MASTER OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS (MPA)

ADVISING GUIDE

2014-2015

The University of Texas at Dallas
School of Economic, Political, And Policy Sciences
University of Texas at Dallas
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http://www.utdallas.edu/epps/public-affairs/degrees.html

Dr. Doug Goodman, MPA Director

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About the Program

Mission Statement

The Master of Public Affairs program advances excellence in public service. The program accomplishes this mission through three sets of activities aimed at preparing its students to serve as capable and ethical stewards of the common good. It imparts essential knowledge, competencies and perspectives to a diverse array of future and current professionals in government and nonprofit organizations. It supports the wider community through in-service professional and leadership training, and through policy and management analysis services. And it produces new knowledge through practice-centered research.

Objectives

The Master’s degree in Public Affairs is a professional diploma that focuses on the development of management and analysis skills useful in carrying out administrative and leadership responsibilities in government and nonprofit settings. The specific outcome objectives for students who graduate with the MPA degree are:

- Solid understanding of the philosophical, theoretical and legal foundations of public management, policy making, and leadership in government and nonprofit settings;
- Proficiency in organizational and decision analysis, research and evaluation practice, and quantitative and qualitative techniques;
- Sound preparation for advanced study aimed at research centers; and
- Mastery of persuasive written and oral communication.
Policies and Procedures

University policies and procedures concerning graduate programs, assistantships, and other important matters are contained in the University of Texas at Dallas Graduate Student Guide and the University of Texas at Dallas Graduate Catalog 2012-2013. The Guide and Catalog are both available from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, and online at http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/CAT2012/index.htm. Students should read both, as well as this Advising Guide. Students are also expected to regularly review communications sent to their UTD email accounts that may include important announcements and advising information.

Transfer Policies

Students who have previous graduate work pertinent to the requirements of a master’s program may be given up to 9 hours of transfer credit, and the hours of coursework required for the degree will be reduced accordingly. Students desiring to transfer graduate courses considered equivalent to core courses may be required to demonstrate competency through examination. The award of such transfer credit must be consistent with the University’s “Transfer of Credit” policy.

Student Ethics and Conduct

Student behavior is expected to conform to the highest academic and professional standards. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. In particular, fraudulent behavior, including cheating and plagiarism, is not tolerated.

Non-degree Graduate Certificates

Students who complete one of the Public Affairs program’s graduate certificates can count those hours toward the MPA degree.

Fast Track

Academically qualified students with a minimum GPA of 3.50 are encouraged to consider the Fast Track Option. This program allows students to take graduate-level courses while they are undergraduates. Specific admission requirements can be found in the descriptions of majors.

Undergraduate students who are admitted to the Fast Track program may take a maximum of 15 specified semester hours of approved graduate courses in EPPS during their senior year. These graduate hours may be used to complete the bachelor’s degree and to satisfy requirements for the master’s degree.

Students interested in the Fast Track program should consult with the Undergraduate Academic Advisor and complete an application form. Students must apply prior to the final 30 credit hours of work for their bachelor’s degree.

For Fast Track admission requirements and completion requirements, click here.
To learn more about Fast Track options, contact an Undergraduate Academic Advisor.

Facilities

Students have access to the computing facilities in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences and the University’s Computing Center. The School has two computing laboratories with over 50 computers that are network linked and equipped with major social science software packages, including E-Views, R, Rats, SPSS and STATA. A computerized geographic information system, the Lexis Nexis Database, and WestLaw are also available for student use. The University's Computing Center provides use of personal computers and UNIX Workstations. Many important data and reference materials are also available online via the McDermott Library and School's memberships in numerous organizations.
Admission Requirements

The University’s general admission requirements are discussed here.

The Master of Public Affairs program seeks to attract and admit highly motivated students with strong records of academic performance from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. The program draws from mid-career professionals, as well as a pool of recent college graduates, to create a diverse and capable group of students with a desire to contribute to public service. The minimum requirement for admission to the MPA program is a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. Students’ records are evaluated across several performance dimensions in making admission decisions. In accord with Chapter 51, of the Texas Education Code, decisions on admission to degree-granting graduate programs at U. T. Dallas are based on holistic considerations of all information contained in the application material submitted, including academic, career and personal histories. Standardized test scores and GPA levels are primarily used as indicators of typical student achievement levels and program success. No single quantitative or qualitative measure or any specific combination thereof, constitutes a definitive standard for admission. Rather, each application will be considered individually and each applicant’s complete profile of strengths and prospects for successful completion of the program will be evaluated.

In general, students who have a 3.0 undergraduate grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) is preferred. Grade point average is only one of the factors taken into account in determining admission. Students also submit transcripts, three letters of recommendation, a resume, and a one-page essay outlining the applicant’s background, education, and professional objectives. Students who fail to meet these standards may be admitted on a probationary basis until they demonstrate their capabilities in graduate level course work.

To be guaranteed consideration for admission, fall applications must be received by August 1. Applications for spring admission must be received by December 1. Any incomplete application received after these dates will not be considered for admission during the designated semester. Students who do not meet this deadline must reapply for the following semester.

Prerequisites

While there are no specific prerequisites required for any MPA course, students who lack background in particular areas may be advised or required to take preparatory courses. In particular, students who lack background or experience in American political institutions and policymaking, mathematics (including statistics), and micro computing may be required to develop proficiency in these areas before being admitted into certain courses. To ensure proper course selection, students meet with the MPA advisor prior to enrollment.
Program Requirements

Degree Requirements

The University’s general degree requirements are discussed here.

Students seeking a Master of Public Affairs (MPA) degree must complete at least 42 semester credit hours of work in the program.

The program has three components:
- 21 hours of core courses
- 15 hours of directed electives within a chosen specialization
- 3 hour Capstone seminar (Policy Research Workshop in Public Affairs: CAPSTONE)

For students without evidence of at least 12 months full time managerial experience in the public or nonprofit sectors, 3 hours of internship credit are also mandatory. Students for whom the internship requirement is waived must complete an additional 3 hours of approved elective coursework.

Grade Point Requirements

Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in the core courses and an overall grade point average of 3.0 to graduate. If a student’s GPA does not meet these standards, University policy concerning academic probation and removal from the program are in effect.

Core Courses (24 hours)

All MPA students should complete the core courses as soon as possible. A full-time student entering the program will normally take three core courses and one additional course each semester. The workshop or internship is usually undertaken when the student has completed most of the other degree requirements.

Required core courses for the MPA (21 hours)

- PA 6313 Public Policymaking and Institutions
- PA 6315 Program Evaluation
- EPPS 6313 Introduction to Quantitative Methods
- PA 6311 Public Management
- PA 6321 Government Financial Management and Budgeting
- PA 6320 Organizational Theory
- PA 6345 Human Resource Management

Elective Courses (15 hours)

Students not wishing to complete a professional specialization must complete 12 hours of elective coursework in addition to the core courses, capstone and internship. These courses will be determined in consultation with the MPA advisor. Other courses, including online offerings,
may be authorized for all tracks at the discretion of the MPA Program Director.

Professional Specialization Core Courses

Specialization tracks include:
- Public Management
- Local Government Management
- Nonprofit Management
- Policy Analysis
- Customized track with MPA director’s approval

Students who specialize in Public Management take 15 hours from:
- PA 6300 Quality and Productivity Improvement in Government
- PA 6326 Decision Tools for Managers
- PA 6328 Management Process and Analysis
- POEC 6336 Bureaucracy and Public Policy
- PA 7322 Negotiation Strategies for Effective Management
- PA 6344 Local Government Management
- Or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

Students who select the Local Government Management Track take 15 hours from:
- PA 6344 Local Government Management
- PA 6345 Human Resources Management
- PA 6342 Local Economic Development
- SOC 6341 Urban Development
- PA 6321 Government Financial Management and Budgeting
- Or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA director.

Students who wish to focus on the Nonprofit Management Track take 15 hours from:
- PA 6380 Nonprofit Organizations
- PA 6381 Nonprofit Management
- PA 6374 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
- EPPS 6352 Evaluation Research Methods
- Or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA director.

Students who choose Policy Analysis complete 15 hours from:
- PA 7317 Economics for Public Policy
- ECO 6361 Public Sector Economics
- EPPS 6316 Advanced Regression Analysis
- EPPS 6352 Evaluation Research Methods in the Economic, Political and Policy Sciences
- EPPS 7304 Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA director.

Other courses may substitute for those listed in any specialization with the approval of the MPA Director.
**Capstone (3 hours)**

The capstone in Public Affairs is the culminating experience for graduating MPA students. Students integrate knowledge from across the MPA curriculum in a faculty-directed semester-long applied research project (PA 6399 Capstone in Public Affairs).

This required 3 hour seminar should be taken in the semester in which the student intends to graduate.

**Internship (3 hours)**

3 hours of internship credit (PA 8v97) are required for completion of the MPA. The internship involves work in a professional capacity in an organization, under the joint supervision of an experienced professional mentor at the internship site and the MPA Internship Coordinator. The standard three hour internship requires approximately a 20-hour per week time commitment to the work experience for a total of 300 internship contact hours during the semester. The objective of the internship is to provide an introduction to professional life and to establish sound approaches to the practice of public affairs. Students shall not take more than 6 hours of approved internship credit toward the MPA. For students with evidence of at least 12 months full time managerial experience in the public or nonprofit sectors, 3 hours of internship credit may be waived at the discretion of the MPA director. Students who wish to seek the internship waiver must submit a formal written request to the MPA Director that includes a letter documenting the duration of their experience and its relevance to public or nonprofit management. This request must be approved no later than the student’s penultimate semester in the program. Students for whom the internship requirement is waived must complete an additional 3 hours of approved elective coursework in lieu of the internship.

**Course Offerings**

To view Public Affairs course offerings during a specific semester, visit Course Lookup at http://www.utdallas.edu/coursebook/. More detailed course descriptions can be found by visiting the Graduate Catalog available on the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies [website](http://www.utdallas.edu/coursebook/).

**Suggested Course Order**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Year 1, 1(^{st}) Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA 6311</td>
<td>Public Management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6313</td>
<td>Public Policymaking and Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPPS 6313</td>
<td>Introduction to Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>Year 1, 2(^{nd}) Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6321 or PA 6320</td>
<td>Government Financial Management &amp; Budgeting or Organization Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6315</td>
<td>Program Evaluation</td>
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**Summer Term**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Elective or Internship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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**Year 2, 1st Semester**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA 6345</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6320</td>
<td>Organization Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6321</td>
<td>Government Financial Management &amp; Budgeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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**Year 2, 2nd Semester**

<table>
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<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6399</td>
<td>Capstone Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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**Advising and Registration**

**Advising Contacts**

- A-L: Nora Hernandez, nora.hernandez@utdallas.edu, 3-4524
- M-Z: Talia Jaryszak, talia.jaryszak@utdallas.edu, 3-4239
Appendix A: Core Faculty

**Professors:** L. Douglas Kiel

**Associate Professors:** R. Paul Battaglio, Doug Goodman, and Sarah Maxwell

**Assistant Professors:** Evgenia Gorina, James Harrington, Young-Joo Lee and Meghna Sabharwal

**Clinical Faculty and Senior Lectures:** Don Arbuckle, Ted Benavides, and John McCaskill