MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

To survive in Washington’s complex political environment, the legislative affairs professional must have a comprehensive understanding of how Congress operates, how decisions are made on Capitol Hill, how to influence those decisions, and how to accomplish specific objectives within the legislative process.

Developed in consultation with government relations experts and legislative specialists, this challenging program delivers the knowledge and skills you need to work more effectively in the national policymaking arena. Learn how Congress and the White House develop public policy and examine the workings of Congress from the perspective of both scholars and practitioners.

The master’s degree in legislative affairs offers an 11-course (33-credit-hour) program. Classes meet Monday through Thursday evenings on Capitol Hill at the Hall of the States. The degree can be completed in less than two years. The three-part curriculum covers the political process and policy analysis in such areas as political leaders and parties, Congressional committees, campaigns and elections, interest groups, public opinion, media and public affairs, national security and foreign affairs, energy and environmental policy, and presidential relations.

Visit the program website (http://gspm.gwu.edu/legislative-affairs/) for additional information.

ADMISSIONS

Admission

Fall - June 15

Spring - November 15

Summer - April 15

Standardized test scores: Applicants with an overall undergrad GPA, including transfer credits, of 3.0 (no rounding of GPA) and above are not required to submit scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

Applicants with an overall undergrad GPA, including transfer credits, below 3.0 must do at least one of the following:

1. Take the GRE and request ETS to have official scores be sent to GW (school code: 5246).
2. Submit a petition based on three or more years of relevant professional experience, consisting of a descriptive essay and a corresponding portfolio of work, as defined below.

Descriptive Essay - In a descriptive essay of approximately 500 words, please describe in detail the nature, duties, and duration of your qualifying experience (as defined below). Please identify your direct supervisor and provide his/her current contact information. This essay should also place the portfolio materials in a context that demonstrates, in the applicant’s view, an aptitude for graduate study in the program where admission is sought.

Portfolio - A portfolio of work is a compilation of the most outstanding examples of your prior work, for example, research projects, writing samples or any published work. Your portfolio should include 1-3 pieces of work-related professional writing in the range of 500-1000 words.

Establish valid as follows: A minimum of three years of full-time (35 or more hours per week), professional, management-level experience that includes some combination of program responsibility, independent decision-making authority, official high-level outside contacts, budgetary responsibility and/or supervisory authority. For the Public Relations program the experience must be in a professional public relations capacity. “Relevant work experience” does not include internships, volunteering on a campaign, receptionist duties, or clerical responsibilities.

Recommended (2) recommendations (preferably one professional and one academic recommendation)

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 should be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission.

Transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be accompanied by an official transcript evaluation from an accredited independent evaluating agency. Please be sure you request a detailed, course-by-course evaluation that includes all course titles, credit hours, grade-point average (GPA), United States degree equivalency, and date of degree conferral. Please see the list of acceptable foreign credential evaluation services (https://www.naces.org/members.htm).
Statement of purpose: In an essay of 250-500 words, state your purpose in undertaking graduate study in this field and describe your academic objectives, research interests, and career plans. Also, discuss your related qualifications, including collegiate, professional, and community activities, as well as any other substantial accomplishments not already mentioned on the application form.

Additional requirements: A résumé.

International applicants only: Please review International Applicant Information (https://graduate.admissions.gwu.edu/international-student-application-requirements) 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:
College of Professional Studies – Office of Admission
The George Washington University
44983 Knoll Square, Suite B56
Ashburn, VA 20147

Contact for questions:
CPS Office of Admissions
cpsgspm@gwu.edu ~ 703.299.9142 (phone) ~ 703.299.4144 (fax)
8:30 am – 5:00 pm EST, Monday through Friday

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled: 33 credits, including 12 credits in required courses; at least 6 credits in courses in each of two elective areas; either 6 credits in thesis or 6 additional credits in one or both of the two elective areas; and successful completion of a master's comprehensive examination.

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>LGAF 6201</td>
<td>Politics and Public Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGAF 6202</td>
<td>Legislative Politics</td>
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<td>LGAF 6203</td>
<td>Executive-Legislative Relations</td>
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<td>LGAF 6204</td>
<td>Research Methods for Legislative Affairs Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elective areas</strong></td>
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<td>American Political Process</td>
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At least two courses from the following:

- LGAF 6212 Congressional Committees
- LGAF 6217 Budgetary Politics
- LGAF 6218 Judicial Politics
- LGAF 6219 American Presidency
- LGAF 6222 Parties and Elections
- LGAF 6223 Public Opinion and Political Socialization
- LGAF 6224 Interest Group Politics
- LGAF 6228 Media and Congressional Politics
- LGAF 6233 Comparative Legislatures
- LGAF 6234 PACs and Congress
- LGAF 6235 Ethics and Congress
- LGAF 6241 Legislative Writing and Research
- LGAF 6242 Legislative Drafting
- LGAF 6243 Advanced Legislative Procedure
- LGAF 6244 Running for and Serving in the U.S. Congress
- LGAF 6247 Managing a Congressional Office
- LGAF 6250 Public Policy Analysis

At least two courses from the following:

- LGAF 6246 Congress and Foreign Policy
- LGAF 6248 Religion and Politics
- LGAF 6249 Congress and National Security Policy
- LGAF 6251 Budgetary Policy
- LGAF 6260 Special Topics: Domestic Policy
- LGAF 6261 Congress and Defense Policy
- LGAF 6262 Congress and Intelligence Policy
- LGAF 6263 Congress and Cybersecurity Policy
- LGAF 6264 U.S. Energy and Environmental Policy
- LGAF 6266 Congress and Trade Policy
- LGAF 6267 Congress and Healthcare Policy
- LGAF 6270 Special Topics: Congress and Foreign Policy
Thesis option

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>LGAF 6299</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGAF 6300</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
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<td>Three additional credits in one of the elective areas, above.</td>
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Non-thesis option

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<td>Nine additional credits in one or both of the elective areas, above.</td>
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*With prior approval of the academic advisor, students may take up to three of the required number of elective courses in related disciplines.

Successful completion of a master's comprehensive examination is required.

See CPS regulations for additional information regarding enrollment status and time limits.

FACULTY

Director  C. Burgat

Associate Professors  S. Billet, S. Wiley

Professorial Lecturers  R. Carr, G. Fisher, R. Whitlock

COURSES

Explanation of Course Numbers

- Courses in the 1000s are primarily introductory undergraduate courses.
- Those in the 2000s to 4000s are upper-division undergraduate courses that can also be taken for graduate credit with permission and additional work.
- Those in the 6000s and 8000s are for master's, doctoral, and professional-level students.
- The 6000s are open to advanced undergraduate students with approval of the instructor and the dean or advising office.

LGAF 5099. Variable Topics. 1-99 Credits.

LGAF 6201. Politics and Public Policy. 3 Credits.
Examination of political processes that influence policy formulation, policy implementation, and the uses of policy analysis. Topics include political and policy decision making, actors, and process.

LGAF 6202. Legislative Politics. 3 Credits.
Theory, structure, and process of the U.S. Congress, with emphasis on member-constituency relations, individual and collective decision making, party and committee activities, executive-legislative relations, and interest-group activities.

LGAF 6203. Executive-Legislative Relations. 3 Credits.
Political and institutional relationships between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government.

LGAF 6204. Research Methods for Legislative Affairs Specialists. 3 Credits.
Approaches to political analysis. Construction of research designs and problems of measurement.

LGAF 6212. Congressional Committees. 3 Credits.
Overview of the history, function, and influence of Senate and House committees in the U.S. Congress.

LGAF 6217. Budgetary Politics. 3 Credits.
Examination of federal budget policymaking and politics.

LGAF 6218. Judicial Politics. 3 Credits.
Role of the judiciary in policy formulation; emphasis on Congress and the Supreme Court.

LGAF 6219. American Presidency. 3 Credits.
Personalized and institutionalized aspects of the presidency, with emphasis on the politics of contemporary policymaking.

LGAF 6221. Executive Branch Decision Making. 3 Credits.

LGAF 6222. Parties and Elections. 3 Credits.
Nature and functions of American political parties: organizational status, nominating and electoral politics, and role in governing.

LGAF 6223. Public Opinion and Political Socialization. 3 Credits.
Sources and dynamics of public opinion and political socialization.

LGAF 6224. Interest Group Politics. 3 Credits.
Theory, structure, and activities of interest groups in American politics.

LGAF 6228. Media and Congressional Politics. 3 Credits.
Role of the media in American politics, with emphasis on news coverage, political debates, and political advertising, with their impact on the electorate.

LGAF 6233. Comparative Legislatures. 3 Credits.
Selected problems of legislative theory and behavior from a comparative perspective, with particular reference to the parliamentary systems of Germany, France, and Britain.

LGAF 6234. PACs and Congress. 3 Credits.
Examination of the structure and function of political action committees in the United States in the context of wider arenas of campaign finance, elections, and issue management.

LGAF 6235. Ethics and Congress. 3 Credits.
The role of ethics in the U.S. Congress.

LGAF 6240. Special Topics in Legislative Affairs. 3 Credits.
In-depth coverage of significant theoretical and empirical issues in American politics, including such topics as political behavior, electoral politics, and race and politics.
LGAF 6241. Legislative Writing and Research. 3 Credits.
Using specialized databases and policy journals and communicating research findings to a sophisticated, policy-driven audience.

LGAF 6242. Legislative Drafting. 3 Credits.
Introduction for non-lawyers to the process of legislative drafting in the U.S. Congress.

LGAF 6243. Advanced Legislative Procedure. 3 Credits.
Detailed study of the rules, procedures, traditions, and constitutional underpinnings that govern the work of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

LGAF 6244. Running for and Serving in the U.S. Congress. 3 Credits.
Running for and serving in Congress from a member's perspective.

LGAF 6245. Congressional Committees. 3 Credits.
The lawmaking processes of the U.S. Congress. Focus on the legislative workshops of the House and the Senate. Committees and subcommittees.

LGAF 6246. Congress and Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in setting foreign policy.

LGAF 6247. Managing a Congressional Office. 3 Credits.
Practical consideration of the proper structure, organization, and management of a Congressional office.

LGAF 6248. Religion and Politics. 3 Credits.
The influence of religion on politics in the United States.

LGAF 6249. Congress and National Security Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in setting defense policy.

LGAF 6251. Budgetary Policy. 3 Credits.
Analysis of U.S. monetary and fiscal policy.

LGAF 6260. Special Topics: Domestic Policy. 3 Credits.
Analysis of U.S. policy on selected domestic problems.

LGAF 6261. Congress and Defense Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in U.S. defense policy.

LGAF 6262. Congress and Intelligence Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in U.S. intelligence policy.

LGAF 6263. Congress and Cybersecurity Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in U.S. cybersecurity policy.

LGAF 6264. U.S. Energy and Environmental Policy. 3 Credits.
An overview of energy and environmental policymaking in the United States.

LGAF 6266. Congress and Trade Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in setting U.S. trade policy.

LGAF 6267. Congress and Healthcare Policy. 3 Credits.
The role of Congress in U.S. healthcare policy.

LGAF 6270. Special Topics: Congress and Foreign Policy. 3 Credits.
Analysis of U.S. policy on selected issues, challenges, or world regions.

LGAF 6290. Independent Study. 1-3 Credits.
Directed readings in a topic related to Congress and public policymaking. Limited to Legislative Affairs degree candidates. Written permission of program director required.

LGAF 6299. Thesis. 3 Credits.

LGAF 6300. Thesis. 3 Credits.