

Communications and Public Policy

The Communications and Public Policy major explores the connection between communicating with citizens and creating, implementing and evaluating public policy. Students in the program will explore the influence of communications in the process of a participatory democracy, preparing them to work as communications professionals in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Communications and Public Policy Major

Students will be required to complete 36 credit hours of Communications and Public Policy (COPP) courses and 24 credit hours of courses in one of five Focus Areas. These Focus Areas are: Politics and Governance; Law and Justice; Social Policy and Social Justice; Science, Technology, and the Environment; and International Relations. The courses to support these Focus Areas are drawn from a variety of disciplines at St. Thomas University, ensuring that students participate in the breadth and depth of the liberal arts experience. Normally, students will choose a Focus Area during the winter semester of the first year in the program and will begin assembling the courses in their Focus Area during the fall semester of second year.

The program encourages as many of its graduates as possible to be able to work in both English and French and will provide opportunities for bilingual students and students graduating from French immersion programs to continue their studies in both languages. All students entering the program will be encouraged to complete the Certificate in French Language Proficiency offered by the St. Thomas University French Department. The two core 4000-level courses – a public policy case studies course and an internship course – will be designed to offer students the opportunity to complete course work (and internships) in English and French.

In their fourth year, students will complete a mandatory rigorously supervised internship course that will require all students to gain valuable professional experience before graduation.

Part One – Core Courses and Electives

Students must complete 36 credit hours in Communications and Public Policy Courses. A sample of the structure of the program is listed below.

Year 1

Semester 1

COPP 1013 Introduction to Communications

Semester 2

COPP 1023 Introduction to Policy Studies

Year 2

Semester 1

COPP 2013 Fundamentals of Writing

Semester 2

COPP 2023 Policy Making in the Information Age

COPP 2033 Research Methods

Year 3

Semester 1

COPP 3013 Rhetoric

COPP 3023 Ethics and Social Responsibility

Semester 2

COPP 3033 Public Policy and the Media

Year 4

Semesters 1 and 2

COPP 4006 Case Studies in Public Policy

COPP 4016 Internship

COPP-1013. Introduction to Communications

This course introduces students to the history and evolution of the communications profession, with particular emphasis on communications in the public policy sphere, from the pioneers who sold ideas on behalf of their clients, to the modern world of two-way communications with the public through the internet and social media tools. The course will explore how this evolution is changing the way governments, politicians, non-governmental organizations, citizens groups and corporations interact with the public.

COPP-1023. Introduction to Policy Studies

This course introduces students to the policy making process, how policies are researched, drafted, legislated, and communicated. The course will also explore how non-governmental organizations, citizens groups and corporations influence public policy.

COPP-2013. Fundamentals of Writing

Communicating public policy requires clear and effective writing at every stage in the process. This is a foundational writing course that will help students learn to express themselves in clear, compelling language. Prerequisites: COPP 1013, COPP 1023

COPP-2023 Policy Making in the Information Age (POLS 2333)

This course will explore how social media and internet tools are transforming the world of communications and public policy. The course will explore cases around the world where social media and the access to information on the internet is influencing public policy and the political process. Prerequisite: COPP 2013

COPP-2033. Research Methods

This course will introduce students to the methods for gathering and analyzing data through interviews, surveys, focus groups, content analysis, and polls and how this information can be applied to public policy initiatives and planning an accompanying communications strategy. Prerequisite: COPP 2013

COPP-3013. Rhetoric

This course builds on the skills developed in the Fundamentals of Writing course and applies them to rhetoric, speech writing and debating. Students will read ancient and modern speeches, historical writings on rhetoric and explore the influence of persuasive writing on public affairs. Prerequisites: COPP 2013, COPP 2023, COPP 2033.

COPP-3023. Ethics and Social Responsibility

This course explores the ethical challenges that arise while communicating public policy issues for an organization in the public or private sector. The course will allow students to develop a code of ethics for a communications professional. Prerequisites: COPP 2013, COPP 2023, COPP 2033.

COPP-3033. Public Policy and the Media (POLS 3213)

This course will explore how public policies are reported in various forms of media and how communications planning can influence the success or failure of these initiatives. The course will examine communications planning and media relations strategies such as proactive and reactive methods of representing an organization in the media. Prerequisites: COPP 2013, COPP 2023, COPP 2033.

COPP-3043. Business Communications and Marketing

This course explores the role of communications in business settings, including professional writing, the power of narrative, the influence of social media, and the connection between communications and marketing.

COPP-3053. Special Topics

This course consists of an in-depth analysis of a specific topic in communications and public policy. The course will be organized around the special interests of full time and visiting faculty. Topics could include: policy analysis, public management, organizational social media management, organizational communications, and social media and website design including search engine optimization, Google Analytics and basic back end social media training.

COPP-3063. Special Topics

This course consists of an in-depth analysis of a specific topic in communications and public policy. The course will be organized around the special interests of full time and visiting faculty. Topics could include: policy analysis, public management, organizational social media management, organizational communications, and social media and website design including search engine optimization, Google Analytics and basic back end social media training.

COPP-4006. Case Studies in Public Policy

The capstone case study course will require students to spend the fall semester surveying scholarly literature on public policy analysis (regarding policy development, design and implementation) and the winter semester applying this research as they write two case studies that will require students to synthesize the issues encountered in their Focus Areas with their studies in Communications. Course work can be presented in English and French. Prerequisites: COPP 3013, COPP 3023, COPP 3033.

COPP-4016. Internship

Students will complete two supervised professional unpaid internships in a professional communications agency, non-profit organization, or government office and will complete a detailed exit report. Where possible, students will have the opportunity to pursue internships that require them to work in French or in a bilingual office. Prerequisites: COPP 3013, COPP 3023, COPP 3033.

Cross-Listed Courses

JOUR-3163. New Media and Social Change

This course explores how the new media and social media are contributing to political and social change around the world.

POLS-3223. Public Administration

This course will focus on selected public policy issues in contemporary New Brunswick politics. Special attention will be given to the problems of intergovernmental affairs, recent constitutional negotiations, cabinet policy development, and public finance.

POLS-3613. Model United Nations

This course will prepare students for participation in a Model United Nations, either Canadian or American sponsored. In a model UN simulation, students represent an assigned country's foreign policy on assigned issues on the UN agenda. The course will begin with an examination of the UN and its procedures. Subsequent topics will include researching the assigned UN issues and the assigned country's policy on them; preparation of working papers and motions, and strategies for effective conference participation. Fund raising for the trip required: half credit course, but meets first and second terms; limited enrolment.

Part Two – Focus Areas

To complete the Focus Areas requirement, students must complete 24 credit hours in one of the five following areas:

1. Science, Technology, and the Environment
2. Social Policy and Social Justice
3. Politics and Governance
4. Law and Justice
5. International Relations

Suggested Courses

Please note that these lists are subject to change and modifications and that all courses are not offered every academic year. Additional courses not on these lists may be approved by the coordinator of the Communications and Public Policy program upon request from a student.

1. Science, Technology and the Environment

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| ECON 3323 | Environmental Economics |
| ENVS 1013 | Environment & Society I |
| ENVS 2023 | Environment and Society II |
| ENVS 3013 | Environment & Society III |
| ENVS 3023 | Environmental Praxis |
| NATI 2233 | Natural Resources and First Nations of the Maritimes |
| NATI 3223 | Native Environmental Ethics and Ecology |
| SOCI 2213 | Society and Ecology |
| STS 1003 | Science, Technology, and Society 1 |
| STS 2103 | Science, Technology and Society 2 |
| STS 2123 | Food, Science & Sustainability |

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| STS 2303 | Natural Disasters |
| STS 2313 | Energy and Society |
| STS 2403 | Science, Technology, and War |
| STS 2413 | Science, Technology and Innovation |
| STS 2503 | History of Disease |
| STS 2603 | Animals: Rights, consciousness and experimentation |
| STS 2903 | The Politics of Science |
| STS 3803 | Space Exploration |

2. Social Policy and Social Justice

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| CRIM 2743 | Social Protest in Canada |
| CRIM 3953 | Peacemaking Criminology and Restorative Justice |
| ECON 2203 | Community Economic Development |
| ECON 2403 | Economics of Poverty |
| ECON 4323 | Social Policy: Current Issues and Global Contexts |
| GERO 2013 | Introduction to Gerontology |
| GERO 2023 | Multidisciplinary Issues in Aging |
| GERO 3023 | Aging and Health |
| GERO 3733 | Social Work and Aging |
| HMRT 1006 | Introduction to Human Rights |
| HMRT 3013 | Discrimination and the law in Canada |
| HMRT 3063 | Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity |
| HMRT 3113 | The Rights Revolution in Canada |
| HMRT 3123 | International Human Rights |
| HMRT 3133 | Activism and Social Justice |
| HMRT 3543 | Human Right and Foreign Policy |
| HMRT 3803 | Human Rights of the Child |
| NATI 3313 | Contemporary Issues in Native/Non-Native Relations |
| NATI 3623 | Native Education and Colonization |
| NATI 3803 | Indigenous Cultures and Immigrant Ethnic Minorities |
| NATI 3813 | Native Cultural Identity and Cultural Survival |
| NATI 3843 | Suicide and Indigenous Peoples |
| NATI 3853 | Alcohol, Drugs, and Indigenous People |
| NATI 3863 | Indian Public Health |
| SOCI 2106 | Canadian Society |
| SOCI 2416 | Inequality in Society |
| SOCI 2423 | Social Problems 1 – Sociological Perspectives |
| SOCI 2433 | Social Problems 2 – Canadian Social Problems |
| SOCI 2443 | Racialization, Racism & Colonialism |
| SOCI 2523 | Sociology of Aging |
| SOCI 3123 | Social Movements, Social Activism & Social Change |
| SOCI 3413 | Employment Equity Policy and Gender Inequality at Work |

3. Politics and Governance

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| ECON 1006 | Introduction to Economics |
| ECON 2403 | Economics of Poverty |
| ECON 2153 | Political Economy |
| ECON 3433 | Economics of Government |

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| ECON 3443 | New Brunswick Economy |
| ECON 3453 | Labour Economics |
| NATI 3703 | Indigenous and Western Economics and the Idea of Development |
| POLS 1103 | Canadian Government |
| POLS 2103 | Canadian Constitutional Politics |
| POLS 2113 | Contemporary Issues in Canadian Politics |
| POLS 3103 | Political Parties and Elections in Canada |
| POLS 3113 | Canadian Federalism: Theory and Practice |
| POLS 3123 | The Canadian Constitution: Federalism |
| POLS 3133 | The Canadian Constitution: The Charter of Rights and Freedoms |
| POLS 3213 | Media and Politics in Canada |
| POLS 3223 | Themes and Problems in Contemporary New Brunswick Politics |
| POLS 4103 | Seminar in Canadian Government and Politics |
| POLS 3333 | Introduction to Political Economy |
| SOCI 2106 | Canadian Society |
| SOCI 2323 | Sociology for Cyborgs |
| SOCI 2513 | Communications |
| SOCI 3123 | Social Movements, Social Activism & Social Change |
| SOCI 3693 | Discourse and Society |
| SOCI 3413 | Employment Equity Policy and Gender Inequality at Work |
| STS 2903 | The Politics of Science |

4. Law and Justice

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| CRIM 1013 | Introduction to Criminology |
| CRIM 1023 | Introduction to Criminal Justice |
| CRIM 2123 | Criminal Law |
| CRIM 2223 | Youth Justice |
| CRIM 2233 | Police and the Canadian Community |
| CRIM 2243 | Corrections |
| CRIM 2263 | Children and Youth-at-Risk |
| CRIM 2943 | Victimology |
| CRIM 3123 | Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice |
| CRIM 3143 | Charter of Rights and Criminal Justice |
| CRIM 3203 | Government and the Criminal Justice System |
| CRIM 3243 | Advanced Criminal Law |
| CRIM 3283 | Crime Prevention |
| CRIM 3803 | Child and Youth Rights |
| CRIM 3843 | Corporate Crime and Corporate Regulations |
| CRIM 4133 | International and Comparative Criminal Justice |
| CRIM 4153 | Advanced Studies in Youth Justice Policy |
| CRIM 4403 | Feminist Legal Studies |
| ECON 2423 | Political Economy of Crime |
| HMRT 1006 | Introduction to Human Rights |
| HMRT 3013 | Discrimination and the law in Canada |
| HMRT 3063 | Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity |
| HMRT 3113 | The Rights Revolution in Canada |
| HMRT 3123 | International Human Rights |
| HMRT 3133 | Activism and Social Justice |

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| HMRT 3543 | Human Right and Foreign Policy |
| HMRT 3803 | Child and Youth Rights |
| NATI 3903 | Native People and the Law 1 |
| NATI 3913 | Native People and the Law 2 |
| NATI 3923 | Aboriginal Rights: The Land Question |
| SOCI 2313 | Deviance |
| SOCI 2343 | Surveillance Society |
| SOCI 3313 | Sociology of Law |
| SOCI 3323 | Sociology of Women and Law |

5. International Relations

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| CRIM 3643 | Terrorism |
| CRIM 4133 | International and Comparative Criminal Justice |
| ECON 3343 | Banking and International Finance |
| HMRT 3123 | International Human Rights |
| HMRT 3543 | Human Rights and Foreign Policy |
| POLS 2303 | Comparative Politics of the Developed World |
| POLS 2313 | Comparative Politics of the Developing Areas |
| POLS 3303 | US Government and Politics |
| POLS 3323 | Political Leadership: Local, National, and Global |
| POLS 3413 | The European Union and Europe |
| POLS 3423 | Politics & Society in Russia and Eurasia |
| POLS 2603 | Political and Economic Integration in the Americas |
| POLS 2613 | International Relations I |
| POLS 2623 | International Relations II |
| POLS 3313 | US Foreign Policy |
| POLS 3503 | Human Rights in International Relations and Foreign Policy |
| POLS 3513 | Canadian Perspective on International Law |
| POLS 3523 | International Relations in the Asia Pacific Region |
| POLS 3533 | Canadian Foreign Policy |
| POLS 3603 | The United Nations |
| POLS 3613 | Model United Nations |
| POLS 4603 | Seminar in International Relations |
| SOCI 3153 | Sociology of War |