School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences

Graduate Programs in Public Affairs

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Affairs

75 hours minimum beyond the baccalaureate degree

Faculty

Professor: L. Douglas Kiel

Associate Professors: R. Paul Battaglio Jr., Doug Goodman, Sarah Maxwell, Sheryl L. Skaggs

Assistant Professors: Evgenia Gorina, James R. Harrington, Young-joo Lee, Meghna Sabharwal, Nicholas Vargas

Clinical Professors: Donald R. Arbuckle, John R. McCaskill

Senior Lecturer: Teodoro Benavides

Mission

The mission of the PhD in Public Affairs program is to prepare students for research-oriented careers in academia, policy analysis, and executive public/nonprofit management positions. The rigorous core curriculum provides advanced conceptual and theoretical training in the principal areas of public administration and management, including: public policy, intergovernmental relations, budget and finance, human capital, and organizational theory. Students develop analytical competencies through a sequence of research methods courses and technical knowledge in specific topics through a flexible elective sequence.

Objectives

Through a faculty-guided program of instruction, research and mentoring, students in the Public Affairs doctoral program develop a firm understanding of the broad intellectual tradition of public administration and related fields. The guiding philosophy of the degree is that "public affairs" involves more than mere functional administration, policy implementation or quantitative policy analysis. Rather, doctoral education in public affairs requires an interface between the traditions of public management, public policy, and organizations with a practical appreciation for the challenges of maintaining and building institutions of governance and a civic culture in a complex, democratic society.
The PhD in Public Affairs begins as a cohort program where entering students remain together through the completion of a core curriculum and the qualifying examination (QE), after which they are able to pursue one of several areas of concentration. The concentration allows students to take courses appropriate for their research interests. This structure produces shared experiences and progress through the program that enrich student learning and research.

**Faculty Commitments**

The faculty of the PhD program in Public Affairs is committed to assist students in meeting a set of clear and specific education- and research-related goals. The specific objectives for all graduates of the PhD in Public Affairs program are to:

1. **Demonstrate Comprehensive and Deep Knowledge**: Students will demonstrate their knowledge in principal fields of public administration and management, including: public policy, intergovernmental relations, organization theory, budget and finance, and human capital.

2. **Understand and Apply Theories and Processes of Knowledge Acquisition**: Students will demonstrate familiarity with key theories in each of the principal fields of public administration and management, and will apply this theoretical knowledge in the development of research projects ranging from course assignments to their dissertation research projects.

3. **Produce Scholarly Manuscripts and Publications**: Students, as scholars, will have the ability to execute research projects that utilize state of the art methodologies to produce scholarly manuscripts that are worthy of publication in the journals of the field.

4. **Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas**: Students will have the ability to develop, present, and defend both orally and in writing complex ideas based on in-depth scholarly research.

**Facilities**

Students have access to the computing facilities in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences and the university's computer labs. The school has four computing laboratories which house 24-30 computers that are network linked and equipped with major social science software packages, including EViews, R, RATS, SPSS, and Stata. A computerized geographic information system, the LexisNexis database, and Westlaw are also available for student use. The university's computer labs provide personal computers and UNIX workstations.

**Application, Admission and Assistantships**

**Application Deadlines**: Due to the cohort nature of the PhD program in Public Affairs, admissions are limited to the fall semester only. The application deadline for students seeking funding through assistantships is March 31. Applications for international students must be received by May 1 and June 1 for all required documentation (transcripts, test scores, letters of recommendation, etc.). The application deadline for U.S. Citizens and Residents is July 1 with all documentation (transcripts, test scores, letters of recommendation, etc.). These deadlines must be followed to ensure applications are given full consideration. The web-based application form can be accessed using the "Apply Now" link for each degree listing at: [www.utdallas.edu/admissions/graduate/degrees](https://www.utdallas.edu/admissions/graduate/degrees).
Admission Requirements: The program typically admits only students who have completed a master's degree in public affairs or social science from an institution of higher education. A graduate GPA (grade point average) of 3.0 or better is expected. Prospective students must complete the university's online graduate application and submit a narrative outlining 1) academic interests, 2) current or long-range interests in research, teaching, or other professional objectives, 3) description of publications or other scholarly endeavors, and 3) listing of academic and professional organizations and fellowships, scholarships, or other honors received. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is also required of all applications with a minimum verbal score of 156 and quantitative score of 152. International students whose native language is not English are also required to submit the Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 88, unless they graduated from a four-year college or university in the United States or other English speaking country. Students should submit examination scores and transcripts from all colleges previously attended to UT Dallas' Office of Admission and Enrollment Services. Three letters of recommendation from individuals (employers, community leaders, teachers, etc.) who are able to judge a student's probable success in graduate school are required. The letters may be sent directly to the program office or uploaded online.

International applicants without Permanent Resident Visas must submit evidence of financial support (financial affidavit and original bank statement) before they can receive the I-20 or other required documents needed for visa application.

Teaching Assistantships: Prospective students interested in receiving assistantships must have submitted all application materials including a Teaching Assistant (TA) application form by March 31 of the year they intend to start the program. Applications for the assistantships may be obtained from the Public Affairs Program Office. Offers of teaching assistantships will be made during the spring semester prior to fall enrollment, although additional appointments may be made as new positions become available each semester.

It is expected that those applying for a TA position can communicate effectively in both written and spoken English. State law and regulations of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board require that international students appointed as TA's be proficient in the use of the English language. An English Proficiency Interview conducted under the auspices of the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies will be used to screen for students requiring remedial help in the form of English as a Second Language (ESL) course. International students must satisfy the proficiency requirement upon appointment or pass the ESL course within two semesters to be eligible for consideration of continued appointment as a TA. Regardless of test scores, students must meet the language requirements of their programs.

Program Overview

The PhD in Public Affairs requires the completion of at least 75 hours including a minimum of 45 hours of coursework and 12 hours of dissertation work. Students may be allowed to transfer some of their graduate course work (a maximum of 18 hours) which can be applied to the 75 hours required. To qualify for transfer credit, the student must have completed the graduate course work within the past 24 months at an institution of higher education and earned a grade of B or better. Grades of B- and courses completed through correspondence or extension are not eligible for
transfer credit. The award of such transfer credit must be consistent with the university's "Transfer of Credit" policy.

Prerequisites

Prior to enrolling in core classes for the PhD program, students must have completed a master's degree in public affairs/administration or related field and show evidence of completing a graduate level course within the past 24 months in statistics/quantitative methods and public policymaking/public institutions. A grade of B or better is expected in these course prerequisites.

Qualifying Exam (QE)

Students must pass the QE to continue in the PhD program. If a student fails the exam he or she will be dismissed from the program.

Students must have a grade of B or better in each of the four exam-related courses to be eligible to sit for the exam. Students who do not meet this requirement may choose to leave the program or repeat a course to earn a better grade (only one course may be repeated). Students are encouraged to review the university's Retaking Courses Policy. Students retaking an exam related course are required to enroll in the course in the next semester it is offered. Students will not be permitted to enroll in courses outside the doctoral core curriculum until successful completion of the QE.

1. The QE is based on four specified courses from the core curriculum. The exam comprises 3 sections: (1) general public affairs topics; (2) policy topics; and (3) research methods.

2. The QE is a classroom proctored test. It includes three 4-semester credit hour sessions, which will take place over a two day period. The specific days and location of the sessions will be designated by the department head and announced at the start of the spring semester.

3. Exams will be read and graded by a committee of Public Affairs faculty. Each section will be read by a minimum of two readers and given a Pass or Fail grade.

A student who fails two or more sections of the QE will be dismissed from the program.

If a student fails one section, he or she will be given the opportunity to retake that section. The retake exam will be given within four weeks of the original exam, and will be graded as described above (see 3). If the student passes the retake exam he or she may continue in the program.

Only under extreme, documented circumstances will a student be allowed to reschedule the QE. If an emergency arises, the student must notify the department head within 12 hours of the scheduled exam and request to take a rescheduled exam. If approved, the exam will be rescheduled within 2 weeks of the original exam date.

Required Courses and Dissertation: 75 semester credit hours

Required courses fall into three categories: core, research methods, and areas of concentration.
The program consists of coursework in five core substantive knowledge areas central to public administration and management, including: public policy, nonprofit theory, organizational theory, fiscal and budgetary theory, and human capital. In addition, students are required to complete a three semester credit hour proseminar. A grade of B or better is required for all core courses (18 semester credit hours).

Research methods provide analytical training necessary to conduct doctoral level research beginning with PA 7330 Research Design, a regression course suitable for the student's mathematical skill set (EPPS 6316 for algebra, EPPS 7316 for calculus), and a methods course appropriate for the student's intended dissertation research. A grade of B- or better is required for all research methods-related courses (9 semester credit hours).

Building on the core curriculum, students have the flexibility to choose from one of three concentrations or develop their own customized concentration based on their area of interest (18 semester credit hours). Each concentration allows students the flexibility to select from existing EPPS course (6000 level or above; with program director approval). Students must earn a grade of B- or better in courses within their area of concentration. Repeating a course for a higher grade will be permitted one time only; a student earning two or more grades lower than B- in their area of concentration will be dismissed from the program. To graduate, students are required to complete Dissertation Seminar (PA 8340) and subsequently enroll in dissertation research (PA 8V99) with their appointed dissertation chairperson (9 semester credit hours minimum). To remain in good standing, students must be continuously enrolled in 8V99 each long semester, while completing their dissertation.

Program Coursework

I. Public Affairs Core: 18 semester credit hours

- **PA 7314** Advanced Policy Process, Implementation and Evaluation
- **PA 7320** Advanced Human Capital Research and Theory
- **PA 7350** Advanced Organizational Theory and Behavior
- **PA 7360** Advanced Fiscal and Budgetary Policy
- **PA 7375** Nonprofit Organizations: Theory and Practice
- **PA 8302** Proseminar in Public Affairs (this course includes a series of professional workshops which runs through a student's first year)

II. Research Methods: 9 semester credit hours

- **PA 7330** Research Design in Public Affairs
- **EPPS 6316** Applied Regression
- or **EPPS 7316** Regression and Multivariate Analysis

ONE of the following:

- **EPPS 6346** Qualitative Research Methods
- **EPPS 7344** Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables
- **EPPS 7370** Time Series Analysis
- **EPPS 7386** Survey Research
- **EPPS 7390** Bayesian Analysis for Social and Behavioral Sciences

III. Concentration: 18 semester credit hours

**Concentration 1: Policy Analysis and Evaluation**

- **PA 6315** Program Evaluation
- **PA 6344** Local Government Management
- **PA 7317** Microeconomics and Policy Analysis
- **SOC 6340** Domestic Social Policy

6 semester credit hours approved electives (6000 level or above)

**Concentration 2: Personnel Policy**

- **PA 6345** Human Resource Management
- **PA 7305** Leadership and Change in Public and Nonprofit Organizations
- **PA 6322** Negotiations for Effective Management
- **PA 6386** Diversity in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors

6 semester credit hours approved electives (6000 level or above)

**Concentration 3: Nonprofit Management**

- **PA 6315** Program Evaluation
- **PA 6335** Resource Development for Nonprofit Organizations
- **PA 7305** Leadership and Change in Public and Nonprofit Organizations
- **PA 6387** Strategic Planning for Nonprofit

6 semester credit hours approved electives (6000 level or above)

**Concentration 4: Customized and Directed Research**

Choose 6 courses; **ALL** courses must be pre-approved by the Graduate Director.
IV. Dissertation Seminar (3 semester credit hours) and Dissertation Research (minimum of 9 semester credit hours)

**Dissertation**: Students are encouraged to consult with the department head and/or doctoral program director about the selection of their dissertation chair. Following the completion of Dissertation Seminar (**PA 8340**) and a successful public proposal defense, students begin work on their dissertation research, and enroll in **PA 8V99** during each semester until the dissertation is completed and successfully defended. The final dissertation defense is conducted when the student’s chair and committee agree that the dissertation is satisfactorily completed.

**Master of Public Affairs**

*42 semester credit hours minimum*

**Faculty**

**Professor**: L. Douglas Kiel

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

**Assistant Professors**: Evgenia Gorina, James R. Harrington, Young-joo Lee, Meghna Sabharwal, Nicholas Vargas

**Clinical Professors**: Donald R. Arbuckle, John R. McCaskill

**Senior Lecturer**: Teodoro Benavides

**Mission**

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) program advances excellence in public service. The program is designed to prepare students to build competencies and develop creative solutions for challenges in finance, leadership, human resource, and project management.

**Objectives**

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

- An 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;
• Mastery of persuasive written and oral communication.

Facilities

Students have access to the computing facilities in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences and the university's computer labs. The school has four computing laboratories which have 24-30 computers that are network linked and equipped with major social science software packages, including Eviews, R, RATS, SPSS and Stata. A computerized geographic information system, the LexisNexis database, and Westlaw are also available for student use. The university's computer labs provide personal computers and UNIX workstations. Many important data and reference materials are also available online via the library and school's memberships in numerous organizations.

Admissions Requirement

The university's general admission requirements are discussed on the Graduate Admission page (catalog.utdallas.edu/2014/graduate/admission).

The Public Affairs Master's program at UT Dallas typically admits only students who have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better. Prospective students must complete the university's online graduate application and submit a narrative outlining 1) academic interests, 2) current or long-range interests in research, teaching, or other professional objectives, 3) description of publications or other scholarly endeavors, and 3) listing of academic and professional organizations and fellowships, scholarships, or other honors received. International students whose native language is not English are also required to submit the Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 88, unless they graduated from a four-year college or university in the United States or other English speaking country. Students should submit examination scores and transcripts from all colleges previously attended to UT Dallas' Office of Admission and Enrollment Services. Three letters of recommendation from individuals (employers, community leaders, teachers, etc.) who are able to judge a student's probable success in graduate school and a current resume are required. The letters and resume may be sent directly to the program office or uploaded online.

To be guaranteed consideration for admission, fall applications must be received by July 1 (late registration deadline is August 1). Applications for spring admission must be received by November 1 (late registration deadline is 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.

In addition to the university's transfer of credit requirements, a maximum of 9 credit hours of transfer credit can be applied to the MPA degree.

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 and policymaking institutions, in mathematics, and microcomputing may be required to develop proficiency in these
areas before being admitted into certain courses. Students meet with the MPA Director to determine these requirements. Leveling courses will not count toward the MPA degree.

**Degree Requirements**

The university’s general degree requirements are discussed on the [Graduate Policies and Procedures page](catalog.utdallas.edu/2014/graduate/policies/policy).

Students seeking a MPA degree must complete at least 42 semester credit hours of work in the program. The program has three components: a 21 semester credit hour core, 15 semester credit hours of directed electives within a chosen professional specialization and the 3 semester credit hour Capstone seminar (PA 6399). For students without evidence of at least 12 months full time managerial experience in the public or nonprofit sectors, 3 semester credit hours of internship credit are also mandatory. Students for whom the internship requirement is waived must complete an additional 3 semester credit 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 (GPA) 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.

**Program Coursework**

**Major Core: 21 semester credit hours**

All MPA students should complete the core courses as soon as possible, with the requirement that Introduction to Quantitative Methods (EPPS 6313) be taken during the first two long semester following admission. A full-time student entering the program will normally take three core courses and one additional course each semester. The Capstone or internship is usually undertaken when the student has completed most of the other degree requirements.

**Required core: 21 semester credit hours**

- **EPPS 6313** Introduction to Quantitative Methods
- **PA 6311** Public Management
- **PA 6313** Public Policymaking and Institutions
- **PA 6320** Organizational Theory
- **PA 6321** Government Financial Management and Budgeting
- **PA 6342** Local Economic Development
  - or **PA 7317** Microeconomics and Policy Analysis
- **PA 6345** Human Resource Management
Professional Specialization Courses: 15 semester credit hours

Specialization tracks include: Public Management, Local Government Management, Nonprofit Management, and Policy Analysis. Students can also customize a track based on their career goals with the MPA Director's approval.

Specialization 1: Public Management (15 semester credit hours)
- **PA 6344** Local Government Management
- **PA 6300** Quality and Productivity in Government
- **PA 6318** Information Systems in Policy Environments
- **PA 6324** Urban Planning
- **PA 6370** Project and Contract Management
- **SOC 6341** Urban Economics
- or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

Specialization 2: Local Government Management (15 semester credit hours)
- **PA 6344** Local Government Management
- **PA 6345** Human Resources Management
- **PA 6321** Government Financial Management and Budgeting
- **PA 6342** Local Economic Development
- or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

Specialization 3: Nonprofit Management (15 semester credit hours)
- **PA 6380** Nonprofit Organizations
- **PA 6382** Nonprofit Management
- **PA 6374** Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations
- **PA 6315** Program Evaluation
- or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

Specialization 4: Policy Analysis (15 semester credit hours)
- **PA 7317** Microeconomics and Policy Analysis
- **EPPS 6316** Applied Regression Analysis
- **PA 6315** Program Evaluation
**EPPS 7304** Cost-Benefit Analysis

or other appropriate courses approved by the MPA Director

**Capstone Course: 3 semester credit hours**

The Capstone in Public Affairs ([PA 6399](#)) 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. This required 3 semester credit hour seminar should be taken during the semester in which the student intends to graduate.

**Internship: 3 semester credit hours**

Three (3) semester credit hours of internship credit ([PA 6V97](#)) are required for completing 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 semester credit hour internship requires approximately a 20-hours 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 semester credit hours of approved internship toward the MPA. For students with evidence of at least 12 months full-time managerial experience in the public or nonprofit sector, 3 semester credit hours of internship 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 semester credit hours of approved elective coursework in lieu of the internship.

1. Presumes algebra.
2. Presumes calculus.

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