

# PUBLIC POLICY (BS)

Brooks School of Public Policy

Program Website (<https://publicpolicy.cornell.edu/undergraduate/study/public-policy/>)

CIP: 44.0501 | HEGIS: 2199.00 | NYSED: 76486

## Program Description

The study of public policy is a comprehensive exploration of the politics and mechanisms that shape policy formulation and execution, coupled with an assessment of their effects on society's welfare and quality of life. Students who choose to major in public policy engage with a broad range of topics, including governmental policies impacting areas such as children and families, crime prevention, democratic processes, educational systems, environmental conservation, financial sectors, social inequality, public health initiatives, market regulations, and workplace dynamics, among others.

The major's distinctive strength lies in its cultivation of robust theoretical frameworks, rigorous quantitative analysis skills, critical analytical thinking, strategic planning abilities, and the application of these skills to address real-world policy challenges. These competencies are highly sought after in both government and private sector settings, and our graduates are equipped to navigate complex policy landscapes and drive positive social change.

## Admissions:

The Brooks School recommends sixteen units of secondary coursework, including four of English, four of mathematics (Calculus and/or Statistics recommended), and three of science.

A foreign language is recommended as additional preparatory coursework.

For Brooks School-wide admissions requirements please see the Brooks School page.

## Policies and procedures:

In addition to these program level requirements, students are expected to meet all Brooks School and University level policies noted elsewhere in this catalog.

## Academic Support Courses

1000 level academic support courses do not count towards graduation requirements but do contribute towards maintaining full time semester status and towards good academic standing requirements.

## Academic Standing

- A student must maintain a semester and cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher.
- A student must complete at least 12 credits per semester, excluding physical education courses unless they have received an approved petition to take fewer than 12 credits (e.g. for SDS accommodation).
- Students enrolling in the Brooks School as first-years must enroll in a minimum of one 3-credit course each semester in PUBPOL during each of their first four semesters, excluding winter and summer sessions. Transfer students must take six credit hours of

PUBPOL coursework in each of their first two semesters in the Brooks School.

- All students must complete their requirements for first-year writing seminars (FWS) during their first two semesters at Cornell.
- A student must be making "satisfactory progress" toward a Brooks School bachelor's degree.
- A student cannot carry more than two (2) incomplete grades simultaneously.
- Students must receive a passing grade in PUBPOL 2000 Intermediate Microeconomics and PUBPOL 2101 Statistics for Public Policy. Students who do not receive a passing grade in either of these courses will be placed on a warning status in the following semester.

## Review Process

At the end of each semester, the Brooks School committee on academic status (CAS) reviews each Bachelor of Science and Professional Master student's academic record to ensure that the minimum academic standards are met. The committee takes appropriate action for students whose academic achievement is considered unsatisfactory as defined by the criteria above. To support every student's success, the committee may take any of the following actions:

- Withdraw the student permanently from the Brooks School and Cornell University.
- Require the student to take a leave of absence for one or more semesters.
- Issue a warning to the student at one of the following levels (these imply that if the student does not show considerable improvement during the semester, the committee may withdraw the student):
  - Severe warning with danger of being withdrawn
  - Severe warning
  - Warning
- Add the student's name to a review list; students with this status are monitored by the committee throughout the semester.
- Return the student to good standing.

Any of the above actions may be accompanied by a semester credit limit or a requirement for the student to meet with an academic advisor by a date set by the committee.

Students placed on a required leave must appeal to CAS to return. This appeal occurs at the end of the required leave period. Students who have been withdrawn may appeal the decision before the committee during the pre-semester appeals meeting.

All students with an academic warning status automatically will be reviewed for specific criteria at the end of the subsequent semester. Students put on warning, severe warning, or severe warning with danger of being withdrawn status will be informed of conditions that they are expected to fulfill to return to good standing.

Students who have been previously placed on a required leave and wish to return to the Brooks School must submit a plan of study to the committee before being rejoined. The student should contact the Registrar ([BrooksRegistrar@cornell.edu](mailto:BrooksRegistrar@cornell.edu)) in the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services, and Career Management to discuss the process and due dates.

Students who have been withdrawn from the Brooks School by CAS may request that they be readmitted. Such students have three years from the date they were withdrawn to make this appeal with assistance

from an advisor in the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services, and Career Management. After three years, a former student must apply for readmission through the Brooks School admissions process. A student applying for readmission should discuss their situation with an advisor in the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services and Career Management. The student also should talk with others who may be able to help—faculty mentors, instructors, or a member of the university medical staff. Any information given to the committee is held in the strictest confidence.

## Semester Credit Limits

Full-time matriculated students must carry a minimum of 12 credits (excluding physical education) to maintain their full-time status.

Undergraduate students enrolled in the Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy are typically limited to taking 18 credits per semester. However, students who have completed more than two semesters at Cornell and have maintained a GPA of at least 3.5 may petition to take up to 22 academic credits.

Students who have been at Cornell for less than two semesters or have a GPA lower than 3.5 may only petition for additional credits if they are for physical education or academic support classes (e.g., MATH 1006 Academic Support for MATH 1106).

Eligibility to petition does not guarantee approval to exceed 18 credits. Students must also have the support of an academic advisor from the Brooks School Office of Admissions, Student Services and Career Management. Approval for additional credits will only be granted after a meeting with an advisor.

Please be aware that approvals to exceed 18 credits are granted under limited circumstances, and petitions to enroll for more than 18 credits are not accepted during the pre-enrollment period.

## Special Study Courses

- A maximum of 12 credits of special study/independent study/research coursework can count towards 120 overall credits. Courses will be indicated on the class roster with a Component of either IND or RSC. In Brooks these courses are PUBPOL 4000 Directed Readings, PUBPOL 4010 Empirical Research, PUBPOL 4020 Supervised Fieldwork, & PUBPOL 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship. Additional credits can be taken but will not be applied.
- A maximum of 3 credits of PUBPOL special studies coursework (PUBPOL 4000 Directed Readings, PUBPOL 4010 Empirical Research, and PUBPOL 4020 Supervised Fieldwork) may meet the PUBPOL electives requirement. PUBPOL 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship does not meet the PUBPOL electives requirement.
- A maximum of 3 credits of 4000-4020 (not including PUBPOL 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship) may count towards the 9 Human Ecology credits requirement if the special study is in a department outside the student's major.
- Students cannot TA (PUBPOL 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship) the same course for credit more than once or take and TA the same course simultaneously. PUBPOL 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship does not fulfill any requirements towards the major. Registration for PUBPOL 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship may not exceed 5 credit hours per semester.

## Study Abroad Credit Limits

Students participating in full semester study abroad programs offered via the office of global learning may take no more than the equivalent of 15 credits Cornell credits abroad per semester.

Credits taken through an approved global learning program will automatically count towards the 120 credits needed to graduate.

To request to have a course count towards a major or distribution requirements, students must complete a curriculum substitution petition. Core PUBPOL courses cannot be taken abroad. If a student receives approval for multiple courses to count towards PUBPOL credits, no more than 8 credits per semester abroad may apply towards PUBPOL credits.

## S-U Grade Options

- S/U grading option may NOT be used for any required course unless it is the only grade option offered for those courses.
- S/U grades MAY be used for electives and in the 9 Human Ecology credits.
- Students can apply a maximum of 12 credits of S-U grades toward the 120 credits required for graduation. Courses offered only as S-U grades do not count towards this limit.
- Students have the option to take additional S-U courses beyond the 12-credit limit, but those credits will not count toward graduation requirements.

## Tracking Graduation Requirements

Undergraduate students must track their progress towards graduation by reviewing degree requirements in this catalog. It is the responsibility of students to plan their course selections carefully to ensure they meet all graduation requirements within eight semesters. Transfer students may have a different timeline based on the number of transferable credits they receive upon admission. Students who require additional semesters to fulfill graduation requirements must schedule a meeting with an advisor at the Brooks Office of Admissions, Student Services, and Career Management. During this meeting, they can request to petition for an extension.

## Transfer Credit Policies

All students who matriculate fall 2025 and later are expected to follow the university transfer credit policy.

Prior to enrolling in the course, students must complete a petition to have an external course count towards a Brooks School requirement. Petitions are not required for test credit. See the curriculum requirements tab for more information about how test credit may meet degree requirements.

Students who matriculated prior to fall 2025, and who have not switched to the 2025-2026 curriculum year, are held to the policies from the year they matriculated:

- Of the 120 credits required to graduate, at least 60 credits must be earned at Cornell University.
- After matriculation, transfer students may take no more than 15 credits external to Cornell. AP and IB credits also count towards this limit.
- First-year matriculated students may apply a maximum of 15 non-Cornell credits toward the 120 credits required for graduation. These credits include AP, IB, and college credits earned elsewhere (refer to the Advanced Placement Credit section below).
- Courses taken in a high school setting or counted toward high school graduation, such as Syracuse Project Advance, are not eligible to

count for credits or fulfill graduation requirements or count towards the 120 credits needed to graduate.

## Program Information

- Instruction Mode: In Person
- Location: Ithaca, NY
- Minimum Credits for Degree: 120

## Program Requirements

### Major Requirements (Minimum of 74 Credits)

Must be completed with a grade of C- or better in each course unless S/U is the only grading option available in which case a grade of SX must be received.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Public Policy Core Courses</b>		
PUBPOL 1111	Building Success at Brooks	1
PUBPOL 2030	Population and Public Policy	4
PUBPOL 2040	Economics of the Public Sector	4
PUBPOL 2101	Statistics for Public Policy	4
PUBPOL 2301	Introduction to Public Policy	4
PUBPOL 2370	Race, Racism, and Public Policy	4
PUBPOL 2830	Ethics and Public Policy	3
PUBPOL 3100	Multiple Regression Analysis	4
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>28</b>

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Introductory Microeconomics</b>		
Select one of the following:		
ECON 1110	Introductory Microeconomics (or)	3
5 on the AP microeconomics exam (or)		
7 on the IB HL Economics exam		

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Intermediate Microeconomics</b>		
PUBPOL 2000	Intermediate Microeconomics	4
or ECON 3030	Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Government</b>		
Select one of the following:		
GOVT 1111	Introduction to American Government and Politics (or)	4
GOVT 1313	Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics (or)	
GOVT 1817	Making Sense of World Politics	

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Political Science</b>		
Select two of the following:		
PUBPOL 2320	Global Democracy and Public Policy	6-8
PUBPOL 2857	Global Governance and Policy	
PUBPOL 3583	Comparative Public Policy: Political Pathways to Equality	

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Introduction to Sociology</b>		
Select one of the following:		
SOC 1101	Introduction to Sociology	3
PUBPOL 2250	Social Problems in the United States <sup>1</sup>	

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Public Policy Electives</b>		
2000, 3000, or 4000 level public policy courses <sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>		
		<b>22</b>

<sup>1</sup> PUBPOL 2250 can count towards either introduction to sociology or public policy electives, but not both areas.

<sup>2</sup> PUBPOL 4030, PUBPOL 4980, and PUBPOL 4990 cannot be used to fulfill the public policy electives requirement.

<sup>3</sup> A maximum of 3 credits from PUBPOL 4000, PUBPOL 4010, and PUBPOL 4020 can be counted towards the public policy electives requirement.

<sup>4</sup> Within the public policy electives, at least one course must have the CU-CEL tag.

### Distribution Requirements (Minimum of 24 Credits)

Must be completed with a grade of D- or better in each course unless S/U is the only grading option available or otherwise stated.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>First-Year Writing Seminars <sup>5</sup></b>		
		<b>6</b>

<sup>5</sup> Both required first-year writing seminar courses must be completed within the first two semesters at Cornell.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Mathematics</b>		
		<b>3-4</b>
Select one of the following:		
AP Calculus BC exam score of 4 or 5 <sup>6</sup>		
IB HL Mathematics AA or AI score of 6 or 7		
CASE Exam credit confirmed through the MATH department		
Any 3-credit Cornell math course except MATH 1101 and MATH 1710 (must be taken at Cornell)		

<sup>6</sup> It's important to note that while AP Calculus AB credit (with a score of 4 or 5) may be applied as elective credits, it does not fulfill this specific requirement.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Natural Science I <sup>8</sup></b>		
		<b>3-4</b>
Choose one of the following:		

#### Biology

BIOG 1140	Foundations of Biology	
BIOG 1440	Introductory Biology: Comparative Physiology	
BIOG 1445	Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, Individualized Instruction	
BIOMG 1350	Introductory Biology: Cell and Developmental Biology	
BIOEE 1610	Introductory Biology: Ecology and the Environment	
AP Biology score of 5 or IB Biology HL score of 7		

#### Chemistry

CHEM 1560 & CHEM 1561	Introduction to General Chemistry and Introduction to General Chemistry Laboratory
CHEM 2070 & CHEM 2071	General Chemistry I and General Chemistry I Laboratory
CHEM 2080 & CHEM 2081	General Chemistry II and General Chemistry II Laboratory
AP Chemistry score of 5	
IB Chemistry HL score of 6 or 7	
CASE exam credit approved by Chemistry department	

**Physics**

PHYS 1101	General Physics I
PHYS 2207	Fundamentals of Physics I
EAS 1600	Environmental Physics
PHYS 1102	General Physics II
PHYS 2208	Fundamentals of Physics II
AP Physics score of 5	
AP Physics HL score of 6 or 7	

<sup>8</sup> Please note that if AP Physics is not used to fulfill this requirement, then the course must be taken at Cornell.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Natural Science II</b> <sup>9</sup>		<b>3-4</b>
Select any 3-4 credit course with a course distribution code of BIO, PBS, BIOLS-AG, or BIONLS-AG.		

<sup>9</sup> Please note that AP credit is not accepted.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Language</b>		
AP (score of 5), IB HL (score of 7) or CASE credit may meet this requirement if approved by respective language department at Cornell.		

For a list of courses that fulfill this requirement, see Language Study (<https://catalog.cornell.edu/exploratory-studies/language-study/>).

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Historical Analysis</b>		<b>3</b>
Any course with a HA or HST distribution code		

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Human Ecology Electives</b> <sup>10</sup>		<b>9</b>
Any course with the subject code DEA, FSAD, HD, HE, or NS <sup>11</sup>		

- <sup>10</sup>
- AP Psychology with a score of 4 or 5 may meet this requirement.
  - This requirement may overlap with any other requirements.
  - These can be taken S/U only if course is NOT used to fulfill another requirement.
  - A maximum of 3 credits of special studies courses with the Human Ecology catalog numbers of 4000-4020 may count towards the 9 Human Ecology credits requirement.

<sup>11</sup> Excludes FWS courses, HE 1006, HE 1105, HE 1110, HE 1115, HE 1200, and any 4030 Teaching Apprenticeship course.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Electives</b>		<b>variable credit</b>
Any courses that are not taken in the areas mentioned above will count as Electives.		

## University Graduation Requirements Requirements for All Students

In order to receive a Cornell degree, a student must satisfy academic and non-academic requirements.

### Academic Requirements

A student's college determines degree requirements such as residency, number of credits, distribution of credits, and grade averages. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the specific major, degree, distribution, college, and graduation requirements for completing their chosen program of study. See the individual requirements listed by each college or school or contact the college registrar's office (<https://registrar.cornell.edu/service-resources/college-registrar-directory/>) for more information.

### Non-academic Requirements

**Conduct Matters.** Students must satisfy any outstanding sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed or agreed to under the Student Code of Conduct (Code) or Policy 6.4. Where a formal complaint under the Code or Policy 6.4 is pending, the University will withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the adjudication process set forth in those procedures is complete, including the satisfaction of any sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed.

**Financial Obligations.** Outstanding financial obligations will not impact the awarding of a degree otherwise earned or a student's ability to access their official transcript. However, the University may withhold issuing a diploma until any outstanding financial obligations owing to the University are satisfied.

## Additional Requirements for Undergraduate Students

The University has two requirements for graduation that must be fulfilled by all undergraduate students: the swim requirement, and completion of two physical education courses. For additional information about fulfilling University Graduation Requirements, see the Physical Education website (<https://scl.cornell.edu/pe/>).

### Physical Education

All incoming undergraduate students are required to take two credits (two courses) of Physical Education prior to graduation. It is recommended they complete the two courses during their first year at Cornell. Credit in Physical Education may be earned by participating in courses offered by the Department of Athletics and Physical Education (<https://catalog.cornell.edu/courses/pe/>) and Cornell Outdoor Education, by being a registered participant on a varsity athletic team, or performing in the marching band.

Students with medical concerns should contact the Office of Student Disability Services (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>).

## Swim Requirement

The Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education has established a basic swimming and water safety competency requirement for all undergraduate students. Normally, the requirement is taken during the Fall Orientation process at Helen Newman Hall or Teagle Hall pools. The requirement consists of the following: jump or step feet-first into the deep end of the pool, float or tread for one minute, turn around in a full circle, swim 25 yards using any stroke(s) of choice without touching the bottom or holding on to the sides (there is no time limit) and exit from the water. Students who do not complete the swim requirement during their first year, during a PE swim class or during orientation subsequent years, will have to pay a \$100 fee. Any student who cannot meet this requirement must register for PE 1100 Beginning Swimming as their physical education course before electives can be chosen.

If a student does not pass the swim requirement in their first Beginning Swimming PE class, then the student must take a second Beginning Swimming PE class (PE 1100 or PE 1101). Successful completion of two Beginning Swimming classes (based on attendance requirements) with the instructor's recommendation will fulfill the University's swim requirement.

Students unable to meet the swim requirement because of medical reasons should contact the Office of Student Disability Services (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>). When a waiver is granted by the Faculty Committee on Physical Education, an alternate requirement is imposed. The alternate requirement substitute is set by the Director of Physical Education.

## Learning Outcomes

- Interpret and explain the theory and use of tools applicable to the development and evaluation of policy
- Develop the skills required for effective delivery of evidence used for policy formation and evaluation, including written, spoken, and visual presentation
- Work with others toward the goal of serving the public interest
- Foster an inclusive learning environment in which diverse approaches and points of view can help guide government actions
- Evaluate and scrutinize data to inform policy evaluation