DUAL BACHELOR OF ARTS AND MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE PROGRAMS

Combined Programs

Bachelor of Arts in SMPA major and Master of Arts in the field of Media and Strategic Communication

The School of Media and Public Affairs offers a combined degree for students who wish to pursue the study of strategic political communication in greater depth and attain a higher level of skill and credentials before entering the job market. The Master’s in Media and Strategic Communication (http://smpa.gwu.edu/node/167) is designed for students interested in media and strategic political communication. Students gain a full understanding of how political actors use communication, as well as the history and theory behind how various forms of communication affect the operation of both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

SMPA undergraduate majors are able to accelerate the M.A. degree by double counting nine credits toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees -- providing substantial tuition savings and reducing the necessary credits for a master’s degree to 27 credits. This comes out to seven additional three credit classes, plus six credits towards a capstone project or thesis.

Applicants must have at least a 3.5 overall GPA and apply to the combined degree program in the second semester of their junior year.

Students do not need to take the GRE to apply for the combined degree program.

Taking additional M.A. courses as an undergraduate: In some cases, a student may have completed all undergraduate credit requirements (including double counted graduate level course work) as a result of AP or transfer credits. If such a student wants to take additional graduate level course work towards the graduate degree while still an undergraduate, a petition must be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Studies (http://advising.columbian.gwu.edu) before enrolling in the additional graduate courses; no requests for retroactive credit will be approved. Please be aware that taking graduate level course work at the undergraduate level may affect the student’s financial aid; student should address questions to Office of Student Financial Assistance (http://financialaid.gwu.edu).

Bachelor of Arts in SMPA major and Master of Professional Studies in the field of Political Management

The School of Media and Public Affairs and The Graduate School of Political Management (GSPM) offer a dual degree B.A./M.P.S. program designed for high-quality undergraduate students who are interested in careers in the field of Political Management (http://gspm.gwu.edu/node/120). This combined degree program, by allowing the counting of credits for several courses towards both programs, permits both degrees to be granted in a shorter time and at lower cost than if both programs were pursued separately. This option is available only to George Washington University students.

Application to the combined degree program may be made by a SMPA undergraduate student in the third year of study. Admission to the combined degree program allows the student to substitute two Political Management (https://gspm.gwu.edu/node/120) courses for the requirements of the SMPA undergraduate degree. The student will graduate from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences with a B.A. in Political Communication or a B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication, then continue to pursue a M.P.S. in Political Management (https://gspm.gwu.edu/node/120) at The Graduate School of Political Management.

REQUIREMENTS

There are special admission policies for the combined degree program and per CCAS policy, students must attain a minimum grade (B) in the graduate level courses in order for them to count toward the MA program. Students apply to the combined degree program in the second semester of their junior year and begin taking courses in their senior year. Interested students should consult their advisor and the director of graduate studies and apply to the dual degree program.

Curricular Requirements for the completion of the Bachelor of Arts with a major in journalism and mass communication or the Bachelor of Arts with a major in political communication degree programs

In the last year of the Bachelor of Arts program, students in the combined degree program will take 9 credits as follows which will count toward the Bachelor of Arts and the Master of Arts:

- SMPA 6204 Strategic Political Communication
- Six additional elective credits chosen from the following:
  - SMPA 6208 Politics and Public Relations Fundamentals
  - SMPA 6201 Strategic Communications Skills
  - SMPA 6205 Media, Development, and Globalization
  - SMPA 6210 Media & Foreign Policy
  - SMPA 6203 Information, Technology, and Political Communication
  - SMPA 6206 Advocacy Communication and Political Networks
  - SMPA 6275 Public Diplomacy
NOTE Students must choose the additional elective credits in consultation with their advisor and may not take a course that is substantially similar to one already taken at the undergraduate level. The elective options are basically any MA course except the research methods courses, practicum and capstone which must be taken once full time in the MA program.

Combined degree students do NOT take SMPA 6202. Instead they will take 15 credits of electives for the MA degree and 12 credits of core courses. It is assumed they have the information that is taught in SMPA 6202 as part of their undergraduate degree.

Curricular Requirements for the completion of the Master of Arts program in media and strategic communications

Core courses (15 credits)

- SMPA 6202 Media Effects, Public Opinion, and Persuasion
- SMPA 6204 Strategic Political Communication
- SMPA 6208 Politics and Public Relations Fundamentals
- SMPA 6241 Research Design
- SMPA 6242 Analytics and Data Analysis for Strategic Communication

Strategic communication skills courses (3 credits)

- SMPA 6201 Strategic Communications Skills

These 1.5 credit courses can be repeated with different topics to reach the required three credits. Additional SMPA 6201 courses can be taken for elective credit. Courses include classes such as: video production/using digital media; political use of social media; web development and strategy; speechwriting; editorial and persuasive writing, crisis communication.

Elective courses (12 credits)

Students complete 4 courses/12 credits of electives tailored to their individual interests. Electives can be taken in both SMPA and other departments. Examples of elective courses include:

- SMPA 6205 Media, Development, and Globalization