



School of Public Affairs Leadership Program

Certificate in Advanced Leadership Studies

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM COURSES

First Semesters: Emerging Leaders Sequence

The SPA Leadership Program follows a project-based curriculum, which enlivens leadership learning for students. First and second-year students work on a leadership project over two semesters; they identify, research, and then implement a solution to a real-world policy problem. These projects help students develop deep content knowledge about leadership in public affairs as well as deepen their own skills of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication.

The “emerging leaders” sequence in SPA 361 and SPA 362 will take students on a two-year journey from the theory to the practice of leadership.

SPA 361: Laboratory in Leadership Development I

SPA 361 is the first step in our two year “emerging leaders” sequence. This course features weekly class sessions and small group meetings. In the fall, the course examines the key theories of leadership. In the spring, the course builds on strengths-based approaches to leadership, and helps students learn how to develop their personal leadership skills. Student teams present the results of their year-long leadership project in April.

SPA 362: Laboratory in Leadership Development II

SPA 362 is the second step in our two year “emerging leaders” sequence. In the fall, the course continues an examination of the key theories of leadership. The spring term of SPA 362 looks at a series of biographies/autobiographies of leaders.

In addition, students will complete a yearlong experience as an academic researcher: students choose a leadership problem in public affairs, conduct research, learn, and design their own leadership project to help correct the problem.

AT A GLANCE

- Washington, D.C. is a “leadership laboratory” for the program.
- Leadership students design and execute two leadership projects, addressing pressing social issues.
- Incoming leadership students are matched with a student mentors.
- Two dedicated faculty members for the program -- Director and Faculty Advisor.
- Students attend workshops across campus.
- Community-building initiatives throughout the course of the program.
- Application opens in the spring.



Leadership students at the annual symposium.

Final Semesters: Advanced Practice and Study of Leadership

The final portion of the program trains students in the advanced practice and study of leadership.

SPA 391: Internship: Leadership

Washington, D.C. provides many practical opportunities to experience and learn about leadership. Ordinarily in the second or third year of the program, students complete an approved internship of their choosing: previous leadership internships have taken place with an interest group, in a congressional office, and at a government agency. Through weekly reflections, students are able to connect the leadership theories they learned in class to their actual work experiences.

SPA 460: Political & Organizational Leadership

This is the capstone seminar for completion of the SPA Advanced Certificated in Leadership Studies program. The course examines the key theoretical concerns of the fields of leadership, bureaucracy, and public affairs. Weekly readings and class discussions involve leadership in all of its complexity: in the use of power and also regarding the problem of change. Students also prepare a professional leadership portfolio.

SPA Leadership Portfolio

The SPA Leadership Portfolio provides students with an opportunity to reflect on their curricular and co-curricular experiences in the leadership program in order to earn a deeper understanding of how to lead in public affairs. Students design and build a leadership portfolio throughout their coursework. This will help them learn leadership skill sets that can be quantified, including resume preparation, preparing a letter of introduction, research skills, public speaking, planning, and time-management. The portfolio allows students to develop a comprehensive set of practical tools for leadership practice, gain a greater self-understanding about being a leader, and enhance knowledge of leadership ethics. The leadership portfolio serves as a virtual résumé after they graduate.

QUESTIONS?

Contact

School of Public Affairs Student Services

202-885-6200

Email: aupublicaffairs@american.edu

