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Master in Public Policy

The Master in Public Policy (MPP) degree is a rigorous two-year program that prepares students both to understand complex problems and to craft concrete solutions. Through courses, exercises, and fieldwork students master an interdisciplinary conceptual toolkit that draws on the social sciences but is adapted for action. MPP candidates arrive at HKS committed to improving the world. They equip themselves to do so through broad-spectrum analytical competency. This defining feature of the MPP means intellectual honesty; a hunger for evidence; the capacity to extract answerable questions from the messy clutter of real-world public problems; familiarity with a wide range of analytic methods and the habit of picking the tool to fit the task.

The MPP Core curriculum features policy analysis, economics, management and leadership, empirical analysis, negotiation, ethics, and politics. The first year culminates in a Spring Exercise that lets student teams try their hand at a real-world, real-time policy challenge. Most students spend the summer on a policy-oriented internship. The Policy Analysis Exercise—a client-driven, often team-based practicum—caps the second-year curriculum, in which students also pursue a range of electives at HKS and throughout Harvard.

Classes at the Harvard Kennedy School are taught by the case method, the more traditional lecture format, or a mixture of both. Students work together in small groups on projects and are aided by course assistants, teaching fellows, and faculty members in a collaborative and non-competitive working environment.

Prospective students interested in the MPP program are encouraged to review the prerequisites for academic and work experience prior to applying.

Alumni Spotlight



Emily Janoch MPP 2011
Proposal Development
Specialist, CARE

Hear from a recent MPP
graduate.

→ LISTEN

Alumni Spotlight



Rey Faustino MPP 2012
Founder & CEO, One
Degree

*"Coming to HKS is not just
about learning to be a
better policy analyst... You
will be pushed and
challenged to your limits
by your classmates,
professors and*

distinguished guests, and will grow tremendously as a result. The lessons I've learned while at HKS have dramatically improved the way I approach leadership and problem-solving. HKS has made me a better leader and public servant."



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PACs and Concentrations

As a complement to the MPP core curriculum, students are required to specialize in a **Policy Area of Concentration (PAC) or a Concentration**. Students are encouraged to explore different areas that interest them and ultimately asked to choose one area in which to specialize. MPP candidates develop expertise in their area of choice through a variety of required and elective courses and through a policy-oriented seminar which culminates in the Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE). This exercise asks students to examine an existing public or nonprofit sector problem presented by a real-life client organization.

Students in most PACs and Concentrations will declare their interest in the fall of their final year when electing their PAE seminar. However, students electing the Concentration in International and Global Affairs (IGA) or Social and Urban Policy (SUP) are encouraged to declare their Concentration early due to the more extensive set of requirements (see below for more detail).

Concurrent degree students fulfill a reduced set of coursework requirements for their chosen PAC/Concentration, but must complete a PAE to obtain an MPP degree. Joint degree students with Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School will complete a program-specific joint seminar and a capstone exercise.

Following are the areas in which MPP students can specialize:

Business and Government Policy (BGP)

Courses in BGP examine the organizational relationship between business and government, how they seek to influence one another, how governmental policies influence the decisions of firms and industries and vice-versa, and economic issues in an increasingly integrated global economy.

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Democracy, Politics and Institutions (DPI)

Courses in DPI focus on the conduct and institutions of politics as well as governance in the United States and elsewhere. These courses cover topics such as: the workings of the presidency and Congress; the role of the media; the nature of political life in different regions of the world; and the political, historical, and normative analysis of policy issues.

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International and Global Affairs (IGA)

The [IGA concentration](#) provides intensive training to students preparing for careers addressing international and global challenges and governance, including international security, human rights, energy security, environment and resource systems, public health, and information systems.

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International Trade and Finance (ITF)

Courses in ITF focus on macroeconomic policy-making by analyzing the economics, law, and politics of financial markets, international monetary economics, international trade policy, and other topics such as capital mobility, financial crises and choice of exchange rate regimes.

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Political and Economic Development (PED)

Courses in PED focus on the political economy surrounding major policies for economic and social development, examining issues such as how political analysis can improve policy analysis; how political relationships and bureaucratic

influences shape policy decision making and the allocation of public resources; the design and implementation of public finance; and the determinants of growth, volatility, and inequality.

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Social and Urban Policy (SUP)

The SUP concentration draws together a set of policy domains—health, education, labor, poverty, crime, housing, urban land-use planning, and urban economic development—that share a common concern with promoting a sustainable and improving level of well-being for all members of society, and especially for those vulnerable children, elderly and adults who live at society's margin. A particular focus of this concentration is policy-making and governance in urban areas since cities concentrate both opportunities for prosperity and challenges of sustainability and social inclusion.

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API-101 A: Markets and Market Failure

Semester: Fall

Faculty: [Anh Tran](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	9/5		
Meet Day	M/W	1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	L230
Review	F	1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	Land

Description

This course applies microeconomic reasoning to public issues, policies, and programs. It considers economic incentives and organizations; models of economic behavior, including markets, the absence of markets, and interventions in markets; the price system and how it works; and policy objectives and instruments. All sections cover a common set of core topics; the pedagogical approaches vary with the individual instructor. Prerequisite: The Z section of this course presumes the ability to use basic calculus.

API-101 is required for MPP students. May not be taken for credit if taken after API-109 or API-111. API-105 is intended as an alternative to API-101 for MPAs. MPA students can enroll in API-101 only with the permission of the API-101 course head and if admitted will be assigned to a section by the MPP faculty chair.

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API-102 A: Economic Analysis of Public Policy

Semester: Spring

Faculty: [Monica Singhal](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	1/27		
Meet Day	T/Th	11:40 AM - 1:00 PM	L140
Review	F	11:40 AM - 1:00 PM	L130

Description

This course builds on API-101 to develop microeconomic tools of analysis for policy problems through various policy applications. The course is broadly focused on evaluating the rationale for government intervention in the economy and evaluating the efficiency, incentive, and distributional effects of government policies. The A section focuses on social policy and the design of optimal government programs, with applications including poverty alleviation, health, education, unemployment, and taxation. Prerequisites: API-101 or equivalent.

Students may receive credit for both API-102 and API-110 or API-112 only if API-102 is taken first.

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API-201 A: Quantitative Analysis and Empirical Methods

Semester: Fall

Faculty: [Jonathan Borck](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	9/4		
Meet Day	T/Th	8:40 AM - 10:00 AM	L230
Review	F	10:10 AM - 11:30 AM	STARR
	2nd Review: 11:40-1:00, L230		

Description

Introduces students to concepts and techniques essential to the analysis of public policy issues. Provides an introduction to probability, statistics, and decision analysis emphasizing the ways in which these tools are applied to practical policy questions. Topics include: descriptive statistics; basic probability; conditional probability; Bayes' rule; decision making under uncertainty; expected utility theory; sampling design; statistical inference; and hypothesis testing. The course also provides students an opportunity to become proficient in the use of computer software widely used in analyzing quantitative data.

API-201 is required for MPP students and is a prerequisite to API-202. The Z section moves more quickly through the material, spends more time on advanced topics, and assumes a greater mathematical facility than is required for the other sections. The Z section is recommended, but not required, for students who are planning to take API-302. This course may not be taken for credit with API-205 or API-209. MPA students can enroll in API-201 only

with the permission of the API-201 course head and if admitted will be assigned to a section by the MPP faculty chair.

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API-202 A: Empirical Methods II

Semester: Spring

Faculty: [Rema Hanna](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	1/26		
Meet Day	M/W	8:40 AM - 10:00 AM	L230
Review	F	1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	L130

Description

Intended as a continuation of API-201, this course equips students with an understanding of common tools of empirical analysis in policy applications. Much of the learning will take place through hands-on analysis of data sets. The course will cover regression analysis, including multiple regression, dummy variables, and binary dependent variables; as well as program evaluation, including selection effects; the advantages and disadvantages of experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational data; and instrumental variable techniques. The final part of the course includes an integrative exercise in which students will have the opportunity to assess empirical analysis in an open-ended and professionally realistic project. Prerequisite: API-201 or equivalent.

May not be taken for credit with API-210.

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DPI-101 H: Political Institutions and Public Policy: American Politics

Semester: Spring

Faculty: [Matthew Baum](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	1/27		
Meet Day	T/Th	10:10 AM - 11:30 AM	L130

Review

Description

This is a course about fundamental problems of participation, democratic governance, and conflict in contemporary political systems. It will provide students with an analytical toolkit for understanding and acting on the political dimensions of policy problems. The G and H sections consider these questions primarily through the prism of American political institutions and the context they create for policymaking. The I, J, and K sections look at systematic variations across different sorts of political institutions in both advanced and developing democracies, as well as in countries that are not democracies. The class develops the skills for effective political analysis and advocacy, including memo- and op-ed writing, as well as the skills to brief actors who need to know everything about the politics of a situation in a short period of time.

Open to MPP1 students only.

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DPI-201 A: The Responsibilities of Public Action

Semester: Spring

Faculty: [Arthur Applbaum](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	1/26		
Meet Day	M/W	2:40 PM - 4:00 PM	L280

Review

Description

This course is a philosophical examination of the responsibilities of public policymakers in a democracy. The course asks two questions: (1) What should governments do? (2) What should political actors do? The first question requires consideration of public principles that guide good, just, and legitimate public policy. The second question requires consideration of the many and often competing obligations that should guide political actors inside and outside government, particularly when there is disagreement about what is good, just, and legitimate public policy. Discussions and assignments focus on applications of theoretical concepts from scholarly readings in philosophy and political theory to practical issues of public policy and policymaker responsibility.

Open to non-MPP1 students by permission of instructor only.

Please note that this course will be piloting the Harvard University Canvas course page system during the Spring 2015 term.

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MLD-101 A: Management, Leadership, and Decision Making

Semester: Fall

Faculty: [Hannah Riley Bowles](#)

Credit: 1.0

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	9/4		
Meet Day	T/Th	10:10 AM - 11:30 AM	STARR

Review

Description

MLD-101 is a survey course designed for professional students with aspirations to contribute to the public good. It provides an introduction to important concepts and analytic frameworks for management, leadership, and decision making. The course includes material on topics such as aligning mission and strategy, performance measurement, basic marketing and operations, motivating people, biases in decision making, and working in teams.

Open to MPP1s only. May not be taken for credit with MLD-110.

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Fundamentals of Negotiation Analysis

MLD-220M A: Fundamentals of Negotiation Analysis

Semester: Fall Mod1

Faculty: [Brian Mandell](#)

Credit: 0.3

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	9/5		
Meet Day	M/W	11:40 AM - 1:00 PM	STARR
Review			

Negotiation Exercise: Tue, 4:00-6:00

Description

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of negotiation analysis. Being a skillful negotiator is a pre-requisite for creating public value. Analytic and interpersonal negotiation skills are essential for building operational capacity, legitimacy, and support for important policy choices and collective action. To be effective agents of social change -- especially in organizations, enterprises and networks where formal authority is insufficient for advancing policy goals -- policy entrepreneurs must mobilize coalitions across diverse interest groups to negotiate agreements that are acceptable to a broad range of stakeholders. Public managers often face strong resistance from capable and well-resourced adversaries who have a vested interest in the status quo or an outcome counter to the manager's goals. Policy analysts and managers who are able to anticipate barriers to agreement, assess no-agreement alternatives, diagnose incentives and underlying interests, engage in backward mapping and sequencing to build winning coalitions, and know the value of thinking strategically acting opportunistically to re-set the negotiation table, are better-equipped to

see their ideas put into action. Through analysis of case studies, students will apply the negotiation-analytic framework to ongoing, real-world negotiation challenges. Specifically, students will examine the structure, context and the role of key stake-holders in a broad range of public policy negotiations, both domestic and international, to diagnose barriers to agreement and opportunities for crafting innovative policy solutions. In weekly negotiation exercises, students will address the challenges of creating and claiming value, managing conflict escalation, and building deal-driving coalitions to generate robust, sustainable agreements. Cumulative, experiential skill-building opportunities will allow students to practice their powers of persuasion, experiment with a variety of tactics and strategies, be exposed to situations involving a shifting mix of cooperation and competition, and face important ethical choices. The exercises will strengthen students' ability to set the negotiating table, manage trade-offs and concessions necessary for agreement, and secure commitment to favorable outcomes. There will be no exemptions, section changes, auditors or cross-registrants permitted in MLD-220M.

Open to MPP1 students only. MPP students will not be allowed to enroll in MLD-222M, which is a very similar course designed for non-MPPs. MLD-220M serves as a prerequisite for both MLD-223M (Negotiating Across Differences) and MLD-280 (Advanced Workshop in Multiparty Negotiation and Conflict Resolution). MLD-220M and HLS 2195 (the HLS Negotiation Workshop) may not both be taken for credit.

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API-500: Spring Exercise

Semester: Spring

Faculty: [Sheila Burke](#), [Mary Jo Bane](#)

Credit: 0.5

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	4/15		
Meet Day			HKS
Review			

Description

Taken by all MPP1 students, this two-week, concentrated, integrative course will engage students in a practical policy exercise, which will draw upon knowledge gained from the core courses. Students will be grouped into small teams and given a specific policy problem. These teams will be expected to prepare products (memoranda, briefings, and presentations, both oral and written) of professional quality. The core faculty will assist in advising each of the teams. The exercise is meant to provide a realistic experience and will involve outside experts, in addition to the faculty, who will lecture on the policy topic as well as assist in judging the final products.

The Spring Exercise will be held during the last two weeks of the spring semester. All other MPP1 courses will be suspended during this two-week period. This course is not open to non-MPP1 students.

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PED-250Y A: Second-Year Policy Analysis Seminar

Semester: Year

Faculty: [Eduardo Levy Yeyati](#)

Credit: 1.5

Syllabus: [Click here for syllabus](#)

Schedule

	Day	Time	Location
First Day	9/4		
Meet Day	Th	4:10 PM - 6:00 PM	L332

Review

Description

This is a required second-year paper for students in the MPA/ID program, aimed at integrating course work through the application of analytic tools to a policy and institutional problem. The goal is to produce recommendations for policymakers that are technically rigorous, practical, and politically relevant. Students will work with seminar leaders and faculty advisors to conceptualize policy and institutional problems for a client. Some students establish a real relationship with a client, but this is not required, as the focus is on defining and analyzing an important issue that is amenable to the range of techniques developed in course work. This is not a consultancy exercise. Students develop a conceptual and empirical strategy, and undertake a mix of technical, political, and implementation-related analysis in the process of preparation of a draft and final report. There is also substantial emphasis on effective presentation, in both the writing and oral presentations.

This course is required for second-year MPA/ID students and is not open to non-MPA/ID students.

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