MURP HANDBOOK

MASTER OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

VIRGINIA TECH

CELEBRATING **60** YEARS OF ACCREDITATION

SOCIAL MEDIA

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https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvhlAbfH2BUiBuqCGzzwOGA

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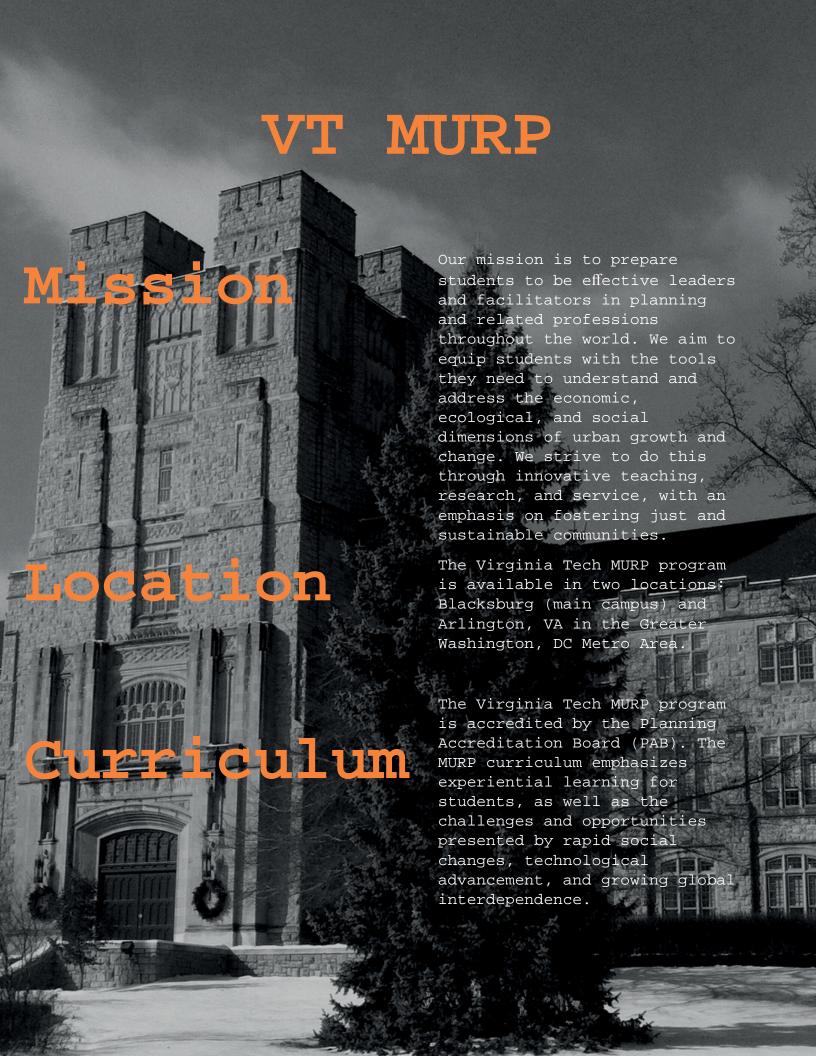
Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/vtspia/

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VT MURP

Mission

Our mission is to prepare students to be effective leaders and facilitators in planning and related professions throughout the world. We aim to equip students with the tools they need to understand and address the economic, ecological, and social dimensions of urban growth and change. We strive to do this through innovative teaching, research, and service, with an emphasis on fostering just and sustainable communities.

Location

The Virginia Tech MURP program is available in two locations: Blacksburg (main campus) and Arlington, VA in the Greater Washington, DC Metro Area.

Curriculum

The Virginia Tech MURP program is accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). The MURP curriculum emphasizes experiential learning for students, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by rapid social changes, technological advancement, and growing global interdependence.

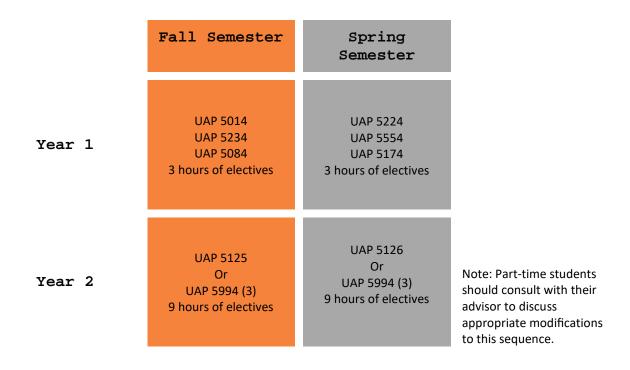# MURP Curriculum

MURP Curriculum

The Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program is a two-year, 48-credit hour, interdisciplinary professional degree open to students from a wide variety of undergraduate fields. The program prepares students to become professional planners who can address the economic, environmental, and social consequences of growth and change; and to provide leadership in fostering just and sustainable communities through teaching, scholarship, and service.

The required core courses provide a foundation of planning theories and skills and constitute approximately one-half of the MURP curriculum. The remaining credit hours are selected by students and their advisors to develop individualized areas of concentration using coursework from across the university.
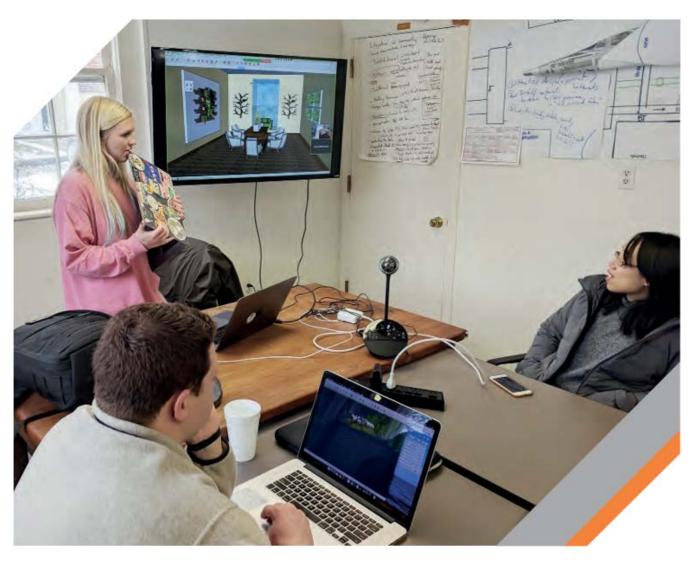
Curriculum Requirements

Core Requirements (18 credit hours)	
UAP 5014	Gateway to Planning (3)
UAP 5084	Collaborative Planning and Community Involvement (3)
UAP 5174	Planning Theory and History (3)
UAP 5224	Planning Methods and Technologies (3)
UAP 5234	Urban Economy, Equity, & Society (3)
UAP 5554	Land Use and Planning Law (3)
Capstone Project (6 credit hours)	
UAP 5125 – 5126	Planning Studio: Real World Problems and Solutions (3, 3)
	or
UAP 5994	Master Research and Thesis (6)
Electives (24 credit hours)	
Electives are for students to develop their specialty (see Areas of Concentration for details). Elective hours are also for students to obtain graduate certificates (see Graduate Certificates for details).	
Total Credit Hours: 48	

Suggested Sequence of Courses for Full-time Students

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	UAP 5014 UAP 5234 UAP 5084 3 hours of electives	UAP 5224 UAP 5554 UAP 5174 3 hours of electives
Year 2	UAP 5125 Or UAP 5994 (3) 9 hours of electives	UAP 5126 Or UAP 5994 (3) 9 hours of electives

Note: Part-time students should consult with their advisor to discuss appropriate modifications to this sequence.

Areas of Concentration

Areas of Concentration

Students are expected to work with their advisor to identify a MURP Plan of Study that includes courses relevant to their interests. Sample concentrations are provided below, but students may also work with their advisors to design a custom concentration that fits their particular interests.

- Environmental Policy and Planning
- Housing, Community, and Economic Development
- International Development Planning
- Transportation Planning and Policy
- Planning Analytics

There are no required courses for these areas. Courses should be selected in consultation with an advisor to determine an appropriate set of electives. The following lists of courses can be used as a starting point. In addition, students are free to consider other VT courses not listed. MURP students are restricted to 6 hours of 4000 level courses on their Plan of Study.

Suggested Areas of Concentration

Environmental Policy and Planning

Goal: Provide students with the conceptual and analytical skills involved in planning and policy development for protection and enhancement of environmental quality.

Career Opportunities: Students in this area of concentration may pursue careers with local, regional, and state planning agencies; state and federal environmental agencies; public interest environmental groups; and private consultants.

Support Faculty:
Hall, Hankey, Lim, Mastran, Misra, Schenk, Wernstedt, Zahm, Y.Zhang

Recommended Electives:
UAP 5214   Disaster Resilience and Natural Hazards Mitigation
UAP 5264G   Environmental Ethics and Policy
UAP 5374G   Land Use and Environment: Planning and Policy
UAP 5384G   Pollution Control Planning and Policy
UAP 5394G   Community Renewable Energy Systems
UAP 5414   Natural Resources Planning
UAP 5424   Environment & Behavior Studies
UAP 5794   Environmental Planning Studio

Planning Analytics

Goal: Provide students with knowledge and experience with data, analytical tools, and visualization techniques. The amounts and types of data available to planners is growing at a fantastic rate. The challenge is harnessing these data to answer timely questions with sound analytical methods and communicate the results to other planners, stakeholders, and the community. Courses focus on analytics as an element of plan-making.

Career Opportunities: Analytic skills are becoming increasingly important for all types of planning roles. While certainly valuable for technical roles, it is important for all planners to understand the language, capabilities, and limitations of data being used for decision-making purposes.

Support Faculty: Buehler, Hankey, Lim, Misra, Sanchez, Schenk, Wernstedt, Zhang

Recommended Electives:
UAP 5114   Computer Applications in Planning
UAP 5424   Planning Analytics and Visualization (currently taught as special topics course)
UAP 5464   Qualitative Methods
UAP 5484   Advanced Urban Research Methodology
UAP 5494   Advanced Quantitative Techniques
UAP 5564   Information Technology, Society, and Public Policy
UAP 5854G   Planning the Urban Infrastructure

Suggested Areas of Concentration

Housing, Community, and Economic Development

Goal: Provide students with the background knowledge, analytical perspectives, and methodological skills that will enable them to assist effectively in the development and implementation of public and private policies relating to housing socio-economic development at the local, metropolitan, and regional scales.

Career Opportunities: Students who complete this concentration can expect to be specialist planners who focus on community and economic development policies and issues with general planning agencies; with specialized economic development, community development and redevelopment organizations; and with private development corporations and consulting firms.

Support Faculty: Bieri, Cowell, Provo, Stephenson, Sanchez

Recommended Electives:

UAP 5104	Urban & Regional Development Theory
UAP 5164	Collaborative Processes & Civil Society
UAP 5184G	Community Involvement
UAP 5744G	Principles of Real Estate & Development
UAP 5774	Economic Development Studio
UAP 5784	Local Economic Development Planning

International Development Planning

Goal: Provide graduate training in theory, methods, and skills within a multidisciplinary framework needed to prepare students for effective planning work in developing countries.

Career Opportunities: Planning students with this concentration may pursue professional careers in public and private agencies concerned with urban, rural and regional development, international lending institutions, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, private business, or universities and consulting firms engaged in international development planning and policy.

Support Faculty: Hall, Stephenson, Wernstedt, Y.Zhang

Recommended Electives:

UAP 5364	NGOs and Development
UAP 5384	Infrastructure Planning in the Third World
GIA 5525	Critical Issues in International Development
UAP 5764	International Development Planning Studio
UAP 5764G	International Development Planning and Policy

Suggested Areas of Concentration

Transportation Planning and Policy

Goal: Provide students with skills that enable them to analyze problems of the current transportation system, assess the connection of transportation plans, polices, and land-use, critically evaluate transportation policies and plans directed at improving sustainability of the current transportation system. Courses focus on active modes of travel (i.e. cycling and walking), public transportation, and the coordination of transportation and land-use.

Career Opportunities: Students with this concentration typically work in the area of transportation planning and policy at town, county, city, regional, and federal planning agencies, with private consulting firms, and with non-profit corporations.

Support Faculty: Buehler, Hall, Hankey, Sanchez, Schenk

Recommended Electives:

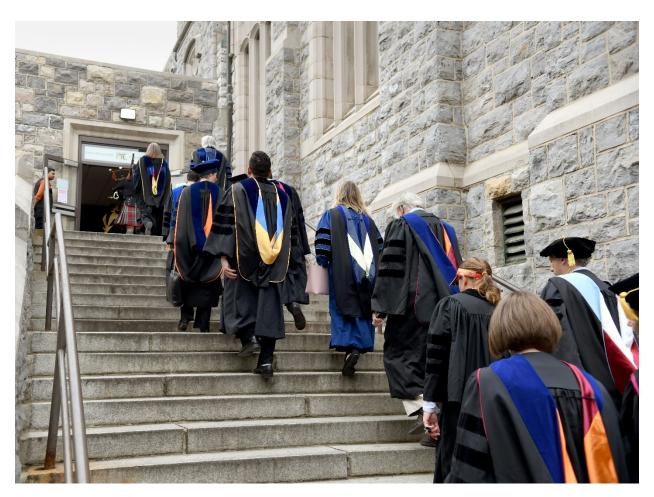|	
UAP 5644	Transportation Systems Planning
UAP 5794	Environmental Planning Studio (with focus on transportation)
UAP 5864	Topics in Transportation Planning and Policy
UAP 5864	Public Transportation
UAP 5864	Walking and Cycling

Graduate Certificates

Graduate Certificates

Our program offers Graduate Certificates in Urban Planning Analytics, Transportation Planning & Policy, Economic Development, Disaster Resilience and Risk Management, and Global Planning and International Development Studies. MURP students also regularly obtain certificates in other areas, including Watershed Management, Geospatial Information Technologies, and Public and Nonprofit Management.

Virginia Tech offers more than 70 certificates, many of which could be obtained as part of the MURP program or as a Commonwealth Campus student. For a complete list of available certificates, please consult the Graduate School's website. Please check with certificate contacts to see whether desired certificates are available on your campus.

Graduate Certificates Application Form can be found at

https://graduateschool.vt.edu/content/dam/graduateschool_vt_edu/GAAPforms/Application_Certificate.pdf

Certificate in Disaster Resilience and Risk Management

Description: The Graduate Certificate in Disaster Resilience and Risk Management (DRRM) provides graduate students with a trans-disciplinary learning opportunity to train future leaders in managing disaster risks and improving society's disaster resilience. By cross-cutting and uniting science, engineering, social science, and public policy, this certificate pro- gram teaches students the full complexity of disaster risk and resilience. This certificate program will help the students overcome discipline-specific conceptualizations and will generate new trans-disciplinary knowledge and solutions for achieving disaster resilience.

Course Requirements:

The Certificate requires the completion of a minimum of 12 credit hours of graduate course work. All courses must be completed with a grade of B or better. Courses completed with a pass/fail or audit option do not count toward the certificate. Students seeking the certificate must complete the interdisciplinary core (3 credits) and select at least 6 credits from the core cross-disciplinary electives.

Interdisciplinary Core (3 credits)
GRAD 5134: Principles of Disaster Risk Management

Core Cross-discipline Electives (at least 6 credits):
One course from the following list:
UAP 5084: Collaborative Planning & Community Involvement
UAP 5214: Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning
PAPA 5354: Homeland Security, Response & Recovery
UAP 5784: Economic Development Planning Topics

One course from the following list:
BIT 5474: Computer-based Decision Support Systems
CEE 5594: Risk Analysis in Geotechnical Engineering
CEE 5854G: Advanced Coastal Engineering
EOS 6204: Simulation and Modeling in Geosciences

Faculty contact: Y. Zhang, M.Cowell

Certificate in Global Planning & International Development Studies

The Graduate Certificate in Global Planning and International Development Studies builds on Virginia Tech's internationally recognized, 30-year specialization in international development planning and an innovative partnership between faculty in programs such as Urban Affairs and Planning, Public Health, Geography, and Building Construction. The certificate seeks to prepare graduate students in multiple disciplines to engage in meaningful global professional leadership and academic positions to systematically tackle and resolve these global planning and development issues.

Course Requirements:

The Certificate requires the completion of a minimum of 12 credit hours of graduate course work. To receive the Certificate, students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for the courses taken. Following the required six credits core courses, students may select an additional six credit hours in three specializations:

- Non-profit and Non-governmental Organization Management and Development
- Sustainable Infrastructure Development
- Public and Environmental Health and Global Development

Additional graduate courses of study in environmental planning and policy, women and gender in international development, natural resources management, homeland and global security, agricultural and rural development, and international business management are also offered at Virginia Tech and may be taken in addition to the three areas of specialization.

Required Core Courses (6 credits)

UAP 5764G International Development Policy and Planning (3H)
UAP 5764 International Development Planning Studio (3H)

Elective Courses (6 credits)

Non-profit and Nongovernmental Organization Management and Development

- UAP 5364 Nongovernmental Organizations in International Development
- UAP 5454 Nonprofit Organization and Management
- UAP 5534 Nonprofit Leadership and Governance
- UAP 5544 Public and Nonprofit Financial Management

Sustainable Infrastructure Development

- UAP 5324 Topics in Infrastructure Planning in Developing Countries
- UAP 5864 Topics in Transportation Policy and Planning
- BC 5144 Sustainable Infrastructure Systems
- UAP 5424 Urban Planning in Europe

Public and Environmental Health and Global Development

- PHS 5004 Fundamentals of Public Health
- PHS 5014 Environmental Health
- PHS 5224 Comparative Health Systems
- GEOG 5214 Health and the Global Environment

Faculty contact: Ralph Hall, Kris Wernstedt

Certificate in Economic Development

Description: The Graduate Certificate in Economic Development is de- signed for those who are interested in acquiring a basic understanding of urban and regional economic development dynamics and the role of policy in influencing them. Urban and regional planners need to know how they can develop their economies. The challenge for policymakers, economic developers and urban planners nowadays is to design appropriate local and regional economic development policies and pro- grams to respond to challenges resulting from globalization, technological development, demographic changes, urban de- cline, sprawl, and social inequities.

Course Requirements:
The Certificate requires the completion of a minimum of 12 credit hours of graduate course work. To receive the Certificate, students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for the courses taken. Students seeking the Certificate must complete at least six credit hours from among the following courses plus six credit hours in electives:

UAP 5234: Urban Economy & Public Policy
UAP 5104: Urban & Regional Development Theory
UAP 5784: Local Economic Development Planning
UAP 5774: Economic Development Studio

All credits for the Certificate must be 5000- or 6000- level courses and must be graded on an A-F basis unless they are only offered on a Pass/Fail basis. All courses must be taken from programs in Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs with at least nine in Urban Affairs and Planning. The Certificate is offered at both the Arlington and the Blacksburg campuses.

Faculty contact: Margaret Cowell

Certificate in Planning Analytics

Description: The Graduate Certificate in Urban Planning Analytics is designed to teach students to engage cities with the skills to leverage data for enhanced, interdisciplinary decision-making problems. It trains students to make decisions that are not only technically efficient, economically sound, environmentally aware, but also socially, ethically, and politically informed. In addition, the certificate equips students with essential foundational skills that arise from actively engaging in data science combined with an understanding of cities as systems. In doing so, the certificate promotes the educational mission of Virginia Tech to offer its students an innovative, interdisciplinary learning environment in which they can grow take leadership roles in data sciences for the cities of tomorrow. The certificate seeks to meet the increasing workforce demand for analytical skills and literacy.

Course Requirements: Students will be required to complete coursework to develop knowledge and skills related to data analytics and public policy for cities and urbanized places. Students will gain an understanding of the fundamental competencies needed for data collection, cleaning, management, and analysis as well as manage teams that conduct analyses related to cities. Students seeking the Certificate must complete the following four courses:

UAP 5114: Computer Applications in Urban Planning and Management
UAP 5224: Planning Methods and Technologies
UAP 5494: Advanced Quantitative Techniques for Urban Research
UAP 5564: Information Technology, Society, and Public Policy
Faculty contact: Tom Sanchez

Certificate in Transportation

Description: The Graduate Certificate in Economic Development is de- signed for those who are interested in acquiring a basic understanding of urban and regional economic development dynamics and the role of policy in influencing them. Urban and regional planners need to know how they can develop their economies. The challenge for policymakers, economic developers and urban planners nowadays is to design appropriate local and regional economic development policies and pro- grams to respond to challenges resulting from globalization, technological development, demographic changes, urban de- cline, sprawl, and social inequities.

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Faculty contact: Ralph Buehler

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Simultaneous Graduate Degrees

Graduate students can pursue dual degrees that share the same graduate level courses. No more than 50% of appropriate graded course work requirements for a master's degree may be common to both degrees. For example, if one master's degree requires 20 credits of graded coursework and the other degree requires 30 credits of graded coursework, no more than 10 credits (50% of the graded work on the degree with lower credit requirements) can be used toward both degrees. No Research or Project and Report credits from one degree may be counted toward the other degree. No credits can be triple-counted.

In the past years UAP students actively participated in Simultaneous Graduate Degree programs with Landscape Architecture (MLA/MURP) and the Center for Public Administration and Policy (MPA/MURP).

Less typical dual degree options have included, but were not limited to: Geospatial Information Technology (GEOG); Infrastructure Systems (CEE); Intermodal Transportation Planning and Analysis (ENG); Construction Engineering and Management (BC/ENG); International Research and Development; Solid Waste Management; and Transportation Policy.

Interested students must submit applications to both programs and be accepted into both programs.

If a student wishes to pursue two graduate degrees in different departments simultaneously, an Application for Simultaneous Degree must be submitted https://graduateschool.vt.edu/content/dam/graduateschool_vt_edu/GAAPforms/simultaneous_degree.pdf

Capstone Projects

Planning Studio Sequence (6 credit hours)

The UAP 5125 – 5126 planning studio sequence provides intensive, on the ground, practical exposure to current planning issues and professional contexts. It builds upon and synthesizes skills developed through the core masters curriculum, such as research methods, communication techniques and community involvement.

The first course in the sequence (5125) introduces students to specific subject matter and professional contexts related to a client-based problem, along with a set of skills to analyze the issue. Students will be required to employ project management skills to define the scope of the problem and to conduct original empirical research using specialized planning tools and methodologies.

Students will use advanced communications skills to engage with the client and community stakeholders throughout the semester and receive feedback on a presentation of pro- posed alternatives at the end of the term.

The second course in the sequence (5126) allows the student teams to develop the preliminary analysis from 5125 into a professional-quality report and/or presentation. Students will be required to apply specialized data analysis and visualization tools; professional communication standards; and advanced written, visual and oral presentation skills.

The student completing the planning studio sequence is expected to demonstrate his/her ability to:

1. Apply project and task management techniques in individual and collaborative work contexts
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the norms and practices of professionals in planning-related fields
3. Formulate a problem, define the scope of a project, and collect and analyze appropriate data related to contemporary planning problems
4. Propose sound solutions that respond to the needs and constraints of clients and stakeholders
5. Report results effectively through high-quality written and oral presentations

The Master's Thesis (6 credit hours)

The thesis presents the results of a well-defined and original research effort that involves either:

1. the analysis of primary or secondary data sources (an example of a primary source would be the statistical analysis of the results of a questionnaire you designed and mailed to a set of state economic development agencies, a secondary source would be a statistical analysis of HUD Housing Survey data in an innovative way);

2. the analysis of primary or secondary document sources (an example of a primary document source would be a set of municipal ordinances relating to economic development which you collect and analyze, a secondary source would be a set of such sources collected by someone else but which you analyze in an innovative way);

3. the analysis of primary or secondary ethnographic sources (an example of a primary ethnographic source is a set of interviews with city planning directors whom you interview personally, a secondary source would be a set of interviews

someone else collected but which you interpret in your own original way); or

4. the use of another academically legitimate analytical technique (such as history, jurisprudence, philosophy) with approval and guidance of your thesis advisor and your committee.

Students selecting this option are required to enroll in UAP 5994 (Research & Thesis) and to consult with their advisor and/or Committee Chair at the beginning of the second year in the MURP program. Ideally, students planning on pursuing the thesis option will discuss with their (potential) chair within their first year in the program.

Two of the three thesis committee members have to be SPIA faculty.

Internships

For-credit and not-for-credit internship placements are an important part of the pre-professional experience and are highly encouraged. Students in the MURP program may receive up to three hours of credit for successful completion of an internship placement. The department distributes information about available internships, but the student is responsible for acquiring the position.

General requirements when an internship is to be taken for course credit:

1. Students must be in good academic standing (GPA 3.0 or higher.)
2. Students must meet with their advisor prior to enrolling for credit.
3. The student, the sponsor/supervisor, and the advisor enter into an internship agreement that defines the duties and responsibilities of the position and establishes objectives relative to student learning and/or skill development. In general, the internship experience should be:
   - consistent with the student's professional goals;
   - related to the major program of study; and
   - integrated into a full range of activities and responsibilities of the organization.
4. The internship must provide the student an opportunity to engage in independent professional work. Clerical work is not acceptable.
5. Credit for internships is based on total hours worked. The policy is 60 hours of work equals one hour of credit, with a maximum of 3 credit hours for the internship. Students must enroll in the appropriate number of credits during the time of the internship placement (e.g., summer cred- its for summer work).
6. Each student submits a portfolio of work to their advisor for the final grade. The portfolio includes:
   - examples of work completed during the internship, with a description of the intern's role/responsibility relative to the final product/deliver- able; and
   - a reflective essay assessing preparedness for the internship, learning achieved during the internship, relationship to personal and professional background, goals, etc., and any needs identified (relative to future coursework).

A site supervisor's evaluation will constitute half of the final grade.

If any of the work the student completes is confidential so that he/she cannot produce copies for review by the advisor, then the intern and the advisor will agree on a proxy for that particular requirement.

All paperwork needs to be submitted prior to starting the internship to receive credit.

Plan of Study

Plan of Study

All students must file a Plan of Study (POS) with the Graduate School no later than the end of the semester prior to the proposed graduation date. However, students and their advisors should begin drafting their POS in their first semester and have a draft program on file with the department upon completion of 24 credits. Students should complete a POS form, which is available on the SPIA website.

The POS must be signed by all of the appropriate faculty members be- fore being submitted to the UAP department office.

Requirements

In developing your plan of study for the MURP Degree, students must adhere to the following requirements, in addition to requirements listed above about core courses, capstone etc.:

4000-level courses
Maximum hours: 6

Independent Study (5974) & Special Studies (5984) courses
Maximum 9 combined total hours for non-thesis students of 5974 and 5984 courses
OR
Maximum 6 credit hours combined total hours for thesis option students of 5974 and 5984 courses.

Metro Seminar (5424)
Maximum hours: 12

Research & Thesis (5994)
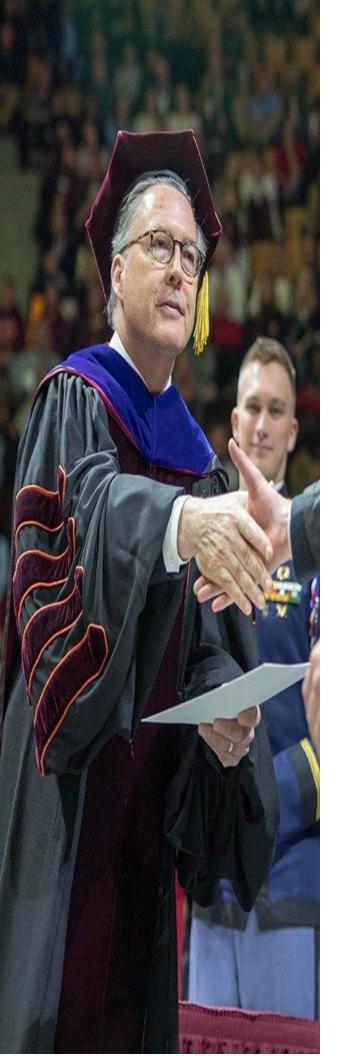Maximum hours: 6

Student Advising

All faculty members are available for either academic or career advising by appointment. Upon entrance into the program, all first-year students are assigned an interim primary advisor by the Program Chair. Assignments are made on the basis of student academic interests as stated in their application as well as faculty advising loads.

Students should take the opportunity to introduce themselves to their primary advisor and meet with them sometime early in their first semester to begin preliminary planning for their program of study. It is the student's responsibility to set up a meeting with their advisor after 12 credits. It is also the student's responsibility to keep in touch with their advisor and notify them of relevant deadlines and requirements related to their progress and graduation. If a student wishes to change advisors, this may be done simply by

1) obtaining approval from the new advisor,
2) notifying the old advisor, and
3) notifying the Program Chair of the change.

During the spring semester of the first year, full-time students should work with their advisor to establish their advisory committee. Committee membership varies depending upon the form of capstone project a student selects (see "Capstone Projects" below). Final membership must be approved by the Program Chair.

Before the Plan of Study (POS) is signed by the advisory committee, changes in the composition of the committee may occur following the procedure for changing advisors outlined above. After the POS is signed, committee changes are made with the Graduate School "Change of Committee" form requiring signatures of both old and new members and the Program Chair. This form may be obtained from the Graduate School website.

Graduation Procedures

Students should follow these steps by the deadlines to get their degree and participate in the commencement ceremony. For updated dead- lines, see:
https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/deadlines-for-academic-progress.html

Steps to Completing Your Degree

1. Submit a Plan of Study (POS)

A POS details all of the courses you will take in order to complete your degree program. All degree-seeking graduate students must submit a plan of study. Master's students must submit by the end of their second academic semester (or after completion of 24 hours for PT students). Refer to the Graduate Catalog for policies and requirements.

2. Enroll in Your Final Semester

You must enroll in at least three credit hours in your last semester to receive a degree and participate in commencement, unless you qualify for the Start-of-Semester Defense Exception

3. Check the Name on Your Diploma

The name printed on your diploma will be the full legal name on your official university record. If you wish to make a change, submit a name change request before the deadline to apply for your degree.

4. Apply to Receive Your Degree

Electronically submit a Degree or Certificate Conferral Request online using HokieSPA. A $25 fee will be charged to your student account.

You must do this by the deadline for your name to be printed in the Commencement Bulletin.

If you don't complete all the degree requirements during the semester on your Degree or Certificate Conferral Request, you'll need to submit a new request for the term you wish to graduate.

5. Schedule Your Final Exam

Schedule a date for your final exam to defend your thesis using the Electronic Signature System. You must submit this request at least two weeks before your desired exam date. Please consult with your Commit- tee Chair to ensure that you have a defensible draft completed in time to defend.

6. Thesis Students Need to Submit Your Electronic Thesis or Dissertation.

Upload your electronic thesis or dissertation (ETD) within two weeks after your exam/defense date. Submit any supporting documentation to the Graduate School during this timeframe as well, such as copyright permission letters, IRB approval or exemption notices, UMI form, or Sur- vey of Earned Doctorates.

Once your final exam is approved, an ETD archiving fee of $20 for master's thesis students or $45 for doctoral students will be charged to your student account.

7. Attending Commencement

Use the degree menu in HokieSPA to confirm whether or not you plan to attend your commencement ceremony. Master's candidates who finish the requirements but not in time to receive a degree this semester are still welcome to participate in commencement.

Principles of Community and Inclusion and Avenues of Redress

Our departmental expectations of civility, inclusion, and respect are embedded and reaffirmed by Virginia Tech's Principles of Community:

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

•   We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.

•   We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

•   We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.

•   We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others. We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Complaints about professional misconduct (integrity and civility) are concerns of both the targets of those complaints and of the department. As such, they are not appropriate topics of informal discussion alone. Students giving voice to complaints of misconduct should, in a timely fashion, initiate processes in which the department and the targets of the complaints would have opportunities to respond. Students can initiate such processes by sharing complaints with departmental or university authorities, as listed below.

MURP and Virginia Tech have means to address complaints of misconduct. Relevant offices include:

- Graduate director, MURP — discussion of concerns about graduate student integrity and civility within the department, all of which remain in confidence other than sexual harassment/assault, mention of which must result in a phone call to the Human Resources Title IX coordinators, as noted below.
- Chair, Urban Affairs and Planning — discussion of concerns about faculty conduct, all of which remain in confidence other than sexual harassment/assault, mention of which must result in a phone call to HR Title IX, as noted below.
- Graduate Student Ombudsperson — discussion of any concerns related to treatment by others, including officials, in the university, all of which remain in confidence other than sexual harassment/assault, mention of which must result in a phone call to …
  - o Human Resources, Title IX — reports of sexual harassment/assault, which reports result in HR officer outreach to alleged victims, who then choose whether to authorize continued investigation.
  - o Student Conduct, in the Dean of Students Office — reports of concerns about student conduct, including disruption, threats, incivility, and harassment (form of redress.
  - o Graduate Honor System — reports of violations of academic integrity.
  - o Graduate School Appeal
  - o Process

For confidential discussions of issues of civility, you may contact:

  - o The Women's Center's Counseling staff (concerns about gendered conduct, sexual assault, sexual harassment)
  - o Cook Counseling Center

Academic bullying manifests itself in many different ways and can include intimidation, humiliation, belittlement, embarrassment and undermining one's authority. Academic bullying also includes behaviors or comments that indicate disregard of one's concerns, ignoring contributions, minimize one's efforts in the eyes of colleagues, and other means of exclusion or withholding information…Academic bullying occurs throughout the academic or professional space; in the classroom, in meetings, at conferences, in the laboratory setting, in face-to-face interactions, and of course through email and social media.

Through the Disrupting Academic Bullying Initiative, the Graduate School has created resources to help members of the VT community identify academic bullying and to report it through the Disrupting Academic Bullying Reporting Form.

Student Activities

MURP Student Travel

To encourage, support, and make visible the research of graduate students, SPIA will provide limited travel support annually to conferences or workshops where the graduate students are presenting a paper.

Graduate students presenting a paper at a conference must first secure support from GSA or other sources. SPIA and UAP may be sources of travel support for students. This can be for one trip or spread over two trips as long as the guidelines for presenting research are met.

Requests for travel support should be made to the SPIA director and the UAP program chair, accompanied by a brief budget for the trip (estimated costs for travel, lodging, meals and conference registration), and should identify any additional support available for the travel. The request should also include the name and location of the conference and the title of the paper to be presented.

Find the travel form here: https://www.controller.vt.edu/content/dam/controller_vt_edu/forms/travel/request_for_travel_approval_vt.pdf

Student and Professional Organizations

Capital Area Student Planning Association (CASPA)

The Capital Area Student Planning Association (CASPA) is committed to enhancing the experience of Urban and Regional Planning graduate students in the National Capital Region. There are 3 main components to this: social, professional, and curricular. Socially, we host fun activities where students meet one another and develop friendships. Professionally, we connect current students with alumni and the career center for advice and opportunities. And finally, we seek to improve the academic program by providing a student opinion during faculty meetings, collecting anonymous feedback from students, and presenting recommendations to faculty for improvement.

Find CASPA on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/245088195639155/about/

American Planning Association (APA)

Full-time students interested in planning are eligible to join APA at a reduced cost. APA currently offers free membership to first-year planning students. When submitting a membership form, students must remember to also join the local APA chapter, either the Virginia Chapter, or the National Capital Area Chapter.

Other Organizations

There are a number of graduate student organizations on campus that seek to help students successfully complete their course of study and integrate them into campus life. The Graduate Student Assembly rep- resents the interests of graduate students on campus. Election to that body is through the college. Visit the GSA homepage here: https://graduateschool.vt.edu/student-life/graduate-student-organizations.html

The Council of International Student Organizations (CISO) is an umbrella organization representing all international student organizations at Virginia Tech. CISO currently includes students from over 110 countries attending Virginia Tech. Together with the Cranwell International Center, CISO officers try to make students feel at home in Blacksburg. One of the missions of CISO is to represent the interest and voices of inter- national students to the university's committees and commissions. To get involved with CISO, send an email to the CISO President, blairshi@ vt.edu.

For those interested, there are also numerous social, athletic, political and academic societies and clubs on campus. A list of student groups is available from the Division of Student Affairs: http://www.dsa.vt.edu/

Community Scholars Fellowship Program

To encourage diversity in urban and regional planning, the Virginia Tech Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program (MURP) is launching a Community Scholars Fellowship Program in Fall 2021 to financially support selected incoming MURPs from under-represented groups (including African American, Latinx, Pacific Islander, or American Indian) based on academic achievement and promise within the field.

The Community Scholars Fellowship Program was established following the events of the summer of 2020, including protests against police brutality following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many others, to strengthen its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Award amounts each academic year will be established by the admissions committee in consultation with fund managers. The fellowship will be funded through contributions from alumni, faculty, students, and outside organizations. Besides the $4000 financial award, the recipient will be paired with a faculty and/or professional mentor(s), who will help guide their graduate study and professional development during their time in the program, as well as offer support navigating a profession which remains majority-white. Over time, the program will connect the recipient to other professionals within the network to create a multiplier effect, leading to wider impact within and across regions.

UAP has updated a memorandum of understanding with VA APA to work together toward diversity and inclusion goals for the planning profession, including commitments for the Community Scholars Program and recognition of the importance of anti-racism in practice.

For more information about the Community Scholars Fellowship Program, including inquiries about serving as mentors for the program, please contact VT UAP faculty member Theodore Lim (tclim@vt.edu).

Other Activities

Faculty

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MURP HANDBOOK $\overline{VT}$

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