

Public Policy (PLCY)

Course information contained within the Bulletin is accurate at the time of publication in June 2025 but is subject to change. For the most up-to-date course information, please refer to the Course Catalog.

PLCY 2000. Special Topics I. 3 Credit Hours.

Topics vary from semester to semester. Please check with the faculty advisor for a course description and topic.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

PLCY 2103. Making Public Policy. 3 Credit Hours.

This course examines selected policy areas in a variety of national settings and the relationship of political cultures and policymaking structures to policy outputs. NOTE: Students will receive credit only once for either POLS 2103 or PLCY 2103. This course was previously titled "U.S. Public Policy Making"; students who received credit under the former title will not earn additional credit.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 3000. Special Topics II. 3 Credit Hours.

Topics vary from semester to semester. Please check with the faculty advisor for a course description and topic.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

PLCY 3151. Public Policy Analysis. 3 Credit Hours.

This course considers selected contemporary public policy issues. The course begins with an examination of the national political-economic context within which major policy issues arise and then turns to the analysis of the roots and policy alternatives on several major issues. Issues may concern health, energy, education, employment, welfare, and the regulation of business.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 3185. Internship I. 1 to 12 Credit Hour.

This internship course offers students the opportunity to gain practical experience in an area of interest. The course is designed to combine general academic experience with practical experience in fields such as public policy, local, state and federal government agencies, interest advocacy, campaigns and elections, law firms, government affairs, and NGOs, among others. The course does not have formal meeting times but will meet several times during the semester of registration in a classroom/small setting. Students are responsible for working on their own to complete the required assignments.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

PLCY 5000. Topics in Non-Profit Management. 3 Credit Hours.

Special topics related to the management, finances, funding, activities and/or impacts of nonprofit organizations. Specific topic varies.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

PLCY 5001. Non-Profit Organization and Management. 3 Credit Hours.

The course focuses on the organizational features, management, and evaluation of non-profit organizations. It is primarily for individuals who currently work in or with non-profit organizations or who may be interested in employment within them. To help prepare these practitioners, the course focuses less upon the development of theory and purely academic topics and more on the application of theory and the real-world goals, challenges and behavior of non-profit organizations. At the same time, the course offers a broad perspective on how non-profits are established, managed and evaluated that goes beyond merely describing their nuts-and-bolts operations. Ph.D. students and others with an academic interest in non-profit organizations will gain an in-depth understanding of why these organizations exist and how they behave.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 5002. Non-Profit Fundraising. 3 Credit Hours.

Fundraising is a crucial element of leading and managing non-profit organizations. Most non-profits do not have readily available sources of revenue built into the logic of their organization (such as the power to tax in the case of public sector organizations and the profit motive in the case of business enterprises). Therefore, teaching students how to locate, attract and cultivate donors and how to acquire and manage financial resources is of the utmost practical value. This course covers the fundraising process from start to finish, beginning with identifying potential donors and ending with evaluating a fundraising campaign.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

Pre-requisites: Minimum grade of C- in PLCY 5001 (may be taken concurrently)

PLCY 5003. Financial Management for Non-Profit Organizations. 3 Credit Hours.

Managing finances is an essential skill of nonprofit managers because their organizations cannot attain most of their goals without remaining in sound financial health. This course provides a foundation in nonprofit finance and accounting concepts and techniques. It highlights the similarities and differences along a variety of dimensions between nonprofits and for-profit and public sector organizations. The specific topics covered include: distinguishing among different kinds of budgets, budgetary planning and making spending and revenue projections, cash flow management, endowment management, capital financing, expenditure control and audits, how to read different financial statements and reports.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

Pre-requisites: Minimum grade of C- in PLCY 5001 (may be taken concurrently)

PLCY 5004. Leadership in Public Sector and Non-Profit Organizations. 3 Credit Hours.

This course focuses on the tasks of leadership in public sector and nonprofit organizations, leadership behavior and how leaders succeed or fail to promote the mission and goals of their organizations. Among the topics covered are types of leaders, the constraints of organizational context and culture on leaders' influence, decision-making processes and practices that help to avoid mistakes, developing organizational priorities and strategies, building effective teams, handling ethical quandaries, and how to measure leaders' effectiveness.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

Pre-requisites: Minimum grade of C- in PLCY 5001 (may be taken concurrently)

PLCY 5085. Internship in Public Policy. 3 Credit Hours.

Students in the MPP program must serve in an approved internship of approximately 16 hours per week during the fall or spring semester (or approximately 32 hours per week during a summer session). Students earn 3 credits for paid and unpaid internships. The internship may be in a federal, state or local agency in the executive or legislative branches of government or in a private or non-profit firm that works closely with such an agency to fulfill the agency's mission.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

PLCY 8001. Statistics for Public Policy. 3 Credit Hours.

Introductory applied social statistics for public policy. Topics covered include descriptive measures, elementary probability theory, hypothesis testing, and correlation and regression analysis. This course explores inductive statistics including: probability and sampling, multivariate contingency tables, analysis of variance, correlation and regression analysis.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 8118. The Policy-Making Process. 3 Credit Hours.

This course explores the process through which federal and state governments in the United States formulate and implement public policies. Major political and institutional actors that influence policy-making are covered, including public opinion, interest groups, legislatures, bureaucracies and chief executives, and courts. The course covers how problems are recognized and get "framed" by advocates and policymakers and how they reach the agenda, how alternatives are formulated and adopted, the implementation and evaluation of policies and programs, and how the performance and structure of existing policies feed back into the process as policies undergo expansion, revision or termination.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 8119. Policy Analysis. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is an introduction to policy analysis for MPP students. Policy analysis involves collecting and analyzing information pertinent to public policy issues and solutions and communicating them clearly to a client, which is usually a policymaker or administrator of a program. Policymakers need analyses that clearly define and describe the nature and severity of an issue, assess the feasibility and estimate the costs and benefits of alternative solutions for addressing them, and (often) recommend one or more courses of action over others.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 8120. Topics in Public Policy. 3 Credit Hours.

Explores in-depth a particular public policy issue area (such as education, health, public finance, etc.) or a thematic topic (such as leadership and public policy, ethics and public policy, etc.). Topic(s) covered varies with instructor.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

PLCY 8123. Bureaucracy and Public Management. 3 Credit Hours.

Bureaucracies and the public managers who inhabit them are of critical importance for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies. This course provides students with an overview of bureaucratic agencies as key actors who shape public policy and performance. One focus of the course is how the institutional features of bureaucracies as large, complex organizations and of the broader political system in which they operate shape agencies' behavior. The other major focus is on how the leaders, managers and staff work together to shape bureaucratic cultures, missions and operating procedures and how these, in turn, determine whether the agency is capable of carrying out policies effectively and in accord with legislative mandates.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 8127. Public Policy Project. 3 Credit Hours.

A semester-length project that students take in their last semester in the MPP program. They produce an original, full-length policy analysis for a client. Students attend a weekly seminar to report on their progress at each stage in the development of their policy analysis, receive feedback from other seminar participants, and provide advice to other students in the seminar.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

Pre-requisites: Minimum grade of C in POLS 8001 and (PLCY 8119 or POLS 8119)

PLCY 8128. State and Local Budgeting. 3 Credit Hours.

Examines the economic and political aspects of the budgetary process in government, particularly at the state and local levels. Topics covered include the major sources and types of revenue, discretionary and non-discretionary spending, managing deficits and debt, forecasting fiscal conditions, capital budgeting, pension management, and other issues.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

PLCY 8131. Innovation in Government. 3 Credit Hours.

Innovation is considered a critical component of both private industry and the academic research community, but the concept is also highly relevant for government. While its outcomes may look differently in a government setting and focus more on efficiencies and social benefit rather than new products or services, innovation remains a critical part of any successful government. Without setting the stage for innovation and purposefully managing it, government lacks capacity for improving constituent services, engaging purposefully with its neighborhoods and residents, and developing more efficient and cost-effective internal processes.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.