The central focus of Rice University’s Social Policy Analysis program is policy design, analysis, and communication. Interdisciplinary in nature, the curriculum’s emphasis is on integrating rigorous instruction in theory and method with hands-on, skills-based instruction by social science faculty. The primary goal of the program is to train Rice students to obtain the specialized knowledge, skill and experience to be leaders in the field of social policy analysis.

The Social Policy Analysis program focuses on the evaluation of alternative interventions that proposed to improve human well-being. Graduates will be able to answer questions like: Which early interventions lead to greater educational attainment for low-income children? Which juvenile rehabilitation programs are more likely to reduce the recurrence of criminal behavior? How does healthcare policy influence our daily health behaviors? Without evidence-based research and rigorous evaluations to test these ideas, there is no way to know which solutions work and for whom. In a time of limited resources and rising demands, our leaders need the analytical expertise to make a demonstrable, sustained impact on the most pressing issues facing our cities and nation. The Social Policy Analysis program will train Rice students to meet these needs.

Bachelor’s Program

- Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with a major in Social Policy Analysis (https://ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs/social-sciences/social-policy-analysis/social-policy-analysis-ba/)

Social Policy Analysis does not currently offer an academic program at the graduate level.

Director and Undergraduate Advisor

Melissa J. Marschall, Political Science

Advisory Board

Chase Lesane-Brown, Psychological Sciences
Flávio Cunha, Economics
Robert M. Stein, Political Science
Ruth N. Lopez Turley, Sociology

Affiliated Faculty

Dominic C. Boyer, Anthropology
Paul Brace, Political Science
Jennifer L. Bratter, Sociology
Tony N. Brown, Sociology
Sergio Chavez, Sociology
Flávio Cunha, Economics
SOPA 300 - SOPA FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Short Title: SOPA FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCE
Department: Social Policy Analysis
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Research
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): SOPA 200
Description: Students work on approved field research projects, write a research report for publication and present finding from their field research project to Rice faculty and staff. Department Permission Required. Recommended Prerequisite(s): POLI 338 or SOSC 301. Repeatable for Credit.

SOPA 400 - SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH SEMINAR I

Short Title: SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH I
Department: Social Policy Analysis
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Research
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): (POLI 395 or SOCI 382 or PSYC 339 or SOSC 302 or ECON 307 or STAT 310) and (POLI 338 (may be taken concurrently) or SOSC 301 (may be taken concurrently)) and (SOPA 200 or POLI 337)
Description: Students work on approved field research projects, write a research report for publication and present finding from their field research project to Rice faculty and staff. POLI 338 or SOSC 301 may be taken concurrently with SOPA 400.

SOPA 401 - SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH SEMINAR II

Short Title: SOPA CAPSTONE RESEARCH II
Department: Social Policy Analysis
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Research
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): SOPA 400 and (POLI 338 or SOSC 301)
Description: The capstone research seminar is a two-semester course taken in the final year of study. During the Spring Semester, the research teams will write up and present their final research report.

SOPA 477 - SPECIAL TOPICS

Short Title: SPECIAL TOPICS
Department: Social Policy Analysis
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Internship/Practicum, Seminar, Lecture, Laboratory
Credit Hours: 1-4
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester’s topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.

Description and Code Legend

Note: Internally, the university uses the following descriptions, codes, and abbreviations for this academic program. The following is a quick reference:

Course Catalog/Schedule
- Course offerings/subject code: SOPA

Program Description and Code
- Social Policy Analysis: SOPA

Undergraduate Degree Description and Code
- Bachelor of Arts degree: BA

Undergraduate Major Description and Code
- Major in Social Policy Analysis: SOPA

CIP Code and Description

1 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2010 Codes and Descriptions from the National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/