PAR is a 10-month, 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), NBC News: “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.”

Daisy Contreras (’17), editor and reporter, The World, Boston: “The PAR program gave me the tools I needed to cover more than just politics to make me a well-rounded reporter. Looking back now, I like to think of the Public Affairs Reporting program as my one-stop shop for everything journalism (from classroom instruction to hands-on reporting at the Illinois Statehouse), especially for students like me, who did not major in journalism as an undergrad.”
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.
• Journalism experience is helpful but not required.
• 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 8 hrs.

Spring:
• PAR 503 Legislative Issues 2 hrs.
• PAR 504 Internship 12 hrs.
• One graduate-level elective 4 hrs.

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

Affordability

PAR is one of the most cost-effective and time-efficient ways for a journalist to earn a graduate degree while building a resume and getting high-level experience with a professional media outlet. During the internship, students receive a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend. In addition, the program is supported by generous donors who annually provide thousands of dollars in scholarships to PAR students exhibiting exemplary academic performance and financial need.

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.


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

Information effective Spring 2022. Subject to change without notice. See uis.edu/catalog for up-to-date requirements.