

**California State University, Los Angeles  
Department of Political Science**

**Master of Science in Public Administration Program  
Student Handbook**

**Fall, 2004**

**Version 8.3**

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## PREFACE

This Handbook is intended for students accepted to the MSPA program for Fall Quarter 2004 or later. These students are subject to the revised requirements for the MSPA which came into force in that quarter. The revisions concern primarily the requirement for a skills sequence of four courses in the core program, and modification of the comprehensive examination.

Students who began this program before Fall Quarter 2004 have the option of adapting their coursework to the new program. If you do wish to do so, by taking the skills sequence in the core program and the modified comprehensive examination, you should consult the MSPA Advisor or other public administration faculty. However, you may find that taking the new program may delay your planned graduation date.

Students who wish to continue with their original programs as set out before Fall 2004 may do so. They will be held to the University Catalog requirements in force in the quarter for which they were accepted into the program. They will therefore take the "old" comprehensive examination (case study and data analysis), administered in Fall and Spring Quarters. This examination, however, will be provided as long as any student wishes to take it. The thesis requirement is the same for both old and new programs. If you have any questions regarding these changes or your program, please consult the MSPA Advisor or any public administration faculty member.

We hope that you enjoy the MSPA program at California State University, Los Angeles and that the program offers you the opportunity to improve your knowledge and skills, and advance in the public or nonprofit sector. If you have questions not answered in this booklet, feel free to come to the Department office and ask the Graduate Coordinator or the MSPA graduate advisor, or any faculty member. We are glad to help you and hope that your stay at the University is a pleasant one.

September 2004

## **Master of Science in Public Administration Mission Statement**

The mission of the MSPA program at California State University, Los Angeles is to educate students for professional public and community service within a diverse urban environment through the development of creative management and analytical skills, enhanced leadership capabilities, and clearer understanding of the issues of governance and institutional adaptation in a fast changing world.

**Accredited by the National Association for Schools of  
Public Administration and Affairs**

**The MSPA program was reaccredited for seven years in July 2000. Accreditation is granted by NASPAA only after a rigorous process including a self-study and site visit. Accreditation is a guarantee of a recognized, high quality, well-run and up-to-date program.**

In addition to the MSPA, the Department of Political Science also offers the following degrees:

BA in Political Science:  
    General Option  
    Global Politics Option  
    Pre-legal Studies Option  
    Public Administration Option  
Minors in Political Science  
    General Minor  
    Global Politics Minor  
    Pre-legal Studies Minor  
    Public Administration Minor  
MA in Political Science

Information on these programs is available in the University Catalog which may be found on-line at <http://www.calstatela.edu> [catalog and Academic Calendar]

## Careers for MSPA Graduates

Our graduates go on to a variety of careers in local, state, and federal governments, as well as nonprofit organization. They are primarily managers, analysts, and policy specialists:

**Managers** implement policies, allocating resources to achieve the objectives of the program and organization

**Program managers** administer programs, establishing objectives, stimulating productivity, motivating workers, reporting and evaluating work progress, structuring work, allocating resources, coping with internal and external political pressures, and ensuring that the public interest is reflected in the work of the agency.

**Staff managers** support the work of program managers, performing such activities as budgeting and financial management, personnel and labor relations, management information systems, organizational analysis, and procurement of supplies and materials.

**Staff analysts** develop ways to ensure that program objectives are met. They also look at new ways to meet the public's requests for service. A staff analyst must be familiar with research on social, economic, and environmental problems in order to propose optional courses of action to decision makers. They are the elements of the program usually involved in briefing papers, and computer applications. Staff analysts work in planning and evaluation units or budget divisions in government.

**Policy specialists**, the counterparts of staff analysts, work in consulting firms, research institutes or non-profit organizations.

Some of the positions recent graduates have held are:

Human Relations Analyst, Los Angeles County  
Appraisal Specialist, Assessors Office, Los Angeles County  
Manager, Aquatorium, City of Commerce  
Community Residential Services Supervisor, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center  
Assistant Director of Finance, City of Bellflower  
Environmental Supervisor, City of Los Angeles  
Lieutenant, Special Operations Division, Police Department, City of Pasadena  
Senior Investigator, State of California  
Manager, Staff Relations, Fire Department, City of Los Angeles

## **The Master of Science in Public Administration Program**

### **Level 1. Prerequisites**

POLS 460 Foundations of Public Administration  
POLS 462 Public Policy

### **Level 2. Management Core**

POLS 571 Intergovernmental Relations  
POLS 572 Public Sector Organization and Management  
POLS 573 Public Sector Human Resource Management  
POLS 574 Public Budgeting and Financial Administration

### **Level 3. Skills Core Sequence**

POLS 578 Research Design for Public and Nonprofit Managers  
POLS 579 Public Sector Information and Management and Computing  
POLS 580 Data Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers  
POLS 594 Applied Research in Public or Nonprofit Administration

### **Level 4. Electives**

Three graduate electives with advisor approval

### **Level 5. Capstone course**

POLS 590 Seminar: Philosophy of Public Service

### **Level 6 Comprehensive Examination or Thesis**

### **Internship**

• **Level 1 Prerequisites. All Students: 8 units (2 courses) minimum**

Completion of the following prerequisite courses (or their approved equivalents) is required of all students entering the MSPA program. You must earn a grade of “B” or better in each of these courses. You may not take courses at the 500-level before you have satisfactorily completed your prerequisite program.

**POLS 460 Foundations of Public Administration:** Politics of administrative power; methods of controlling bureaucracy; changing agency environments; dynamics and processes of public management; public service as a career.

**POLS 462 Public Policy:** Introduction to public policy making and implementation, stressing the politics of the policy making process.

**The Graduate Advisor may also require other prerequisites, depending on individual circumstances.**

Students who have weak backgrounds in computer applications in public sector organizations and spreadsheet analysis must take POLS 479 (Computers in the Public Sector) before taking POLS 579 (Quantitative Methods in Public Administration). A weak background is defined as either not using computers in one’s job or for school or using them only for word processing, email or web browsing. A strong background in one where the student is able to implement a beginning to intermediate level spreadsheet or database, in addition to being able to use electronic mail, being familiar with the Internet, World Wide Web, web browsers and word processing at the intermediate to advanced level.

If you are not thoroughly familiar with social science research and statistical methods at the beginning to intermediate level you must take or sit in on POLS 281, the Department’s statistics and computerized data analysis courses, or its equivalent in Economics, Sociology or Psychology, before taking POLS 580.

**You MUST complete your prerequisite program before taking any 500-level course. You must receive a permit from the Department before registering in each of your 500-level course. To receive a permit, you need to contact the Graduate Coordinator in the Department Office. You should do so as soon as the class schedule is available for the upcoming quarter.**

• **Level 2 Management Core Courses: 16 units (4 courses)**

These courses may be taken in any order. A 3.0 (B) average must be maintained in all 500-level courses.

**POLS 571 Intergovernmental Relations**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. An introduction at the graduate level to intergovernmental relations, governmental structure, incentives for different levels of government, relationships between and among local, state, and federal governments, competition/conflict, cooperation, collaborative models of decision making. In addition, the course provides participants the opportunity to use collaborative problem solving skills to address regional policy challenges.

**POLS 572 Public Sector Organization and Management**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. A study of the most relevant organization and management thinkers and issues. Topics include organization structures and theories of management in the public sector, decision-making, human relations, goal setting, leadership in government organization.

**POLS 573 Public Sector Human Resource Management**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. In depth study of personnel and human resource management,

providing an opportunity to analyze current issues. Case studies of personnel problems; examination of varying roles of boards, commissions, and other legislative bodies; new frontiers in personnel research and personnel legislation.

### **POLS 574 Public Budgeting and Financial Management**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Concepts and implementation of budgeting and financial administration. Topics include issues and problems in budget authorization, execution, and control, including public policy implications.

### **• Level 3: Skills Core Sequence: 16 units (4 courses)**

The aim of the skills core is to provide the analytical and research skills for students to complete and write up a research project. Unlike a course paper, which is completed in one quarter, the applied research will be completed over a period of three to four quarters. The capabilities acquired in one course, therefore, provide the foundation for the next.

### **POLS 578 Research Design for Public and Nonprofit Managers**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. In this course students gain an understanding of the conduct of inquiry in the social sciences and the forms, potential and limitations of research. The course focuses broadly on research capabilities, including qualitative as well as quantitative approaches to knowledge acquisition. By the end of the course, you should have chosen a topic for individual research, and produced a research design. The course is the first course in the skills core sequence. You **MUST** take this course before you take POLS 580.

### **POLS 579 Public Sector Information Management and Computing**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 or 462, (and 479). If you are not minimally familiar with a spreadsheet and the kinds of computing done in the public sector you **MUST** take POLS 479 before taking 579. The objective is to cover typical hardware and software applications in the public sector, as well as the strategies and techniques of information resource management and the issues computers raise in privacy, security, and computer crime. Students achieve an intermediate to advanced level of proficiency in a spreadsheet. The organizational implications of computers are a major topic. It is a good idea to take this course after you take POLS 578 and before you take POLS 580, but you may take it before or together with POLS 578.

### **POLS 580 Data Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 or 462, 281 or equivalent, and 578. If you have not had a recent elementary statistics course you should take or sit-in on POLS 281, Sociology 210AB, or another similar course. In this course, you will work on the statistical and other techniques necessary to carry out research. The course covers different methods of conducting research in public and nonprofit organizations, issues of measurement in social science research, review of descriptive statistics and introduction to a statistical software package, probability concepts and applications, sampling, inferential statistics and statistical significance, multivariate analysis, and communication of findings. POLS 580 is essentially the second part of POLS 578, and may not be taken before you have completed POLS 578.

### **POLS 594 Applied Research in Public and Nonprofit Administration**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 or 462, 578, 579, 580. This course completes the Skills Core Sequence. In POLS 594, you bring together what you have learned to complete the graduate research project you initiated in POLS 578, using the skills acquired in POLS 579 and 580, as well as knowledge gained in your other course work. This course may only be taken after completion of POLS 578, POLS 579, and POLS 580, and should be taken towards the end of your program. During the course you will discuss, in the context of your project, problem definition, conceptual and ethical issues in social science research, insights and material from bibliographic searches, research methodologies, and the implementation of research design. By the end of the course, you should have a fully edited, professional quality paper.

There are a number of ways you may complete this sequence. Since the beginning of the Skills Sequence requires you to work on your graduate research topic, it is not a good idea to begin the program with these courses. You should plan your program in cooperation with the MSPA Advisor.

• **Level 4 Electives: 12 units (3 courses)**

These should be chosen according to your interests.

**POLS 565 Seminar: Public Sector Labor Relations**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. An introduction to collective bargaining and labor negotiations in federal, state, and local government, with emphasis on California. Also covered are differences between the public and private sectors, bargaining legislation and impasse resolution.

**POLS 567 Seminar: The Third Sector and Non-profit Organizations**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Study of the increasingly integrated relationship between government and third sector service providers; professional management of nonprofit organization in a complex environment; grant writing project.

**POLS 568 Seminar: Community Development Administration**

Advanced work in the community development and human services area for those who have a special interest in either community development agencies or human service programs.

**POLS 575 Seminar: Administrative Systems in the Pacific Rim**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. The objective is to broaden the outlook and experience of students, whose main goals and experiences are likely to be at the local government level in Southern California, with the administrative systems and cultures of the nations of the Pacific Rim, many of which have major population centers in Southern California cities and towns. Comparing public administrative systems in selected Pacific Rim nations, this seminar reviews theories in comparative politics and public administration and then introduces students to administrative practice in these countries. Special attention will be given to how and why these countries differ, as well as the consequences of these differences.

**POLS 583 Seminar: Health Politics and Policy**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Health politics and policy at the national level and in California. Role of Congress, executive branch, media, interest groups, and industry. Policy tradeoffs, design, implementation, and evaluation of health policy.

**POLS 584 Seminar: Issues in the Metropolitan Area**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. This seminar surveys the special problems of cities at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, focusing on the discovery of characteristics of the ideal community and their use in administration.

**POLS 585 Seminar: Regulation, the Environment and California Public Policy**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. This seminar ties together three crucial topics that public administrators in California need to understand: regulation; environmental problems, particularly the problems of air quality, water quality, and toxic waste disposal; and the study of California public policy.

**POLS 587 Seminar: Aging Politics, Policy, and Administration**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Political and policy analysis of retirement, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability programs. Discussion of administration and policy alternatives, including privatization.

**POLS 591 Seminar: Administrative Theory and Behavior**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Organization behavior and the ways managers can utilize theories and research to deal with problems involving people. The seminar provides students with insights into many aspects of organizational management from the perspectives of a diverse group of management thinkers. It also examines a theory of organizational survival and demise. The seminar paper consists of the

student's reflection on theories of organization and behavior, his/her analysis of some organization in terms of the theories, and his/her own experience where applicable.

### **POLS 595 Selected Issues in Public Administration**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. This is a special topics seminar, whose subject matter varies. It may be taken more than once for credit.

### **POLS 598 Graduate Directed Study**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Instructor consent to act as sponsor. Independent study of advanced topics in the field; regular conferences with sponsor. May be repeated twice for a maximum total of 8 units. Students contemplating doing a thesis may use POLS 598 as a course in which they complete their 20-30 page proposals.

#### **• Level 5 Capstone Seminar 4 units (1 course)**

### **POLS 590 Seminar: Philosophy of Public Service**

Prerequisites: POLS 460 & 462. Instructor consent. This capstone seminar is designed to tie together the curriculum through the study of different schools of thought concerning public administration and the philosophy of public service and through applying that study to the field of ethics in public service. This seminar should be one of the last three courses you complete, following advancement to candidacy.

#### **• Level 6 Comprehensive Examination or Thesis**

The culminating experience of your degree program is writing a comprehensive examination or thesis. The majority of MSPA students have chosen the comprehensive examination, since it has been difficult for working professionals to devote sufficient time and commitment to a thesis. However, many have expressed the wish to undertake a substantial and serious piece of research as part of their programs. In response to this concern, and also in line with many other leading schools of public administration and public policy, the MSPA degree has been modified through incorporation of a skills sequence leading up to completion of a graduate research project within the context of regular coursework. Following completion of coursework, you will take the comprehensive examination in a modified format. The thesis option remains available.

### **Comprehensive Examination (POLS 596)**

You may ONLY take the comprehensive examination upon successful completion of ALL your required coursework, if you have maintained a minimum B average in your 12 course program (you may not count grades from pre-requisites), and if you have no outstanding incomplete grades. During the registration period for the quarter in which you wish to take the examination, you should request a permit from the Graduate Coordinator, and then register for POLS 596 on-line via the G.E.T. registration system. The fee for the examination is currently \$10. No late "adds" are allowed, which means you must add the course before the end of the second week of the quarter in which you plan to take the examination.

The examination is taken on a take-home basis within a specified period. You may pick up the examination paper between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. on the date specified. At this time you will be asked to pledge that you will uphold the ethical standards of the discipline of public administration and its professional association, the American Society for Public Administration, by signing the following statement:

"The Honor System in the MSPA program depends upon adherence of all members of the program to high standards of academic behavior. Acts constituting a violation of the Honor Code include giving assistance in a formal academic exercise without due acknowledgement; plagiarism; the submission of the same work of academic credit more than once without permission; willful falsification of data, information or citation; and the failure to take constructive action in the event of committing or observing a violation or apparent violation".

"I certify that I have neither given nor obtained assistance in this formal academic exercise without acknowledgement, that I have not plagiarized, that I am not submitting the same work for academic credit without permission, that I have not willfully falsified data, information, or citation, and that I have not failed to take constructive action in the event of committing or observing a violation or apparent violation of this Honor Code".

Once you have accepted the paper for the examination you may not drop POLS 596. Up to that point you may withdraw.

Each comprehensive examination paper is graded anonymously by two faculty members. General grading criteria include:

1. Knowledge of and ability to express theories and concepts and apply them.
2. Clarity in argument
3. Adequacy and relevance of facts, references, and data
4. Organization of material in a coherent, logical form
5. Professionalism in presentation

Examination results are distributed at the end of the quarter the examination was taken, usually during final exam week. Questions regarding the examination results should be directed to the MSPA Advisor at the beginning of the following quarter. Two strikes and you are out! The College of Natural and Social Sciences allows only two attempts at the comprehensive examination.

**(a) Comprehensive Examination Requirements for Students beginning their programs in Fall 2004, who have completed the skills sequence and all their coursework.**

Students who began their programs before Fall 2004 may take this comprehensive examination format only if they have successfully completed the skills core sequence, and all their coursework

The comprehensive examination consists of a single 24-hour take-home essay on a topic that draws together your comprehension of public administration and concepts gained from your coursework and practical experience.

You may take the examination in the Fall, Winter, or Spring Quarter following completion of your coursework.

The dates for the examination are:

Fall 2005 (first Monday in November)  
Winter, 2006 (first Monday in February)  
Spring, 2006 (first Monday in May)

**(b) Comprehensive Examination requirements for students who began their programs before Fall 2004 and wish to continue with their original programs.**

The "old" comprehensive examination consists of two parts: a case study and empirical analysis and presentation, both done on a take-home basis.

The first part of the examination is an empirical analysis and presentation. This part requires you to analyze quantitative data for an agency director, an interagency work groups, a federal audit team or a group of community or business owners. You will typically be provided with a small database, problem or article, and you are expected to pull together an appropriate analysis and presentation.

The empirical analysis and presentation involve both your analytical skills and your skills in creating a presentation. Your written analysis will typically consist of visual displays of data analysis and an appropriate narrative providing both the rationale for your presentation and describing/analyzing the visual aids. We envision your presentation as consisting of:

1. A series of outlines or bullets that could be flashed on the screen if they were transparencies and you were doing your presentation live (these can be done with a word processor and will typically be one-half page in length in outline style).
2. Presentations and analyses of quantitative data, included with the outlines as appropriate (these can be presented on single sheets of paper, i.e, they do not have to be integrated with the outlines in a single narrative).
3. A narrative to go along with the outlines and data presentation, consisting of roughly what you would say if you were presenting the briefing.

This part of the examination should be completed and returned in forty-eight hours.

The second part of the examination is in the form of a case study. The case study is a written "real life" situation in which you are asked a series of questions regarding administrative and managerial challenges, conflicts, or contradictions. The goal is to bridge the gap between the theories in the Public Administration literature and the real world. This part of the examination should be returned twenty-four hours after receiving the exam. Your paper should be typed in 12 pt. Times Roman font, and double spaced, on one side of the paper and fully referenced as appropriate.

This format for the comprehensive examination will be offered in Fall and Spring each year as long as students who are eligible wish to take it. Dates for this comprehensive examination are:

Fall 2004	Monday, November 1 (data analysis), Monday, Nov. 10 (case study)
Spring 2005	first and second Monday in May
Fall 2005	first and second Monday in November
Spring 2006	first and second Monday in May

Past comprehensive examinations are on electronic reserve at the University Library. The password is **pols596** (case sensitive).

### **Master's Thesis**

You may also write a Master's Thesis instead of taking the comprehensive examinations, but to do so, you must have better than a 3.5 GPA in your coursework, a Public Administration faculty member willing to supervise the thesis, a proposal deemed acceptable by the faculty, and two other members of the committee acceptable to the graduate advisor and department chair. Students should be careful of theses; our experience is that they tend to drag on for years, and sometimes students have courses expire under the seven-year rule because of unfinished Masters theses.

Copies of theses are available from the Department and from the University Library for short-term borrowing. See the Graduate Coordinator or Advisor.

Title 5 of California's Education Code requires that theses meet the following standard: A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendations. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation."

## Thesis Proposals

A 15-25 page proposal is required. Each faculty member on your committee must sign off on the proposal. It should have the following sections:

1. *A statement of the problem and its significance.* What problem will the thesis investigate? How does that problem relate to current problems in the field, to the public administration/public policy literature, etc.? How significant is the problem compared with other problems that might be investigated for these kinds of governments, policies, etc.?
2. *What literature exists on this general problem area?* What has been written about the problem in the last two decades in the public administration or public policy literature? What are the two or three central themes of that literature? What are the gaps in that literature as far as the kind of problem you intend to study?
3. *What hypotheses will you collect evidence on?* Most theses endeavor to collect evidence concerning some problem, either in a case study or some more systematic gathering of evidence (survey, use of existing Census or survey data, etc.). What are the two or three (or more) hypotheses for which we are collecting evidence? Obviously, these should relate directly to the literature in the second part of the proposal.
4. *What data or information will be collected as evidence concerning the hypotheses?* What will be the source of the data, and what problems might be expected to arise as a result of the data collection method? What are the weaknesses of this method? The strengths? How will you compensate for the weaknesses? How original is the data?
5. *The Outcome of the Study.* Give us several paragraphs that tell us what you expect to find and why it will be significant. Be sure to explain fully exactly what will be original about the thesis in comparison with other work.

Usually, the proposal can become, with revision, the first chapter of the thesis.

A thesis is expected to be a well-written, original, piece of work which states a problem, explores how it has been treated in the literature, states one or more hypotheses, indicates the data or information that will be used to confirm/disconfirm the hypotheses, contains one or more chapters which explain the findings of the analysis, and one or more chapters which draw conclusions from the study.

## Internship

You must complete the equivalent of a one quarter, full-time internship in a public or non-profit organization or an approved field project. You may be able to substitute appropriate professional experience for the internship. For more information on internships, see pp. 21-22.

## ADMISSION TO THE MSPA PROGRAM

### Application Requirements/Criteria

You need to apply both to the University and to the Department of Political Science; please note that the criteria for admission differ. Your application to the Department must include:

- **Department program application**
- **A statement of why you wish to pursue the MSPA degree**
- **Two letters of recommendation on official letterhead**
- **One set of official, sealed transcripts from all colleges and universities attended**

- **Current resume**
- **2.75 minimum grade point average in the last 90 quarter units in BA/BS**

### **Deadlines for Consideration**

*The Department of Political Science accepts students to the MSPA degree program for Fall and Spring Quarters only each year. To be considered for Fall Quarter, your completed application and documents must be received by the Department by the preceding April 10; to be considered for Spring Quarter, the deadline is November 10 of the preceding year.*

## **STUDYING FOR THE MSPA DEGREE**

Once you have been accepted into the MSPA program, your job is to work your way through the courses, culminating either with the comprehensive examination or thesis. The MSPA Advisor, public administration faculty, and the Graduate Coordinator will assist you as much as we can. But remember—it is your responsibility to ensure that you fulfill all the degree requirements, to keep track of the courses you complete, and maintain good standing in the program. If you have any questions or find difficulties in completing your program, you should immediately talk with the MSPA Advisor. The following notes are to help guide you and familiarize you with the most important regulations. For further details, you should consult the University Catalog.

### **General Obligations and Honor Code**

Our program is conducted in the spirit of adult education, which assumes that every individual student bears responsibility for ethical conduct. Your admission into the MSPA program assumes **as a minimum** acceptance of the following Honor Code:

“The Honor System in the MSPA program depends upon adherence of all members of the program to high standards of academic behavior. Acts constituting a violation of the Honor Code include giving or obtaining assistance in a formal academic exercise without due acknowledgement; plagiarism, the submission of the same work for academic credit more than once without permission; willful falsification of data, information or citation; and the failure to take constructive action in the event of committing or observing a violation or apparent violation”.

You are additionally expected to exercise courtesy to faculty, staff, and fellow students, to respect the facilities and amenities of the University, and to observe common rules regarding classroom behavior, punctuality, and timely fulfillment of assignments. Students who contribute actively to classroom discussions, interact with their colleagues, and avail themselves of the multiple opportunities for education offered through their courses and University activities, generally gain a good deal more from their degree programs than those who see the degree simply as something to be gotten through as quickly and with as little effort as possible.

### **Your Program Plan**

When you are accepted by the Department of Political Science into the MSPA degree program, you must file a program plan. The program plan lists the courses you need to take to receive the degree. It represents a contract between you and the University, and may only be changed (by addition or substitution of other courses) through approval of the MSPA Advisor and Department Chair.

Your program consists of a minimum of 48 quarter units (12 courses), not including prerequisites, plus a comprehensive examination or thesis. You must complete your approved program with a grade point average of 3.0 (“B” average) or higher. Courses with grades below a C must be repeated

The Graduate Coordinator will send your program plan to you, and you should discuss it with the MSPA Advisor and make sure you understand all its requirements. The program plan has to be signed by

you, the MSPA Advisor and the Department Chair. It is then sent to the Graduate Division of the Dean's Office of the College of Natural and Social Sciences for approval.

**Remember: You are responsible for ensuring that you fulfill the requirements of your program plan.** You should keep a copy, and as you complete each course you should keep track of the quarter you took it and the grade you received. You are welcome to take additional courses, but only those approved and officially substituted by the MSPA Advisor, may be counted toward your program. If changes or substitutions are approved for your program, you should make sure these have been properly recorded in your file and the necessary paperwork completed.

### **Conditional Classification and Advancement to Candidacy**

If you have not completed all the prerequisite on your program when you are accepted by the University, you will be admitted as a conditionally classified student. You will qualify for Financial Aid with this classification. To become classified, you need to complete your prerequisites, and the University has to change your status to fully classified.

After successful completion of sixteen units (4 courses) on your official program, it is your responsibility to request that you be 'Advanced to Candidacy' by the College of Natural and Social Sciences, Graduate Division, Dean's Office. The following conditions must be met:

- Completion of 16 quarter units of your 500-level program with a cumulative, minimum GPA of 3.0 or more;
- Passage of the Writing Proficiency Exam/Graduate Writing Record Assessment

### **Advising**

At the beginning of your studies, you will need to meet with the MSPA Advisor to discuss your program plan. Although the program is fairly straightforward, you should periodically check with a public administration faculty advisor to see that you are on the right track, and discuss how things are going. If you want to change your program, substitute a course, or add a course not on your program, you should definitely see an advisor to gain approval and ensure an official change is made. Full-time faculty have four hours per week of office hours. The times are posted on their doors, and you may make an appointment via telephone or email, or drop in at the appointed time if you do not mind waiting. You should note that there are no faculty office hours between quarters or during final examination weeks.

Remember: It is solely your responsibility to plan your program so that you complete your degree efficiently and comfortably, so you should make sure that you consult your advisor regularly to ensure you are meeting all requirements.

### **Graduate Writing Proficiency Requirement**

All graduate students must take the Graduate Writing Proficiency Examination, offered each quarter, by the end of their second quarter in residence. Recent BA graduates from CSULA (and some other colleges) will have taken the exam as undergraduates and do not need to repeat the process, as their transcripts will indicate that the exam has been passed.

### **Internships**

The program requires an internship. You must complete the equivalent of a one quarter full-time internship in public administration or a nonprofit organization or an approved field project. Appropriate professional experience may be substituted for an internship, and in fact, most students are able to use their professional experience to fulfill the internship requirement. To qualify, experience must be professional and/or administrative in nature; clerical level positions do not count for internship experience.

Dr. Siegrun F. Fryess is the Public Administration internship coordinator, and if you need or would like to complete an internship, please contact her by email, [sfreyss@calstatela.edu](mailto:sfreyss@calstatela.edu) or telephone, (323) 343-2238.

Other resources for internships include:

Dr. Jaime Regalado, Director of the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs, on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Library South building (323) 343-2770. The Institute occasionally has stipends of \$1,500 to compensate students who intern in placements that do not pay salaries. See Dr. Regalado for further information.

The department bulletin boards contain notices of forthcoming internships, including the bulletin board outside Dr. Freyss's office.

The Placement Office on campus may have additional information.

Some paid internships are still available for many students, although many are competitive and paid internships are less available (but not impossible) for non-American citizens. Being able to write good quality English or use a computer are assets and will help locate a good quality internships.

### **Registration for Courses**

You need to request a permit, available from the Graduate Coordinator, before you may enroll in 500-level courses. Your registration dates and deadlines are indicated in your personal G.E.T Account (NOTE: check on-line as soon as the next quarter's Schedule of Classes is available). You may not register for more than **two** 500-level courses, which constitute a full-time graduate course load.

### **Incomplete Grades**

Students who do not complete the work for a particular course may be granted an 'incomplete' grade with the instructor's permission. Students have up to but no longer than ONE calendar year to make up the incomplete regardless of breaks in attendance, a leave of absence, etc. The official policy states that the single year may be extended prior to the expiration of the one year period by the College Graduate Dean, "...for contingencies such as, but not limited to, military service and health problems or an incapacitating nature verified by a physician's statement".

**Incomplete grades that are not made up become graded IC (Incomplete Charged) and are factored into the overall GPA as a grade of "F".**

### **Seven Year Rule**

You have seven years to finish your degree once you start taking 500-level courses on your program (prerequisite courses do not count). Courses at CSULA "expire" seven years after they are taken, and they must be renewed by the same or similar courses taken again in order for them to count toward your degree. Needless to say, retaking courses involves considerable inconvenience, and the whole procedure has to be agreed upon by the College Graduate Studies Sub-Committee, which will require an explanation in person as to why the student did not complete the coursework within the normal timeframe of the class.

Speaking practically, the 'seven-year rule' means that the University's expectation is that you will work steadily on your program once you commence. An extended leave of absence for whatever reason may involve retaking courses because of their expiration.

## Leave of Absence

If you intend to interrupt attendance for more than two quarters in any successive four quarters, you must file an application for Academic Leave. Granting Academic Leave is routine, but if you do not file for a Leave of Absence, and you do not attend the university for more than two quarters in any four, you may need to reapply for admission and will generally be subject to the catalog in force (including any new requirements) when you return to your studies. Thus, filing an application for Academic Leave is definitely recommended.

## Adding a Course after the Quarter Has begun

Generally speaking, you can add a course for the first week of the quarter. Since quarters have only 10 weeks of instruction plus a week for final exams, adding a course after the first week is NOT generally recommended unless there are special circumstances.

## Dropping Courses After the Quarter Has Begun

The policy on dropping courses is one of the areas where CSULA is very different from other universities and causes more problems for students than any other areas that we know of.

First, you get a free drop during the registration period BEFORE the quarter begins or during the first eight (8) days of the quarter. This means one week ONLY. No signatures are required. You can do it via the G.E.T. registration system.

After the first week, you can drop with the instructor and chair's signatures, but the reasons should be of an emergency nature, i.e., medical reasons or a change of work hours or some kind of emergency. You can't drop because the course is too hard, because you do not like the instructor, or because you deem the exam not to be relevant to the course material, etc.

After the 7<sup>th</sup> week, you can only drop for "extremely serious and compelling reasons", which usually turn out to be serious and extreme cases of medical problems and changes in work hours. You will need the instructor's, chair's, and Dean's signatures, and you will have to provide outside, written verification of the reasons for the drop.

Collecting signatures the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> weeks in the quarter is difficult so do not wait until Thursday or Friday and expect that faculty, chair, and Dean will be sitting waiting to sign your form. Start early.

**Be very careful of these rules! If you do not withdraw properly or wait too long, you will receive a WU for the courses, which stands for "withdrawal unauthorized" and counts on your GPA as a grade of F.**

## Your GPA

Graduate students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above in the courses on their graduate programs. Anything less is unacceptable, and students in this position are initially placed on probation and then excluded from further classes if their GPAs are not raised to 3.0 within 16 units or two quarters in residence, whichever is later.

There is a big difference between graduate students and undergraduates in this respect; if your GPA is below 3.0, you can only take the courses on your program and two additional courses to raise it. You cannot take an unlimited number of courses to raise your GPA. We are limited by university rules to the addition of only two courses to your 12-course program. Obviously, it is better never to arrive at this situation than to have to get out of it.

## Application for Graduation

### University Procedure

The university processes applications for graduation four times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer). The university commencement ceremony is held only once in the Spring quarter. Students who wish to have their name printed in the booklet for the Spring ceremony must file the previous fall, and for the Winter, Spring, and Summer of the current academic year, i.e., June 2005 graduation candidates would include those who filed for the Fall 2004, Winter, Spring, and Summer 2005. It is solely the students' responsibility to file for graduation during the filing periods that are printed in the quarterly 'Schedule of Classes'.

Completion of the MSPA degree is fulfilled by the successful passage of the comprehensive exam or completion of a thesis. MSPA candidates must file for the appropriate quarter that they anticipate they will attempt the comprehensive examination.

**Note:** If you do not pass the exam, you are allowed to repeat it the next time the exam is given. It is the policy of the graduation office to 'transfer' applicants' graduation applications to the next quarter if they do not complete all the degree requirements by the quarter filed. For MSPA candidates, the consequence is that should you not pass the comps in the Fall, your application would be forwarded to the Winter quarter.

### Department Procedure

Bring your paid 'Application for Graduation' to the Department for the Graduate Coordinator to stamp, verify that all requisite information is correct, and to record that you have applied for graduation. You must then take the graduation application to the Dean's Office, Graduate Division, College of Natural and Social Science, KH-D1052. Your application will then be forwarded to the Graduation Office for processing.

## SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Once you have received your letter admitting you to both the University and the MSPA program, you may begin working toward your degree. This checklist summarizes the process outlined in the Handbook.

1. Make an appointment with the MSPA Advisor to discuss and sign your program plan
2. Take the Writing Proficiency Examination within two quarters of starting courses (or you will not be allowed to register).
3. Discuss with the MSPA Advisor whether you need to take an internship, or whether it will be waived because of your professional experience. If you do need an internship, start planning now.
4. Begin your coursework with the two prerequisite requirement. You **must** complete these courses with a minimum grade of B before you may register for 500-level courses.
5. Continue with your core, and elective courses. It is advisable to begin with the management core courses, so that you have some knowledge before you choose your research project. Remember: you will need a minimum of three, or even four, quarters to complete the skills sequence of courses. You do not need to take these courses immediately after each other—you may space them out if you wish. But you must ensure that you take them in sequence. You should consult the two year MSPA schedule guide to see when courses will be offered (This schedule is tentative, but efforts will be made to keep to it as far as possible).
6. To register for 500-level courses you will need to request a permit. Normally, these are given out when the quarter class schedule is published. You should call or email the Graduate Coordinator to request a permit as early as possible, before you receive your registration materials or grades. You may not register for more than **two** 500-level courses, which constitute a full-time quarter course load.
7. You need to maintain a B average (3.0) on your 12-course/48 unit program. If you drop below a B, you will be placed on academic probation. If you drop so far below a B that you cannot get up to a B average with the courses left on your program, we can add only two courses to your program to make up for the deficiency.
8. After completing 16 units on your program, with a minimum B average, contact the Graduate Coordinator to apply for candidacy.
9. Begin thinking about your project while you are taking courses, and consult with faculty regarding appropriate projects before you begin the skills sequence. Similarly, you should look ahead to the comprehensive examination, and prepare yourself to complete it successfully.
10. After you have completed all your coursework you may take the comprehensive examination. You need to register for POLS 596 as you would for any course, except that this course has a fee of \$10. Dates for the examinations are posted in the Department. You may decide to withdraw only before you have received the examination questions. Once you have received the examination questions, you will be counted as having attempted the examination.
11. Apply for graduation. Students need to apply for graduation for the quarter in which they take the comprehensive examinations. The application filing periods are listed every quarter in the Schedule of Classes. It is the student's responsibility to file by the listed deadline. If you have any questions about this procedure, please contact the Graduate Coordinator.
12. If you wish to write a thesis, you should consult with a faculty advisor early in your program, and you should be aware that an acceptable thesis usually takes at least a year and usually more to complete.
13. Other Sources of Information. You should become familiar with the sections on the Department and graduate study generally in the University catalog in force when you began study. The College of Natural and Social Sciences' Graduate Studies Office has an "Advisory Check List". The Department website is [http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/pol\\_sci/](http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/pol_sci/)

## Public Administration Faculty

J. Theodore Anagnoson, Ph.D. (University of Rochester, 1977). Professor. Public Policy (policy analysis, program evaluation, environment and social welfare policy), Methodology (quantitative methods, statistics, computer applications), American Government (bureaucracy, legislatures).

Greg Andranovich, Ph.D. (University of California, Riverside, 1984). Professor. Urban and Regional Studies, Public Policy, Comparative Public Administration.

Naomi J. Caiden, Ph.D. (University of Southern California, 1979). Professor. Public Administration, Public Policy, Budgeting and Finance.

Siegrun F. Freyss, Ph.D. (Claremont Graduate School, 1978). Associate Professor. Public Administration, the Non-profit Sector, Urban Studies, Women's Studies, Research Methods.

Todd Kunioka, Ph.D. (University of Rochester, 1996). Assistant Professor. Public Administration, Public Policy, Environmental Policy, Research Methods.

Stephen K. Ma, Ph.D. (University of Alberta, 1994). Professor. Public Administration, Comparative Administration, Organizational Behavior, Comparative Development, International Relations, Comparative Politics, Politics and Administration of Pacific Rim Nations.

The public administration faculty have won several national and local awards attesting to the quality of their instructional performance and scholarship, and are engaged in professional activities and university and community service.

**Professor J. Theodore Anagnoson** was awarded one of CSULA's annual "Outstanding Professor Awards" in the Fall of 1991. He has received four grants from the National Science Foundation. Professor Anagnoson has also received a University "creative leave", and was twice awarded Meritorious Performance and Professional Promise Awards. Between 1995 and 1997 he was Acting Director, Health Financing Policy Division, Office of Health Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. Between 2002 and 2004, he was Chair of the CSULA Faculty Senate, and he is currently a member of the CSU State-wide Academic Senate. In Fall 2004 he received the Presidential Distinguished Professor Award.

**Professor Naomi J. Caiden** was awarded the Aaron Wildavsky Award for lifetime contribution to public budgeting, and the William Mosher Award for the most meritorious article by an academican to appear in *Public Administration Review* in 1980. She also received the National Distinguished Service Award in recognition of outstanding academic contributions and leadership from the American Association for Budget and Program Analysis in 1981 and 1991. She is the author of numerous articles on public budgeting, was the editor of *Public Budgeting and Finance* for six years, and is the joint author of *Planning and Budgeting in Poor Countries*. She has published the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> editions of the classic, *The New Politics of the Budget Process* by Aaron Wildavsky. She was awarded a Distinguished Women Award by CSULA in 2002, and the Harry Scoville Award for Academic Excellence from the Los Angeles Metro Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration in 2003.

**Professor Siegrun F. Freyss** won an award for the best book review essay in the 1987 volume of the *Public Administration Review*, was Graduate Student Association Professor of the Year of Public Administration at Texas Tech University in 1995, and won the Pi Alpha Distinguished Professor Award in 1994-1995 at Texas Tech University. She is the editor of *Human Resource Management in Local Government: An Essential Guide*, first published by the International City/County Management

Association in 1999 and then in a second edition in 2004.

**Professor Stephen K. Ma** is the author of *Administrative Reform in Post-Mao China: Efficiency or Ethics* (University Press of America, 1996) and *US Civil Service and Ethical Codes* (in Chinese) (Tsinghua University Press, 1999). He is also a co-editor of *Selected Classic Readings of Public Administration* (in English/Chinese) (Fudan University Press, 2000). His articles have appeared in *Pacific Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Chinese Public Administration*, *Asian Journal of Political Science*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Policy Studies Review*, and he has written numerous book reviews for *Choice*, a publication of the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of *International Journal of Public Administration*, and has edited special issues for that journal and *Public Administration Quarterly*. He is Director of the Institute for Executive Leadership.

**Professor Greg Andranovich** is co-author of *Culture, Development, and Public Administration in Africa* (Kumarian Press, 2005), *Olympic Dreams: The Impact of Mega-events on Local Politics* (Lynne Rienner, 2001), and *Doing Urban Research* (Sage, 1993). He and his co-authors won the best paper award at the 2000 annual meeting of the Urban Affairs Association for their paper, "Olympic Cities: Lessons Learned from Mega-event Politics." He has conducted training workshops for the LAUSD, LA County Management Council, and the California Parks and Recreation Society. He previously was a science policy analyst for the U.S. General Accounting Office in Washington, D.C., and a local government specialist in Washington State University's Cooperative Extension Service.

**Professor Todd Kunioka** has published several articles on environmental policy, banking policy, and social capital in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Public Administration Review*, and *Journal of Socio-Economics*, and a book chapter on Nevada state politics in *Outside Money: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 1998 Congressional Elections*.

## Important Contacts and Offices

### Public Administration Faculty

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