

**PUBPL 6950 – APPLIED POLICY PROJECT/CAPSTONE**  
**Tuesdays from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm**  
**Spring 2018**

**Instructor:** Tony Mastracci

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am to 10:30 am and by arrangement

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course consists of a faculty-supervised project applying the Master of Public Policy curriculum to the analysis of real-world policy issues and partnering with a policy-oriented agency or faculty member. In this course, we utilize some the public policy skills you've learned throughout your program of study and apply those skills to your capstone master's degree project. Students meet in class and online to learn and practice skills in policy research and policy development, to discuss their projects, challenges they encounter, obtain individual assistance, and learn from guest speakers from the world of public policy and policy analysis.

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

Foundational Knowledge

- Review and refine skills learned through the MPP course of study
- Create effective presentations based on the capstone project and targeted to policymakers and other audiences who have limited time and focus

Application

- Do real-world professional policy research and to share that research publicly
- Work effectively in dynamic policy organizations
- Apply what has been learned in the MPP program to new personal and professional situations

Integration

- Bring research evidence to real world policy challenges and how to assess policy-relevant evidence
- Apply policy research in shifting policy contexts – political, economic, social, global

Human Dimension

- Assess and communicate your own values to others and gain empathy for how others view the world from their own unique perspective and life experiences

Caring

- Look forward to coming to class, be curious and interested in engaging with your fellow students and learn new things about yourself

Learning how to Learn

- Express complex ideas clearly in writing and speaking

## ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments	Points
Summary of Project Concept (1 – 2 pages, single spaced)	10
State of the State posts (Canvas)	5
Project Outline and Methodology	10
Peer review of another student's outline	5
Post of current progress (Canvas)	5
Posting comments on classmates' post of current progress (Canvas)	5
Legislative testimony	5
Elevator speech and feedback	5
Rough draft of project	10
Final project presentation	20
Class participation	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Extra Credit: Op-Ed</b>	5

## GRADING CRITERIA

Late assignments will result in grade reductions unless alternate arrangements are made *prior* to the deadline. The grading scale for the course will be:

- A = Outstanding (93% and above)
- A- = Very Good (between 90% and 93%)
- B+ = Above Average (between 88% and 90%)
- B = Average (between 83% and 88%)
- B- = Below Average (between 80% and 83%)
- C+ = Poor (between 78% and 80%)
- C = Marginal (between 73% and 78%)
- C- = Unsatisfactory (below 73%)

For all the writing assignments in this class, you are expected to produce graduate level writing: error-free with proper punctuation, spelling, grammar, sentence structure, logical organization, proper documentation, and appropriate supporting evidence.

## UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENTS

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND ACADEMIC HONESTY** All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc.

Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to the Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and

progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated as public service is a calling that requires students, as future and current administrators, to understand the importance of ethical behavior in all facets of their work, including their academic coursework. The University of Utah and the Political Science Department expect students to adhere to generally accepted standards of academic conduct. Academic misconduct is defined in the University's student code as follows: Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information. Cases of academic misconduct will be dealt with immediately and may result in failure of the class. It is expected that you WILL CITE for every assignment—give credit where credit is due!

## **ADA ACCOMMODATIONS**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor, as well as to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to decide for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

## **SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Please note that additional reading assignments and/or resources may be uploaded to Canvas during the semester.

### ***TUESDAY JANUARY 9TH***

#### **In Class Discussion:** Course Overview

- Introductions, discuss syllabus, discuss student goals for this class and your careers, discuss your projects;
- Debriefing your experience in the MPP program
- Discussion of assignment due on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

### ***TUESDAY JANUARY 16TH***

#### **Assignment Due:**

- **Summary of Project Concept - Submit through Canvas no later than Tuesday January 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm**

Project Concept paper should be one to two page (single spaced) and include:

- Organizational client, if any
- Faculty committee chair and members
- Two-paragraph summary of project concept
- Whether IRB approval is required and date of approval (or expected date)
- How the project may be useful to a client, policymakers, and other readers

#### **In Class Discussion:** Policy Analysis in Action

**Guest Speaker:** Claire Tobin-Lence, Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst and Brian Bean, Policy Analyst at Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel (Invited)

**In Class Presentation:** Present your Summary of Project Concept to the class

## **TUESDAY JANUARY 23RD – ONLINE CLASS**

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Project Outline and Methodology** - Submit through Canvas no later than Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 pm

The document should include:

- A rough outline of your project, showing preliminary organization of report and a description of expected tables and figures
- Statement of the primary research question
- Description of activities needed to gather information (interviews, compiling/analyzing data sets, readings, etc.). Be as specific as possible: whom will you interview? What data are available and from which sources? What documents/reports will you read?
- If you are performing an empirical study, include information about your quantitative methods and why you chose your approach. If you have preliminary data findings, include a brief summary

- **State of the State Posts** - Post your thoughts and ideas on the questions about the State of the State (See online discussion questions below), and respond to at least three of your classmates posts no later than Monday January 29th.

### **Online Discussion: State of the State Address**

- What policy issues took priority in the State of the State address?
- How adequate are the proposed solutions?
- Which policy issues were omitted that should have been addressed?
- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of proposing public policies in a setting like this address?

## **TUESDAY JANUARY 30TH**

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Peer review of another student's outline** - Submit your review as comments on the other student's outline (in Word) and email to me and the other student no later than Tuesday January 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm

As assigned by me, review another student's outline, examining research quality. Please consider the following:

- How sound is the primary research question? Are there any adjustments to the question that could strengthen the project?
- Are the research methods adequate to addressing the research question?
- Is the outlined paper organized effectively to convey the importance of the issue and the public policy implications of the work?

### **Readings:**

- Ethics Case Study Discussions

### **In Class Discussion:** Ethics issues and concerns in research, policy analysis and advocacy

### **Guest Speaker:** Dr. Lina Svedin

- Dr. Svedin will discuss a range of ethical issues in public policy analysis, policy implementation, etc.
- Be prepared to discuss ethical dilemmas or concerns related to the policy areas associated with your project

## ***TUESDAY FEBRUARY 6TH***

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Post current progress of your project** - Submit this online post through Canvas no later than Friday, February 6th at 6:00 pm

Discussions will be set up online through Canvas, and you will post a status report of about 500 words. Describe any difficulties you are having, questions you have about how to address these difficulties, describe what's going well with your project, and provide a general update on its level of completion.

**In Class Discussion:** Consuming Policy Analysis

**Guest Speaker:** Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck, Utah House of Representatives

**In Class Presentation:** Current progress of your project

## ***TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13TH – ONLINE CLASS***

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Online feedback on Feb 6th posts** - Your comments on others' reports must be posted on Canvas no later than Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 PM

Each of you will provide meaningful comments, feedback, and advice to at least three class members by posting on their discussion thread.

**Online Discussion:** Feedback on the posts submitted on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> and the presentations last week

## ***TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20TH***

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Legislative testimony** – Submit through Canvas no later than Tuesday February 20th at 6:00 pm

Write a short memo (about two pages, single spaced) designed for busy legislators or local government officials, based on your project findings. Include:

- Who you are and why you are testifying
- A brief statement of your findings
- Why these findings are relevant to a policy question that is before this committee
- Your recommendation for action

**In Class Discussion:** Policy Analysis as a Career

**Guest Speakers:** Anna Thomas, Policy Analyst, Voices for Utah Children

**In Class Presentation:** Present your Legislative Testimony to the class for feedback

## ***TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27TH***

### **In Class Discussion:**

- Communicating Policy to Policymakers
- Data visualization

**Guest Speakers:** Shawn Teigen, Vice President and Research Director and Christopher Collard, Research Analyst, Utah Foundation

## ***TUESDAY MARCH 6TH – ONLINE CLASS***

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Elevator Speech** - Elevator speech video is due no later than Tuesday March 6th at 9:00 pm;  
Videotape yourself giving a one- to two-minute “elevator speech” about your project and receive feedback; focus on quick, persuasive statements about your findings, encouraging a listener to read your work or take action on the issue
- **Feedback** - Feedback on classmate’s elevator speech videos due no later than March 12<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm  
Provide meaningful feedback on three of your classmates video submissions focusing on the characteristics listed in the bullet point above

## ***TUESDAY MARCH 13TH - OPTIONAL CLASS SESSION***

**Topic:** Individual assistance with your rough drafts - I will schedule time slots during class if you would like some individualized help with your methodology, format, scope, and/or want discussion on preparing and organizing your rough draft

## ***TUESDAY MARCH 20TH – SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS***

## ***TUESDAY MARCH 27TH***

### **Assignment Due:**

- **Rough draft of entire project report** - Submit rough draft through Canvas no later than Tuesday March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm
  - Submit your rough draft of the entire project report, with tables, graphs, and a complete (though rough) draft of the text
  - Be prepared to offer and receive guidance on your project and others' projects

### **In Class Discussion:** Discussion of Rough Drafts

- What did you learn so far that was a surprise?
- What elements of the project are presenting a challenge to you?
- What is going well?
- Questions on how to proceed

## ***TUESDAY APRIL 3RD – ONLINE CLASS***

### **Assignment Due – EXTRA CREDIT:**

- **Op-ed (opinion article)** – Submit Op-Ed no later than Tuesday April 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm
  - Write 500-750 words, based on your project findings, designed to be published on the opinion page of a recognized newspaper
  - Use your subject knowledge to convince readers to take some action, whether that is to study the issue, ask elected officials for change, contribute to a cause, engage in a public process, or so on

**Online Discussion:** Instructor feedback provided on your rough draft

## ***TUESDAY APRIL 10TH***

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### **Reading:**

- Utah Foundation Research Report 704: Nominating Candidates: The Politics and Process of Utah's Unique Convention and Primary System

**In Class Discussion:** Caucuses, conventions and voter turnout

**Guest Speaker:** Morgan Lyon Cotti, Hinckley Institute of Politics

### **Additional In Class Discussion:**

- Final project paper and presentation
- Feedback on this class

## ***TUESDAY APRIL 17TH***

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### **Assignment Due:**

- **ALL FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS DUE** – Submit through Canvas no later than Tuesday April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

**In Class Presentation:** First half of the class alphabetically present Capstone project. Each of you will participate in grading others' projects

## ***TUESDAY APRIL 24TH***

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**In Class Presentation:** Second half of the class alphabetically present Capstone project. Each of you will participate in grading others' projects