

PUBLIC POLICY, BA

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, students majoring in Public Policy study how governments, institutions, and communities identify problems, weigh evidence, and make decisions that affect lives. They ask questions like: What makes a policy effective? Who benefits—and who doesn't?

How can we use data, dialogue, and diverse perspectives to build better solutions? Through interdisciplinary coursework and hands-on learning, students develop skills in policy analysis, strategic communication, civil discourse, and evidence-based decision-making.

Whether you're passionate about climate justice, education reform, health equity, or economic development, Public Policy's courses give you a framework to understand complex systems and a pathway to lead within them. Students often find the work exciting and transformative—connecting classroom learning to real-world impact through internships, case studies, and collaborative projects.

Studying public policy at UW–Madison means going beyond headlines and soundbites. You'll engage deeply with data, theory, and lived experience. You'll learn to analyze tradeoffs, anticipate unintended consequences, and communicate across differences. You'll be challenged to think critically, act ethically, and lead thoughtfully.

Graduates can pursue careers in government, nonprofits, consulting, advocacy, and business—and many will go on to graduate programs in public affairs or international public affairs, law school, or leadership roles in public service. The Public Policy major's emphasis on analytical rigor and civic engagement prepares students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.