The Public Affairs Reporting (PAR) degree is designed for the student who wishes to specialize in news coverage of governmental affairs. A primary goal is for graduates to obtain employment in which they can report or interpret governmental activity for the population at large. The objectives of the year-long program are to graduate men and women who are able not only to understand and interpret public affairs but also to communicate with the clarity, accuracy, and speed demanded of deadline reporters of the highest rank. The program directs students to an investigation of the interactions between the news media and society and the news media and government and encourages students to expand the knowledge of such interaction through research and experimentation. Program faculty also expect that each graduate, whatever the skill level upon entering the program, be proficient in reporting, editing, and writing at graduation. The unique nature of the program is derived from the simultaneous pursuit of various goals; none is considered paramount.

**The Master's Degree**

**Advising**

The program director serves as principal academic advisor for PAR students, although special advising requests may be referred to other faculty members with particular expertise. After students are accepted into the program, they should contact their academic advisors for an appointment before initial registration.

**Grading Policy**

PAR students must receive a grade of B or better in any required PAR course to receive credit toward the degree (grades of B- or lower will not be accepted).

**NOTE:** Students also should refer to the campus policy on Grades Acceptable Toward Master's Degrees (http://catalog.uis.edu/graduate-students/academic-info-masters/grades-acceptable), which is in the Academic Information for Master's Degree Students section of this catalog.

**Degree Requirements**

The M.A. in Public Affairs Reporting requires 40 hours of graduate-level course work. In the fall semester, students enroll in two required courses: PAR 501 (six hours), and PAR 510 (four hours). Students choose other courses after consultation with their academic advisor.

During the spring semester, students begin an internship, PAR 504, with an experienced professional journalist covering state government and the Illinois General Assembly. This internship course (12 credit hours) includes a weekly seminar. PAR 503 (two hours) is also required during this semester. After consultation with an academic advisor, the student registers for other courses to maintain a full course load.

Students participate in the second phase of the internship, PAR 505, during the summer term (until July 1). This internship period is considerably more intense, as it coincides with the conclusion of the legislative session. During the six-month internship, students receive a monthly stipend and tuition waiver.

Before graduation, students must complete a professional portfolio that demonstrates mastery of public affairs journalism. The portfolio will include a variety of hard news, analyses, in-depth and feature stories the student has reported and written and that have been published or aired by a professional media outlet, along with project memos detailing the news judgments involved in reporting and writing the longer pieces.

**Required Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAR 501</td>
<td>Advanced Public Affairs Reporting</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR 503</td>
<td>Legislative Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR 504</td>
<td>Internship I</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR 505</td>
<td>Internship II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR 510</td>
<td>Developing Public Policy in Illinois</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Electives**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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**Total Hours**

| 40    |

**Courses**

**PAR 203. State of the State. 3 Hours.**

Introduction to the structure, operations, and politics of state government in Illinois, examining the interplay of these factors in determining public policy on key issues facing the state. Course Information: Same as PSC 203. This course fulfills a general education requirement at UIS in the area of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**PAR 404. Media Law And Ethics. 4 Hours.**

Examines media law and ethical decisionmaking from the standpoint of media producers, critics, and users. Case studies include obscenity and indecency, libel, privacy, advertising, conflict of interest, and rights of access. Lectures and discussions examine social and cultural contexts in which laws and ethical principles develop. Optional course for PAR majors. PAR majors not allowed to take this course CR/NC. Course Information: Same as COM 404.

**PAR 410. Critical and Persuasive Writing for Journalists. 4 Hours.**

Students will learn to craft editorials, columns, reviews and essays that will have impact. They will also learn about the evolution of critical and persuasive writing in the media and its role in society. Each class will be a mix of lecture, discussion and group and individual exercises. There will be weekly writing assignments.

**PAR 501. Advanced Public Affairs Reporting. 6 Hours.**

Newswriting and reportorial techniques, including investigative reporting, journalism ethics, news analysis, and interpretation. Relevant, pertinent, and salient news standards are probed, with emphasis on coverage of governmental news. Course Information: Prerequisite: Admission to the PAR Program.

**PAR 503. Legislative Issues. 2 Hours.**

In-depth study of key issues before the Illinois General Assembly. Offered during spring semester. Course Information: Prerequisite: Admission to the PAR Program.
PAR 504. Internship I. 12 Hours.
Practical experience in reporting public affairs. Each student is assigned to full-time work with an experienced journalist at the State Capitol. Students receive monthly stipend. Weekly seminar. Course Information: Prerequisite: Admission to PAR program.

PAR 505. Internship II. 4 Hours.
Continuation of PAR 504, but more intense in conjunction with the windup of the legislative session. Work supervised by media bureau chief and program director. Course Information: Prerequisite: Admission to PAR program.

PAR 510. Developing Public Policy in Illinois. 4 Hours.
Intensive study of the factors affecting the development of public policy at the state level in Illinois. Major topics include constitutional framework, historical influence, demographics, political culture, role of parties, and interest groups, role of the media, legislative process, role of the executive budgetary process.