Public Affairs Reporting
Master’s Degree Program

PAR is a one-year, professionally oriented master’s program that trains students to become journalists who produce intelligent news coverage about government, politics and other public affairs.

The program concentrates its instruction in three areas: journalistic skills (news reporting and writing for digital, broadcast and print), public affairs knowledge and professional responsibility.

The program’s centerpiece is a six-month, paid internship, where PAR students work for a professional news organization in the Statehouse press room to report on the Illinois General Assembly’s spring session.

From our alumni...

Natasha Korecki ('97), POLITICO: “For any aspiring reporter who wants on-the-ground training, I cannot point to a better program than PAR. It did more to prepare me for the real world in one year than four years of undergrad. The classes are designed to be specifically relevant to public affairs and what you’re later covering. The real experience working in the Capitol is invaluable.”

Ray Long ('81), Chicago Tribune: “If you want to be a hotshot covering politics and government, come learn what it takes to work on the Greatest Beat on Planet Earth. (PAR) plugs you into the same electrifying Illinois Statehouse environment that propelled Barack Obama to Washington and sent a string of governors to prison. The experience will catapult you ahead of your peers.”
Qualifications

- Bachelor’s degree with a good academic record.
- Solid writing skills and a desire to report on government, politics and other public affairs topics.
- The Graduate Record Exam is not required.

Course Requirements

Fall:
- PAR 501 Advanced Public Affairs Reporting 6 hrs.
- PAR 510 Developing Public Policy in Illinois 4 hrs.
- Two graduate-level electives in Political Science or Communication 8 hrs.

Spring:
- PAR 503 Legislative Issues 2 hrs.
- PAR 504 Internship 12 hrs.
- One graduate-level elective in PSC or COM 4 hrs.

Summer:
- PAR 505 Internship (through June 30) 4 hrs.

Six-Month News Internship

In January, PAR students begin an internship with a newspaper, wire service, television or radio station, under the guidance of professional working journalists who serve as mentors and coaches. Students’ coverage of the Illinois General Assembly will be read, seen or heard by audiences throughout the state.

A Record of Success

Somewhere near you, a PAR grad is informing a community about important issues. They are prepared to step into the most demanding beats, and hiring managers know it. That’s why editors and news directors with openings call us looking for alums who might be available; in fact, the callers are often PAR grads themselves. Today, hundreds of graduates of the PAR program work at the nation’s newspapers, television and radio stations, press agencies, and in related communication careers.


Broadcast alums are executives, producers and reporters with television and radio outlets in Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, Boston, Atlanta, Phoenix, Denver, Orlando, Raleigh-Durham, San Diego, Nashville and other markets throughout the U.S., as well as with Al Jazeera and NPR.

Program Director

Jason Piscia, MA ’98 PAR

Professor Piscia returned to UIS following a 21-year career at The State Journal-Register in Springfield, Illinois, where he was a reporter, digital editor and managing editor. He also earned degrees from Illinois State University and Illinois Valley Community College. He is a native of Peru, Illinois.

Apply by April 1

at uis.edu.