

Public Policy

Department Information

- **Department Chair:**
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- **Department Location:**
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- **Department Phone:**
(701) 231-8567
- **Department Web Site:**
www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/ (<http://www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/>)
- **Credential Offered:**
M.P.P.

NDSU's Master of Public Policy (MPP) program provides rigorous training that meets regional, national, and international needs for policy design and program evaluation. The hybrid format means students may attend classes in-person or attend remotely in real time. The program accommodates both traditional students and those who have already begun their careers. Our accelerated master's program allows undergraduate students to complete both their political science major and MPP in five years.

What is an MPP?

A Master of Public Policy prepares students to be policymakers. The coursework helps students to identify policy goals, design effective programs, and evaluate policies to determine if they have met their intended goals. Unlike an MPA (Master of Public Administration), which prepares students to carry out policy implementation, an MPP program trains those who will determine "what works" and generate new policy solutions to social problems.

Why an MPP?

Individuals with MPPs work in government agencies, non-profits, think tanks, political advocacy organizations, and even the private sector. Professionals with MPPs are attractive candidates for organizations that want to evaluate and improve their policies and approaches. MPPs cultivate strategic thinkers who want to do good, and do it well.

Nationally, the number of open jobs listing an MPP as a qualification is large and growing. Analytics firm Burning Glass reports over 300 jobs per year just in North Dakota and the surrounding states, offering an average salary of over \$75,000. Universities in the region currently confer substantially fewer MPP degrees than necessary to meet this demand.

Why North Dakota State University (NDSU)?

NDSU provides the only MPP program in the Dakotas and is one of the most cost-effective options for earning an MPP nationwide. The program offers a rigorous sequence of core courses that provide skills in policy design and evaluation, complemented by a variety of electives that allow students to build their knowledge in specific policy areas; these courses cover policy areas ranging from education to infrastructure to international development.

Our faculty have expertise in local, national and international policy. Members of our faculty direct the Upper Midwest Center on Public Policy and Center for Study of Digital Society, and serve as policy consultants with major organizations including USAID and Facebook. Students can also leverage the resources of the newly-created Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth.

The NDSU Department of Political Science and Public Policy invites students with a wide array of undergraduate backgrounds to apply for our Masters of Public Policy (MPP). Our program provides students with an in-person and synchronous on-line options for completing degree requirements.

Applicants for the MPP program will complete their application through the Graduate School's online application (<https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/apply/>). The application requires the following:

1. A statement of purpose – why does the applicant wish to pursue a MPP at NDSU?
2. A current resume or CV
3. An academic writing sample – this writing sample might be a paper written for an undergraduate or graduate-level class or could be written specifically for this application. The writing sample should demonstrate the applicant's ability to write research or policy-related papers and should be submitted in English.
4. Two letters of recommendation, with at least one preferred to be academic.
5. Transcripts from all institutions the applicant has attended (for undergraduate or graduate study)
6. Optional GRE scores – applicants are not required to complete the GRE, nor will the absence of GRE scores negatively affect the application.

7. Optional statement of extenuating circumstances – if there is anything the applicant would like the admissions committee to know about their circumstances, that is not discussed elsewhere in the application, the applicant may include that here. Applicants are not required to complete a statement of extenuating circumstances, nor will its absence negatively impact the application.
8. International applicants may need to submit TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo scores to demonstrate proficiency in English. See the Graduate School's page for more information. (<https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/apply/international/>)

The MPP Admissions Committee will review applications on a rolling basis.

Accelerated MPP

The Department of Political Science and Public Policy is also pleased to offer an accelerated MPP option for current NDSU undergraduates, that allows students to complete a BA/BS in Political Science and an MPP in as little as 5 years.

Students interested in an accelerated masters will complete the same application as those applying for the traditional MPP program (see above). Students must have a 3.5 GPA in order to be admitted, and can matriculate in the program once they have completed 60 undergraduate credits. See the NDSU Catalog for more information about this process. (<https://catalog.ndsu.edu/academic-policies/degree-and-graduation/#accelerateddegreeprogramsugrtdtogradtext>)

Students are encouraged to talk with their advisers about this option early in their undergraduate careers.

The Master of Public Policy program is 36 credits from the list below.

Core Courses (24 credits)

Either:

Public Policy Analysis (POLS 423/623) (3) The public policy process and key American public policy issues against the backdrop of America's federal, multi-branch system of government

OR Global Public Policy (POLS 710) (3) An introduction to key challenges in the development and implementation of policies that affect populations outside the US, including American foreign policy and overseas development assistance.

Policy Design and Evaluation (POLS 705) (3) Strategies for developing and evaluating effective public policy.

Public Budgeting and Finance (POLS 724) (3) This course provides students with an advanced understanding of government budgeting at the local, state, and national levels. It reviews the technical elements of budgeting as well as how politics shapes this process from start to finish. This class recognizes that in order to achieve policy goals you must first find a way of paying for it. Just how funds are allocated by elected and appointed officials determines government policy.

Harm Reduction for Policymakers (POLS 726) (3). In this course students will learn to systematically anticipate the benefits and harms caused by policy or policy evaluations and adapt interventions to maximize benefit and minimize harm.

Law and Public Policy (POLS 728) (3) Relationship between law and governmental policies and programs. Constitutional, statutory, and administrative law will be considered.

Either:

Quantitative Methods for Public Policy (POLS 701) (3) An introduction to quantitative tools for policy analysis, program evaluation, and data-driven policy-making.

OR Quantitative Methods for Political Science & Public Policy (POLS 670) (3) Introduction to social science data analysis with a focus on political science and public policy applications. Students will learn to describe and model social data and determine if patterns in those data are meaningful.

Either:

Qualitative Methods for Impact Evaluations (POLS 702) (3). Techniques, tools and considerations for evaluating policy impacts using surveys, interviews, text analysis and focus groups.

OR Advanced Policy Analysis (POLS 703) (3). Advanced topics in causal and statistical inference for policy evaluation. Covers randomized controlled trials, survey experiments, and quasi-experimental designs. Addresses problems with measurement and sampling, randomization errors, non-compliance, and spillovers. Emphasizes practical issues in designing policy program evaluations to use these tools to produce causal conclusions.

Either:

Master of Public Policy Capstone (POLS 780) (3) Provides a culminating application experience for Master of Public Policy students.

OR Masters Thesis (POLS 798) (6-10)

Electives (12 credits)

Public Organizations (POLS 730) (3) Bureaucratic and human relations models of organizational design and behavior in the public sector. Mechanisms for planned organizational change are also explored.

State and Local Policy (POLS 622) (3) Detailed survey of the multiple levels of government at which public policy occurs, including national, state, county, local, and special district government.

Comparative Democratic Institutions (POLS 654) (3) This course examines the emergence, evolution, and functioning of political institutions across democracies. Topics include party systems, presidential and parliamentary regimes, legislative organization, electoral systems, and bureaucratic structures.

Poverty and Policy (POLS 732) (3) Design and evaluation of policy intended to reduce poverty in the US and globally. Addresses the personal and environmental causes of poverty, problems of defining and measuring poverty, and larger social impacts of programs targeted at the poor.

Decision Theory and Behavior Change (POLS 734) (3). Fundamentals of decision-making and tools for explaining and predicting social and economic behavior in global contexts. Provides insight into the origins of behaviors that undermine well-being and the role of policy in encouraging more effective decision-making.

Policy Proposal Development and Writing (POLS 736) (1). Workshop-format class on developing effective policy proposals for US and international donor agencies.

International Law (POLS 644) (3) Examines the history and foundation of the international legal system, including customs, treaties, jurisdiction, and the relationship between international and municipal law.

Comparative Political Economy (POLS 652) (3) Comparative study of the relationship between politics and the economy in industrialized and developing countries. Topics include elections, trade, development, investment, redistribution, and the political business cycle.

Environmental Politics and Policy (POLS 653) (3) Course is designed to provide students with both a general and advanced understanding of environmental issues. Will examine philosophical underpinnings informing environmental policy making as well as analyze various substantive environmental issues in the US.

New Institutionalism in Political Science (POLS 762) (3) This course surveys the new institutionalist literature in political science and examines applications of rational choice theory, and its extensions, to problems of politics and governance, while drawing on both theoretical and empirical research at the intersection of economics and political science.

Special Topics (POLS 696) (3) Focus on specific areas of public policy, including education, healthcare, environmental, welfare, immigration, criminal justice, and other areas. May be repeated.

Geographic Information Systems Pattern Analysis and Modeling (GEOL 680) (3) Application of GIS for determination of: factors or variables that influence geospatial patterns, data limitations in spatial and temporal continuum scales, identification of data anomalies, optimal data prediction, and evaluation of prediction uncertainty.

Economic Development (ECON 661) (3) Analysis of the main causes of economic development.

Public Economics (ECON 670) (3) The economics of the public sector, including: taxation, expenditure, public goods, externalities, and program evaluation. The course will be taught from both a traditional perspective and through the lens of political economics.

Health Economics (ECON 675) (3) Introduction to the application of economics to healthcare and medical care issues including demand and supply of healthcare, health insurance, health quality and safety, and the role of regulations within a healthcare system.

Natural Resource Economics (ECON 681) (3) Application of economic tools to evaluate natural resource policies. Concepts such as property rights, non-market goods, resource allocation over time, externalities, open access, and public goods are discussed in an intermediate micro-economics and calculus-based format.

Environmental Economics (ECON 682) (3) Application of economic tools to evaluate environmental policies. Topics include cost benefit analysis, regulatory versus market pollution control approaches, environmental damage assessment, and green accounting.

New Institutional Economics (ECON 762) (3) This course introduces theoretical and applied studies examining the role of formal and informal institutions that make economic activities possible. Topics include property rights, contracts, transaction costs, informal norms, culture, and conventions.

Community Development (SOC 605) (3) Study of communities viewed as social systems. Includes political, economic, social, and economic factors affecting community growth and decline. Community development methods are addressed.

Organizations and the State (SOC 733) (3) This course tackles the complex set of historical, economic, political and sociological issues that affect embedded organizations. Students will learn applications of game and exchange theory models that will provide mechanistic explanations of power dynamics within and between organizations. The class plans to move beyond theories of embeddedness to emphasize, using models and quantitative data, precisely how states and organizations each shape the other.

Organizational Psychology (PSYC 653) (3) Survey of topics related to application of psychology to organizational settings. Emphasis on the theoretical bases of the individual (leadership, decision making) (motivation, satisfaction) and social (influence, workgroup) (leadership, work group) factors involved in work behavior.

Youth Policy (HDFS 719) (3) This course examines federal and state policies that impact the developmental opportunities for youth. A guiding question that will be used to evaluate these existing (and prospective) policies is whether they contribute to, or act as barriers to desired developmental outcomes.

Aging Policy (HDFS 760) (3). Formation, implementation and impact of policies that affect the well-being of the elderly in the United States. Public Transportation (TL 786) (3). This course focuses on public transportation issues and models. Topics include: policy issues, government's role in transit, transit planning, demand forecasting, performance evaluation, and system costing. Students will work on projects directly related to a transit system. Industry experts will provide guest lectures. Prereq: TL 782.

Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning (EMGT 610) (3) Educates students in the preparation of various types of emergency management plans and how to lead an effective planning process within non-profits, businesses, and/or government organizations.

IDEAS Research Workshop (BUSN 690) (1) Invites internationally renowned scholars from universities across the country to present research and engage in discussion with the NDSU community. Seminars will focus on important issues related to institutions, trade, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Accelerated students can take 15 credits towards the MPP in the course of their standard undergraduate career. During the fifth year, students would take the remaining 21 credits from the curriculum above.

Thomas Ambrosio, Ph.D. (https://www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/dr_thomas_ambrosio/)
University of Virginia, 2000
Research Interests: International Relations, Russian Foreign Policy, Stability of Authoritarian Regimes

Nicholas Bauroth, Ph.D. (https://www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/dr_nicholas_bauroth/)
Loyola University Chicago, 2003
Research Interests: American Government, State and Local Government and Politics, Public Policy

Ethan Boldt, Ph.D. (https://www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/dr_ethan_boldt/)
University of Georgia, 2019
Research Interests: Law and Courts, the Criminal Justice System, American Political Institutions

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University of Maryland, 2014
Research Interests: Crime Policy, Continuity and Change in Offending Among Parents, the Role of Social Institutions During the Transition to Adulthood

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University of Nebraska at Omaha, 2007
Research Interests: Law and Society, Crime and Public Policy, Police Reform and Governance

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University of California Los Angeles, 2011
Research Interests: Political Behavior, Public Opinion and Survey Methods, Lab and Field Experimentation, the Political Economy of Development in Africa

Kjersten Nelson, Ph.D. (https://www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/dr_kjersten_nelson/)
University of Minnesota, 2009
Research Interests: American Politics, Gender and Politics, US Courts

Daniel Pemstein, Ph.D. (https://www.ndsu.edu/politicalscience/dr_daniel_pemstein/)
University of Illinois, 2010
Research Interests: Democratic Institutions, Internet Politics and Policy, Comparative Political Economy, Methodology