Certificate in Applied Politics and Public Affairs Communications


Public Affairs Communications can be an extraordinary career path that is intellectually and financially rewarding. It is one in which students can eventually make a real difference in shaping how the country runs and how it serves its people. PAC at Grady College is an exciting new interdisciplinary program that offers students creative opportunities, hands-on training, and experiential learning opportunities to see just how public affairs communicators influence policy and legislation.

What is Public Affairs Communications?

Public Affairs Communications is the backbone of public policy, politics and advocacy. It is a specialized communications 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.

Interdisciplinary Certificate: Grady and SPIA

We are excited to announce a new interdisciplinary certificate at UGA—one of the first of its kind—that prepares students with applied skills in the area of public affairs communications and politics. The new certificate, beginning Fall 2016, offers two tracks: (1) Public Affairs Communications and (2) Applied Politics. 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 Public Affairs Communications (PAC) track within the new Grady-SPIA interdisciplinary certificate will prepare Grady students to compete effectively in the world of policy, political communications, and advocacy. Students will come to understand PAC as a distinct discipline with exciting career paths. They will also be introduced to and practice the various forms of PAC, and understand how the components work together to influence policy, public opinion, and legislation. The Carolyn Caudell Tieger Professor will teach the core courses in this track.
Grady students will benefit by having 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. The initial cohort will consist of 30 students – 15 in each track.

The certificate is targeted to undergraduate majors in the School of Public and International Affairs and the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication who are interested in pursuing careers in these fields. This certificate will strengthen existing collaboration among students, faculty, and alumni from these two departments and schools, and provide a synergistic environment and grounding for the practice of public affairs communications.

**New GRADY courses within the Public Affairs Communications Certificate Track:**

Three new courses are offered that offer unique and specialized skills, concepts and practice in the exciting area of public affairs communications:

**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 the strategy, tools, and techniques of historical advocacy campaigns. Students will get an introduction to the field and complete assignments designed to get them to think strategically and to apply the tools available to public affairs professionals—writing an opinion editorial, stakeholder mapping, and scripting an advocacy commercial.

**Advanced Public Affairs Communications (ADPR 3960 – 3 hours)**
This course provides an in-depth dive into public affairs communications and will offer a hands-on opportunity for students to bring their classroom learning to the real world. Students will study the elements and tools that can be used as they create a full-scale public affairs communications campaign. Students will also learn about the importance of ethics in public affairs campaigns.

**Topics in Public Affairs Communications (ADPR 5940 – 3 hours)**
This course is designed to be flexible so that a different public affairs communications topic can be covered each semester that reflects currents events and topical issues of interest to the instructor. For example, the course could focus on: (a) turning polling data into successful strategy, (b) studying the elements of successful public affairs communications campaigns, (c) creating advocacy advertising, or (c) creating a public affairs communications campaign from the ground up.
Certificate Track in Public Affairs Communications: 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. Students enroll in one track or the other, than take two required core courses—one offered by Grady College, one offered by SPIA—as a cohort. Students then take two required courses and two electives. Students will work closely with the PAC 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 the strategy, tools, and techniques of historical advocacy campaigns. Students will get an introduction to the field and complete assignments designed to get them to think strategically and to apply the tools available to public affairs professionals—writing an opinion editorial, stakeholder mapping, and scripting an advocacy commercial.

Introduction to Applied Politics (POLS 4790 – 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. The instructor (typically the faculty member serving as director of the certificate program) will integrate course materials with guest lectures by a wide range of practitioners from politics and public affairs communications.

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 and will offer a hands-on opportunity for students to bring their classroom learning to the real world. Students will study the elements and tools that can be used as they 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 4600 Legislative Process
- POLS 4660 Southern Politics
- POLS 4605 Politics of Congressional elections
- POLS 4610 US presidency
- POLS 4515 Campaign politics
- POLS 4530 American political parties
- POLS 4540 Interest group politics
- POLS 4510 Public opinion
- POLS 4520 Electoral behavior
- *POLS 4150 Research Methods and Design for the Practice of Politics

*Required in the SPIA track

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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.

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, (c) creating advocacy advertising, or (c) creating a public affairs communications campaign from the ground up.

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. Performance is evaluated by representatives of the internship sponsor and by the assigned faculty supervisor.

Online Reputation Management (ADPR 3530 – 3 hours)
- This class will examine how people and brands can cultivate online reputations through case study analysis, interaction with professional advertising and public relations people, reading and discussion, and hands-on work in digital media.

Crisis Communication (ADPR 5120 – 3 hours)
Students develop crisis analysis, planning and communication skills through class discussion, analysis of theories, case studies, and development of a crisis communication plan. Students will develop the skills needed to produce or supervise production of public relations materials needed in crisis communication. Real life situations will be discussed and experienced.

Information Gathering (JOUR 3090 – 3 hours)
The various methods journalists use to ensure transparency in government and business. Students will gather news and information via observation, interviewing, capturing visuals, accessing documents, and analyzing data. Special emphasis is placed on real-world newsgathering scenarios, fact-finding, accuracy, and comprehensive storytelling.

Credibility, the News Media, and Public Trust (JOUR 5420 – 3 hours)
Examination of what has become the central conflict in journalism: how to sustain credible practice in a time of wrenching change. This class will be taught from the perspective that understanding the changes offers the best chance of resolving the conflict in favor of credible practice.

Eligibility: Admission is open to majors in SPIA and Grady 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 either the Department of Political Science or the Department of Advertising and Public Relations. **Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher to apply. Applicants must submit an essay explaining their interest in applied politics or public affairs communications.**