



# School of Public Affairs Minors

## Race, Politics, & Justice (21 credit hours)

The Race, Politics, and Justice minor is designed for undergraduate students who are interested in understanding how race and ethnicity factor into the political and criminal justice fields. In addition to learning about the major topics in politics and justice, students will also learn how race and ethnicity shape, frame, influence, and guide many decisions that occur within those fields. Using an interdisciplinary approach, students will understand how public policy might have racial/ethnic influences and propose solutions to address the consequences of those policy decisions. The required courses are:

**Politics in the Developing World:** Political order and change in selected countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, emphasizing nation building, ideology, development, and the role of the military.

**Minority Politics in the United States:** This course explains how various minority groups have shaped the American political system, and how American political structures have affected their involvement in the political process at the local, state, and national levels. The course looks at the impact that African Americans and Hispanics have had upon urban politics, the politics of Asian Americans, indigenous Americans, and their quest for autonomy and for equal rights, and European ethnic and religious groups and their journey from isolation to assimilation. The students read textbooks written by members of the various minority groups discussed in the course, view movies and read court cases.

**Race Issues in Justice:** Race and justice are inextricably linked. From institutionalized racism on both global and domestic scales to de facto and de jure segregation, profiling in criminal justice, and environmental justice, among other topics, this course explores racism in its varied forms through a justice lens and examines issues of justice through a racial lens, tying the historic to the present and how these two impactful concepts relate to public policy. Discussions are framed by the required texts and readings, while also infusing current events, headlines, scholarly opinions, and relevant subject matter into the examination of this topic.

## Public Administration & Policy (21 credit hours)

The Public Administration and Policy minor is designed to give undergraduate students a deeper appreciation for the challenges in organizing the modern state and the manner in which the intricacies of implementation affect the achievement of public policies. The required courses are:

**Political Power and American Public Policy:** This course offers an introduction to American public policy and written communication in political science. Students explore key questions about political power and public policy, learn the writing conventions of political science, and refine their written communication and information literacy skills. Through examination of the American public policymaking system and prominent issues in American public policy, as well as instruction on problem definition, issue analysis, and policy proposal, students come to understand how policy is made and how to participate effectively in the process.

**Administrative Politics:** An introduction to American public administration and the executive branch of government. Emphasis on the politics of administration and on the relationship of the bureaucracy with clientele groups, Congress, the White House, and the public.

**Introduction to Public Administration and Governance:** An introduction to the theory and practice of organizing the modern state and achieving public policies. The course examines the evolution of the modern administrative state, together with the organizational theories that characterize and influence its development.

## Justice (18 credit hours)

The Justice minor is designed to help undergraduate students understand, think critically about, and evaluate the causes of and responses, including policies, to crime and violence in society. The required courses are:

**Critical Issues in Justice:** Political, legal, economic, and social problems of justice emphasizing crime, deviance, and other conduct resulting in such socially disapproved labels as mentally ill, delinquent, and criminal. Moral and theoretical issues involved and mechanisms for remedying injustice and controlling socially disapproved behavior.

**Introduction to Systems of Justice:** An overview of the formal mechanisms of social control as manifested by the components of the criminal justice system (legislatures, planning agencies, law enforcement, courts, and corrections), civil justice systems, and such other mechanisms as civil commitment. Alternatives to formal processing including diversion, pretrial screening and dispute-settlement programs.

## Legal Studies (18 credit hours)

The Legal Studies minor is designed to help undergraduate students understand and evaluate the conceptual foundations, historical evolution and normative implications of legal ideas and traditions. Undergraduates will be able to analyze and think critically about legal issues and policies due to a familiarity with different research designs and methodologies. The required courses are:

**Introduction to Law:** A general introduction to law and the legal system, including a survey of substantive law in both civil and criminal arenas. Students learn how the legal system operates and the basic categories of law, and discuss controversial issues in each area of law.

**Western Legal Tradition:** From the biblical era to the American experiment, the Western legal tradition encompasses primitive, divine, natural, canon, secular, and common law. This course examines the key legal documents and issues of the tradition including the Code of Hammurabi, the Ten Commandments, the trials of Socrates and Jesus, the Magna Carta, the Rule of Law, and Common law.

**Introduction to Legal Studies Research:** This course introduces a wide array of methodologies employed in legal studies related to the humanities and social sciences. It provides the knowledge and skills necessary to design, conduct, and present a scholarly research project. The research questions that motivate scholars in legal studies, as well as the different methods used to collect and analyze the evidence systematically and logically are discussed.

## Political Science (21 credit hours)

The Political Science minor is designed to give undergraduate students the knowledge and understanding of key theories, concepts, and issues surrounding the study of political institutions and processes then put their acquired knowledge into practice of politics. The required courses are:

**Individual Freedom vs. Authority:** The study of major philosophical discussions of the conflict between individual freedom and authority with analysis of the relation between this conflict and the problem of organizing a government.

**Politics in the United States:** Study of major philosophical concepts that shaped government in the United States combined with an analysis of contemporary political institutions and behavior, focusing on the American governmental system. Four-credit sections include Washington laboratory experiences.

## QUESTIONS?

### Contact

School of Public Affairs Student Services

202-885-6200

Email: [aupublicaffairs@american.edu](mailto:aupublicaffairs@american.edu)