



Accelerated 90-Credit Bachelor of Arts in Applied Public Policy Analysis



FOUNDATIONAL APPLIED PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS COURSES

HOW PUBLIC POLICY WORKS

Public policy exists in every corner of contemporary society and affects every facet of our daily lives. In this course students explore where federal, state, and local policies come from and how policy analysts working in the private, non-profit, and government sectors influence the U.S. policymaking process. In addition to readings and class discussions, the course engages students through experiential learning visits to organizations and institutions in the Washington DC area where policies are invented, evaluated, debated, decided, and put into operation.

POLITICAL POWER AND AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY

This course offers an introduction to American public policy and written communication in political science. Students explore key questions about political power and public policy, learn the writing conventions of political science, and refine their written communication and information literacy skills. Through examination of the American public policymaking system and prominent issues in American public policy, as well as instruction on problem definition, issue analysis, and policy proposal, students come to understand how policy is made and how to participate effectively in the process.

IMPLEMENTING AND MANAGING PUBLIC POLICIES: PUTTING POLICY INTO ACTION

This course studies implementation, the art and science of putting public policies into action. Through strategic management of resources, public organizations, and their partners, implementors create policy delivery systems designed to achieve stated goals. Students learn that successful implementation requires measuring performance, facilitating evaluation, and navigating the competing incentives of a range of stakeholders including political actors, administrative entities, and the citizens the policy is intended to serve.

INTRODUCTION TO POLICY RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS

This course develops research and statistical methods essential for policy analysis and evidence-based decision-making. Students gain an understanding of the linear regression model and its limitations, while learning data management and coding skills in support of policy research. The course covers descriptive, predictive, and causal analyses, focusing both on modeling technique as well as effective interpretation and communication of findings.

SPA's Bachelor of Arts in Applied Public Policy Analysis is a selective, 90-credit program designed to provide students with applied training in the theory and practice of public policy analysis within an accelerated undergraduate degree format. The curriculum emphasizes quantitative reasoning, evidence-based analysis, and the institutional and political contexts of public policymaking. Students receive preparation for a variety of careers in the public, non-profit, and for-profit sectors, as well as for graduate study. Eligible students can complete the program in three years. **Read on to find out if this undergraduate major can help you work towards your career goals.**

STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

- Students may study abroad during the summer between their first and second year or second and third year.
- Students may also choose to study abroad during a Fall or Spring semester in the second or third year of the program.
- Students may apply up to 9 credits from study abroad towards their degree; these 9 credits can also count toward major requirements, with approval from the Program Director.

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Washington, DC provides a variety of opportunities for internships in policy analysis; students are strongly encouraged to complete an internship.
- Students can earn up to 6 credits from internships toward their degree; these 6 credits also count toward major requirements, with approval from the Program Director.
- Students should complete at least 30 credit hours at AU before registering for an internship for credit.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

- All students complete two research methods courses, providing a great foundation for further work with faculty: Introduction to Policy Research Methods, and Artificial Intelligence and Information Literacy for Public Policy.
- Students learn research design, regression analysis, information literacy and scholarly research skills, and the ethical and responsible use of AI in the policy context. Further coursework provides skills in survey design, geographical information systems, data science, and causal inference.
- Interested students have opportunities to work with faculty mentors and their original research projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how public policies are developed, funded, implemented, and evaluated, and how government institutions and stakeholders influence policy outcomes.
- Use quantitative methods and data analysis to investigate policy issues and assess the quality and relevance of evidence for decision-making.
- Critically evaluate policy alternatives and develop evidence-based recommendations that balance data, political and administrative context, economics, and public values.
- Apply data, technology, and emerging analytical tools—including AI—ethically and effectively to support public policy analysis.
- Produce and communicate professional-quality policy analyses in a variety of formats that translate evidence into clear, actionable insights for diverse audiences.

QUESTIONS?

Contact:

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