

# MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC POLICY, PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL POLICY CONCENTRATION

The formulation and evaluation of public policy have become a major concern for both public officials and citizens in U.S. society. Even technical policy issues raise questions about social values and assume knowledge of concepts that call for philosophical exploration. As part of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the master's program in philosophy and social policy addresses questions of public policy from a humanistic perspective. GW's MA offers an interdisciplinary course of study in the field of public policy, with a concentration in philosophy and social policy.

The "policy core" includes courses in political science, economics, quantitative methods, and a variety of approaches to policy analysis. These courses ensure that all candidates for the degree acquire methodological skills indispensable for the analysis of policy issues. In the "philosophy core," students examine the broad normative and institutional backgrounds within which specific policy decisions are framed.

The program prepares students to bring the normative, historical, and logical tools of philosophical inquiry to bear upon policy issues. Through case studies, students analyze the underlying concepts and value implications of specific policies in areas including welfare programs, access to health care, protection of the environment, health and safety, equality of opportunity, and protection of human rights. Concentrations within this program include bioethics and health policy, urban and welfare policy, and environmental philosophy and policy. Students may choose to pursue specific concentrations reflecting their interests.

Visit the program website (<https://philosophy.columbian.gwu.edu/ma-philosophy-and-social-policy/>) for additional information.

## ADMISSIONS

**Admission deadlines:** Fall - April 1 (February 1 for fellowship consideration). Applications received past April 1 may be reviewed, space permitting

Spring – October 1

Standardized GRE not required.  
test scores:

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the PTE Academic is required of all applicants except those who hold a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from a college or university in the United States or from an institution located in a country in which English is the official language, provided English was the language of instruction.

Minimum scores for the program are:

- Academic IELTS: an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual score below 6.0; or
- TOEFL: 600 on paper-based or 100 on Internet-based; or
- PTE Academic: 68

**Recommendations:** Two (2) recommendations required:

**Prior academic records:** Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission.

If transcripts are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translation alone should be uploaded into your application.

**Statement of purpose:** A 2-3 page statement of philosophical and policy interests and personal goals.

**Writing Sample:** A writing sample highlighting analytic, writing, and research abilities is also required. Writing samples should be approximately 10-15 pages.

**International applicants only:** Please review International Applicant Information (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants> (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants/>)) carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Graduate Studies  
The George Washington University  
801 22nd Street NW, Phillips Hall 107  
Washington DC 20052

For additional information about the admissions process visit the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Frequently Asked Questions (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-admissions-faq/>) page.

**Contact:**

[askccas@gwu.edu](mailto:askccas@gwu.edu)  
202-994-6210 (phone)

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

## REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#degreeregulationtext>).

Thesis and non-thesis options are available at the discretion of the faculty. Thesis option—36 credits, including 24 credits in required coursework, 6 credits in elective courses, and 6 credits in thesis; non-thesis option—36 credits, including 24 credits in required coursework and 12 credits in elective courses.

| Code                                                                                                            | Title                                                  | Credits |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Required</b>                                                                                                 |                                                        |         |
| Four graduate Philosophy (PHIL) seminars.                                                                       |                                                        |         |
| One course from each of the following areas of study, to be selected in consultation with the academic advisor: |                                                        |         |
| Applied policy—example courses:                                                                                 |                                                        |         |
| PPPA 6066                                                                                                       | U.S. Environmental Policy                              |         |
| PPPA 6069                                                                                                       | Science and U.S. Public Policy                         |         |
| PSC 8212                                                                                                        | Urban Policy Problems                                  |         |
| Economics—example courses:                                                                                      |                                                        |         |
| ECON 6217                                                                                                       | Survey of Economics I                                  |         |
| ECON 6237                                                                                                       | Economics of the Environment and Natural Resources     |         |
| PPPA 6003                                                                                                       | Economics for Public Decision Making                   |         |
| PPPA 6007                                                                                                       | Microeconomics for Public Policy I                     |         |
| Policy analysis—example courses:                                                                                |                                                        |         |
| HIST 6011                                                                                                       | Reading and Research in History and Public Policy      |         |
| PPPA 6006                                                                                                       | Policy Analysis                                        |         |
| PPPA 6011                                                                                                       | Politics and Policy Analysis                           |         |
| PSC 6103                                                                                                        | Approaches to Public Policy Analysis                   |         |
| SOC 6248                                                                                                        | Race and Urban Redevelopment                           |         |
| WGSS 6240                                                                                                       | Gender and Public Policy                               |         |
| WGSS 6265                                                                                                       | Gender, Welfare, and Poverty                           |         |
| Research methods—example course:                                                                                |                                                        |         |
| PPPA 6002                                                                                                       | Research Methods and Applied Statistics                |         |
| Required for the thesis option                                                                                  |                                                        |         |
| PHIL 6999                                                                                                       | Thesis Research (taken twice for a total of 6 credits) |         |

**Electives**

6 credits in elective courses for thesis, 12 credits for non-thesis.

Electives may focus on a particular policy area (e.g., biomedical/healthcare, urban/welfare, or environmental policy) or may explore varied approaches and policy and policy issues.