Internet access.

CHASS users can dial-up the system from home for free, although the lines are often busy during the day and early evening. There is also a university-wide system called UTOR, which sells Internet access by the hour. There are also numerous Internet providers in Toronto, making for good competition and prices.

By September 1999, GASPS hopes to have its own listserv, which is an electronic mailing list for all members. More information on how to use the listserv, and guidelines for appropriate postings, will be sent to you by e-mail.

The CHASS information office is located on the fourteenth floor of Robarts library - to get to it, take the stack elevators. The information officer, Claire Smith, is extremely friendly and helpful, and there are very good handouts on how to access CHASS from home, useful tips, and many other items. All handouts are also available at <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca>

It is essential that graduate students check their e-mail regularly preferably every day, and at least two or three times a week. If you have an external account, please get your chass mail forwarded or have it listed as your official e-mail address in the department. It is the primary way the department keeps in touch from seminar notices to last minute lunch invitations to notifying you that your fellowship cheque has arrived!

### *Department Facilities*

The Department has a number of desktop computers in three rooms. The two computers in the graduate mailroom are primarily for quick e-mail and Netscape access. Room 3002 across the hall from the lounge has six desktops, but is also used by undergraduates in the second-year research methods course. Room 3006 is primarily used by research assistants for professors but is open for general graduate use as well. *There are no printing facilities within the department.*

### *The Fourteenth-Floor Lab*

The fourteenth floor of Robarts also features the CHASS computer lab, which boasts twelve PCs and three Mac desktop computers, and two laser printers *with free printing* (although you may have to supply your own paper). This is a very nice professional place to work. However, because it is open to all humanities and social science students, the spaces fill up by ten o'clock each morning and there is a queue of one or two people for the rest of the day. The fourteenth-floor has a very highly developed sense of etiquette - don't talk loudly and wait your turn for a computer terminal.

### *The Information Commons*

The "Information Commons" on the first floor of Robarts Library has about a hundred computers used by all members of the university community, and has a lovely ergonomic design straight from "Star Trek". There are two types of computers - the stand-up terminals have access to the library catalogue, Netscape and e-mail, while the sit-down terminals also have the full slate of Microsoft Office software. Printing is available for 15 cents a page, and there is an *Express Printer* station for printing straight from your own floppy disk. Line-ups are constant after ten o'clock every weekday. As the name might suggest, the Commons is dedicated to universal information access, and they don't care what information. So, while you're typing your dissertation proposal at one terminal, the undergraduate beside you might be playing Quake.

**TIP:** Don't waste time queuing on the first floor just to look up a book! There are lots of Internet-only Pentium computers and "dumb terminals" on the fourth, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth floors.

The dumb terminals are actually the best and quickest way to access the library catalogue. You can even check your CHASS e-mail on them - enter "10 - Internet Services" on the main menu and then "8 - Other Services." Type your library card number, hit enter, and type in "chass.utoronto.ca" at the prompt. You're in!

### **Photocopying and Faxes**

Photocopy machines are scattered throughout campus, mainly in libraries. Most Robarts copiers are on the third and fourth floor around the escalators. A few take coins, but it's cheaper and easier to use your library card (the "T-card" or "Smart Card"). Machines on the first and third floor will credit money to your card.

Graduate students do not have access to Department copiers (if you need to make copies related to your teaching, it's best to go through the course instructor). In Sidney Smith Hall, use the coin machines in the offices of both the Arts and Science Student Union and Association of Part-Time Students. There is also a publishing centre in the basement which does large jobs and special orders such as transparencies or binding

The department will send and receive faxes for Ph.D. students only after they have passed their qualifying exam, and it charges exorbitant fees of about a dollar a page, plus telephone charges.

For cheap copying and faxing, avoid the University completely. There are several private shops around the two intersections of College and St. George, and Bloor and St. George, that charge about half the price of campus photocopiers (usually 5 cents a page). Even cheaper rates are available if you venture farther from the campus.

## **V. Student Groups - or, Acronym City** [\[back to top\]](#)

As a graduate student in Political Science, you automatically belong to the Graduate Students Union (GSU) and the Graduate Association of Students in Political Science (GASPS). GASPS is independent of the GSU but works closely with both it and the teaching assistants' union, CUPE 3902, on issues of interest. Let's work through these acronyms.

### **GSU**

The Graduate Students' Union is housed at 4 Bancroft Avenue. In addition to the GSU offices, there is a decent pub (Sylvester's), a somewhat dilapidated lounge, and a gym that can be rented. They also have a great array of publications and pamphlets on all kinds of graduate student issues (including free copies of the Canadian higher education journal "University Affairs.") The GSU has four full-time staff, including the President, administers the Student Health Plan and various other programs, and is the voice of graduate students at U of T.

Any questions on the compulsory student health plan should be directed to the GSU.

### **GASPS**

In contrast to the multipurpose GSU, GASPS is an entirely volunteer organization whose assets comprise a file cabinet and modest bank account, financed by GSU transfers. We don't know who came up with the "GASPS" moniker, and that's probably for the better.

GASPS has three main functions:

*Building Community.* It's easy to feel anonymous and alone in this huge university and large city. GASPS organizes social events, the buddy system, and generally acts as a catalyst for people to meet and build community in the Department.

*Professional Development.* GASPS organizes or co-sponsors regular seminars on dissertation-writing, academic job-hunting and getting published.

*Advocacy.* GASPS has chummy and not-so-chummy meetings with the Graduate Coordinator and Department Chair on issues of concern to graduate students, particularly over funding, course offerings and space for graduate students. We also sit on most major department committees, and offer advice and support to any student complaints and concerns. We don't deal directly with individual complaints, but we can certainly advise you on the best route to take.

## **CUPE 3902**

If you are a teaching assistant, you are part of the bargaining unit represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3902 - an all-Toronto T.A. local. The union office is located at 227 College, just west of College and St. George and has a website at <http://www.interlog.com/~qp3902>.

Contact the department union steward with any concerns or problems about your TAship. That is, if we have a union steward. Quite often, there is no political science union steward, because our best activists keep getting elected to the union executive or hired as office staff. If this is the case, you can contact the union office directly.

## **VI. Housing and Child Care [\[back to top\]](#)**

### **Child Care at the University of Toronto**

Child care in Toronto is often expensive and hard to find. There are a few day-care centres on campus, usually with long waiting lists. The University has a Family Care Advisor (<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/equity/familycare/fmcmain.htm>) who maintains lists of day-care sites, policies, and other useful advice.

### **Housing**

*Off-Campus*

While not quite Manhattan, Toronto has a typical big-city shortage of decent rental accommodation. Toronto does not have "apartment brokers" who will hunt for you you have to check the listings and visit places yourself. Off-campus housing near the university is particularly in demand, so begin your search early rather than waiting till you get to Toronto in late August or September.

A good place to start is the University of Toronto Housing Service ([http://www.library.utoronto.ca/housing\\_service/index.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/housing_service/index.html)). The Service (physically located in the Koffler Centre at the corner of College and St. George) maintains a big registry of listings and can give you lots of general information and advice on looking for housing. The service is available on-line, but only if you have a current student number. You can also examine the newspaper classifieds; the best listings are in the Toronto Star (<http://www.thestar.com>).

The Housing Service website also features information on average Toronto rents and lease guidelines, at [http://www.library.utoronto.ca/housing\\_service/page5b.htm](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/housing_service/page5b.htm). They will also provide assistance if you're having difficulties with a nasty landlord.

### *On-Campus*

A few undergraduate colleges have rooms available for graduate students. However, with the university's commitment to increase undergrad numbers this too is in short supply. And remember do you really want to live with undergraduates? Contact the colleges directly after June to find out what's available. Knox College also takes graduate student residents. It is a mix of undergraduate, graduate, and theological students, with good food, a great location and a movie-set picturesque building.

The university currently has one graduate residence, the St. George, which is located at the corner of St. George and Bloor streets. Again, apply early! The university is also building a new graduate residence at Hoskin and Spadina. It is not expected to be finished before the beginning of the 1999-2000 academic year, although they are accepting applications for mid-year move-ins.

### *Family Housing*

The University maintains two apartment buildings for U of T students with families (i.e., partner and/or children). They are located on Charles St. W., about a fifteen minute walk from the centre of campus and right by the major intersection of Yonge and Bloor Sts. Super location, although a bit noisy. General information is available at: [http://www.library.utoronto.ca/housing\\_service/page3a.htm](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/housing_service/page3a.htm).

The apartments are not big, but the rents are very good (\$588 for a one-bedroom, utilities included), and hence there's a waiting list. This list is unpredictable some people get in

within a couple of weeks, while others have to wait many months. Two-bedroom units are particularly in demand. Permanent parking is \$65 a month (very good for the location).

The buildings have gone through a lot of renovations recently, leading to noise complaints and general frustration. This has been compounded by the complex management structure the buildings are owned by the provincial government, operated by the city public housing authority and managed day-to-day by a private company (U of T just determines who gets to live there). The University has become increasingly frustrated with the lack of clear accountability and rather ham-handed public relations of the housing authority, and plans to buy the buildings for themselves. The renovations are now ending, and the apartments are still a very good deal.

### *Other*

#### Donships

Each undergraduate college at the University of Toronto has dons. Dons are graduate students who live in college and act as either residence dons or, in the case of Trinity College, academic dons. A residence don is responsible for the functioning of a floor or house in a residence everything from entertainment to discipline. On the other hand, an academic don is a college TA who is hired in a particular field and responsible for tutoring undergraduates having difficulty in any course covered in this general subject area. In return for their services dons are given a room and board allowance at the college and sometimes their phone line and voice mail is paid for too. The colleges will advertise for dons in the *Varsity and Bulletin* in late January or early February each year. However, remember that a donship is a lot of work, and you can easily overcommit yourself by taking such a position.

#### Massey College

Massey College is an independent college and residence affiliated with the University, and located smack-dab in the middle of campus. It looks like a medieval castle (although built in 1961) but within the walls is a wonderful and welcoming graduate community.

The college has different categories of members. Junior Fellows are graduate students currently enrolled at the University of Toronto, and can be either *resident* (i.e., living there) or *non-resident* (living elsewhere but with all the other benefits of college membership). Senior Fellows are UofT faculty. There is also a Quadrangle Society of members from outside the university in a wide variety of fields from business and politics to fundraising and community service. The place is overseen by the Master, John Fraser, a prominent journalist. The founding Master was novelist Robertson Davies.

There are about one hundred Junior Fellows at any one time and the Junior Fellowship is elected each May. Applications and general information are available at the Porter's Lodge at 4 Devonshire Place, or at <http://www.utoronto.ca/~massey/Masseyj.html>. Resident fees are

around \$4000 to \$5000 for eight months (meals included) ; non-residents pay about \$250 a year (meals available at a discount). Non-residents have carrels in the basement (no mean thing on a crowded campus).

The Massey system is a little different from what most graduate students are used to, in that it is a *community* and not just a glorified apartment building. There is a common room with a fireplace, newspaper subscriptions, and bar. The dining hall and meals are exceptional this is not your "mystery meat" high school cafeteria. The College has regular High Table dinners, with prominent visitors, free-flowing wine, etc., and all members wear gowns to every evening meal (although many people wear shorts underneath). Massey also has computer terminals with dedicated net access, word processing and printing facilities. Currently, there are eight graduate students in the department who are Junior Fellows and five professors who are members of the Senior Fellowship so we have a really strong presence.

## **VII. International Students** [\[back to top\]](#)

Approximately 25 to 30 percent of graduate students in the department are international students. They are from as near as Buffalo, New York or as far away as Perth, Australia.

Depending on where you're from, you will have different needs and concerns, but all non-Canadians will have some common concerns over things like visas, international tuition, health care, taxes and other important things. The best place to start is at the International Students' Centre at 44 St George Street. Get in contact with the ISC before you arrive to find out about international students' orientation, health care and, if you need it, to sign up for their airport meeting service. The ISC has many clubs, is constantly organizing events, has an invaluable tax seminar in February and, if things go more than a little wrong, a counsellor. Check it out at: <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/isc/index.htm>.

In 1998, the department appointed an International Students' Advisor who is an additional level of support and information. However, perhaps the best sources of information are upper year international students. Having lived through the relocation experience and then added a few years experience, your fellow students can answer the everyday kind of questions, like: how do you dress for a Toronto winter? We try to pair international students with the buddy system. If you'd like to contact an international student before arriving in Toronto please e-mail the GASPS chair, Mirella Eberts [meberts@chass.utoronto.ca](mailto:meberts@chass.utoronto.ca), and she'll be able to put you in touch with an upper year student.

## **VIII. Funding** [\[back to top\]](#)

Nothing brings grad students together more than the quest for funding. Here's a brief rundown on things worth knowing more detailed information is available at the official graduate program website. Note that funding for M.A. students is very limited.

### *U of T Funding*

The Department awards Fellowships of varying size to Ph.D. students. All applicants and students up to their fourth year are automatically considered for these awards, and decisions are made by the Admissions and Awards Committee. The one condition is that students must have applied for external awards as well. The University of Toronto also has a variety of awards such as the Connaught Fellowships. Again, as long as you have applied for external funding, you will be considered for these automatically.

### *External Awards OGS and SSHRC*

The two external awards for which you must apply (to be considered for U of T funding) are the OGS (Ontario Graduate Scholarships) and SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) Doctoral Fellowships.

These awards are tricky for new students, since the application deadlines are in October of your first year (M.A. or Ph.D.) for the following academic year. There are two obstacles here the first is being able to write a reasonable summary of what it is that you're interested in studying. The second is finding professors who know you well enough after a month to be able to write a recommendation letter for you. While it's ok to have a letter from a professor at your old school, it is advisable to have at least one from UofT. The department runs a funding workshop to assist you in the application process for both these scholarships.

### *Other Awards*

The Graduate Office sends out notices of awards by e-mail from time to time. As well, the School of Graduate Studies (63 St. George St.) maintains a website of scholarships, bursaries, travel grants, etc. available from around the world. As you are probably aware, there are many awards out there, and it's a tedious job sifting through them all. But that's the way to do it!

## **IX . Surviving Your First Year in the Ph.D. Program** [\[back to top\]](#)

The first term is definitely the most important and probably one of the toughest. However, there are ways of approaching your first term so that it becomes more manageable. This section is intended to help you avoid some of the most common pitfalls.

The key to getting through it is to be organized, choose courses carefully, and realize that everybody else in the first year is having a pretty similar experience no matter how blasé they are trying to appear. The first thing is to work out which courses you're taking so that you don't end up losing time by switching courses after a few weeks or months. Make certain you meet with the Graduate Director in September to sort out these matters.

One of the most important things to remember is that you do not need to have your dissertation topic worked out from the very beginning of your program, nor do you have to start studying for your qualifying exams. Remember, your first year is an enormous learning curve. For many it's a time to decide whether or not this is the right choice. Don't be afraid to change your mind, but do talk to someone—the Graduate Director, your advisor, a professor, or a fellow-graduate student. Most people feel like frauds for a long time in graduate school but it's important to realize that this is not a unique feeling and in 99.9% of cases it's not true.

As mentioned earlier, the department is very large and sometimes can be overwhelming. The best way to combat this lost feeling is to get involved. GASPS has its first meeting in mid-September and, along with the other orientation events, it's usually the best starting place for meeting people. Volunteer for a position—most of them are not too onerous and by being an internal rep or a GSU rep, you get involved in the life of the university very quickly and begin to recognize faces around the department and campus in no time at all. In past years students have organized regular coffee meetings or dinner groups; chances are if you're interested in something, someone else in the department is too, so send an e-mail on the student listserv.

It's important to remember that you need a life outside of graduate school. It's really easy to put real life on hold when you feel swamped with readings and essays. However, this work-work-work attitude only increases the sense of isolation. Come to department seminars and parties, work in the communal spaces so that you see a friendly face, or make a reading group in your core course so that you can get together and discuss the readings before class.

### **Life After First Year**

At the end of first year, usually in August, although sometimes in May, Ph.D. students take their qualifying exams. These vary from sub-field to sub-field. For example, the Comparative-Developing exam is a two hour end-of-course exam while the IR qualifying exam is a three hour comprehensive survey of major works and philosophy of social science. The first tip here is to listen to your core course advisors, take their advice seriously and keep in contact with them over the summer.

Once you pass your qualifying exam (don't worry if you don't pass the first time—you get another chance) you will either have course work to complete or be faced with the task of

writing your dissertation proposal. The first step is to choose a supervisor and get advice from your supervisor on choosing your committee. Like all other things, do your research: find out how many students your potential supervisor has, how quickly they return work, and when they're going on sabbatical during the time you'll be working with them. It's also good to get the low-down on supervisors from students already working with them. Contact information for other students can be found in the GASPS Student Directory which is distributed in late September.

The form and content of dissertation proposals vary from supervisor to supervisor. Some are ten page think-pieces while others are comprehensive papers with detailed lit-reviews, well developed structure, and a timetable for completion. The department guide on dissertations says that they take a month to write but our experience has been that they take a lot longer. Don't kill or flagellate yourself over the proposal it's always going to be imperfect, and its resemblance to your actual dissertation might be minimal.

Once the dissertation proposal has been approved by your supervisor and committee, it's time to write the dissertation. The most difficult thing is to stay motivated and focused on what is essentially the academic equivalent of running a marathon you're on your own. There are things that you can do to minimize the downs of academic life. One is to organize a dissertation group with people who are at a similar stage to you. This group can be as formal or informal as you like the important thing is to be able to meet, talk through your ideas, and get outside feedback on your written work.

## **X. On Being a Political Scientist: Professional Associations and Conferences** [\[back to top\]](#)

It's important to remember that grad school is not an end in itself, but a beginning or launching pad. Therefore, it's important to get involved in the wider political science community to begin building a network for research and eventually for post-doc and job opportunities, inside or outside of academia.

At the Ph.D. level, you're well-advised to become a member of at least one of the Big Three: The Canadian Political Science Association, the American Political Science Association and the International Studies Association. You should also look at associations in your sub-field(s).

The Canadian Political Science Association (<http://www.uottawa.ca/associations/cpsa-acsp>) is the major association of political scientists in Canada, and its annual conference is in June every year (except for 2000, when it joins with the International Political Science Association meetings in Quebec City in July). Obviously it's the place to be for Canadian politics and anything related to Canadian politics. It also has a fairly active political theory section. Student membership is \$35 a year and includes a subscription to the Canadian Journal of

Political Science. It's relatively easy to present a paper in Canadian politics or political theory at the CPSA meetings the deadline for proposals is November 1 of the previous year.

The American Political Science Association (<http://www.apsanet.org>) is the big one. Its scope is all-encompassing and its annual meetings are huge. For annual membership of \$47 (U.S.) (\$32 plus international postage fees of \$15), you get the American Political Science Review and the very valuable PS:Political Science and Politics (which is the best source of general information on the discipline). APSA also has various sub-fields you can join, at a price, to receive various extra services and publications. There are few grad student papers at the APSA meetings, but you can probably get a "poster session" where you create a visual presentation of your work and people come around and ask about it. Deadlines are November 15 for the August meetings.

The International Studies Association (<http://www.isanet.org>) is 'the' association for most IR and IPE students. Meetings are in March; proposal deadlines are June 1. Student membership is \$25 (U.S.).

The department encourages conference attendance and participation where possible. It's good for them to have a profile, and good for us in terms of getting feedback for thesis work and expanding CVs. The department will provide financial assistance for a limited number of conferences each year for students presenting papers. Usually the department will give assistance for students presenting conference papers. Funding usually maxes out at \$500 and is limited to one paper per student a year. Conference notices are usually posted around the department and sent out on e-mail on a weekly basis. As a student you need to take the initiative: no one will ever ask you to a conference. *The Department does not fund conference attendance alone: you must present a paper.*

## **XI. Real Life** [\[back to top\]](#)

Maintaining a semblance of real life is vitally important in the Ph.D. program. Remembering to do things that other people do, or you once did before you became a doctoral student, lets you get a bit of perspective on those abstruse readings. Toronto is also a wonderful city. While it may appear a little cold and forbidding at the beginning for those coming from elsewhere, a little bit of digging unearths blocks and blocks of good, cheap restaurants and too many cultural things to do in four years.

Below, we've listed some of our favourite pubs, cafes, and other places to hang out or explore. The two free weekly entertainment papers *Eye* and *Now* (both available around campus), and <http://www.toronto.com> have excellent listings of things to do around Toronto.

**The Duke of York** on Prince Arthur at Bedford. Laid back English pub. Extensively populated by the UofT community. Pints around \$5.00 and heart-attack worthy Aussie fries \$6.50

**The Bedford Academy** opposite the Duke. Slightly more upmarket than the Duke of York with more of a mixed crowd.

**Greg's Ice cream** Bloor Street, opposite Philosopher's Walk. The only place to buy ice cream. Flavours change every day. Famous for green tea ice cream and ale ice cream. Prices start at \$2.00 for a kid's serving and go on up from there, depending on how much your tummy can take!

**Gypsy Co-op Café** 880 Queen Street West. Fun and happy restaurant, candy store, and swing club (upstairs Thursday nights). Slightly pricier than the other places we've included; entrees are around \$14 but entirely worth it for a special dinner. Exceptional early in the week, but you need reservations and bit of a Queen St attitude for Friday and Saturday nights.

**The Art Gallery of Ontario:** Solid permanent collection and happy recipient of most major touring exhibitions in North America. Pay what you can.

**Toronto Symphony Orchestra:** Student Rush tickets cost \$10 and go on sale about 1.5 hours before the concert. Really great seats, except on President's Evening.

**National Ballet of Canada:** Student Rush tickets cost \$19 and go on sale 2 hours before the performance.

**Dominion Supermarket** on Bloor, west of Spadina: Conveniently located near campus! But tends to be a little pricey and the produce can be less than fresh.

**Super Loblaws** at Christy and Davenport: Shopping here is fun shopping. Huge supermarket with good produce, fresh fish and a Marche market.

**Canadian Tire** on Yonge, north of Bloor: The only good cheap store for all those household things you need that is located downtown. Plus your Canadian Tire money is considered to be legal tender at the bakery at Kensington Market.

**Kensington Market:** An excellent place to shop, this is a neighbourhood of tiny stores just west of Spadina and south of College. It's cheap, sometimes weird, and there are always free samples at the bakeries and cheese shops. Also has a wealth of second hand clothes stores - a good place to buy a winter coat if you're from a warmer climate.

## **XII. The End For Now** [\[back to top\]](#)

Well, we've said all we can for now. There's lots of things we could have said but missed or didn't have time to do. But we hope this guide has been helpful, and we look forward to answering your additional questions when we welcome you at U of T!

This document was prepared by Jonathan Malloy with major contributions from Jenna Sindle. Joan Kallis and Margaret "Eagle Eye" Hepburn both gave valuable additional comments and suggestions. Date: July 15, 1999.

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