

SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS

Contact Information

Social Policy Analysis

<https://sopa.rice.edu>

101 Herzstein Hall

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Melissa J. Marschall

Program Director

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Social Policy Analysis is a major offered by the department of Political Science. Its central focus is policy design, analysis, and communication. Interdisciplinary in nature, the curriculum's emphasis is on integrating rigorous instruction in theory and method with hands-on, skills-based instruction by social science faculty. The primary goal of the program is to train Rice students to obtain the specialized knowledge, skills, and experience to be leaders in the field of social policy analysis.

As an undergraduate major, Social Policy Analysis focuses on the evaluation of alternative interventions that are proposed to improve human well-being. Graduates will be able to answer questions like: Which early interventions lead to greater educational attainment for low-income children? Which juvenile rehabilitation programs are more likely to reduce the recurrence of criminal behavior? How does healthcare policy influence our daily health behaviors? Without evidence-based research and rigorous evaluations to test these ideas, there is no way to know which solutions work and for whom. In a time of limited resources and rising demands, our leaders need the analytical expertise to make a demonstrable, sustained impact on the most pressing issues facing our cities and nation. The Social Policy Analysis program will train Rice students to meet these needs.

Bachelor's Program

- [Bachelor of Arts \(BA\) Degree with a Major in Social Policy Analysis](https://ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs/social-sciences/social-policy-analysis/social-policy-analysis-ba/)

Social Policy Analysis does not currently offer an academic program at the graduate level.

Director and Undergraduate Advisor

Melissa J. Marschall, *Political Science*

Advisory Board

Chase Lesane-Brown, *Psychological Sciences*

Flávio Cunha, *Economics*

Anna Rhodes, *Sociology*

Robert M. Stein, *Political Science*

Elizabeth Vann, *Sociology*

Affiliated Faculty

Erin Baumgartner, *Houston Education Research Consortium*

Dominic C. Boyer, *Anthropology*

Paul Brace, *Political Science*

Jenifer L. Bratter, *Sociology*

Tony N. Brown, *Sociology*

Brielle Bryan, *Sociology*

Sergio Chavez, *Sociology*

Flávio Cunha, *Economics*

Özge Gürcanlı, *Psychological Sciences*

Elaine Howard Ecklund, *Sociology*

James R. Elliott, *Sociology*

Christopher P. Fagundes, *Psychological Sciences*

Bridget K. Gorman, *Sociology*

Vivian Ho, *Economics*

Mark P. Jones, *Political Science*

Rachel Tolbert Kimbro, *Sociology*

Stephen L. Klineberg, *Sociology (Professor Emeritus)*

Chase Lesane-Brown, *Psychological Sciences*

Melissa J. Marschall, *Political Science*

Nancy A. Niedzielski, *Linguistics*

Daniel J. Potter, *Houston Education Research Consortium*

Robert M. Stein, *Political Science*

Ruth N. Lopez Turley, *Sociology*

For Rice University degree-granting programs:

To view the list of official course offerings, please see [Rice's](#)

[Course Catalog \(https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/!SWKSCAT.cat?p_action=cata\)](https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/!SWKSCAT.cat?p_action=cata).

To view the most recent semester's course schedule, please see [Rice's](#) [Course Schedule \(https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/!SWKSCAT.cat\)](https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/!SWKSCAT.cat).

Social Policy Analysis (SOPA)

SOPA 200 - APPROACHES TO SOCIAL POLICY

Short Title: APPROACHES TO SOCIAL POLICY

Department: Social Policy Analysis

Grade Mode: Standard Letter

Course Type: Lecture

Credit Hours: 3

Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.

Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level

Description: This course provides an introduction to the social sciences and the study of public policy. Students will review the nature of different disciplines and their research programs. These approaches will be studied as different paradigms for policy making.

SOPA 238 - SPECIAL TOPICS

Short Title: SPECIAL TOPICS

Department: Social Policy Analysis

Grade Mode: Standard Letter

Course Type: Internship/Practicum, Laboratory, Lecture, Seminar, Independent Study

Credit Hours: 1-4

Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.

Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level

Description: Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester's topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.

SOPA 300 - SOPA FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**Short Title:** SOPA FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**Department:** Social Policy Analysis**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Seminar**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Prerequisite(s):** SOPA 200 and (SOSC 302 or STAT 310 or STAT 315)**Description:** Students work on approved field research projects, write a research report for publication and present finding from their field research project to Rice faculty and staff. Recommended Prerequisite(s): POLI 338 or SOSC 301. Repeatable for Credit.**SOPA 309 - APPLIED ECONOMETRICS FOR POLICY EVALUATION****Short Title:** APPLIED ECONOMETRICS: POL EVAL**Department:** Social Policy Analysis**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Lecture**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Prerequisite(s):** SOSC 302 or STAT 310 or ECON 307 or STAT 315 or DSCI 301**Description:** This course covers applications of statistics to policy analysis and evaluation. Topics include regression, limited dependent variable and selection models, and other estimation techniques appropriate for evaluation and causal inference.**SOPA 340 - INTRODUCTION TO PANDEMIC RESPONSE****Short Title:** INTRO TO PANDEMIC RESPONSE**Department:** Social Policy Analysis**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Lecture**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** This course provides students with a broad, introductory-level overview of the knowledge and skills necessary for preparing a public health response to epidemics or pandemics of infectious diseases. The course will use the recent pandemic, COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019), and the subsequent response efforts in the United States to provide context to covered topics.**SOPA 400 - SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH SEMINAR I****Short Title:** SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH I**Department:** Social Policy Analysis**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Research**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Prerequisite(s):** (ECON 209 or SOSC 302) and (POLI 338 or SOSC 301) and SOPA 200 and SOPA 309**Description:** Students work in teams under the guidance of a Rice faculty member, researcher, or community partner (government, nonprofit, advocacy Organization, etc.) to evaluate or design a social policy intervention. Teams write a research report of publication quality and present findings at the end of the year.**SOPA 401 - SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH SEMINAR II****Short Title:** SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH II**Department:** Social Policy Analysis**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Research**Credit Hours:** 3**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Prerequisite(s):** SOPA 400 and (POLI 338 or SOSC 301)**Description:** The capstone research seminar is a two-semester course taken in the final year of study. During the Spring Semester, the research teams will write up and present their final research report.**SOPA 477 - SPECIAL TOPICS****Short Title:** SPECIAL TOPICS**Department:** Social Policy Analysis**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter**Course Type:** Internship/Practicum, Seminar, Lecture, Laboratory**Credit Hours:** 1-4**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level**Description:** Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester's topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.

Description and Code Legend

Note: Internally, the university uses the following descriptions, codes, and abbreviations for this academic program. The following is a quick reference:

Course Catalog/Schedule

- Course offerings/subject code: SOPA

Department (or Program) Description and Code

- Social Policy Analysis: SOPA

Undergraduate Degree Description and Code

- Bachelor of Arts degree: BA

Undergraduate Major Description and Code

- Major in Social Policy Analysis: SOPA

CIP Code and Description ¹

- SOPA Major/Program: CIP Code/Title: 44.0501 - Public Policy Analysis, General

¹ Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2020 Codes and Descriptions from the National Center for Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/>