Learn to analyze and identify approaches to complex social problems

Today's challenges are complex. Problems like inequality, climate change, and unemployment directly affect families, neighborhoods, and communities. And they affect some groups of people far more than others. These issues also affect our collective future.

If you think a lot about these issues, the Certificate in Public Policy may be for you. How does a person's zip code affect their opportunities in life? What gets in the way of using more renewable energy? How will the global COVID-19 pandemic affect unemployment, education, and financial markets?

In public policy and public affairs, we learn how to "wade into" these complex problems, look carefully at data to identify patterns, and propose solutions to serve the common good. In short, we approach very complex puzzles by bringing different analytic tools to the table. Our graduates bring these skills to work in government, nonprofit, legal, and private sector jobs.

We bring approaches from economics, political science, and sociology to uncover patterns in data. We search out partners in many fields, including psychology, urban planning, and medicine, to join us in looking at these problems. We then search for better ways to design policies and interventions that serve the public good.

Through this work, we train students of public policy and public affairs to "wade in" in more productive, impactful ways. Our academic programs train people who want to use research evidence and good leadership to work toward better solutions, working to improve our collective future.

Requirements

Required courses (3 credits each)
- Intro to Public Policy: Public Affairs 200
- Analytic tools (Pub Affairs 240 or 380)
- Specialization course (3 credits)
- Internship/fieldwork (3 credits)

“I was really interested in engaging in academic work that could be applied to real-world problems. My public policy classes have taught me to have an analytic mindset when I think about public policy issues and the ways we go about addressing them.”

Liliana Teniente, Certificate Student

How to apply

Apply when:
1. You have already taken, or have registered to take, one of the required Certificate courses (Public Affairs 200, 240, or 380)
2. You are at least a sophomore (in credits) with good academic standing (cum GPA at least 2.0)
3. You write a statement of interest that outlines why you would like to complete the Certificate and how it complements your major and other studies

Then, submit your application through the online application portal, open May 1 – May 31!

Questions?
Please get in touch!

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Learn more online!
La Follette School of Public Affairs
lafollette.wisc.edu/admissions/undergraduate-certificate