

SPRING 2026

COURSE DESCRIPTION BOOKLET FOR PUBLIC POLICY



Martin School of Public
Policy and Administration





Spring 2026

Course Description Booklet for Public Policy



PPL 201 Introduction to Public Policy

PPL 251 Social Policy

PPL 302 Political Context of Public Policy

PPL 303 Public Service Organizations

PPL 304 Public and Nonprofit Financial Management

PPL 399 Internship in Public Policy

PPL 401 Data and Evidence in Public Policy

PPL 580 Public Finance in US Healthcare Systems (Core Elective)

PPL 583 Tax Policy (Core Elective)

PPL 584 Environmental Policy (Core Elective)



**Martin School of Public
Policy and Administration**

PPL 201 Introduction to Public Policy

with Dr. Cory Curl

TR 2:00 - 3:15

The College of Law Rm. 399

In this UK Core - Intellectual Inquiry in the Social Sciences course, we explore the science and strategy of problem-solving in the public interest. Students learn how to use data and evidence to understand the causes and consequences of problems that they care about - in housing, environment, health, education, energy, technology, whatever strikes their interest. From there, they use a policy analysis framework to evaluate potential solutions to those problems. Students learn how to communicate with clarity and credibility to decision-makers and other influential people in government, nonprofit organizations, and well beyond.

PPL 251 Social Policy

with Instructor Dexter Horne

MW 2:00 - 3:15

Miller Hall, Rm. 302

PPL 251 analyzes how public policies influence social inequality in the United States. Students will examine empirical evidence on disparities in wealth, education, health, and other key outcomes across a range of identities. Through case studies of major institutions—including families, neighborhoods, labor markets, the welfare system, and criminal justice—students will develop frameworks for understanding how policy decisions shape social outcomes across different communities.

PPL 302 Political Context of Public Policy

with Dr. Abbie Wood

MW 12:30 - 1:45

Miller Hall, Rm. 302

This course examines the important role of political context in the policy process. It equips students with the skills necessary to conduct effective public policy analysis from a political perspective and provides an understanding of the major actors and institutions involved in policymaking. We will begin with a broad discussion of the political institutions and policy actors in the policy process. Next, we will cover different stages of the policy process while focusing on the role of political institutions and actors in each one. In the end, we will apply the theories and perspectives to analyze the political context of various policy areas.

PPL 303 Public Service Organizations

with Dr. Jeongyoon Lee

TR 12:30 - 1:45

Miller Hall, Rm. 302

This class introduces students to a variety of ethical perspectives and decision-making frameworks to help them make collaborative, ethical decisions designed to solve problems in their own communities. Each fall semester, PPL 306 students identify a critical issue facing students at UK and then host a policy roundtable event to illuminate a variety of perspectives on the issue. We also learn from compelling and courageous government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and business leaders in the local community.

PPL 304 Public and Nonprofit Financial Management

with Dr. Iuliia Shybalkina

MW 2:00 - 3:15

Miller Hall, Rm. 101

PPL304 explores financial management in nonprofit and public organizations, where the goal is impact rather than profit. These organizations must balance their mission with limited resources while staying accountable to stakeholders. You will learn to build budgets, use tools like break-even and variance analysis, and prepare financial statements. Microsoft Excel will be used throughout the course to solve real financial problems. By the end, you will understand nonprofit and public finance and be able to apply it to make better decisions, improve performance, and support the long-term sustainability of mission-driven organizations.

PPL 399 Internship in Public Policy

Ready to have hands on experience in Public Policy? This course is for students participating in a public policy internship. To register for the course, students must work with their internship supervisor and Dr. Curl to complete a departmental learning contract. Students will submit a final paper at the end of the internship. May be repeated for a maximum of six credit hours.

PPL 401 Data and Evidence in Public Policy

with Dr. Cory Curl

MW 11:00 - 12:15

Miller Hall, Rm. 302

In this project-based course, students identify, manage, and analyze datasets to address relevant and timely questions for public policy. Students learn principles for effective (and beautiful!) data visualization using Excel, Tableau, and R, which are all in wide use in policy organizations. Finally, this course continues to build understanding of policy research designs, sound and ethical research practices to strengthen students' capacity to critically evaluate claims from data analyses and policy research.

PPL 580 Public Finance in US Healthcare Systems (Core Elective)

with Dr. Joe Benitez

TR 3:30-4:45

Miller Hall, Rm. 302

This course will introduce students to the principles of public finance with respect to the United States (US) healthcare system. We will discuss the local, state, and federal government's role of redistributing income to finance healthcare (e.g., health insurance, healthcare provider) markets. Throughout the course, we will apply concepts of equity and efficiency towards taxing and government spending. We will explore the social, economic, and policy contexts motivating types and levels of government spending in healthcare. Last, we will describe specific mechanisms of government spending in healthcare.

PPL 583 Tax Policy (Core Elective)

with Dr. Caroline Weber

MW 9:30 - 10:45

Miller Hall, Rm. 302

This course examines the ways in which federal, state and local governments raise revenues to finance the public services they provide. The objective of this course is to provide you with the tools—theoretical and empirical— to analyze current tax policy and proposed tax reforms. The first part of the course develops necessary theoretical tools. Topics in this part of the course include: who bears the burden of a tax, how to assess the efficiency of a particular tax system, and the inherent tradeoffs between efficiency, equity, and compliance costs when choosing the optimal tax system. The second part of the course applies these theoretical tools, along with empirical evidence, to evaluate specific tax systems and consider tax reforms. Tax systems considered often include the personal income tax, the corporate income tax, consumption taxes, tariffs, property taxes, and taxes on specific goods, such as cigarettes, cannabis, and sweetened beverages.

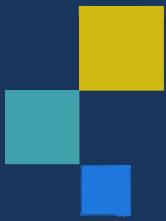
PPL 584 Environmental Policy (Core Elective)

with Dr. Dani McLaughlin

TR 2:00 -3:15

Miller Hall, Rm. 312

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STUDENT RESOURCES

ASK US!



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VISIT US!

scan to schedule



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