

PUBPL 6950: Applied Policy Project/Capstone Spring 2016

INSTRUCTOR	Stephen Hershey Kroes President, Utah Foundation
CLASS TIME	Wednesdays, 6:00-9:00 PM
LOCATION	OSH 231
CONTACT INFO	Cell: (801) 573-8824 steve@utahfoundation.org
AVAILABLE HOURS	Call or text me anytime from 8 am to 9 pm M-F. I am also often available on weekends if you text first. Usually, we will correspond by email, and I will respond promptly.

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 of 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 to learn and practice skills in policy research and policy development, to discuss their projects, challenges they encounter, obtain individual assistance, and to participate as teams in policy analyses and problem solving. We also review some key skills and knowledge learned throughout the MPP course of study.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To develop the skills to do real-world professional policy research and to share that research, i.e. make it public or publishable
- To learn how to bring research evidence to real world policy challenges and how to assess policy-relevant evidence
- To develop skills to work effectively in dynamic policy organizations
- To learn to apply policy research in shifting policy contexts – political, economic, social, global
- To review and refine skills learned through the MPP course of study
- To create effective presentations based on the capstone project and targeted to policymakers and other audiences with limited time and focus

How these objectives will be reached:

- Course is structured around learning skills by doing
- Assignments, in addition, to the individual applied policy projects, enable the acquisition of skills and the application of skills acquired to new situations/environments

Specific Core Competencies to be developed in this course:

- Capacity to express complex ideas clearly in writing and speaking
- Ability to apply what has been learned in program to new situations
- Making knowledge 'talk' to policy
- Team work
- Negotiating difficult situations in policy work
- Understanding the ethical concerns associated with public policy research

Course Schedule

Date	Class Activities	Assignments Due
Jan 13	<p>Course overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Discuss student goals for this class and your careers • Discuss my goals for this class • Discuss your projects 	<p>Policy project description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide verbal description of topic, methodology, and data sources in class today.
Jan 20	<p>Instructor presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of great projects from past classes <p>Class discussion on the State of the Union Address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll watch some of last week's address and discuss • What policy issues took priority? Why do you think they did? • 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? 	<p>Policy project summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One- to two-page (single-spaced) summary of project concept described in class last week. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 • Submit the summary as a Word document by email before the beginning of class today
Jan 27	<p>Guest speaker: Professional policy analyst</p> <p>Discussion: the elements of strong policy analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break into three groups: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find online examples of misuse of data 2. Find examples of proper data use 3. Brainstorm elements of strong policy analysis • Present group findings <p>Discussion: the value of a strong project outline (with examples)</p>	

Date	Class Activities	Assignments Due
Feb 3	<p>Discuss your project progress with class members</p> <p>Discuss peer review assignment</p>	<p>Project outline and methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough outline, showing preliminary organization of report by section 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: e.g., 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 of them. • Submit this assignment as a Word document by email before the beginning of class today
Feb 10	<p>Guest speaker: Professional consumer of policy analysis</p>	<p>Peer review of another student's outline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As assigned by the me, review another student's outline, examining research quality. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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? • Submit your review as comments on the other student's outline (in Word) and deliver to me and the other student by email before the start of today's class.
Feb 17	<p>Guest speaker: Employer of policy analysts</p> <p>Discussion: Careers in public policy-related fields</p>	
Feb 24	<p>Discussion: ethics concerns in public policy analysis</p> <p>Guest lecturer: Dr. Lina Svedin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Lina Svedin will be in class today to discuss a range of ethical issues in public policy analysis, policy implementation, etc. • Discuss ethical dilemmas or concerns related to the policy areas associated with your project.

Date	Class Activities	Assignments Due
Mar 2	<p>Guest speaker: Communications staff from nonprofit sector or communications consultant</p> <p>Discussion: Generating publicity for policy analysis</p>	<p>Elevator speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a one- to two-minute “elevator speech” about your project and receive feedback from our guest communications expert(s). Focus on quick, persuasive statements about your findings, encouraging a listener to read your work or take action on the issue. • There is no written document to turn it, but you will be graded on the verbal presentation.
Mar 9	<p>OPTIONAL CLASS SESSION – Individual assistance with your rough drafts. Let me know ahead of time if you’d like some individualized help with your methodology, format, scope, etc. I will schedule slots during this class time for any of you who want some intensive discussion on preparing and organizing your rough draft.</p>	
Mar 16	<p>SPRING BREAK</p>	
Mar 23	<p>Discuss rough drafts with the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn so far that was a surprise? • What elements of the project are presenting challenges for you? • What is going well? • What questions do you have on how to proceed? 	<p>Rough draft of entire project report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit your rough draft of the entire project report, with tables, graphs, and a complete (though rough) draft of the text • Submit this assignment as a Word document by email before the beginning of class today • Be prepared to offer and receive guidance on your project and others' projects
Mar 30	<p>Discussion: Caucuses, conventions, voter turnout, and policies to strengthen democracy</p> <p>Guest speakers: policy experts on voting</p>	<p>To participate fully in this discussion, skim these documents. I will provide copies on Canvas for download:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2009 report from the Governor’s Commission on Strengthening Utah’s Democracy • Utah Foundation Research Report 735: Voting in Utah: Analyzing Current Practices and Future Options for Utah Voters • Utah Foundation Research Report 704: Nominating Candidates: The Politics and Process of Utah’s Unique Convention and Primary System

Date	Class Activities	Assignments Due
Apr 6	<p>Guest speaker: Elected official</p> <p>Discussion on final presentations and papers</p> <p>Discuss how to improve this course next year</p>	<p>EXTRA CREDIT: written legislative testimony or op-ed</p> <p>Op-ed (opinion) article:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Legislative testimony – written and spoken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a short memo (about two pages, single spaced) designed for busy legislators or local government officials, based on your project findings. Assume this would be handed to committee or council members to accompany a verbal testimony. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 <p>Choose either assignment for some extra credit or if you'd otherwise enjoy the exercise. Submit by email as a Word document before the beginning of class today</p>
Apr 13	<p>Presentation of final projects (First half of class, alphabetically)</p>	<p>FINAL PROJECTS DUE FOR ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENTING NEXT WEEK</p> <p>Email your final paper and PowerPoint presentation to me before class begins today. Each of you will participate in grading others' projects.</p>
Apr 20 Last day of instruction	<p>Presentation of final projects (Second half of class, alphabetically)</p>	<p>All students attend each presentation; each of you will participate in grading others' projects.</p>

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

All assignments are to be submitted by email to steve@utahfoundation.org as Microsoft Word files. Name the files with your last name as the first portion of the filename. All submissions should be single-spaced with a blank line between paragraphs.

Date	Assignment	Contribution to Final Grade
1/20	Policy project summary	5%
2/3	Project outline and methodology	10%
2/10	Peer review of outline/methodology	5%
3/2	Elevator speech	5%
3/23	Rough draft of entire project report	20%
4/6	Op-ed article or legislative testimony – Extra Credit	5%
4/13	Final project paper	40%
4/13	Final project presentation	15%

GRADING CRITERIA:

- A = Distinguished Work – writes at a graduate level,* work is well organized (logically, good conceptual flow), consistently and effectively applies concepts, does original and compelling analysis, integrates literature and concepts in course work, initiates and effectively responds to questions.
- B = Average Work – substantial work, including analysis, integration, and application of learned concepts in both written and oral activities (writing is more a review or summary of materials than a critical analysis); regular attendance and participation in class.
- C = Below Average Work – satisfies minimum requirements: limited integration, application or analysis.
- D = Unsatisfactory Work – satisfies some of the minimum requirements.
- E = Failure – does not meet minimum requirements.

* Graduate level writing: virtually error-free with proper punctuation, spelling, grammar, sentence structure, logical organization, proper documentation, and appropriate supporting evidence.

Grading scale:

A	93-100%	B-	80-82.9%	D+	67-69.9%
A-	90-92.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D	63-66.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C	73-76.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B	83-86.9%	C-	70-72.9%	E	< 60%

ADA STATEMENT:

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 Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY:

Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that may conflict with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is

one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience. For more information, please consult the University of Utah's Accommodations Policy.

FACULTY AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

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