SOCIAL AND PUBLIC POLICY, MASTER OF ARTS

The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Social and Public Policy program draws students who are committed to social change who want to address some of the most pressing issues of our time. The program helps prepare graduates for advanced careers within government and nongovernmental settings, including the not-for-profit sector, involving public policy, advocacy, health care, human services, philanthropy, policy research and analysis, policy implementation, and community work.

Students can specialize in any of the following areas which include but are not limited to: human services, health care policy, poverty alleviation, education, restorative justice, child welfare, or aging.

Program Delivery and Tuition Rate

This master's program is delivered through online courses and is billed at the non-MBA rate.

Admission

Admission to this program is selective. This program enrolls new students in the fall and spring terms. Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree.

Application

Please see the Graduate Admissions (http://catalog.sunyempire.edu/graduate/admission/) pages of this catalog for a complete listing of materials required to complete a graduate application.

Program Curriculum

Students in the M.A. in Social and Public Policy program must take 5 core courses, 4 electives, and a capstone course. The required courses are as follows:

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses		
PPOL 6007	Policy Process	3
PPOL 6010	History and Social Context of American Policy	3
PPOL 6015	Policy Implementation	3
	CHOOSE:	
PPOL 6021	Methods for Policy Research (preferred course)	3
	OR	
PPOL 6020	Research Methods (if you intend to pursue doctoral studies)	
PPOL 6030	Public Policy Analysis	3
Electives, 3cr (4)		*12*
Capstone Course		
PPOL 7010	Final Project - Professional Project: Social and Public Policy	3
Total Credits		**30**

Electives

Students must complete 12 credits of electives. Examples of electives include but are not limited to:

Code	Title	Credits
PPOL 6070	Race Class & Gender in US Public Policy	3
PPOL 6075	Family Policy	3
PPOL 6055	Human Services Policy	3
PPOL 6035	Advocacy in State & Community-level Government	3

Transfer Credit

After admission, students should discuss the possibility of transfer credit with their academic advisor. To request transfer credit, students complete the Transfer Credit Request Form available through the Quicklinks box of the Graduate Student Center on MySUNYEmpire (https://www.sunyempire.edu/mysunyempire/).

Typically, 9 credits are acceptable for transfer subject to the Transfer Credit Policy (located in the policy section of this catalog).

Final Project

The final project represents the capstone experience in the program. This shall take the form of a Policy Memorandum, which is designed to support students' professional and personal goals. This is a challenging task which draws on and brings together the skills and concepts learned through the master's program. It requires identification of a public policy issue, examination and interpretation of various sources of information relating to the issue including scholarly sources, analysis of possible approaches to the issue and the student's recommendations regarding the issue.

Learning Activities and Course Goals

As the capstone project for the master's program, the policy memo builds on prior coursework and provides the opportunity for the student to engage in a sustained examination of a major policy issue. The purpose is to reinforce the knowledge and skills required to analyze policy issues, develop defensible positions on policy issues, and clearly communicate a position in the form of a policy memo, which is standard fare in the work of legislators, elected officials, agency heads and other organizational leaders involved in the formation of policy.

The policy memo includes the exploration of a critical issue, the development of alternative approaches to the issue and a reasoned, evidence-based, defensible argument about how the issue should be addressed. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between a policy memo and other academic papers. Whereas academic papers build arguments by gradually introducing the least important ideas first, a policy memo uses an "inverted pyramid" of ideas, delivered as efficiently as possible, beginning with the most important. In a policy memo getting at the truth through the exploration and the interpretation of what is known about an issue is more important than developing new knowledge. As such, no thesis statement or theoretical framework underpins a policy memo.

Course goals:

- The ability to clearly identify a critical policy issue related to the student's program;
- The ability to identify and access relevant information related to the problem;
- Demonstration of a nuanced comprehension, evaluation and interpretation of the body of knowledge surrounding the issue;
- Exhibition of a disciplined application of knowledge in the formulation of alternative, feasible approaches to the issue; and

- Presentation, in tightly-constructed prose, of a well-reasoned defensible approach to the issue that draws on relevant concepts from previously completed coursework.

The student will engage in the relevant readings for this project and prepare drafts of the policy memo. As opposed to preparing the entire memo all at once, the student will develop the memo in sections as follows: Executive Summary (while this appears first in a policy memo, its exact contents will change as the student progresses through this course); Argument, Counter Arguments, Analysis, Recommendations.

Following instructions in the online course, drafts will be submitted to the instructor for review and comments; the student will revise project drafts and return. This process will be repeated until the draft is accepted by the instructor. While there is no set number of pages for a policy memo, which can range from a page to a hundred pages, for the purposes of this program, 20-30 pages is the target. The specific task should dictate the length. The writer should use a direct, efficient style of writing that results in a "tight" memo that does not ramble or engage in needless repetition.

Upon successful completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Understand the policy process from formation to implementation.
- Create a paradigm for analyzing public policy.
- Intensively engage with specific policy issues.
- Engage in sustained, disciplined research effort.
- Develop competencies that they are likely to need as professionals in the public policy arena.