

MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale

Policy Studies Program

Description of the Policy Studies Program

Policy Studies at Yale brings to the International Affairs Council a specialized focus on policy-rich research and current policy perspectives in all areas of international relations, such as trade, development, environment, security, and foreign policy.

The program offers M.A. students in International Relations an opportunity to integrate a policy focus directly into their core concentrations, to help them gain a deeper understanding of the policy making process, and acquire the necessary tools to work successfully in the policy arena. In order to fulfill the Policy Studies Specialization, students must complete at least five courses from a designated list of “policy cluster” courses, earning a minimum grade of HP in each. One of the five courses must be the IR Policy Workshop offered in the fall semester of their second year of study. All courses should be chosen in consultation with the Director of Policy Studies.

Policy Studies also coordinates a speaker series, which periodically invites policy experts and practitioners to lecture and give seminars at the MacMillan Center, and offers awards and grants to financially assist students in the program who are engaged in various policy-related activities.

Policy Cluster Courses

Each August, an updated list of policy relevant courses available to IR students for the upcoming academic year will be compiled (see reverse for this year’s list). The courses are drawn from departments and professional schools across the university, including: Anthropology, Economics, Forestry & Environmental Studies, History, International Relations, Law, Management, Political Science, and Public Health.

Courses are eligible for inclusion in the policy cluster if they have international or foreign relations relevancy and meet any one of the following criteria:

- At least 25 percent of the course content directly relates to policymaking, policy decision-making, policy implementation, and/or policy analysis.
- At least 25 percent of the course assignments require policymaking/policy implementation analysis. This could mean 25 percent of all graded assignments (e.g., a “policy memo” worth 25 percent of the final grade), or 25 percent of specific graded assignments (e.g., 25 percent of exams/papers/term projects need to address policy implications, policy suggestions, and/or policy relevance).
- A course that does not meet these two criteria can, upon approval of the course instructor, and authorization of the Director of Policy Studies, be tailored to include assignments that fit the second criterion above. Directed Reading projects that focus on an IR policy question and contain at least 50 percent policy-relevant analysis and recommendations may also (upon approval) count as a policy cluster course.

Note that the annual list of policy courses exists as a perennial work in progress. If you believe a course should be added to the list, you may petition the Director of Policy Studies for its inclusion. This applies to courses from academic fields not normally included on the annual list.