

# DEPARTMENTAL DISTINCTION IN PUBLIC POLICY

The Departmental Distinction Program in Public Policy seeks to promote the integration of advanced knowledge in the field of public policy with valuable policy research and analytical competencies. In order to graduate “with Distinction” in Public Policy, eligible students are required to complete the Distinction curriculum outlined below, which includes a PPOL thesis project. The public policy thesis is an in-depth policy analysis of a societal issue, including identification of solutions and a policy recommendation.

## Departmental Distinction Resources

Students considering or participating in the Departmental Distinction Program should regularly check the [Departmental Distinction Tab](#) of the [Korbel BA Program Portfolio](#) webpage.

The Departmental Distinction Tab includes the most up to date versions of the following items:

- Departmental Distinction Handbook
- Application for Departmental Distinction in Public Policy
- Request to Enroll in PPOL 3990
- Departmental Distinction Thesis Approval Form

The Departmental Distinction Tab will also include any new or relevant information for Departmental Distinction students. If you have a question, please first check the Korbel BA Program Portfolio or this handbook for your answer. If you still have a question after checking these resources, you can send an email to the [Korbel Advisors](#) and we will do our best to get you an answer.

## Eligibility Criteria

Interested students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for Departmental Distinction in Public Policy:

- Public Policy (PPOL) Major
- Minimum overall GPA of 3.50 *and* major GPA of 3.70 (at time of application and at time of graduation);
- Secure appointed PPOL faculty advisor for the thesis
- Course Pre-Requisites Prior to Application:
  - PPOL 2000 – Analysis and Action
  - PPOL 3230 – Analytical and Critical Skills
- Application submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> of junior year
  - **Failure to submit a required application on time will result in the student forfeiting their current or potential position in the departmental distinction program.**

## Required Curriculum

Students accepted to the Departmental Distinction Program must successfully complete the following curriculum in a satisfactory manner to achieve distinction in PPOL:

- PPOL 3990 – Thesis
  - Enrollment Process:
    - Submit Departmental Distinction Application (due Apr. 1<sup>st</sup> of Junior year)
    - Receive Committee Approval to Participate in Departmental Distinction
    - Approach faculty regarding thesis
    - Submit [“Thesis Intent”](#) form (due prior to the start of the quarter in which you intend to register thesis credits)
    - Enroll in PPOL 3990
  - This placeholder class is available in Fall or Winter Quarter. Students must submit their Request to Enroll no later than the start of the quarter.

- Enrollment Process for PPOL 3990:
  - Submit “Request to Enroll in PPOL 3990 - Honors Thesis”
  - Receive departmental approval to enroll
  - Complete “[Application for Independent Research](#)” and obtain required signatures
  - Enroll in PPOL 3990

## General Thesis Requirements

The Public Policy thesis project is the academic culmination of the Departmental Distinction Program. All students who wish to graduate “with distinction” in Public Policy must complete a thesis project. Please review the detailed Guidelines posted on the [BAINTS Portfolio site](#). The general thesis requirements are as follows:

- A viable policy topic and **approval from an appointed PPOL faculty member that is willing to advise the thesis**
  - It is the student’s responsibility to seek out and secure an appropriate PPOL faculty advisor for the thesis
  - Faculty collaboration is voluntary, and based on the alignment of appropriate and mutual research interests
  - Please see the timeline for more information on when students should start looking for a faculty advisor and what aspects of the program require faculty advisor input
- 20 pages
  - Typed
  - Standard 11-point font, double spaced, with 1” margins
  - Cover page and table of contents included
- The student must submit a final, **electronic** copy to the [Director of Undergraduate Student Affairs](#) in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format by the deadline (see timeline to determine deadline)
  - Note: Students enrolled in the UHP should ensure they are aware of UHP requirements and timelines
- Distinction candidates are required to submit a final, graded thesis by **Wednesday at noon of week three of the quarter in which they intend to graduate**. This is required to comply with University timelines governing official graduation and commencement records. Late submissions will disqualify a student from earning Distinction in PPOL and may result in a failing grade for PPOL 3990.
- Final drafts delivered to the thesis advisor for grading beyond a week before the deadline will not be accepted
- It is the responsibility of the student to put together a panel and receive acceptance from members at least one week before a defense, if desired.

**NOTE: Once a student has secured an advisor, work on the thesis may begin. Generally, a student will submit several drafts before a final thesis is accepted and graded. It is important that the student and faculty advisor establish clear expectations of one another during this process, as well as a specific and reasonable timeline for comments/edits to assist revisions on the thesis. Students should not expect faculty advisors to examine their work at the last minute or beyond the agreed upon timeline.**

## University Honors Program

Public Policy majors enrolled in the University Honors Program (UHP) must complete departmental distinction in Public Policy. If a student has a second major in addition to Public Policy, they can do departmental distinction in Public Policy OR their second major. UHP students must meet the requirements for departmental distinction outlined above.

Remember, the deadlines for the University Honors Program are determined by that office and may be different from the PPOL Distinction timeline. For more information about these specific deadlines and requirements, please contact the [University Honors Program](#) directly. **Public Policy majors not enrolled in the UHP can also earn departmental distinction.**

## DEPARTMENTAL DISTINCTION PROGRAM TIMELINES



**Legend**

- Green
- Orange
- Purple

**Applications & Requests to Enroll**

**Required Courses**

**Faculty Advisor Participation**