



Public Affairs Professional Certificate

At-a-Glance

Interdisciplinary Certificate: Grady and SPIA

The new certificate, which began in Fall 2016, offers two tracks: (1) Public Affairs Communications for Grady College students and (2) Applied Politics for political science students. The certificate was designed to offer a competitive professional advantage to students majoring in both colleges who want to combine their interests in communication and politics.

The Carolyn Caudell Tieger Professor of Public Affairs Communications will teach the core courses in this track. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the new Grady in Washington, D.C. summer program that features internships and a public affairs communications topics course.

The PAC track requires 6 courses: two core courses in PAC, two courses in Political Science, and two PAC-relevant special topics courses. Students will apply for acceptance into the certificate program. However, students outside the certificate can take these courses, thus broadening the number of students introduced to this discipline.

What is Public Affairs Communications?

Public Affairs Communications is the backbone of public policy, politics and advocacy. It is a specialized communication skill set aimed at educating, driving or changing public opinion around a public policy, legislation, political candidates or issues. It includes skills such as understanding and executing public opinion research, political and advocacy campaigns, grassroots and ally development, opinion writing, advocacy advertising, and new media mobilization, among others.

Public Affairs Communications Track Eligibility

Admission is open to majors in Grady College who meet the following criteria: the completion of 30 hours, including POLS 1101 (American Government), a statistics course (any STAT course, MSIT 3000, BIOS 2010+L), and one upper-division studies course [3000 or above] offered by the Department of Advertising and Public Relations. **Applicants must have an overall GPA of 3.2 or higher to apply. Applicants must submit a formal essay explaining their interest in public affairs communications. Application cycles are at the start of each Spring semester.**

Certificate Track: How It Works

The certificate program is designed to be completed in four semesters. Grady College students apply either when they apply to be a Grady College major or their first semester as a major. Upon admission, students take two required core courses—one offered by Grady College, one offered by SPIA—as a cohort. Students then take two additional required courses and two electives. Students will work closely with the Tieger professor or advisor to choose electives that align with the student's interests.

Level I. Core Required Courses (6 hours)

Students will take two required core courses in public affairs communications and applied politics.

Introduction to Public Affairs Communications (ADPR 3860 – 3 hours)

This course describes the field and the role of public affairs and advocacy in shaping public policy, legislation and politics. It also describes career opportunities, and strategy and techniques of historical advocacy campaigns.

Introduction to Applied Politics (POLS 5030 – 3 hours)

This “launch pad” course will introduce students to substantive issues and knowledge needed to pursue a career in politics and politically oriented advertising and public relations.

Level II. Required Courses (6 hours)

Students will take the advanced public affairs communications course and, in consultation with the Tieger Professor or advisor, select one political science course. Students also will be strongly encouraged to take additional courses in the field, and to use their experiential learning courses in PAC-related work.

Advanced Public Affairs Communications (ADPR 3960 – 3 hours)

This course provides an in-depth dive into public affairs communications through the study of elements and tools that can be used to create a full-scale public affairs communications campaign. Students will also learn about the importance of ethics in public affairs campaigns.

Choose one of the following 3-hour, upper-level POLS courses:

POLS 4510 Public opinion

POLS 4600 Legislative Process

POLS 4515 Campaign politics

POLS 4605 Politics of Congressional elections

POLS 4520 Electoral behavior

POLS 4610 US presidency

POLS 4530 American political parties

POLS 4660 Southern Politics

POLS 4540 Interest group politics

****POLS 4150 Research Methods and Design for the Practice of Politics*** (*required in the SPIA track)

Level III. Special Topics and PAC Opportunities (6 hours)

Students will work with the Tieger Professor or advisor to choose at least two additional courses aligned with the students’ interests.

Grady in Washington, D.C. (ADPR 5011, ADPR 5991 – 6 hours)

Grady in Washington, D.C., provides a unique opportunity for Public Affairs Communications students to satisfy all 6 of the required Level III credits. This 12-week summer program allows students to receive credit for interning full time in Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. (ADPR 5011- 3 hours) while also taking a course offered at UGA’s Delta Hall campus (ADPR 5991- 3 hours).

Topics in Public Affairs Communications (ADPR 5940 – 3 hours)

This course is flexible such that a different public affairs communications topic can be covered each semester. For example, the course could focus on: (a) turning polling data into successful strategy, (b) studying the elements of successful public affairs communications campaigns or (c) creating advocacy advertising.

Internship (ADPR 5011 Internship – 3 hours)

Special internship opportunity tied to the Grady in Washington, D.C. summer program, or any politically related internship. Interns are required to work full time for sponsoring organizations and to complete a journal describing weekly assignments with examples of completed work. Internships must be pre-approved by the department specifically to count as Level III.

Online Reputation Management (ADPR 3530 – 3 hours)

Crisis Communication (ADPR 5120 – 3 hours)

Information Gathering (JOUR 3090 - 3hours)

Credibility, the News Media, and Public Trust (JOUR 5420 – 3 hours)

For more details about Public Affairs Communications and the certificate program, please visit

Grady.uga.edu/PAC

or email pacgrady@uga.edu