

"After being in this program, I've learned to look at numbers with a new appreciation. I believe numbers hold power. Now I see how data analysis cuts straight to the core message and efficacy of a policy."

- **Tamari Ramishvili**

Master of Public
Policy, 2017



Areas of Concentration:

Master of Public Policy

Department of Public Administration and Policy
2024-25



SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

Mission Statement

The mission of the **AU Master of Public Policy** program is to prepare students to advance the quality of policy making in a variety of institutional settings in the U.S. and abroad by instilling a blend of analytical, contextual, ethical, and substantive skills and knowledge.

Goals/Objectives - We will achieve our mission by preparing students to:

1. **Formulate and evaluate** public policy and communicate analysis effectively to relevant stakeholders.
2. **Address societal problems with policy analysis** in the context of political/policy processes in the U.S. and abroad.
3. **Improve the allocation of resources** using sound, evidence-based evaluation of the costs and benefits of policy alternatives.
4. **Incorporate a range of values** into policy analysis, including democratic/constitutional values, respect for the diversity of people and perspectives in the policy process, and ethical principles including commitment to upholding the public trust.

For the foreseeable future, the United States and other governments worldwide face the challenge of discerning how best to harness the energy and expertise of public servants, the passion and commitment of nonprofit organizations, and the dynamism and creativity of markets in the pursuit of democratic and constitutionally informed public purposes.

Through our teaching and unique location in Washington, D.C., we seek to help meet this challenge by enhancing the knowledge, professional skills, and leadership potential of our students in their public service careers.

We educate students entering, engaged in, and interacting with government agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

We treat administration and policy as interrelated subjects strongly influenced by the values of public service and democratic constitutionalism.

Through our research and civic involvement, we seek to enhance what is practiced and taught in our field.

We seek to attract a diverse group of talented students. We encourage their active involvement in learning, research, and professional activity and strive to enhance their appreciation of the responsibilities of public service.

MPP Program Core

MPP students take a total of ten required courses plus three concentration courses. Eight of the ten required courses are specifically prescribed, including a gateway course (Foundations of Policy Analysis, PUAD 606) at the beginning of the program and a capstone course (Policy Practicum, PUAD 688) at the end. Students must also choose one course from a list of applied policy analysis offerings and one from a list covering the governmental context. The remainder of the MPP degree program is composed of concentration courses and an internship for pre-service students. The total program is comprised of 13 courses or 39 credit hours.

Students may test out of the basic statistics course (Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I, PUAD 601) via an online waiver exam administered before the program begins. Students with a B or better in Intermediate Microeconomics from their undergraduate programs may also waive out of the Economics for Policy Analysis course (PUAD 670) upon consultation with their academic advisor and approval of the Program Director. In both cases, students will substitute other MPP course offerings in place of those required courses.

Required Courses

1. PUAD 601 Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I (3 credits)
2. PUAD 602 Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis II (3 credits) *(PUAD 601)
3. PUAD 603 Public Policy Process (3 credits)
4. PUAD 606 Foundations of Policy Analysis (3 credits)
5. PUAD 631 Financing Government Services (3 credits) *(PUAD 630 or 670)
6. PUAD 670 Economics for Policy Analysis (3 credits)
7. PUAD 684 Organizational Analysis (3 credits)
8. Applied Policy Analysis (at least one of the following):
 - PUAD 604 Public Program Evaluation (3 credits) *(PUAD 602)
 - PUAD 671 Cost Benefit Analysis (3 credits) *(PUAD 630 or 670)
 - PUAD 672 Advanced Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis (3 credits) *(PUAD 602)
9. Legal, Organizational, and Ethical Context (at least one of the following):
 - PUAD 616 Legal Basis of Public Administration (3 credits)
 - PUAD 617 Project Management (3 credits)
 - PUAD 619 Ethical Issues in Public Policy (3 credits)
 - PUAD 650 Leadership in a Changing Workplace (3 credits)
10. PUAD 688 Policy Practicum (3 credits)

*indicates prerequisite

Concentration and Internship

Students take three concentration courses (9 credits); concentrations are listed on the following pages. Pre-service students are expected to complete an internship.¹ They may earn 3 credits by enrolling in the Internship Seminar (PUAD 691). This course replaces one concentration course. Alternatively, students can complete non-credit internships. Academic advisor approval is required for all internships.

Capstone Experience

Assignments in the capstone course (Policy Practicum, PUAD 688), including a major policy analysis paper for a client and a “48-hour exercise,” fulfill the university requirement for a capstone experience. The capstone course should be taken in the final semester of study and is only offered during the Fall and Spring semesters.

¹ Students with significant professional experience may apply to waive the internship requirement, with Program Director approval. Students opting for a non-credit internship must complete a verification survey.

MPP Areas of Concentration

Each student constructs his or her area of concentration, suited to his or her individual career goals. Students should consult department faculty and their academic advisor for help in selecting concentrations. Interviews with alumni and practitioners may also help students identify suitable subjects. Some students select established concentrations; others assemble courses around their own interests and educational needs.

Within its 85-member faculty, the School of Public Affairs has many scholars and practitioners with expertise in various public policy areas. Drawing on that expertise, the MPP program advertises 12 areas of concentration. Students wishing to construct an area of concentration or take courses not listed on the following pages must have their selections approved by their academic advisor. Concentration courses should complement each other and lead to an advanced level of study. Please note that while the concentration courses listed in this booklet are routinely offered, availability during a particular semester is not guaranteed.

Most students complete 9 credit hours in their area of concentration. This may include up to three credits of SAMI classes. Students who waived out of a course will take additional electives in lieu of the waived course. The listed areas of concentration for the MPP degree program are as follows:

1. Social Policy
2. Health Policy
3. Education Policy
4. Environmental Policy
5. Public Financial Management
6. Global Governance and Management
7. Nonprofit Policy, Management, and Leadership
8. Public Management
9. Advanced Policy Analysis
10. Criminal Justice Policy
11. Race, Policy, and Administration
12. Cyber Policy and Management

MPP students may also develop a customized concentration with the approval of their academic advisor. This can be a “mixed concentration”, with courses drawn from suggested courses of two or more concentrations listed here, and/or a “create-your-own” concentration, a set of any 3 elective courses approved by their advisor. Students may self-title their customized concentration. Please note that no MPP concentration will be posted to a student’s official transcript. However, students are highly encouraged to list their area of concentration on their resumes to signal their areas of focus and expertise to employers.

In addition, by including courses taken through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area, students may be able to develop a concentration in an area not offered at AU. For additional information, consult your academic advisor.

Please note that while we *strongly encourage* students to choose a concentration, **students are not required to name a concentration** at any point during their time in the MPP program.

1. SOCIAL POLICY

Faculty Advisors: Professors Taryn Morrissey and Valentina Duque

This concentration introduces students to issues related to the design of the social safety net of programs designed to improve economic mobility within the United States. This coverage includes a range of programs, policies, and reforms primarily targeted towards families with children. The concentration broadly exposes students to education, health, food assistance, housing, and income support programs designed to promote upward economic mobility and economic security. Several courses within the concentration address current issues in social policy and poverty studies, while providing important historical context.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings

- PUAD 609 Topics in Public Management:
 - State and Local Management (3)
- PUAD 681 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Healthcare Policy (3)
 - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)
 - Child and Family Policy (3)
 - Education and the American Policy System (3)
 - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
 - Race, Policy, and Administration (3)
 - Housing Policy (3)
 - Health Economics and Policy (3)
 - Politics and Policy in DC (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- JLC 636 Reproduction and the Law (3)
- JLC 638 Race and Justice in America (3)
- JLC 651 Drugs, Crime, and Public Policy (3)
- SIS 648 Gender and Development (3)
- SOCY 684 Seminar in Public Sociology (3)

*indicates prerequisite

2. HEALTH POLICY

Faculty Advisors: Professors Taryn Morrissey, Erdal Tekin and Brandyn Churchill

This concentration offers an understanding of the historical, political, economic, and policy context of the U.S. health care and public health systems and those around the world. Courses are designed to provide a framework for and sharpen the analytical skills necessary for developing and evaluating health-related policies and interventions.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Health Policy (3)
 - Health Economics and Policy (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- JLC 636 Reproduction and the Law (3)
- JLC 651 Drugs, Crime, and Public Policy (3)
- HIST 669 The History of Medicine in the U.S. from Smallpox to AIDS (3)
- SIS 635 Topics in Development Management:
 - Health in the Developing World (3)
 - Intro to Global Health (3)

*indicates prerequisite

3. EDUCATION POLICY

Faculty Advisors: Professors Seth Gershenson, Dave Marcotte, Claudia Persico, and Jordan Matsudaira

This concentration allows students to gain an appreciation for the issues faced by policymakers and analysts working on education and related issues in the U.S. and abroad. Students in this concentration will learn to critically evaluate research on education policy while being introduced to a variety of education policy topics, such as inequalities in education, school finance, health and education, charters and vouchers, teachers and accountability, access to higher education, and early childhood programs.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 609 Topics in Public Management:
 - State and Local Management (3)
- PUAD 681 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Education and the American Policy System (3)
 - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)
 - Child and Family Policy (3)
 - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
 - Race, Policy, and Administration (3)
 - Housing Policy (3)
 - Politics and Policy in DC (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- JLC 638 Race and Justice in America (3)
- SOCY 684 Seminar in Public Sociology (3)

4. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Faculty Advisors: Professors Dan Fiorino, Claudia Persico and Todd Eisenstadt

The concentration in science, technology, and environmental policy examines how public officials bring to bear the full presence of science onto critical issues confronting society. While emphasizing global climate change and environmental protection, the concentration also addresses policy issues arising from pandemics, changes in computer technology, robotics, genetics, energy production, national security, and space exploration. Faculty working in the specialization give special attention to ethical concerns, the interplay of culture and technology, and the use of science to promote innovation, counter anti-science feelings, and devise new forms of governance.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Environmental Sustainability and Public Policy (3)
 - Public Policies for the Environment and Energy (3)
 - Regulatory Policy and Management (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- SIS 620 Studies in Global Environmental Politics – Various Topics
 - Global Climate Change Politics (3)
- SIS 649 Environment and Development (3)
- SIS 660 Environment and Politics (3)

*indicates prerequisite

5. PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors David Schwegman and Marquise McGraw

This concentration is designed for students wishing to understand the manner in which efforts to finance public sector activities affect public policy. Public finance provides a framework for understanding policy choices and the implications of program structural features within the context of economic responses of service populations, the general public, and policymakers.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 604 Public Program Evaluation (3) *(PUAD 602)
- PUAD 633 Budgeting and Financial Management (3)
- PUAD 671 Cost-Benefit Analysis (3) *(PUAD 630 or 670)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Health Economics and Policy (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- ACCT 607 Financial Accounting (3)
- FIN 630 Financial Analysis: Concepts and Applications (3)

*Indicates prerequisite

6. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors Khaldoun AbouAssi and Sheeling Neo

Students who wish to work on policy as it relates to global issues, particularly those affecting the developing world, will benefit from this concentration. Topics include the unique challenges of administering public programs in developing countries and the methods by which development projects are carried out, the role of foreign aid on good governance, the interplay of various actors involved in development (such as NGOs and INGOs), and intergovernmental finance. Students can choose from traditional course offerings in development within the School of Public Affairs and the School of International Service, as well as courses from other university departments.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 608 Comparative Administrative Systems (3)
- PUAD 613 Global Governance and Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 685 Development Governance and Management (3)

Courses offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- SIS 636 Power and Practice in Development (3)
- SIS 637 International Development (3)
- SIS 642 Intercultural Relations (3)
- SIS 649 Environment and Development (3)
- SIS 731 Economic Development (3)*
- ECON 661 Survey of Economic Development (3)

*indicates prerequisites

7. NONPROFIT POLICY, MANAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP

Faculty Advisors: Professors Khaldoun AbouAssi and Lewis Faulk

This concentration addresses the strategic organizational challenges that policymakers and analysts confront when using nonprofit organizations to implement public policy.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 613 Global Governance and Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 615 Public-Private Partnerships (3)
- PUAD 650 Leadership in a Changing Workplace (3)
- PUAD 681 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 682 Nonprofit Resource Development (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Nonprofits and Public Policy (3)
 - Development Governance and Management (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- ACCT 607 Financial Accounting (3)
- COMM 642 Strategic Communication Leadership & Management (3)***
- FIN 630 Financial Analysis: Concepts and Applications (3)
- MGMT 609 Management of Organizations and Human Capital (3)**

*indicates prerequisite

**only certain sections may be open to MPP students

***Permission of COMM department may be required, please contact your advisor

8. PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors Jocelyn Johnston, Anna Amirkhanyan, and Ken Meier

Students who wish to combine their study of public policy with a deeper understanding of public administration have the opportunity to take a selection of management courses from the MPA degree. Such courses amplify lessons contained in the required MPP course on Organizational Analysis by examining issues that affect the implementation of public policies.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 608 Comparative Administrative Systems (3)
- PUAD 609 State and Local Management (3)
- PUAD 615 Public-Private Partnerships (3)
- PUAD 616 Legal Basis of Public Administration (3)
- PUAD 617 Project Management (3)
- PUAD 650 Leadership in a Changing Workplace (3)
- PUAD 665 Managing Human Capital Assets (3)
- PUAD 681 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Race, Policy and Administration (3)
 - Regulatory Policy and Management (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- COMM 642 Strategic Communication Leadership & Management (3)***
- MGMT 609 Management of Organizations and Human Capital (3)**

**Only certain sections may be open to MPP students.

***Permission of COMM department may be required, please contact your advisor.

9. ADVANCED POLICY ANALYSIS

Faculty Advisors: Professors Seth Gershenson, Dave Marcotte, Valentina Duque, and Marquise McGraw

This concentration aims to equip students with a set of cutting-edge, quantitative skills that can be used to conduct policy-relevant data analysis. Coursework includes training in advanced quantitative methods, program evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis. Students who wish to work in roles such as research assistants, research associates, program evaluators, data analysts, or who are considering advanced study in public policy or a similar field, may find this concentration to be of interest.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 604 Public Program Evaluation (3) *(PUAD 602)
- PUAD 671 Cost-Benefit Analysis (3) *(PUAD 630 or 670)
- PUAD 672 Advanced Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis (3)
*(PUAD 602)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Qualitative Methods (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

*indicates prerequisite

10. CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY

Faculty Advisor: Professor Lynn Addington

This concentration provides students with an understanding of the policy and legal issues that policymakers and analysts encounter within the area of criminal justice. An emphasis is placed on constitutional criminal procedure under the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution as well as on impermissible conditions of confinement and remedial law under the Eighth Amendment. Basic aspects of constitutional tort law and administrative law are also covered as they impact the administration of criminal justice.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings:

- PUAD 616 Legal Basis of Public Administration (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- JLC 602 Legal Theory (3)
- JLC 608 The Constitution and Criminal Procedure (3)
- JLC 609 Criminological Theory (3)
- JLC 635 Gender and the Law (3)
- JLC 651 Drugs, Crime, and Public Policy (3)
- JLC 696 Cybercrime & Cyber-Enabled Crime (3)

11. RACE, POLICY, AND ADMINISTRATION

Faculty Advisors: Professors Derek Hyra and Valentina Duque

This concentration enables students to examine the role of race and ethnicity in public policy and administration. Topics of study include: racial disparities in policy making, implementation, public management, and outcomes for citizens at the local, state, and federal levels; diversity and inclusion strategies in policymaking and public administration; and the role of race in key policy areas (including urban, housing, justice, health, and education policy). Several courses also explore race as a social construct and the political, historical, and economic roots of racialization.

Required Course:

- PUAD 685 Race, Policy and Administration (3)

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:

- PUAD 609 State and Local Management (3)*
- PUAD 685 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 665 Managing Human Capital Assets (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
 - Race, Policy, and Administration (3)
 - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
 - DC Politics and Policy (3)*
 - Education Policy in America (3)*
 - Housing Policy (3)*
 - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)*
 - Nonprofits and Public Policy (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- JLC 610 Justice and Public Policy: Controversial Issues (3)
- JLC 638 Race and Justice in America (3)
- JLC 651 Drugs, Crime, and Public Policy (3)*
- EDU 611 Social Theory and Educational Practice (3)*
- SOCY 653 Intersectionality: Theory/Practice (3)
- SOCY 661 Racial Inequality and Social Transformation (3)

*While race is not the predominant focus of these courses, it plays a critical role throughout the course.

12. CYBER POLICY AND MANAGEMENT (9 CREDITS)

Faculty Advisor: Professor Sasha O'Connell

This concentration prepares students to understand, analyze, and manage the dynamics of cyber policies that are critical to effective governance across public agencies, levels of government, and in nonprofit organizations and contracting agencies. The concentration courses will include the history, development, and management of U.S. cyber policy, and a range of frameworks that can be used to facilitate and protect the flow of information and communication through sound cyber policies designed to enhance the success of organizations and public services.

Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements (9 credits):

- PUAD 617 Project Management (3)

Courses not offered by the Department of Public Administration and Policy may not be offered regularly and are subject to change. Please consult your advisor if you are interested in taking one of these courses.

- JLC 665 Who's Who in U.S. Cyber Policy (3)
- JLC 683 Cyber Threats and Security (3)
- JLC 696 Cybercrime and Cyber-Enabled Crime (3)

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