



# SPIA UNDERGRADUATE NEWSLETTER

## FALL 2023

## WELCOME (BACK) TO SPIA!



If you are new to SPIA, we are happy to have you! If you are returning, welcome back! This newsletter is a place to find important information about SPIA points of contact, important dates, courses, and more!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your SPIA contacts below, and have an incredible semester!

## SPIA CONTACT GUIDE



**CHRIS LAPLANTE** *chrisl@vt.edu*

Contact Chris for all things advising, from orientation to graduation. Questions about courses and local Blacksburg area hikes are his specialty.

<https://vt.campus.eab.com/pal/Ci3mCAe05A>



**RALPH HALL** *rphall@vt.edu*

Contact Ralph to provide him with feedback on the SPIA undergraduate program, discuss careers and graduate school, and obtain the latest news from the table tennis world.



**HAILEY DELANEY** *dhailey1@vt.edu*

Contact Hailey for all things MURP, Plans of Study, Accelerated Degree Forms, and all things Dungeons and Dragons related.

Virtual Office Hours: Thursdays 1-3

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/84202923397>

## IMPORTANT DATES

Oct 3: Last day to change grade option from A-F to P/F. Last day to drop individual courses (25% refund).

Oct 6-8: Fall Break Weekend (No Classes - University Offices Open Friday).

Oct 23: Last day to resign and/or change grade option from P/F to A-F.

Nov 14: Last day to apply for Fall graduation to have your name appear in the Commencement program and to update your diploma mailing address.

Nov 15: Deadline for undergrads to request rescheduling of final exams.

Nov 18-26: Thanksgiving break (No Classes - University Offices close at noon on Nov 22).

Dec 6: Classes End. Last day to apply for "W" grade.

Dec 7: Reading Day (No Classes/Exams).

Dec 8-13: Final Exams.

Dec 15: Final grades due.



# SPIA WINTERMESTER 2024

## **SPIA 2004: Urban Analytics (online)**

*Computational and quantitative thinking applied to urban problems. Multiple data sources and tools for urban analysis. Application of computational and quantitative thinking in decision making and policy processes. Data cleaning, joining/merging, and summarizing. Evaluation of computational and quantitative thinking in urban planning and policy. Ethical and other issues related to computing, analysis, and problem solving.*

## **SPIA 2124: The Art & Science of Negotiation (in person, Blacksburg)**

*Negotiation is pervasive, from starting salaries to what's for dinner. This course will equip you with practical negotiation techniques and tactics for your professional and personal lives. It will provide you with tools to systematically assess and prepare for negotiations; hone your interpersonal skills for effective engagement; explore ethical and moral issues in negotiations; and introduce facilitation and mediation techniques. Particular emphasis will be placed on the mutual gains approach to negotiation.*

## **SPIA 4454: Future of Cities (online)**

*Cities as complex systems. Interdependence of social, economic, environmental, and technological components and how these change over time. Theories about city formation, structure, and change, with implications for sustainability, resilience, and globalization.*

## **UAP/PSCI 4624: U.S. Congressional Oversight in Action (in person, D.C.)**

*This 3-week, 3-credit seminar is designed to introduce students to the politics and practice of congressional oversight. This seminar immerses participants in the D.C. ecosystem of professionals, creating opportunities for students to interact with policymakers in executive branch agencies, think tanks, associations, lobbyists, news media, and congressional offices focused on government oversight and accountability. Students will engage with experts across a wide variety of organizations and agencies; participate in lectures, seminars, and mentoring; and collaborate with other students on an original research project and congressional briefing.*



# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN SPIA

## Washington Experience

The School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech offers a variety of different experiential learning opportunities in the Washington, D.C. area. These are practice-based experiences that expose students to policy-making through courses, field visits, and career-bridging internships.

**Applications Open For Winter, Spring, and Summer 2024**

### Winter Session Washington Experience: US Congressional Oversight in Action - January 2024

- 3 credit Winter Session seminar
- **Deposit Deadline: December 1, 2023**

### Washington Semester in Global Engagement - Spring 2024

- 9 credit internship
- 3 credit seminar on international politics
- 3 credit State Department Diplomacy Lab policy simulation
- **Application deadline: November 5, 2023**

### Washington Semester in Leadership and Governance - Summer 2024

- 6 credit internship
- 3 credit policy seminar
- **Rolling Application Review starting October 1, 2023**
- **Early Consideration Deadline: December 1, 2023**

More information here: <https://spia.vt.edu/leadership-development/washington-experience.html>

## Sustainable Europe Study Abroad - Summer 2024

A once-in-a-lifetime journey to explore policy-making & planning in contemporary Europe. You'll meet public officials and other stakeholders, examine some of Europe's most pressing challenges and innovative solutions, and see a variety of cities through the eyes of locals. This three or six credit VT faculty-led study abroad program has four components:

- Fundamentals of sustainability and environmental policy-making in modern Europe, online prior to trip, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, and other locations;
- Making urban transport sustainable, with a focus on how European cities promote walking, cycling, and public transport (Germany, Switzerland, and elsewhere);
- Addressing Europe's wicked sustainability challenges, from flood prevention in Venice, Italy, to heavy industry, cultural preservation, and employment in the Czech Republic; and
- The roles for civil society in advancing sustainability, from energy policy in Hungary to Roma self-empowerment in the Czech Republic.

More information here: <https://europestudies.wordpress.com/>

# SPIA MAJORS



## Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP)

The Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP) major provides students with an interdisciplinary framework to study environmental problems. Students will obtain the knowledge and skills needed to function as policymakers and planners who can understand complex environmental issues and develop enduring solutions.

More info here: <https://spia.vt.edu/academics/undergrad/epp.html>



## Smart and Sustainable Cities (SSC)

The Smart and Sustainable Cities (SSC) major is one of the first majors of its kind in the United States. Students will gain a deep understanding of sustainable urban development and how smart technology and urban analytics can be combined to create solutions for the cities of the future.

More info here: <https://spia.vt.edu/academics/undergrad/ssc.html>



# SPIA STUDENT SOCIETY

The SPIA Student Society (the SPIA-SS) is a student organization formed in October 2020 by SPIA students that actively works to promote academic and professional development among students enrolled in SSC, EPP, and related fields of study. This semester, the society aims to have weekly study sessions in the SPIA-SS Space (Room 2 in the Architecture Annex) and occasional outings.

Students who are interested in joining or have questions should contact SPIA-SS president, Jonah, at [jonahc@vt.edu](mailto:jonahc@vt.edu).

# ACCELERATED DEGREE PROGRAMS

## Accelerated MURP: Master's Urban and Regional Planning

The Urban Affairs and Planning (UAP) Program and School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) offers an accelerated program that enables students to earn credit toward a Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) degree while they are completing the requirements for their Bachelor of Arts in Public and Urban Affairs with a major in Smart and Sustainable Cities (SSC) and/or Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP). This 4+1 five-year program provides qualified students with a unique opportunity to advance in the field of urban and regional planning.

### Criteria for Admission:

- Application: VT Graduate School application submitted by end of junior year
- Minimum GPA: 3.5 cumulative
- Test score requirements: None

Please contact Chris LaPlante for more information.



## Accelerated BA-MPA: Public and Urban Affairs and Public Administration

Virginia Tech undergraduates enrolled in Public and Urban Affairs majors are invited to fast-track their graduate education in Public Administration and Public Policy through the Accelerated BA-MPA program. This special program provides students with the opportunity to study at a nationally ranked and accredited public administration graduate program, with the option to continue their study in Arlington (Washington D.C. area), Blacksburg, Richmond, or online.

### Criteria for Admission:

- Current enrollment as a Smart and Sustainable Cities (SSC) or Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP) major at VT
- Minimum GPA 3.5 cumulative
- 75 credit hours of the undergraduate degree completed at time of application to MPA program

Please contact Chris LaPlante for more information.

More information here: <https://spia.vt.edu/academics/undergrad.html>