

New Course Descriptions Spring 2024

CAPSTONE NOTICE:

Students desiring to pursue an individual capstone and did not take MPP 619 must submit a research proposal by December 15 to the preferred capstone professor (unless they are taking Dr. Coyle or Dr. Graf capstones). See registration website for instructions: [“Capstone Notice”](#) section.

MPP 607.01 Policy Seminar (Capstone): Major Issues in Public Policy (4 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Robert Kaufman](#)

Capstone – Individual (proposal needed for those that did not take MPP 619)

In-Person

The Major Issues in Public Policy Capstone course will provide the student to the opportunity to generate a rigorous, well-argued research paper, with policy implications. The subjects and methodologies are open. Students will develop a clear, cogent, research design, choosing a topic that is significant but manageable within the confines of a semester. The professor will review at least two drafts of the paper, which each student will have to defend publicly in the final week of class in a point-counterpoint format, paired with a fellow student. In this way, the course hopes to refine the student’s capacity to write a worthy policy paper within at least hailing distance of publishable quality.

MPP 607.02 Policy Seminar (Capstone): Empirical Policy Analysis (4 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Luisa Blanco](#) and [James Prieger](#)

Capstone – Group or Individual (proposal needed for those that did not take MPP 619)

In-Person

This capstone course is designed for the student interested in self- and group-motivated policy research using the tools of econometrics and other data-analytic techniques. Any student intending to perform econometric analysis should take this capstone. Other approaches to the capstone are allowed, such as projects that use qualitative methods, but every project is expected to involve significant analysis of data. Projects are encouraged to be completed in a group setting, although individual projects may also be allowed upon approval. Projects in this course have focused on a wide variety of policy issues, such as the environment, health, migration, labor issues, education, and national security. Students should already have a topic for policy research prior to registration. This course is for capstone projects that intend to use data—of any sort and analyzed by any method—in a serious way. This course would not be appropriate for someone interested in writing an essay with no empirical component or analysis of data.

MPP 607.04 Policy Seminar (Capstone): Client-Based Research – Tiny Homes (4 units)

(See catalog for full description)

[Marlon Graf](#)

Capstone – Group (class only available for those pre-selected for grant research, taking MPP 619)

Online Only

This capstone class will provide students with an opportunity to carry-out a research project sponsored by a real-world client. Throughout the semester, students will learn how to apply the research methods and policy analysis strategies they acquired during their first three semesters at SPP to the needs of a real world policy analysis project. Specifically, students will seek to advise their client on very specific research and policy questions, using a mix of literature reviews, as well as analysis of primary and secondary data sources. Findings will be delivered to the client in a written report and presentation, which will double as the students' capstone writeup, to be delivered at the end of the semester. In addition to leveraging the skills students acquired over the duration of their studies, they will also be exposed to work in a non-classroom setting, having to manage communications and meetings with the client as well as any other potential stakeholders involved.

SCHEDULE: Capstone check-ins will be on a bi-weekly basis, scheduled based on availability of faculty and students. These regular check-ins will cover key methodological considerations of the capstone project (such as literature review, data collection and analysis, as well as writing and dissemination) as well as important updates on the overall capstone progress. **Class closed to general registration.**

MPP 627.01 Seminar in Economic Policies: Current Issues in Applied Economics (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Dayea Oh](#)

Economics or State/Local Policy

In-Person

This is a study of relevant issues in applied economics. The topics covered are based on the issues currently relevant to the political debate in the United States on which economists are doing research. Topics to be covered include education, minimum wage, climate change and environment, discrimination, healthcare, crime and policing, immigration, housing, neighborhoods, and urban economic development, among others. We will also cover statistical issues of endogeneity and the common methods for dealing with it, including randomized control trials, regression discontinuity, instrumental variables, matching, difference-in-difference, and synthetic controls. Familiarity with regression is not necessary, but encouraged for this course

MPP 643.01 Immigration Policy (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Brian Goebel](#)

American Politics or International Relations

In-Person

The key pillars of US immigration policy have not been meaningfully updated or reformed since 1986. During this time, we have witnessed dramatic changes in the US economy and labor markets, migration patterns, the demographics and scale of refugee and asylee applicants, and global terrorism. Although we have corrected many of the national security weaknesses in our visa and travel systems that were exposed before and on 9/11, weaknesses remain, and we have been unable or unwilling to secure our Southern Border. We have also encountered many challenges in securing cooperation on migration matters from countries in the Western Hemisphere. This policy paralysis has altered relations between the States and Federal Government, spurred questionable Presidential assertions of unilateral authority, and become

an issue in most Federal elections. Unfortunately, political discussions of immigration-related topics have become increasingly coarse and disconnected from facts and data, and reforms seem increasingly unlikely.

How did we get here? This course will cover the history of immigration policy in the US, with particular emphasis on the period from 1965 to the present. It will explore the myriad immigration challenges our country now faces, including the national security and diplomatic challenges created by our current system.

The US experience is hardly unusual. Across the West, nations struggle with the same set of immigration policy challenges. Indeed, many nations in Europe are dealing with adversaries that seek to spur irregular migration to Europe to exacerbate political divisions and drain resources. To better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the US system, this course will also examine immigration policies and challenges in several G20 nations.

MPP 647.02 Seminar in Political Issues: Health Policy & Politics (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[David Mansdoerfer](#)

American Politics

Online Only

This course will examine the interconnectivity of Health Policy and Politics. From the COVID-19 response, to emerging issues in public health, clinical practice, and resource allocation, Health Policy and Politics will challenge students to dig deeper into critical issues that impact individuals and society as a whole. This course will include weekly guest speakers ranging from former high-level governmental officials (local, state and national) to lobbyists and clinical / health policy experts. The course will culminate with a presentation and defense of a recommended course of action for a hot-button health policy issue to a panel of special guests.

MPP 656.01 Public Policy and the Legal Framework/“Process” (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Steven Hayward](#)

American Politics

In Person

What is the essential connection between law and policy? This seemingly simple question is mired in confusion and controversy today, chiefly because fundamental questions and issues about law are seldom asked, or are taken for granted. This course seeks to treat the question of law and policy from the ground up, starting with the provocative question of whether the natural law tradition, central to Anglo-American and European constitutionalism, is still relevant today. The natural law reasoning central to the American founders guided their views on how the powers and limits of government should be understood and implemented. But for more than a century natural law reasoning has been supplanted by numerous modern foundational rivals. Is natural law legal reasoning wholly obsolete? What might remain operative from this tradition? Can it inform judicial review of today’s constitutional and policy controversies in any substantial way? Main questions of the course include:

- What is natural law anyway? What is the origin of the idea? What is its opposite concept (that is, positive law)?
- What is the necessary philosophical background or foundation for the idea of natural law?
- Is natural law “universal” law? What conditions are required for it to be meaningful?
- How has natural law influenced the development of constitutionalism and modern law?
- What are the defects of the natural law tradition? |
- What are some modern modes of natural law reasoning? What kind of constitutional and policy issues can natural law be applied, and how?

MPP 665.01 Region Specific Studies: Eastern Europe (3 units)

[Alexei Shevchenko](#)

International Relations

Hybrid (In person and on Zoom)

This course focuses on major security, political and economic challenges confronting post-communist Eurasia with a particular emphasis on the crucial case study of Russia. The main themes are the problems of democratizing authoritarian regimes, improving the quality of governance and responding to new security threats. In addition, American post-Cold War foreign policy in the region will be examined. The course emphasizes conceptual analysis by drawing on key theoretical debates in international relations and comparative politics.

MPP 668.01 Seminar in International Relations: How to Run the World (3 units)

[Kiron Skinner](#)

International Relations

In-Person

Global politics and American foreign policy are created out of a dynamic mix of governmental, business sector, NGO and media participants. In this course, leading players from each of these sectors will engage with students, demonstrating both the complex nature of international relations, but also the importance of setting forth clear American interests.

MPP 668.02 Seminar in International Relations: Past is Prologue: US International Politics (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Kiron Skinner](#)

International Relations

In-Person

This course investigates the proposition that past policy decisions are among the most important factors influencing contemporary US foreign policy. Through readings, documentaries, guest speakers, and class discussion, this course examines key foreign policy decisions and international engagements in the past 70 years to gain clarity about America's role in the world in the 21st century.

MPP 687.01 Seminar in Regional Policies: Planning California (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

M. Nolan Gray (see bio below)

State/Local Policy or American Politics

In-Person

This course will survey major California planning institutions, including policies that are common across the US (zoning, subdivision regulations, metropolitan planning organizations) and unique to California (California Environmental Quality Act, Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Sustainable Communities Strategy). This course will cover topics such as housing affordability, transportation planning, and environmental policy, with a special focus on recent reforms. The engaged student will come away understanding how a range of planning policies at the city, county, metropolitan, state, and federal level shape our state. As many of these policies are actively in flux, students will be expected to seriously engage with ongoing debates.

MPP 687.02 Seminar in Regional Policies: Police and Criminal Justice Reform (3 units)

[Kurt Wilson](#)

State/Local Policy or American Politics

Online Only

Students will build upon their comprehensive foundational knowledge of policing and the criminal justice system. They will examine existing opportunities, limitations, legal framework, funding, training, and policies while identifying areas ripe for reform. They will propose policy changes intended to reform one aspect of the criminal justice system and objectively analyze the results by approximating the impacts from the perspectives of the people doing the policing and the people being policed.

LAW 601 International Religious Freedom Advocacy, Law, and Diplomacy (1 unit) –

Limited Space Available

[Knox Thames](#) and [Cameron McCollum](#)

Pass/Fail

In Person

This course offers an overview of international legal standards protecting freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief and exposure to advocacy strategies for protecting and promoting this fundamental human right through diplomatic mechanisms. The class will draw from Knox's scholarship, including his book *International Religious Freedom Advocacy* and his forthcoming book *Ending Persecution*. In addition, students will engage with international law, resolutions of the United Nations, reports by the UN Human Rights Council and US Department of State, and decisions by the European Court of Human Rights. With real-world examples, case studies, and stories from firsthand experiences, students will understand the scope of religious persecution, the plight of victims, and the challenge to see positive change. The class will expose students to the history of the United States' commitment to promoting global religious freedom and its successes and failures while comparing international approaches from the United Nations and countries worldwide. Along with daily lectures, the class will also have interactive discussions on various case studies dissecting foreign laws and international covenants regarding the free enjoyment of religious freedom. Students will leave the course with an expanded understanding of the international legal order protecting freedom of religion or belief, and how governments and international institutions can advocate on behalf of individuals persecuted for their beliefs.

Registration Request: Students are to submit a completed and signed (actual signature or digital time-stamped signature) [Cross-Registration Form](#) to [Sheryl Covey](#) after their registration date and time. Space is limited and will be on first-come, first-served basis.

New Faculty/Lecturer Biographies

All other faculty bios available at: <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/academics/faculty/>.



M. Nolan Gray

M. Nolan Gray is the research director for California YIMBY and expert in urban land-use regulation. He is the author of *Arbitrary Lines: How Zoning Broke the American City and How To Fix It*. Gray previously worked as a planner in New York City, where he worked on the front lines of zoning. He is a widely published author, with work appearing in outlets such as *The Atlantic*, *Bloomberg Citylab*, and *The Guardian*. He lives in

Los Angeles, California and is originally from Lexington, Kentucky.