



PEPPERDINE
School of Public Policy

New Course Descriptions Spring 2025

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. 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)

Hybrid: In-Person Washington, DC, Campus with Zoom for Malibu Students

*Priority given to DC-track students

The Major Issues in Public Policy Capstone course will provide the student 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 a 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, Malibu Campus

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 647.01 Seminar in Political Issues: Making and Practice of American Foreign Policy (3 units)

[Robert Kaufman](#)

American Politics (default) or International Relations (on request)

In-Person Washington, DC, Campus

This course will analyze the making and implementation of American foreign policy from a thematic and historical perspective focusing on an interplay among the executive branch, Congress, and American public opinion. Among other things, this course will investigate watershed inflection points in American foreign policy starting with the George Washington farewell address and including the Monroe doctrine, the Truman doctrine, the Bush 43 doctrine, the Obama doctrine, and the uncertainty about whether the next president has a doctrine.

MPP 647.02 Seminar in Political Issues: The Cold War, Past and Present (3 units)

[Elizabeth Spalding](#)

American Politics (default) or International Relations (on request)

In-Person Washington, DC, Campus

This seminar examines the dominating geostrategic, political, economic, and moral conflict of the twentieth century and considers its lessons and relevance for today. Key questions will include: What is the Cold War? What was the U.S. role in this decades-long conflict, and how was the American president a central figure? What were the effects on grand strategy and U.S. foreign policy? Is the United States in a new cold war, and how might the Cold War help us approach this century's global challenges? Readings and discussion will both draw from and bring together American politics and policy, national security, and international relations.

MPP 665.01 Region-Specific Studies: Middle East (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[James Coyle](#)

International Relations

Hybrid: In-Person Malibu (January), Zoom (February-April)

This course will focus on the Middle East with attention given to the region's history: its economic, political and social institutions; and its relationship to the United States and other nations. Special focus will be on the implications of the regions needs and characteristics for the formation of public policy.

MPP 668.01 Seminar in International Relations: Cybersecurity and US Foreign Policy (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Alma Keshavarz](#)

International Relations (default) or American Politics (on request)

In-Person Washington, DC, Campus

This course is an overview of the foremost cybersecurity challenges US policy makers face. Malicious cyber actors use cyberspace as a tool to target state actors, individuals, and entities, and use targeted approaches to inflict damage against their perceived adversaries by identifying vulnerabilities. The overarching objective of this course is to understand the beginnings of cyber related legislation and how they are applied to major themes in cybersecurity through the lens of foreign policy. Students will learn about cyberterrorism, state-based cyber actors, and cyber

threats through illicit finance, while other topics will cover laws and ethics, cyber strategy, and cyber deterrence.

MPP 668.02 Seminar in International Relations: America's Role in the World: The Enduring Debate (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Kiron Skinner](#)

International Relations

In-Person, Malibu Campus

Starting with Washington's Farewell Address, US presidents have carved out approaches to engaging with the world that are rooted in one or another philosophical tradition found in writings, speeches, political organizing, and legislation by American thinkers, politicians, and activists. Taken together this prodigious body of work has created a distinctive American way of thinking about international relations. An enduring debate has emerged: America must save the world versus America must save itself. What is quite remarkable is that the debate never stops. What is consistent is that each new generation refines and sharpens the questions at hand. What is reassuring is that for all of its faults and missteps at home and abroad, Americans never stop trying to shape the world and forge a common destiny for all. We will join that project in this course.

MPP 668.03 Seminar in International Relations: Leadership and Diplomacy (3 units) (see catalog for full description)

[Michael Keane](#)

International Relations

In-Person, Malibu Campus

This course has the objective of training students to achieve excellence in ethical leadership. We will distill the ingredients of successful leadership by studying a broad range of individuals from a variety of backgrounds including politics, the military, religion and civil rights. The course will examine the various theories of leadership, including the great man theory, great wave theory and traits theory, and dissect their strengths and weaknesses. We will also explore the narrative theme of the "hero's journey" and the ideal of leaders and heroes from Greek and Roman mythology to Marvel Superheroes. Additionally, we will explore the critical role that leadership plays during times of crisis, both international and domestic, by reviewing a series of such historical incidents. Guest lecturers, from diverse backgrounds such as Navy Seals and entrepreneurs, will also be invited to share their own experiences and insights into leadership.

MPP 687.01 Seminar in Regional Policies: Ending Homelessness: The Public Policy Challenge of our Time (3 units)

[Rick Cole](#)

State and Local Policy

In-Person, Malibu Campus

"Homelessness" is the product of intersecting failures, including a broken housing market; inadequate mental health and addiction treatment services; mismatch between wages and housing costs; and reliance on law enforcement to address social breakdowns. This course will analyze the causes of homelessness; the competing political and ideological narratives around its nature and cure; as well as promising policy approaches that actually work. Using Los Angeles as the primary case study, adjunct professor Rick Cole draws on his first-hand

experience as a former mayor and city manager along with guest speakers from government, law, nonprofits and those with lived experience of being unhoused.

MPP 687.02 Seminar in Regional Polices: Public Budgeting and Financial Planning (3 units)

Rowan Miranda

State and Local Policy

Hybrid: In-Person Malibu for two sessions and Zoom for 13 sessions

This course focuses on the tools and techniques to develop and execute budgets and financial plans in the public sector. Course content is focused mostly on state and local governments, but we will also cover the federal budget process. Students will develop skills in constructing, analyzing, and using budget and accounting information. Topics covered include operating and capital budget development, expenditure and revenue forecasting, bond markets, evaluating fiscal stress, budget balancing strategies and financial management technology.

New Faculty/Lecturer Biographies

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

Rowan Miranda – Biography



Rowan Miranda, PhD, is Managing Director & Industry Lead for Government, Education and Nonprofits at Workday, a leading provider of enterprise software in finance and human capital management. Prior to joining Workday, Miranda was a senior executive at Accenture, leading its public sector finance and enterprise performance practice. Most recently, he was Vice President for Operations & Chief Financial Officer at the University of Chicago and AVP for Finance at the University of Michigan. Miranda has also served as a Budget Director and/or CFO in municipal government. Early in his career, Rowan was Director of Research and Consulting at the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Dr. Miranda has served on the public policy faculty

of the University of Chicago University Michigan, Carnegie-Mellon University, and University of Pittsburgh. He holds a PhD in public policy analysis from the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy.