Political Science, M.A. in Public Policy

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Degrees Awarded
M.A. in Public Policy

Website
http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/polisci/ma_public_policy.html

Political Economy and Public Policy

The concentration in political economy and public policy emphasizes the interaction between politics and the institutions (both public and private) that shape economic policies. Students choosing this concentration analyze important issues by focusing on decision-making and organizational behavior as shaped by individual incentives and institutional structures. In addition to the foundation course in public policy required of all students, elective seminars in this field include policy evaluation, organizational decision-making, bureaucracy, regulation, institutional analysis, and urban politics.

The faculty have published research on issues such as the economic development of metropolitan areas, the political economy of suburbs, political controls over regulatory bureaucracies, and citizen responses to tax policies. A sample of other ongoing research projects in which incoming students may become involved include the effect of market-like incentives in school choice, subsidy flows in the European Union, the role of social capital in environmental decision making, and regulation of business by state governments. The economic approach is also used to investigate other political processes such as voting, party competition, and agenda setting.

American Politics

The American politics concentration provides a broad perspective on national political institutions and processes, with particular emphases on elections and courts. Courses focusing on political parties and elections, the legislative process, the American judiciary, electoral behavior, American political ideology, and public choice theory are offered. Students become familiar with the kinds of quantitative and formal analysis techniques most often applied to the study of American politics. Seminar papers allow students to go into detail on topics of special interest.

Members of the faculty are currently doing research on congressional and Supreme Court decision-making, the role of economic forces in American national elections, voting in congressional elections, issues of gender and the law, and the dynamics of American public opinion.

Methodology

Since we believe that a strong background in research methods is essential for political scientists interested in empirical research, we provide a rigorous training in the application of statistical methods and formal models to political analysis. Coursework in methods includes introductory training in research design and elementary statistics, as well as more advanced work in statistical analysis, econometrics, time series analysis, and measurement. The department recognizes that many undergraduates in political science come to graduate school without much background in statistics and math. Therefore, our courses start at an introductory level and slowly develop the skills necessary to do publishable research in political science. In addition to the classroom work, these courses all involve analysis of actual data on personal computers. We believe, however, that it is the application of research methods, first as part of faculty and class research projects and then in a student’s own dissertation research, that makes a qualified researcher with the skills required for success in research and academic careers.

Admission requirements of the Department of Political Science

The M.A in Public Policy prepares students for entry and mid-level analytic and management positions in state, local, and federal agencies, in non-profit organizations that interact with government, and in corporations that deal with public policy. Courses are taught by members of the department, as well as by outstanding local practitioners affiliated with the Center for Regional Policy Studies, headed by Dr. Lee Koppelman.

Admission

Applicants should have an undergraduate Grade Point Average of 3.0 (out of 4.0), and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores indicating a potential for success in a rigorous graduate program. Consideration will also be given to letters of recommendation and work experience.

The Department of Political Science Doctoral Program admits only students who intend to complete the Ph.D., although students are eligible to receive the M.A. Applicants for admission to the Ph.D. program in political science must meet the following requirements:

A. Submission of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Test scores (verbal, quantitative, and analytic).

B. Prior training that includes basic work in at least two of the following:
1. Political science
2. Psychology
3. Mathematics or statistics
4. Economics or sociology

C. A bachelor’s degree with at least a B average in the major subject.

D. Three letters of recommendation from instructors or academic advisors.

E. In those cases where the departmental admissions committee deems it desirable, personal interviews with departmental representatives may be necessary.

Acceptance by both the Department of Political Science and the Graduate School is required.

Facilities of the Department of Political Science

The department has extensive research facilities equal to any in the country, most located on the same floor with faculty and student offices. Students routinely use the conveniently located computer facilities for writing and analysis as part of their professional training. The Social and Behavioral Sciences Data Laboratory on our floor provides access to state-of-the-art personal computers tied to a local computer network and providing connections to all computers on campus. The Stony Brook Instructional Networked Computer site one floor below the department provides additional personal computers for classroom and research work. In addition, our data lab maintains a library of reference materials, holds classes on specific software packages, provides access to the extensive data archives available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Resources, and employs computer consultants to help with student research projects. All of the resources of the data lab are available to graduate students.

The laboratories for political psychology research are designed for the experimental study of political behavior. One set of labs contains computerized equipment to monitor, control, record, and analyze multiple responses from subjects. Much of the recent work focuses on information processing and decision-making—how citizens interpret, use, and recall political information. The other set of labs contains a large survey and experiment room equipped with computerized data collection stations. Students may also take advantage of our modern, fully equipped Survey Center for public opinion studies using computer-assisted, telephone interviewing.

Degree Requirements M.A. in Public Policy

Program Tracks

M.A. Track

This track requires the completion of 30 credits of graduate coursework, typically distributed as follows:

Fall:

POL 501 Introductions to Statistics for Public Policy (3 credits)
POL 535 Public Policy Analysis & Evaluation (3 credits)
POL 509 Public Budgeting and Finance (3 credits)
POL 537 Administrative Law for Public Analysts (3 credits)

or

500-level elective approved by Graduate Director (only one elective permitted outside of Department of Political Science)

Spring:

POL 502 Intermediate Statistics for Public Policy (3 credits)
POL 536 Public Management & Organizational Behavior (3 credits)
POL 510 Personnel Systems for Public Policy (3 credits)
POL 534 Intergovernmental Relations and Policy Delivery (3 credits)

or

500-level elective (as approved)

Summer:

POL 599 Internship in Public Policy (6 credits)

or
POL 597 Master’s Paper (6 credits)

Full-time students without past significant full-time public policy work experience are required to take the Internship in Public Policy. Part-time students can fulfill their capstone requirement by the Internship (POL 599), the M.A. Paper (POL 597), or two additional elective courses approved by the graduate program director.

B.A./M.A. Track

Stony Brook University students currently enrolled with a major in Political Science are eligible for the five year B.A./M.A. program, in which up to six graduate credits are earned during the senior year, while also fulfilling the B.A. requirements. Consult the Undergraduate Bulletin for B.A. requirements. Upon admission to the program, the following two courses (or others approved by the graduate program director) are taken in the senior year and also satisfy the upper level undergraduate elective requirement:

POL 535 Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation (3 credits)

POL 536 Public Management & Organizational Behavior (3 credits)

The student then completes the remaining graduate requirements during the fifth year of full-time study.

Faculty of the Department of Political Science

Distinguished Professors

Lodge, Milton G., Emeritus, Ph.D., 1967, University of Michigan: Political psychology; political cognition.

Segal, Jeffrey A., Chairperson, Ph.D., 1983, Michigan State University: Judicial process and behavior; research methods; American politics.

Myers, Frank, Ph.D., 1965, Columbia University: Comparative politics; political theory.

Professors

Feldman, Stanley, Ph.D., 1978, University of Minnesota: American politics; emphasizing political psychology and socialization; public opinion; voting behavior and participation; methodolgy.

Huddy, Leonie, Ph.D., 1987, University of California, Los Angeles: Political attitudes; groups and politics; sociopolitical gerontology; women and politics.

Koppelman, Lee E., D.P.A., 1970, New York University: Comprehensive regional and urban planning; environmental policy; American federalism and intergovernmental relations; regional policy analysis; coastal zone planning.

Norpoth, Helmut, Ph.D., 1974, University of Michigan: Electoral behavior; public opinion

Salins, Peter D., SUNY Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Ph.D., 1969, Syracuse University: Public policy; regional planning.

Taber, Charles S., Graduate Program Director, Ph.D., 1991, University of Illinois: International relations; political psychology; foreign policy; conflict modeling; computational modeling (AI).

Associate Professors

Cover, Albert D., Ph.D., 1976, Yale University: American politics: congressional elections.

Lavine, Howard, Ph.D., 1994, University of Minnesota: Political psychology; cognition.

Lahav, Gallya, Ph.D., 1995, City University of New York: Political psychology; comparative politics.

Lebo, Matthew, Ph.D., 1999, University of North Texas: Political parties; public opinion; elections; political methodology.

Assistant Professors


Levitan, Lindsey Clark, Ph.D., 2007, University of Chicago: Social networks; attitudes; prejudice.

Steinwand, Martin, PhD., 2010, University of Rochester: Political economy, game theory, economics of foreign aid.

Smirnov, Oleg, Ph.D., 2005, University of Oregon: Evolutionary game theory; computational and agent-based modeling; experimental economics; evolutionary psychology.

Number of teaching, graduate, and research assistants, fall 2009: 22
NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.