Communications and Public Policy

The Communications and Public Policy major explores the connection between communicating with citizens and creating, implementing and evaluating public policy. Students in the program will explore the influence of communications in the process of a participatory democracy, preparing them to work as communications professionals in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Communications and Public Policy Major

Students will be required to complete 36 credit hours of Communications and Public Policy (COPP) courses and 24 credit hours of courses in one of five Focus Areas. These Focus Areas are: Politics and Governance; Law and Justice; Social Policy and Social Justice; Science, Technology, and the Environment; and International Relations. The courses to support these Focus Areas are drawn from a variety of disciplines at St. Thomas University, ensuring that students participate in the breadth and depth of the liberal arts experience. Normally, students will choose a Focus Area during the winter semester of the first year in the program and will begin assembling the courses in their Focus Area during the fall semester of second year.

The program encourages as many of its graduates as possible to be able to work in both English and French and will provide opportunities for bilingual students and students graduating from French immersion programs to continue their studies in both languages. All students entering the program will be encouraged to complete the Certificate in French Language Proficiency offered by the St. Thomas University French Department. The two core 4000-level courses – a public policy case studies course and an internship course – will be designed to offer students the opportunity to complete course work (and internships) in English and French.

In their fourth year, students will complete a mandatory rigorously supervised internship course that will require all students to gain valuable professional experience before graduation.

Part One – Core Courses and Electives

Students must complete 36 credit hours in Communications and Public Policy Courses. A sample of the structure of the program is listed below.

Year 1

COPP 1013	Introduction to Communications
COPP 1023	Introduction to Policy Studies

Year 2

COPP 2013	Fundamentals of Writing
COPP 2023	Policy Making in the Information Age
COPP 2033	Research Methods

Year 3

COPP 3013	Rhetoric
COPP 3023	Ethics and Social Responsibility
COPP 3033	Public Policy and the Media
COPP 3043	Business Communications and Marketing

Year 4

COPP 4006	Case Studies in Public Policy
COPP 4016	Internship

COPP-1013. Introduction to Communications
This course introduces students to the history and evolution of the communications profession, with particular emphasis on communications in the public policy sphere, from the pioneers who sold ideas on behalf of their clients, to the modern world of two-way communications with the public through the internet and social media tools. The course will explore how this evolution is changing the way governments, politicians, non-governmental organizations, citizens groups and corporations interact with the public.

COPP-1023. Introduction to Policy Studies
This course introduces students to the policy making process, how policies are researched, drafted, legislated, and communicated. The course will also explore how non-governmental organizations, citizens groups and corporations influence public policy.

COPP-2013. Fundamentals of Writing
Communicating public policy requires clear and effective writing at every stage in the process. This is a foundational writing course that will help students learn to express themselves in clear, compelling language. Prerequisites: COPP 1013, COPP 1023

COPP-2023 Policy Making in the Information Age (POLS 2333)
This course will explore how social media and internet tools are transforming the world of communications and public policy. The course will explore cases around the world where social media and the access to information on the internet is influencing public policy and the political process. Prerequisite: COPP 2013

COPP-2033. Research Methods
This course will introduce students to the methods for gathering and analyzing data through interviews, surveys, focus groups, content analysis, and polls and how this information can be applied to public policy initiatives and planning an accompanying communications strategy. Prerequisite: COPP 2013

COPP-3013. Rhetoric
This course builds on the skills developed in the Fundamentals of Writing course and applies them to rhetoric, speech writing and debating. Students will read ancient and modern speeches, historical writings on rhetoric and explore the influence of persuasive writing on public affairs. Prerequisites: COPP 2013, COPP 2023, COPP 2033.

COPP-3023. Ethics and Social Responsibility
This course explores the ethical challenges that arise while communicating public policy issues for an organization in the public or private sector. The course will allow students to develop a code of ethics for a communications professional. Prerequisites: COPP 2013, COPP 2023, COPP 2033.

COPP-3033. Public Policy and the Media (POLS 3213)
This course will explore how public policies are reported in various forms of media and how communications planning can influence the success or failure of these initiatives. The course will examine communications planning and media relations strategies such as proactive and reactive methods of representing an organization in the media. Prerequisites: COPP 2013, COPP 2023, COPP 2033.

COPP-3043. Business Communications and Marketing
This course explores the role of communications in business settings, including professional writing, the power of narrative, the influence of social media, and the connection between communications and marketing.

COPP-3053. Special Topics
This course consists of an in-depth analysis of a specific topic in communications and public policy. The course will be organized around the special interests of full time and visiting faculty. Topics could include: policy analysis, public management, organizational social media management, organizational communications, and social media and website design including search engine optimization, Google Analytics and basic back end social media training.

COPP-3063. Special Topics
This course consists of an in-depth analysis of a specific topic in communications and public policy. The course will be organized around the special interests of full time and visiting faculty. Topics could include: policy analysis, public management, organizational social media management, organizational communications, and social media and website design including search engine optimization, Google Analytics and basic back end social media training.

COPP-3183. Special Topics
This course consists of an in-depth analysis of a specific topic in communications and public policy. The course will be organized around the special interests of full time and visiting faculty. Topics could include: policy analysis, public management, organizational social media management, organizational communications, and social media and website design including search engine optimization, Google Analytics and basic back end social media training.

COPP-4006. Case Studies in Public Policy
The capstone case study course will require students to spend the fall semester surveying scholarly literature on public policy analysis (regarding policy development, design and implementation) and the winter semester applying this research as they write two case studies that will require students to synthesize the issues encountered in their Focus Areas with their studies in Communications. Course work can be presented in English and French. Prerequisites: COPP 3013, COPP 3023, COPP 3033.

COPP-4016. Internship
Students will complete two supervised professional unpaid internships in a professional communications agency, non-profit organization, or government office and will complete a detailed exit report. Where possible, students will have the opportunity to pursue internships that require them to work in French or in a bilingual office. Prerequisites: COPP 3013, COPP 3023, COPP 3033.

Cross-Listed Courses

JOUR-3163. New Media and Social Change

This course explores how the new media and social media are contributing to political and social change around the world.

POLS-3223. Public Administration

This course will focus on selected public policy issues in contemporary New Brunswick politics. Special attention will be given to the problems of intergovernmental affairs, recent constitutional negotiations, cabinet policy development, and public finance.

POLS-3613. Model United Nations

This course will prepare students for participation in a Model United Nations, either Canadian or American sponsored. In a model UN simulation, students represent an assigned country's foreign policy on assigned issues on the UN agenda. The course will begin with an examination of the UN and its procedures. Subsequent topics will include researching the assigned UN issues and the assigned country's policy on them; preparation of working papers and motions, and strategies for effective conference participation. Fund raising for the trip required: half credit course, but meets first and second terms; limited enrolment.

Part Two – Focus Areas

To complete the Focus Areas requirement, students must complete 24 credit hours in one of the five following areas:

1. Science, Technology, and the Environment
2. Social Policy and Social Justice
3. Politics and Governance
4. Law and Justice
5. International Relations

Suggested Courses

Please note that these lists are subject to change and modifications and that all courses are not offered every academic year. Additional courses not on these lists may be approved by the coordinator of the Communications and Public Policy program upon request from a student.

1. Science, Technology and the Environment

ECON 3323	Environmental Economics
ENVS 1013	Environment & Society I
ENVS 2023	Environment and Society II
ENVS 3013	Environment & Society III
ENVS 3023	Environmental Praxis
NATI 2233	Natural Resources and First Nations of the Maritimes
NATI 3223	Native Environmental Ethics and Ecology
SOCI 2213	Society and Ecology
STS 1003	Science, Technology, and Society 1
STS 2103	Science, Technology and Society 2
STS 2123	Food, Science & Sustainability
STS 2303	Natural Disasters

STS 2313	Energy and Society
STS 2403	Science, Technology, and War
STS 2413	Science, Technology and Innovation
STS 2503	History of Disease
STS 2603	Animals: Rights, consciousness and experimentation
STS 2903	The Politics of Science
STS 3803	Space Exploration

2. Social Policy and Social Justice

CRIM 2743	Social Protest in Canada
CRIM 3953	Peacemaking Criminology and Restorative Justice
ECON 2203	Community Economic Development
ECON 2403	Economics of Poverty
ECON 4323	Social Policy: Current Issues and Global Contexts
GERO 2013	Introduction to Gerontology
GERO 2023	Multidisciplinary Issues in Aging
GERO 3023	Aging and Health
GERO 3733	Social Work and Aging
HMRT 1003	Introduction to Human Rights
HMRT 3013	Discrimination and the law in Canada
HMRT 3063	Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity
HMRT 3113	The Rights Revolution in Canada
HMRT 3123	International Human Rights
HMRT 3133	Activism and Social Justice
HMRT 3543	Human Right and Foreign Policy
HMRT 3803	Human Rights of the Child
NATI 3313	Contemporary Issues in Native/Non-Native Relations
NATI 3623	Native Education and Colonization
NATI 3803	Indigenous Cultures and Immigrant Ethnic Minorities
NATI 3813	Native Cultural Identity and Cultural Survival
NATI 3843	Suicide and Indigenous Peoples
NATI 3853	Alcohol, Drugs, and Indigenous People
NATI 3863	Indian Public Health
SOCI 2106	Canadian Society
SOCI 2416	Inequality in Society
SOCI 2423	Social Problems 1 – Sociological Perspectives
SOCI 2433	Social Problems 2 – Canadian Social Problems
SOCI 2443	Racialization, Racism & Colonialism
SOCI 2523	Sociology of Aging
SOCI 3123	Social Movements, Social Activism & Social Change
SOCI 3413	Employment Equity Policy and Gender Inequality at Work

3. Politics and Governance

ECON 1006	Introduction to Economics
ECON 2403	Economics of Poverty
ECON 2153	Political Economy
ECON 3433	Economics of Government
ECON 3443	New Brunswick Economy

ECON 3453	Labour Economics
NATI 3703	Indigenous and Western Economics and the Idea of Development
POLS 1103	Canadian Government
POLS 2103	Canadian Constitutional Politics
POLS 2113	Contemporary Issues in Canadian Politics
POLS 3103	Political Parties and Elections in Canada
POLS 3113	Canadian Federalism: Theory and Practice
POLS 3123	The Canadian Constitution: Federalism
POLS 3133	The Canadian Constitution: The Charter of Rights and Freedoms
POLS 3213	Media and Politics in Canada
POLS 3223	Themes and Problems in Contemporary New Brunswick Politics
POLS 4103	Seminar in Canadian Government and Politics
POLS 3333	Introduction to Political Economy
SOCI 2106	Canadian Society
SOCI 2323	Sociology for Cyborgs
SOCI 2513	Communications
SOCI 3123	Social Movements, Social Activism & Social Change
SOCI 3693	Discourse and Society
SOCI 3413	Employment Equity Policy and Gender Inequality at Work
STS 2903	The Politics of Science

4. Law and Justice

CRIM 1013	Introduction to Criminology
CRIM 1023	Introduction to Criminal Justice
CRIM 2123	Criminal Law
CRIM 2223	Youth Justice
CRIM 2233	Police and the Canadian Community
CRIM 2243	Corrections
CRIM 2263	Children and Youth-at-Risk
CRIM 2943	Victimology
CRIM 3123	Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice
CRIM 3143	Charter of Rights and Criminal Justice
CRIM 3203	Government and the Criminal Justice System
CRIM 3243	Advanced Criminal Law
CRIM 3283	Crime Prevention
CRIM 3803	Child and Youth Rights
CRIM 3843	Corporate Crime and Corporate Regulations
CRIM 4133	International and Comparative Criminal Justice
CRIM 4153	Advanced Studies in Youth Justice Policy
CRIM 4403	Feminist Legal Studies
ECON 2423	Political Economy of Crime
HMRT 1003	Introduction to Human Rights
HMRT 3013	Discrimination and the law in Canada
HMRT 3063	Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity
HMRT 3113	The Rights Revolution in Canada
HMRT 3123	International Human Rights
HMRT 3133	Activism and Social Justice
HMRT 3543	Human Right and Foreign Policy

HMRT 3803	Child and Youth Rights
NATI 3903	Native People and the Law 1
NATI 3913	Native People and the Law 2
NATI 3923	Aboriginal Rights: The Land Question
SOCI 2313	Deviance
SOCI 2343	Surveillance Society
SOCI 3313	Sociology of Law
SOCI 3323	Sociology of Women and Law

5. International Relations

CRIM 3643	Terrorism
CRIM 4133	International and Comparative Criminal Justice
ECON 3343	Banking and International Finance
HMRT 3123	International Human Rights
HMRT 3543	Human Rights and Foreign Policy
POLS 2303	Comparative Politics of the Developed World
POLS 2313	Comparative Politics of the Developing Areas
POLS 3303	US Government and Politics
POLS 3323	Political Leadership: Local, National, and Global
POLS 3413	The European Union and Europe
POLS 3423	Politics & Society in Russia and Eurasia
POLS 2603	Political and Economic Integration in the Americas
POLS 2613	International Relations I
POLS 2623	International Relations II
POLS 3313	US Foreign Policy
POLS 3503	Human Rights in International Relations and Foreign Policy
POLS 3513	Canadian Perspective on International Law
POLS 3523	International Relations in the Asia Pacific Region
POLS 3533	Canadian Foreign Policy
POLS 3603	The United Nations
POLS 3613	Model United Nations
POLS 4603	Seminar in International Relations
SOCI 3153	Sociology of War