

PPLSS Curriculum Committee Operating Procedures & Guidelines

- I. The Purpose of the Curriculum Committee** is to
 - A. Ensure that the curriculum offered by the School of Political Science, Public Affairs, Legal and Security Studies (hereafter PPLSS) fulfills the educational mission defined by the School, the College of Liberal Arts, and the university.
 - B. Manage the process of making changes to the curriculum.
 - C. Ensure effective coordination among PPLSS programs to avoid overlaps and conflicts in their respective curricula.
 - D. The Curriculum Committee shall be responsible for reviewing all curriculum proposals for PPLSS.
 1. Curriculum proposals include new courses, course changes, course deletions, new programs, program changes, and program deletions.
 2. The Curriculum Committee will review proposals at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- II. The Intent of Curriculum Committee Operating Procedures & Guidelines** is to
 - A. Achieve student academic success by ensuring academically rigorous degree plans and course listings.
 - B. Implement the goals of each program's degree plan.
 - C. Ensure that each program's curriculum offerings meet the needs of students, reflect best practices in their respective fields, and reflect the teaching interests of the faculty.
 - D. Implement the appropriate guiding principles of the University.

- III. Committee Members and Functions**
 - A. The Curriculum Committee shall be composed of the program coordinators of each program in PPLSS.
 1. The program coordinators are expected to represent their programs as members of the committee and to consider their program curricula within the larger context of PPLSS, the College of Liberal Arts, and the university.
 2. The following program coordinators are included:
 - i. Political Science Undergraduate Coordinator
 - ii. Political Science Graduate Program Coordinator
 - iii. Masters of Public Affairs Coordinator
 - iv. Legal Studies Coordinator
 - v. Global Studies Coordinator
 - vi. Security Studies Coordinator

- B. The Chair of the Curriculum Committee shall be appointed by the PPLSS Director.
- C. In addition to calling and chairing Committee meetings and conducting votes, as well as duties described elsewhere in this document, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee (or designee) shall submit all curriculum proposals through the electronic platforms designated by the university for that purpose, and shall present all curriculum proposals approved by PPLSS to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC/Graduate Council).

IV. Eligibility to Submit Proposals and Vote

- A. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty can submit proposals for curriculum changes.
 - 1. Program Committee chairs may submit proposals on behalf of other faculty members.
- B. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty can vote on the curriculum items.

V. New Course Policy

- A. New courses may be added as necessary in order to meet the needs of each program in PPLSS.
 - 1. The Committee recommends that new courses first be taught as Special Topics courses in order to ensure that sufficient student interest exists and to fine-tune aspects of the course prior to submitting it as a new course proposal.
 - 2. The Curriculum Committee will use a higher standard of evaluation for new course proposals compared to special topics course proposals. This higher standard means that the committee will expect a greater level of specificity and evidence in the written statements for a new course proposal than it does for special topics course proposals.
 - 3. Faculty are encouraged to consult with the PPLSS Director and the program chair prior to submitting a proposal.
- B. Each Program Committee is expected to meet each Spring semester with the PPLSS Director to review the existing curriculum and consider whether any changes may be necessary.
- C. When new faculty join the program, they may propose new courses in their field of study if those courses do not already exist in the curriculum and the course would contribute to the educational mission of PPLSS and UTRGV.
- D. Materials required for course proposals:
 - 1. **Syllabus:** A copy of the syllabus. The syllabus must contain a course description, the core reading selections, assignment and/or examination descriptions, and the point or percentage value of the total grade for those assignments and/or examinations.
 - 2. **Degree-Plan Goals Statement:** A written statement explaining how the course implements the goals of the program's degree plan and, by extension, the selected guiding principles of UTRGV listed on the program's degree plan. Faculty must also indicate which field or concentration the course will fit into, as appropriate.

3. **Unique Content Statement:** A written statement explaining how the subject matter in the proposed course is not adequately represented by any existing course and could not be incorporated into an existing course.
4. **New Course Proposal Form:** The New Course Proposal Form is available on the PPLSS Teams website. This form must be completed in full in order for the course proposal to be considered, as it includes all of the information required by the university in order to propose a new course.

VI. Special Topics / Capstone (Research Seminar) Course Policy

- A. Special Topics courses and research seminars that do not have a specified topic (e.g., POLS 4370 Senior Research Seminar) must be approved by the university administration prior to being opened for registration. A faculty member who would like to teach a special topics course or is scheduled to teach a research seminar must consult with the PPLSS Director, who formally submits the request for approval.
- B. Timeline for submitting proposals:
 1. For Fall semester: **By March 15**
 2. For Spring semester: **By October 15**
- C. Materials required for course proposals:
 1. The proposed course title
 2. A course description of the special topics course
 3. A syllabus that includes a course description, the core reading selections, assignment and/or examination descriptions, and the point or percentage value of the total grade for those assignments and/or examinations.
 4. A written statement explaining how the subject matter in the proposed course is not adequately represented by any existing course and could not be incorporated into an existing course.

VII. Course Change Policy

- A. Faculty may propose changes to a course title (including the full title and the short title that appears on transcripts) or course description that appears in the catalog due to changes in the field; a change in the faculty member regularly teaching the course; in order to avoid conflict due to other changes in the curriculum; or to provide greater clarity to students about the course content.
 1. Changes to the course level (i.e., 3000- or 4000-level) or the course number are strongly discouraged.
 2. Changes to prerequisites are possible but require a high level of justification.
- B. Faculty must submit a proposal to the Curriculum Committee that includes the course number and title and a statement justifying the change.
 1. If the proposal includes changing the name of the course, the proposal should include both the original name and the new name.

VIII. Course Deletion Policy

- A. Courses that have not been taught in at least the last two years are automatically deleted from the curriculum. However, if a faculty member believes that a course in the curriculum should be deleted without waiting through the two-year cycle, they may propose the deletion of the course.
- B. Faculty must submit a proposal to the Curriculum Committee that includes the course number and title and a statement justifying the change, as well as the last time the course was taught and the level of enrollment (if known).

IX. Operating Procedures and Timelines

- A. All new courses, course changes, and course deletion proposals from faculty members must be submitted to the Chair of the Curriculum Committee by the following due dates:
 - 1. New course, course change, and course deletions: **September 15**.
- B. The Chair of the Curriculum Committee will review the proposal for completeness and then forward it within five working days to the appropriate program committee.
 - 1. For course deletions, the proposal must also be sent to the PPLSS director to check if course dependencies will prevent the course's deletion.
- C. The Program Committee will have **15 calendar days** to review and vote on the proposal.
 - 1. For new courses, the Program Committee will assign a course number.
- D. If the Program Committee approves the proposal, the proposal will then be forwarded to the full Curriculum Committee.
 - 1. If the Program Committee does not approve the proposal, it will return the proposal to the faculty member with its reasoning.
 - 2. The faculty member may then submit a revised proposal by **October 15**.
 - 3. Revised proposals should be submitted directly to the appropriate program committee.
- E. Each Proposal approved by the Program Committee will then be returned to the Curriculum Committee for a vote within **15 calendar days**.
 - 1. If approved, it will be forwarded to the PPLSS director for final approval.
 - 2. If the proposal is not approved, it will be returned to the faculty member and the Program Committee with its reasoning.
 - 3. If the Curriculum Committee feels that the proposal needs to be revised in some substantive way, the committee member representing that program will work with their respective program committee on the revisions. Those revisions must be completed with an eye to the university deadlines for curriculum changes.
 - i. Once revisions have been made, the proposal must be returned to the Curriculum Committee for a final vote.
 - 4. Proposals approved by the Curriculum Committee are then subject to approval by the PPLSS Director.
 - 5. Once approved by the PPLSS Director, the Curriculum Committee chair (or designee) will submit the proposal in accordance with the due dates set by the university.

- i. The university-established due dates for curriculum changes are October 1, November 1, and December 1.
- F. Proposals may also be developed by the Curriculum Committee itself or by a Program Committee.
 - 1. If proposed by the Curriculum Committee, the proposal would go through the process beginning with step VIII.C.
 - 2. If proposed by a Program Committee, the proposal would go through the process beginning with step VIII.E.
 - 3. The deadline for Curriculum Committee-initiated proposals to be submitted to a program committee is **October 1**. The deadline for Program Committee-initiated proposals to be submitted to the Curriculum Committee is **October 10**.

Approved by School Vote, May 1st, 2026

Approved by the PPLSS Director, May 4th, 2026