



American University of Armenia

Հայաստանի Ամերիկյան Համալսարան

A US-accredited institution
affiliated with the University
of California

Political Science & International Affairs Program



STUDENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK 2014-2015



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Mission, Program Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes

The Mission of the Program in Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) is to graduate students with advanced analytical reasoning, critical thinking and problem solving skills. This is done through the study of international relations, comparative and domestic political and economic institutions, processes and policies.

PSIA's Program Goals are listed below, along with the Student Learning Outcomes related to each goal.

GOAL 1. Internalize and contextualize concepts and theories (abstract and empirical).

- 1.1 Recognize and explain concepts and theories.
- 1.2 Question and discuss theories and interpretations.
- 1.3 Draw conclusions from evidence.

GOAL 2. Learn how to conduct analysis.

- 2.1 Organize, filter and synthesize a large body of information.
- 2.2 Dissect a problem into its component parts.
- 2.3 Compare, contrast and differentiate among various events.

GOAL 3. Master subject matter (course topics and materials).

- 3.1 Recall and tell others of course materials.
- 3.2 Recognize subjects studied and the relationship among courses.

GOAL 4. Develop (a) Research, (b) Problem Solving, (c) Writing Communication, and (d) Argumentation Skills.

- 4a.1 Apply library acuity.
- 4a.2 Construct and use appropriate research techniques.
- 4b.1 Recognize and formulate political problems.
- 4b.2 Choose appropriate tools for analysis of political problems.
- 4c.1 Clearly organize and prepare papers, reports, and research findings.
- 4c.2 Work in groups.
- 4c.3 Properly cite sources.
- 4c.4 Tailor writing to specific assignments.
- 4d.1 Present to groups.
- 4d.2 Develop and use presentation tools.
- 4e.1 Distinguish different supporting arguments.
- 4e.2 Make reasoned arguments with logical conclusions.

Admission and Graduation Requirements

Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission to PSIA, an applicant must meet AUA's general admission requirements and the PSIA-program specific requirements, which include:

- An undergraduate degree from a four or five year program.
- Demonstrated English proficiency with a minimum TOEFL iBT score of 79 or a minimum IELTS score of 6.5. Test scores cannot be more than 2 years old at the time of application.
- A minimum 25th percentile score on the GRE quantitative examination.
- A high undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA).
- Two letters of recommendation.
- A concise and informative personal statement.

In addition to these requirements, work and volunteer experience are also taken into consideration. The program may also require interviews with applicants.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate with a Master of Political Science and International Affairs, students must complete 54 credit hours of coursework, including the capstone requirement. Students must also complete a course on Environmental Science.

All course units in the program, unless otherwise indicated, are three credit hours and require two and a half hours of class attendance per week by the student.

Full-time students carry either 12 or 15 credit units per Semester. Part-time students must develop an approved three-year program of study with the Chair during the student's first semester of study at AUA.

While the majority of students complete all requirements in two years, the maximum period for completion is three academic years for both full-time and part-time students. Degree candidacy will automatically lapse after this period and students will not be awarded a diploma.

A course load of more than 15 credit units or less than 12 credit units requires prior approval from the Chair of the program. All required courses, must be taken on a letter grade basis. A cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or higher is required for the granting of the degree.

PSIA Curriculum

The Political Science and International Affairs program at the American University of Armenia equips its students with advanced analytical reasoning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as knowledge and expertise related to the field of Political Science and International Affairs. Throughout the two-year program, students are encouraged to think critically about policy issues and politics from both a local and global perspective as they engage in policy analysis, research and leadership training.

The curriculum is comprised of courses in the following subfields of the discipline: political theory and methods, international relations, comparative politics, public administration, public policy, development policy, and economics. Courses are offered in each of these fields throughout the students' two years of study. All courses place a strong emphasis on research and comparative methodology, analysis, and on bringing practical applications of theory into the classroom. The curriculum is divided into first and second year studies with some second-year courses requiring prerequisites.

The PSIA Program aims to provide students with competencies in the following areas: (1) understanding of government institutions and economics in Armenia, the region, and internationally, (2) understanding of political participants, structures and processes in democratic decision-making, (3) understanding of public administration and public policy, (4) understanding of international relations, and (5) understanding of social science research methodologies. PSIA students are instilled with the understanding that these competencies provide them with the tools needed to become problem solvers and agents for change. These objectives are achieved through the successful completion of a required set of courses, some of which include more than one competency.

Learning outcomes are assessed in coursework through tests and examinations, group projects, term papers, oral presentations, simulations, and class assignments. These outcomes are specified in course syllabi.

Two-Track System

In the second year of studies, students may choose one of two tracks to follow: International Relations or Public Policy. In the Fall Semester students choose three courses in their preferred track and one from the other track (along with other program requirements). In the Spring Semester students choose two courses in their preferred track and one from the other track (along with other program requirements).

Capstone Requirement

Each student must complete one of the following capstone projects:

- Master's Essay, which analyzes a particular topic.
- Policy Internship Project, which offers students the opportunity to participate in the functions of a government or non-governmental agency and to write a policy paper.
- Policy Paper, which gives the involved students an opportunity to conduct a more thorough analysis of a current social or political problem of Armenian reality and recommend alternative intervention strategies.

The goals of the capstone project is to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their learning throughout their AUA graduate studies and contribute to knowledge in their area of interest. All three of the capstone options involve taking the 1-credit Research Design course in the first semester of the second year, and the capstone project (2 credits) in the second semester of the second year. Students are required to present their research findings from their capstone project in an open forum at the end of their final semester.

Courses

Specific learning objectives and learning outcomes have been developed for each course offered in PSIA and they are available in the course syllabi prepared by faculty and distributed to students at the start of each course.

Fall 2014 Courses

MPSIA 1st year students

PSIA302 Graduate Research and Scholarly Writing
PSIA311 Comparative Regional Politics
PSIA320 International Relations
PSIA340 Introduction to Public Administration

MPSIA 2nd year students

PSIA325 Ethnicity and Geopolitics in the South Caucasus
PSIA326 Theories of Globalization
PSIA343 Public Financing and Budgeting
PSIA345 Development Policy and Strategy
PSIA351 Micro Economics
PSIA 372 European Neighborhood Policy
PSIA 384 Civil Society and Social Capital
PSIA390 Research Design

Spring 2015 Courses

MPSIA 1st year students

PSIA310 Introduction to Comparative Politics
PSIA350 Introduction to Macro Economics (possibly Summer 2015)
PSIA371 EU and the World
PSIA303 Research Methods in Political Science
PSIA300 Western Political Thought

MPSIA 2nd year students

Capstone (Master's Essay, Policy Paper or Internship Project)
PSIA348 Policy and Program Evaluation
PSIA347 Environmental Policy
PSIA324 Security Policy
PSIA370 European Integration
PSIA383 Distributive Justice

Course Descriptions

First Year Courses

PSIA300 Western Political Thought (3 credits)

This course is an introduction to Western Political Thought from a historical perspective. It covers all the essential ideas since early Greeks to the twentieth century that have shaped the political process and institutionalization of governance in Europe and the United States.

PSIA302 Graduate Research & Scholarly Writing (3 credits)

This is an entry graduate-level course in research methods with a dual emphasis on: (1) comprehension of the fundamentals of social science research and competencies in identifying and consuming research literature; and (2) improvement of individual academic writing, including summarizing and synthesizing, critical analysis, argumentation, using citations, paraphrasing, etc. As a part of these two components, the course will also touch upon working with Excel - data entry, basic analysis, use of workbooks and graphs. The teaching methodology used in this course is learning by doing, with

guided feedback, accompanied by readings, lectures, exercises, home assignments, peer reviews, and group work.

PSIA303 Research Methods in Political Science (3 credits)

Introduction to research methods in political science covering the overall logic and theory of empirical research and the major quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies and statistical analyses used.

PSIA310 Introduction to Comparative Politics (3 credits)

Comparative analysis of political elites, governmental institutions, and political processes in selected industrial, developing and socialist countries. A representative sampling of countries would include the United States, Britain, France, Germany, India, Saudi Arabia, China, Egypt, Iran, Mexico, Russia, Syria and Israel.

PSIA311 Comparative Regional Politics (3 credits)

The course gives an insight on the regional political developments. Features of political cultures, traditions of statehood and key domestic developments in Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and Georgia will be addressed. The course also reflects upon Armenia's relations with those countries. The course is composed of lectures, seminars, discussions and presentations.

PSIA320 International Relations in Theory and Practice (3 credits)

The course covers 1) international relations theories, 2) geopolitics, foreign policy, diplomacy and world politics, as well as inter-governmental organizations (IGOs). The most important issues pertinent to IR, such as war and peace, hierarchy and anarchy, agency and system, power and morality are tackled. It combines theoretical, policy and empirical aspects of IR.

PSIA340 Introduction to Public Administration (3 credits)

The course studies the role and scope of bureaucracy in the modern state; examination of issues in the formulation and implementation of public policy; planning, programming, and decision-making in the bureaucratic policy-making process.

PSIA350 Introduction to Macro Economics (3 credits)

An intensive course in macroeconomic analysis that studies the performance of the national economy and the global economy.

PSIA371 EU and the World (3 credits)

This course studies the relationship between the European Union and the World. It focuses on the emerging role of the EU as a block in the area of foreign affairs to understand how the EU has evolved as a major player in international affairs in different policy domains.

Second Year Courses

PSIA324 Security Policy (3 credits) - International Relations Track

This course addresses a number of security policy related issues, including decision making in the national security matters, strategic planning and implementation of security politics on the executive and different agency levels, implications of globalization and human rights on security related issues, interdependence of foreign, defense, intelligence and security policies. The course also reflects upon Armenia's experience of national security policy planning and implementation.

PSIA325 Ethnicity and Geopolitics in the South Caucasus (3 credits) - International Relations Track

This course gives a critical perspective to ethnic and geopolitical developments in the region and tries to position them along with major theories of ethnicity. The course provides theoretical background on the existing discourses of nationalism, ethnicity and geopolitics with an objective of seeking a deeper understanding of the origins and dynamics of ethnic conflicts. Study of protracted conflicts in

Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia constitutes the bases of the course, other latent conflicts are also considered.

PSIA326 Theories of Globalization (3 credits) - International Relations Track

The world has experienced an extension and intensification of political, economic, and cultural relations and connections in recent decades. This process of globalization will be examined in this course. The course explores different theories of globalization such as neoliberalism, egalitarianism, and nationalism by examining various problems and issues in globalization such as humanitarian aid, global justice and global inequality, climate change, immigration, humanitarian intervention, and transnational corporations. The goals of the course are to gain an understanding of theories of globalization and how they apply to the issues and problems examined, and to analyze and critically evaluate those theories and issues.

PSIA343 Public Finance and Budgeting (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

This course develops a general understanding of the policy of public budgeting and finance. It presents a general overview of Western public finance and budgeting systems with an emphasis on the processes of planning, programming, appropriation, taxation, spending and managing a budget deficit. The course covers both theoretical aspects of public finance and budgeting, as well as politics, processes and institutions in government budgeting. Students also learn the peculiarities of government budgeting in Armenia in comparison with the Western system.

PSIA344 Public Policy Analysis (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

The course consists of three parts. In the first part concepts and theories of public policy analysis are discussed. The general framework for policy analysis is presented. The second part of the course focuses on tools and methods of policy analysis, with a specific focus on one quantitative (regression analysis) and one qualitative (focus groups) method of obtaining and systematizing relevant data. The third part of the course applies theoretical and the methodological knowledge discussed in the previous two sections to the Armenian reality.

PSIA345 Development Policy and Strategy (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

This course starts by considering some of the factors that drive or hinder development, including economic growth, reduction of poverty and inequality, access to resources, education and health care, etc. Then, the course moves on to cover the basis of political decisions made by governments of developing countries across a range of themes. Here, the course explores competing approaches to the role of the state in development and also engages in debates on the characteristics essential for development, contrasting in particular institutional approaches and the good governance agenda. Finally, the course dedicates sessions to sector-level policies: agricultural, industrial, employment, and poverty reduction policies.

PSIA347 Environmental Policy (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the basics of environmental policies. It introduces the tools and approaches that influence political decision-making processes in the field of environmental conservation and natural resource management. The course presents an overview of current global environmental issues of concern to all humanity and their impact on people's life. Students explore the international and national policy frameworks that focus on environmental issues and zero in on their solutions. Students learn about history of environmental policy and politics in the US, Western Europe and former Soviet Union; emergence and evolution of green parties, movements, groups. Armenia's international obligations in environmental sector are presented to students.

PSIA348 Policy and Program Evaluation (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

Program Evaluation is the systematic use of empirical information to assess and improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of public or non-profit programs and policy interventions. Evaluation is increasingly required by funders and policy makers concerned with accountability and efficient use of public or private resources. In addition, many governments and non-governmental organizations have built the logic of evaluation into their work through performance management and

monitoring systems. This course trains you in different types of program evaluation, including needs assessment, formative research, process evaluation, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, impact assessment, and cost analysis.

PSIA351 Micro Economics (3 credits)

This course covers the essential microeconomic principles and applies them to public decisions. It covers the key principles of microeconomics, such as supply, demand, and market processes and provides extensive coverage of topics that concern public sector decisions.

PSIA370 European Integration (3 credits) - International Relations Track

The course will provide an understanding about the European Union (EU) as a unique 'regional' institution with the highest degree of delegation of competencies from the national to the supranational level. European integration is treated as a large case with its specific aspects (history, institutional interplay and policies) analyzed through the lenses of the EU-intrinsic mid-range theories and IR theories.

PSIA372 European Neighborhood Policy (3 credits) - International Relations Track

The course focuses on the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), encompassing also the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership, developed by the European Union (EU) towards its political periphery, namely, North Africa/Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. It additionally deals with the EU's policy in different domains, i.e. trade, democracy, human rights, public administration, civil society, justice, migration, etc.

PSIA383 Distributive Justice (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

Should society have a just distribution of wealth? What is a just distribution? One that is equal, lets people keep what they earn, promotes overall happiness, gives people what they deserve, or something else? This course examines whether distributive justice should be a goal of society and examines competing theories of distributive justice. The theories to be examined are utilitarianism, liberal egalitarianism, capabilities approach, libertarianism, and communitarianism. In examining these theories, the course will cover topics such as taxation and incentives, unconditional basic income, and the moral limits of the market. Thinkers covered include Rawls, Nozick, Dworkin, Cohen, Sen, Walzer, Sandel, and Marx.

PSIA384 Civil Society and Social Capital (3 credits) - Public Policy Track

This course analyses the concepts of civil society and social capital and explains their prominence in current social science. As a first building block, the course material includes relevant works of major social theorists, sociologists and political scientists. The course then makes a transition from theoretical concepts to empirical studies of civil society and social capital. The last part of the course is dedicated to applying the concepts and the approaches to the Armenian reality. The course is envisioned as a seminar with active student participation in class discussions.

PSIA390 Research Design (1 credit)

This seminar is designed to assist students in preparing their research for their final, capstone experience in Political Science and International Relations. This includes Master's Essays, Internship Reports and Policy Analytic Papers. Before one can embark on their final papers, students must plan and prepare for the activities and actions necessary to complete the final paper.

PSIA391 Policy Internship Project (2 credits)

PSIA392 Master's Essay (2 credits)

PSIA393 Policy Analytic Paper (2 credits)

Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis

The Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis (TCPA) was established in 1995 by the AUA School of Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) with the central mission of promoting knowledge and understanding through objective and independent research and policy analysis. TCPA provides students and graduates with opportunities to participate in multidisciplinary applied research in a broad spectrum of contemporary social, political, and legal fields concerning Armenia.

The Center's long-term objective is to contribute directly to Armenia's transition to a democratic state. The Center accomplishes this objective through its open door policy for all persons involved in Armenian policy-making processes and through its educational, research, and analytical activities, which as a by-product help introduce top quality research and analyses to experts and scholars in Armenia.

TCPA is a non-profit and independent organization and is supported through a major donation by the Jerry Turpanjian Family and subcontracts and grants from organizations such as the Urban Institute, Development Associates, the World Bank, Open Society Institute Foundation, Academic Swiss Caucasus Net, TetraTech, the OSCE, and the United States Cultural and Educational Affairs Division of the State Department.

TCPA has become an academic meeting place that provides unique opportunities for the development of young researchers, both in and outside of Armenia, committed to making contributions to Armenian policy-making processes. The Center hosts visiting research scholars from both the United States and Europe.

In Armenia, the Center has become known as a resource for a variety of policy issues. In its various projects, the Center is able to draw on expertise from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences' permanent and visiting faculty. In addition to its regular staff of researchers, the Center hosts Research Fellows and Visiting Scholars who have conducted research in areas such as nuclear energy policy, Civil Society, and conflict resolution. The Center hires students and graduates of the School as short-term assistants for research projects, thus providing opportunities for direct participation in the research, analyses and studies in the field.

Research

The researchers of the Center have a strong commitment to development projects. The Center's recent work has focused on research in the areas of local governance, legislative processes at the national level, human and women's rights, the development of non-governmental organizations, and civil society.

Research Services

The Center provides full research services from the development of reliable and valid measures and indicators and sample designs to complete quantitative and qualitative data analysis and report writing. The Center staff is expert in survey research and polling, focus groups, in-depth interviews, policy and legal analysis, and cost benefit analysis.

Employment

TCPA provides hands-on research experiences that permit the Program's best students and graduates to apply concepts and skills learned in the classroom directly in development projects through paid positions. Students must be in good academic standing in order to apply for research assistantships. When hiring Research Assistants, TCPA gives weight to academic success in PSIA studies.

Faculty

The faculty of the program in Political Science and International Affairs come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience. They have graduated from major universities in the United States and Europe including University of California, University of Pittsburgh, University of Southern California, Oxford University, Jacobs University, Ghent University, Moscow State University and the Armenian Academy of Sciences. They bring wide experience in development and management, and European and international affairs.

The graduate program in Political Science and International Affairs and the Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis (TCPA) are members of the Network of Institutions and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe. PSIA and TCPA have a formal working relationship with the Armenian International Policy Group in Washington, D.C. PSIA has a close working relationship with the Caucasus Research Resource Center, funded by the Carnegie Corporation.

Faculty:

SIMON CLARKE, D. Phil., Oxford University
Associate Professor
PSIA Program Chair and TCPA Director

ARPIE BALIAN, Ph.D., University of Southern California
Senior Lecturer
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ARTHUR DRAMPIAN, Ph.D., Moscow State University, M.A., Brandeis University
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Country Representative and Chief of Party, Counterpart International

DONALD E. FULLER, Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh
Senior Professor
Interim Provost, American University of Armenia

VACHE GABRIELIAN, Ph.D., Rutgers University
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Chief Adviser to RA Prime Minister

ALEKSANDR GRIGORYAN, Ph.D., University of Turin, Italy
Adjunct Senior Lecturer
MBA Program Chair and Assistant Professor of Economics, American University of Armenia

YEVGENYA PATURYAN, Ph.D., Jacobs University Bremen, Germany
TCPA Assistant Director and Senior Lecturer

VAHRAM TER-MATEVOSYAN, Ph.D., National Academy of Sciences, RA
Visiting Senior Lecturer

SYUZANNA VASILYAN, Ph.D., Ghent University, Belgium
Assistant Professor and Jean Monnet Chair of European Studies

Grading

Grading criteria are stated in the syllabi for each course in the program. The expected performance indicators (exams, assignments, attendance, and other measures) necessary to receive a specific letter grade may differ among faculty - that is expected in the system of higher education in which faculty design courses as per their expertise while meeting the goals and objectives of the PSIA program. Students must take responsibility for understanding the differences among faculty.

Faculty does not give grades. Students earn grades. Exams and assignments provide students with opportunities to demonstrate that they have mastered the course content - that is, that they have learned, have obtained course competencies, and have met course objectives. It is up to the student to do his or her best work on each and every assignment and exam.

If a student believes he or she has been graded unfairly on an assignment, exam, or in a course, the following steps should be followed. This process is for use ONLY to rectify situations in which students believe the faculty member has been biased or incorrect in assigning a grade. It is NOT to be used to raise a student's GPA for scholarship eligibility.

1. The student first raises the issue with the faculty member.
2. If a resolution is not obtained after meeting with the faculty member, the student submits a written appeal to the PSIA Chair. The appeal should outline the problem, the remedy desired, and what was done to try to resolve the matter with the faculty member.
3. The PSIA Chair bases his or her decision on the information provided in the appeal and may contact the student and faculty member separately for additional information. The PSIA Chair makes a written decision and submits it to both the student and the faculty member.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the PSIA Chair, the student may file an appeal with the AUA Ethics and Grievance Committee following the policies set out in the AUA Student Handbook and in the online Catalog.

Roles and Responsibilities of PSIA Students

PSIA students are held to the highest standards of integrity and are expected to devote enough time in their studies to excel - that is, to become masters of political science and international affairs.

Students must:

1. Respect the rights of others, including the students, faculty, and staff of AUA and of all persons in the community at large. This respect includes living honorably, holding other members of the AUA community to the same high standards, and taking action when necessary to safeguard the interest and reputation of the University and its community.
2. Read and comply with all rules and regulations of the University and the School of Political Science and International Affairs.
3. Take personal responsibility to learn and understand the mission, goals, and requirements of the PSIA program.
4. Take personal responsibility to learn and understand the objectives and requirements of each course in which enrolled.
5. Take personal responsibility to communicate with instructors both in class and during faculty hours when a lecture or assignment is not understood.
6. Attend all classes and submit all assignments on time. Take prior permission from the instructor of the class for any exceptions due to family or medical emergency.
7. Use the highest level of ethical standards in all areas of academic and personal life at AUA.
8. Work as individuals on all assignments, unless projects are assigned to teams or groups by faculty.
9. Engage in constructive interactions with faculty and administrators to resolve problems.
10. Make sure to meet obligations for payment of tuition and all other fees.
11. Identify and develop career goals as a result of PSIA studies.
12. Become members of the AUA community and take advantage of the many opportunities AUA provides its students outside the classroom.

PSIA Contact Information

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You can also find us at:

<http://psia.aua.am/>

<http://tcpa.aua.am/>

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