

"I am passionate about education reform and aspire to lead a large agency where I can influence education discourse and policy. SPA's MPA is helping me develop my leadership skills and pursue my profession of purpose."

- **Portia Polk**

Master of Public  
Administration,  
2018



**Areas of Concentration:**

# Master of Public Administration

Department of Public Administration and Policy  
2024-25

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the **AU Master of Public Administration** program is to instill the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to manage and lead with distinction in government and related organizations that serve the public good in the U.S. democratic context and abroad.

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

1. **Apply acquired knowledge** about administration/management/leadership in contemporary public and related organizations and systems.
2. **Allocate administrative and programmatic resources** based on analytic decision making.
3. **Analyze administrative problems, craft solutions**, and communicate them effectively to relevant stakeholders.
4. **Incorporate a range of values** into administrative actions, including democratic/constitutional values, respect for the diversity of people and perspectives in the policy process, and administrative values such as responsiveness, accountability, effectiveness, and equity.

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 also 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.

## MPA PROGRAM CORE

The MPA degree program is built around 7 required core courses, 2 management electives from a list of options, and 4 electives or courses encompassing a selected area of concentration (though students are not required to name a concentration). The total program is comprised of 13 courses or 39 credit hours.

### CORE REQUIREMENTS (21 credits)

1. PUAD 612 Introduction to Public Administration and the Policy Process (3)
2. PUAD 605 Quantitative Methods for Public Managers (3) **OR**  
PUAD 601 Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I (3)<sup>1</sup>
3. PUAD 616 Legal Basis of Public Administration (3)
4. PUAD 630 Public Managerial Economics (3) **OR**  
PUAD 670 Economics for Policy Analysis (3)<sup>1</sup>
5. PUAD 633 Budgeting and Financial Management (3) **OR**  
PUAD 631 Financing Government Services (3)
6. PUAD 684 Organizational Analysis (3)
7. PUAD 610 Public Administration Capstone (3)

### PUBLIC MANAGEMENT ELECTIVES (6 credits)

A minimum of **two courses (6 credits)** from the following:

- PUAD 609 State and Local Management (3)
- PUAD 615 Public-Private Partnerships (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
- PUAD 685 Select Topics:
  - Regulatory Policy and Management (3)
  - Program Performance Evaluation/Management (3)
  - Possibly other special topics courses (with approval by Advisor or Program Director)

### ELECTIVE COURSES REPRESENTING AREA OF CONCENTRATION

4 courses (12 credits) – see attached pages.

### INTERNSHIP

Students without a significant professional work background participate in either a for-credit or non-credit internship.<sup>2</sup> Students taking a for-credit internship complete PUAD 691 as part of the concentration; students taking a non-credit internship complete a survey on the experience.

### PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Assignments in the capstone course (PUAD 610), including a major management analysis paper, fulfill the university requirement for a capstone experience. The capstone course should be taken in the final semester of study and is offered in fall and spring semesters only.

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<sup>1</sup> PUAD 601 and 670 should only be taken by MPA students planning a concentration in Policy Analysis; these courses are prerequisites for other policy analysis concentration courses. All others should take PUAD 605 and 630.

<sup>2</sup> Students with significant professional experience may apply to waive the internship requirement, with Program Director approval. Please contact your advisor to discuss if applicable.

## MPA AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Each student constructs his or her area of concentration, suited to his or her individual career goals. Students should consult academic advisors and department faculty for help in selecting concentration courses. Interviews with alumni and practitioners may also help students identify suitable subjects. Some students select established concentrations; others assemble courses around their own special needs. Students should plan their areas of concentration early in their programs, as some of the courses may be offered only once or twice during the overall period of study. Some areas of concentration offer an optional focus field - an additional layer of specialization - for interested students.

Students who follow one of the established concentrations in this booklet may have the concentration listed on their final transcript (for example, “Master of Public Administration with concentration in Nonprofit Management”). These concentrations are:

1. Nonprofit Management
2. Global Governance and Management
3. Public Management
  - Human Resources Management Focus
4. State and Local Management
5. Public Financial Management
6. Policy Analysis
7. Public Policy
  - Social Policy Focus
  - Education Policy Focus
  - Health Policy Focus
  - Environmental Policy Focus
8. Applied Politics
9. Race, Policy, and Administration
10. Cyber Policy and Management

**MPA 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 four elective courses approved by their advisor. Students may self-title their customized concentrations. Please note that only the “official” MPA concentrations above will be posted to a student’s official transcript. However, all students are highly encouraged to list their areas 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 MPA program.

Note: Course numbers and titles may change.

# 1. NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors Lewis Faulk and Khaldoun AbouAssi

Nonprofit organizations play a substantial role in the formulation and delivery of public services. This concentration introduces students to a variety of general management practices used in the nonprofit sector: defining organizational missions, building effective governance structures, acquiring resources, maintaining high standards of fiscal, legal, and professional accountability, managing human resources, and thinking strategically. More broadly, this concentration educates students in the many administrative challenges faced by small community-based or large professionalized organizations in today's "networked economy" where organizations increasingly interact, compete, and collaborate with other service providers, policymakers, and regulators.

## Required Course (3 credits)

- PUAD 681 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)

## Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:

- PUAD 608 Comparative Administrative Systems (3)
- PUAD 613 Global Governance and Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 615 Public-Private Partnerships (3)
- PUAD 619 Ethical Issues in Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 633 Budgeting and Financial Management (3)
- PUAD 682 Nonprofit Resource Development (3)
- PUAD 685 Nonprofits and Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 685 Program Performance Evaluation/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.

- AMGT 608 Grant Writing for Nonprofit Organizations (3)\*\*
- AMGT 633 International Cultural Management (3)
- AMGT 670 Survey of Arts Management (3)\*\*
- AMGT 671 Marketing the Arts (3)\* (AMGT 670)
- AMGT 674 Financial Management in the Arts (AMGT 670) (3)
- AMGT 685 Non-Profit Legal Issues (1)

To complete this concentration, students may take other graduate-level courses in policy, management, or small business administration, upon approval of Program Director.

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\*indicates prerequisite

\*\*indicates Instructor Permission required; consult your advisor

## 2. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors Khaldoun AbouAssi and Sheeling Neo

Global Governance and Management provides a comparative perspective on how policies are made and services are delivered in non-US contexts. With a specific focus on low and medium income countries, the concentration helps students understand the nature of management responsibilities that bridge different cultures, focusing on how public and nonprofit organizations interact to identify, understand, and address problems within or across different national contexts. The courses provide the students with the management and analytical skills necessary to take leadership and management roles in governments, or organizations abroad, or any organization that delivers services globally.

### **Required Courses (3 credits)**

1. PUAD 608 Comparative Administrative Systems (3)  
OR
2. PUAD 685 Development Governance and Management (3)  
OR
3. PUAD 613 Global Governance and Public Policy (3)

### **Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:**

- Any/both of the remaining two courses listed as required
- PUAD 681 Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 615 Public Private Partnerships (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Program Performance Evaluation 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 731 Economic Development (3)
- ECON 661 Survey of Economic Development (3)

### 3. PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors Jocelyn Johnston and Nathan Favero

This concentration strengthens the knowledge and skills of people called upon to work as line managers or administrative support staff in public service or related organizations. It draws upon the strengths of the department as a national center for the teaching of public management.

#### **Required Course (3 credits)**

1. PUAD 617                      Project Management (3) - (Public Management Elective)

#### **Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:**

- PUAD 608                      Comparative Administrative Systems (3)
- PUAD 609                      State and Local Management (3)
- PUAD 615                      Public-Private Partnerships (3)
- PUAD 619                      Ethical Issues in Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 650                      Leadership in a Changing Workplace (3)
- PUAD 665                      Managing Human Capital Assets (3)
- PUAD 681                      Managing Nonprofit Organizations (3)
- PUAD 685                      Development Governance and Management (3)
- PUAD 685                      Program Performance Evaluation and Management (3)
- PUAD 685                      Regulatory Policy and Management (3)
- PUAD 685                      Race, Policy and 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.

#### ***Human Resources Management Focus***

Successful leaders of public service organizations recognize the importance of managing and motivating their workforces. They know that developing human capital is critical for promoting organizational effectiveness. This concentration helps students to understand the strategic role of human resources planning, develop skills to prepare employees for change, and improve management and employee relationships. Professor Jocelyn Johnston advises students on this concentration.

#### **Additional Required Course for the Human Resources Management Focus (3)**

- PUAD 665                      Managing Human Capital Assets (3)

## 4. STATE AND LOCAL MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors Jocelyn Johnston and David Schwegman

The State and Local Administration concentration prepares students for the political and administrative intricacies of delivering public services in an increasingly intergovernmental context. Students are encouraged to include at least one relevant policy course and as many budgeting/finance courses as possible. Additional policy courses are available in the Department of Justice, Law and Criminology.

### Required Course (3 credits)

1. PUAD 609 State and Local Management (3)

### Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:

- PUAD 615 Public-Private Partnerships (3)
- PUAD 619 Ethical Issues in Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 631 Financing Government Services (3) \* (PUAD 630 or 670)
- PUAD 633 Budgeting and Financial Management (3)
- PUAD 665 Managing Human Capital Assets (3)
- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Environmental Sustainability and Public Policy (3)
  - Education and the American Policy System (3)
  - Public Policies for the Environment and Energy (3)
  - Healthcare Policy (3)
  - Housing Policy (3)
  - Race, Policy, and Administration (3)
  - Politics and Policy in DC (3)
  - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
  - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (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.

- SIS 635 Topics in Development Management
  - Urban Development (3)

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\*indicates prerequisite



## 5. PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professors David Schwegman and Marquise McGraw

Program analysts, financial officers, budget officers, and financial analysts are found throughout, and at all levels of government (national, state, and local). They administer and design programs, prepare and analyze budget proposals, evaluate programs, forecast revenues, collect taxes, allocate monies, advise legislators, inspect programs, and prepare financial statements. The Public Financial Management concentration helps to prepare students for the many responsibilities involved with the management of public programs, operations and funds.

### Required Course (3 credits)

1. PUAD 633 Budgeting and Financial Management (3) (Core course)

### Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:

- PUAD 619 Ethical Issues in Public Policy (3)
- PUAD 631 Financing Government Services (3) \* (PUAD 630 or 670)
- PUAD 671 Cost Benefit Analysis (3) \*(PUAD 630 or PUAD 670)
- PUAD 685 Program Performance Evaluation/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)
- IBUS 650 Microfinance and Financial Inclusion (3)

Other options include courses in the Kogod School of Business, the Department of Economics, or other units, with approval of MPA Program Director.

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\*indicates prerequisite

## 6. POLICY ANALYSIS

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

This concentration aims to equip MPA 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/or 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.

### Required Courses (12 credits)

1. PUAD 602            Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis II (3)  
                              \*(PUAD 601. *Note: PUAD 605 will not satisfy this prerequisite.*)
2. PUAD 606            Foundations of Policy Analysis (3)
3. Select two of the following five courses (6):
  - PUAD 604            Public Program Evaluation (3) \*(PUAD 602) **OR**
  - PUAD 685            Program Performance Evaluation and Management\*\*\*
  - PUAD 671            Cost-Benefit Analysis (3) \*(PUAD 630 or PUAD 670)
  - PUAD 672            Advanced Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis (3)\* (PUAD 602)
  - PUAD 685            Qualitative Methods (3)
  - PUAD 685            Health Economics and Policy (3)

MPA students taking this concentration must substitute PUAD 601 Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis I for PUAD 605 Quantitative Methods for Public Managers. Students are also encouraged to take PUAD 670 Economics for Policy Analysis in lieu of PUAD 630 Public Managerial Economics when possible.

\*\*\* Only one of PUAD 604 Public Program Evaluation or PUAD 685 Program Performance Evaluation and Management will count towards the degree.

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\*indicates prerequisite

## 7. PUBLIC POLICY

Faculty Advisors: Professors Daniel Fiorino (Environmental Policy), Taryn Morrissey (Social and/or Health Policy), Dave Marcotte and Seth Gershenson (Education Policy)

This concentration combines the management and leadership strengths of the MPA program with policy courses for students interested in either public policy generally or a particular policy area.

### Required Course (3 credits)

1. PUAD 606 Foundations of Policy Analysis (3)

### Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)
  - Health Policy (3)
  - Child and Family Policy (3)
  - Education and the American Policy System (3)
  - Housing Policy (3)
  - Health Economics and Policy (3)
  - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
  - Environmental Sustainability and Public Policy (3)
  - Public Policies for the Environment and Energy (3)
  - Regulatory Policy and Management (3)
  - Race, Policy and Administration (3)
  - Program Performance Evaluation and Management (3)

### *Social Policy Focus*

The social policy focus teaches students how to utilize governmental and nongovernmental tools to address challenges imposed by poverty, hunger, educational deficiencies, unemployment, and discrimination.

### Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)
  - Health Policy (3)
  - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
  - Child and Family Policy (3)
  - Education and the American Policy System (3)
  - Race, Policy and Administration (3)
  - Housing Policy (3)

\*indicates prerequisite

### ***Education Policy Focus***

The education policy focus teaches students how to utilize governmental and nongovernmental tools to address challenges imposed by poverty, hunger, educational deficiencies, unemployment, and discrimination.

#### **Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:**

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Education and the American Policy System (3)
  - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)
  - Urban Policy and Community Development (3)
  - Child and Family Policy (3)
  - Race, Policy and Administration (3)

### ***Health Policy Focus***

This focus allows students to gain an appreciation for the issues confronting policymakers and analysts working on health and related issues in the U.S. and abroad.

#### **Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:**

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Health Policy (3)
  - Health Economics and Policy (3)
  - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)
  - Child and Family 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.

- SIS 635 Topics in Development Management
  - Intro to Global Health (3)
- HLTH 606 Foundations of Public Health Equity (3)

### ***Environmental Policy Focus***

This focus allows students to gain an appreciation for the issues confronting policymakers and analysts working on environmental issues in the U.S. and abroad.

#### **Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:**

- PUAD 685 Selected Topics:
  - Environmental Sustainability and Public Policy (3)
  - Public Policies for the Environment and Energy (3)
  - Regulatory Policy and Management (3)
  - Additional courses approved by Advisor or Program Director

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.

- GOVT 680 Comp Envir Pol: Climate Change (3)
- GOVT 696 Climate Change Pol-Int-Local (3)
- SIS 620 Environmental Justice
- SIS 620 Democracy and Environment
- SIS 660 Environmental Politics

## 8. APPLIED POLITICS

Faculty Advisors: Professor Candice Nelson and Liz Suhay

The Applied Politics concentration incorporates two fields offered through the school's Department of Government. The first field covers politics, campaign management, and lobbying and serves students aiming to involve themselves as managers in the effort to influence the course of government through the electoral or political process. It draws upon the educational programs offered by the school's Campaign Management Institute and Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies. The second field encourages students to think strategically about the challenges confronted by policymakers concerned with women's issues. It addresses women, public policy, and political leadership and draws upon course work offered through the school's nationally renowned Women & Politics Institute. Students are welcome to choose courses in one field or the other, or from a mix of both areas.

*Any of the courses listed below satisfy this concentration; they are listed in optional (not required) areas of focus.*

### **Suggested Courses/Recent Offerings to Complete Requirements:**

DPAP offerings:

- PUAD 695 DC Policy and Politics (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.

- GOVT 520 Advanced Studies in Campaign Management: Campaign Management Institute (4)
- GOVT 521 Topics in Campaign Management (1)
- GOVT 523 The Art and Craft of Lobbying
  - European Public Affairs Institute (3)
  - Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute (4)
- GOVT 524 Topics in Public Affairs and Advocacy (1)
- GOVT 624 Campaign Finance
- GOVT 641 The Politics of Mass Communication (3)
- GOVT 644 Political Speech Writing
- GOVT 645 Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Lobbying (3)
- GOVT 651 The Legislative Process
- GOVT 656 Voting Behavior, Elections and Campaigns (3)
- GOVT 682 Women and Politics (3)
- GOVT 683 Women, Politics and Public Policy (3)
- GOVT 684 Women and Political Leadership (3)
- GOVT 685 Topics in Women and Politics (Various topics – 1-3 credits each)
  - Supreme Court and Women's Rights
  - Legislative Negotiation
- JLC 635 Gender and the Law (3)
- SIS 648 Gender and Development (3)

## 9. 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 (3 credits)

- PUAD 685 Race, Policy, and Administration (3)

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

- PUAD 609 State and Local Policy (3)\*
- PUAD 685/696 Selected Topics:
  - 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)\*
  - Healthcare 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 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.

## 10. CYBER POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Faculty Advisors: Professor Sasha O'Connell

This concentration prepares students to understand, analyze, and manage the dynamics of the 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 (12 credits):**

- PUAD 617 Project Management (3)
- PUAD 696 Immigration, Disasters, and Dept of Homeland Security Policy/Mngt (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)