

Public Policy

View Political Science Department website

Public policy decisions touch nearly every aspect of daily life, although we often fail to recognize or understand their impact. Daily, we are exposed to the policy proposals and preferences of those in or seeking office and they are in turn influenced by the preferences of the public and the pressures of organized interest groups. Given the impact that policy choices can have on our lives, it is essential that we have an understanding of how policy choices are made and how we might evaluate those choices. Why do we need this knowledge? Policymakers are more responsive to the demands and interests of an active and informed public.

The purpose of the public policy major is to equip students with sufficient competence in analytical skills supported by social science theory to prepare them for graduate or professional study. Majors should be sufficiently prepared to seek positions in organizations which deal with public policy issues: business firms, trade associations, lobbying organizations, and government agencies. The major provides students with the factual, analytical, practical, and theoretical skills necessary for contemporary policy design, implementation, and evaluation.

Public policy is interdisciplinary in nature; it is affected by social and economic conditions; political as well as cultural values; and the structure of government. The study of public policy requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines to understand and critically assess public problems and potential solutions. The public policy major draws upon the knowledge and experience usually available through separate majors such as anthropology, economics, sociology, and political science. Only through a coordinated exposure to these fields can a student understand how they interact in the world of public policy. The interdisciplinary nature of the major makes it a good choice for students considering a double major in related disciplines such as political science or economics.

Public policy students may choose from two disciplinary tracks within the public policy major – American public policy or International public policy. A student who chooses to major in public policy should select an adviser from the political science or public policy faculty, and in

conjunction with the adviser, plan a program that is appropriate to the needs and objectives of the students.

Students who have questions about the public policy major should consult Todd Eberly, coordinator of public policy studies.

Learning Outcomes

- Distinguish the processes by which policies are made
- Identify policy-makers and stakeholders and their roles in creating Public Policy policies
- Detect Public Policy problems that are in need of policy solutions
- Demonstrate and assess the feasibility of potential solutions to Public Policy problems
- Judge the effectiveness of policies using quantitative methods
- Create written policy proposals and analyses
- Design oral presentations of policy proposals and analyses
- Acknowledge the concerns of those affected by Public Policy problems and policy solutions

Degree Requirements for the Major

General College Requirements

General College Requirements, including the following requirements to satisfy the major:

Twelve (12) Credit Hours of Introductory Courses in the Social Sciences

Twelve (12) credit hours of introductory courses in the social sciences. Students must earn a grade of C- or better in each required major course and maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 or better in these required courses:

- POSC 100: Introduction to Politics
- ECON 102: Principles of Microeconomics
- ECON 103: Principles of Macroeconomics

Twenty-eight (28) Credit Hours in the Student's Selected Disciplinary Track

Twenty-eight (28) credit hours in the student's selected disciplinary track. If only one course is listed next to a letter, then that specific course is required. Where a choice of courses is provided, students must select one course from the options provided. Students should note

that some core courses are prerequisites for certain elective courses available under this major. Students should consider their elective options when selecting their core courses.

American Public Policy:

- POSC 201: American Politics
- ECON 251: Intermediate Macroeconomics, or ECON 252: Intermediate Microeconomics
- ECON 253: Economic Statistics, or POSC 200: Scope and Methods of Political Science
- POSC 311: Public Policy
- POSC 315: Policy Evaluation
- POSC 367: Public Administration, POSC 330: Congress, or POSC 312: State and Community Politics, or SOCI 330: Sociology of Organizations

Four (4) credit hours of approved American Public Policy electives

International Public Policy:

- POSC 252: Comparative Politics, or POSC 269: International Politics
- ECON 251: Intermediate Macroeconomics, or ECON 252: Intermediate Microeconomics
- ECON 253: Economic Statistics, or POSC 200: Scope and Methods of Political Science
- POSC 311: Public Policy
- POSC 315: Policy Evaluation
- POSC 320: International Political Economy, or ECON 318: International Finance, or ECON 356: International Economics, or ECON 360: Comparative Economics

Four (4) credit hours of approved International Public Policy electives

Senior Experience in Public Policy (eight credit hours)

- Eight (8) credit hours of St. Mary's Project, or
- Four (4) credit hours of PPOL/POSC 408 (or other approved senior seminar) with a senior experience paper and four (4) credit hours of electives in the student's selected concentration.

Senior Experience

Each student must complete an eight-credit St. Mary's Project in public policy or write a senior experience paper for the course PPOL/POSC 408, "Studies in Public Policy" (cross-listed POSC 408). (Please see the course descriptions for PPOL 408, "Studies in Public Policy" and PPOL 494 for St. Mary's Projects.) The student who chooses to write a senior experience paper instead of a St. Mary's Project will file a declaration of intent with the course instructor and the public policy coordinator by the end of the sixth week during the semester the

student enrolls in "Studies in Public Policy." Guidelines for the senior experience paper will be given to the student by the instructor. Successful completion of the course shall constitute completion of the senior experience requirement. (This course also meets the senior experience requirement for political science.) Double majors should consult with their adviser for additional information.

Field Experience and Independent Study

The 48 credit hours of major requirements may include field experience and independent study approved by the coordinator of the public policy major.

List of Elective Courses by Concentration

American Public Policy

- ECON 325: Urban Economics and Urban Issues
- ECON 350: Environmental Economics
- ECON 351: Industrial Organization and Regulation
- ECON 355: Labor Economics
- ECON 357: Money and Banking
- ECON 359: Public Sector Economics
- ENST 450: Studies in Environmental Policy and Law
- POSC 312: State and Community Politics
- POSC 330: Congress
- POSC 351: Constitutional Law I
- POSC 367: Public Administration
- POSC 371: American Political Thought I
- POSC 371: American Political Thought II
- POSC 451: The Supreme Court and Public Policy
- POSC 461: Studies in American Politics*
- SOCI 300: Sociology of Organizations
- SOCI 347: Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
- SOCI 365: Social Stratification

International Public Policy

- ECON 318: International Finance
- ECON 360: Comparative Economic Systems
- ECON 372: Economics of Developing Countries

- POSC 320: International Political Economy
- POSC 333: Asian Politics
- POSC 405: Democratization
- POSC 462: Studies in Comparative Politics*
- POSC 468: Studies in International Relations*

Courses Approved for Either Concentration

- ANTH 341: Economic and Ecological Anthropology
- ECON 350: Environmental Economics
- ECON 354: Natural Resources Economics
- ECON 363: Political Economy
- ECON 459: Senior Seminar in Economics*
- POSC 364: US Foreign Policy
- POSC 385: Topics in Pol Sci or Pub Policy*
- SOCI 302: Medical Sociology
- SOCI 312: Economic Sociology
- SOCI 355: Demography
- SOCI 490: Senior Seminar*

* Where the topic of the course is appropriate. (Appropriateness of the topic will be determined by the coordinator of the public policy major.)

Faculty

Susan Grogan (Department Chair)