

PUBPL 6950: APPLIED POLICY PROJECT

Spring 2008

INSTRUCTOR: Susan A. McDaniel, Ph.D., FRSC

Senior Scholar, Institute of Public &
International Affairs
& Professor, Family & Consumer Studies
& Adjunct Professor, Sociology
& Affiliate, Center on Aging

CLASS TIME: Tuesdays: 6:00-9:00pm,**LOCATION:** OSH 138**CONTACT INFO:** Phone: 581-5259 (with voice mail)Email: susan.mcdaniel@ipia.utah.edu**OFFICE HOURS:** 330 OSH, Tues 4:30- 5:30 p.m. or by
appointment**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is envisioned as consisting of a faculty-supervised project applying the Masters of Public Policy curriculum to the analysis of real-world policy issues and partnering with a policy-oriented agency. Students meet weekly to learn and practice skills in policy research and policy development, to discuss their projects, challenges they encounter, and to participate as a team in policy analyses. A number of guest speakers/participants will visit the class to share their expertise and experience with the group, and to enable opportunities for networking.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To develop the skills to do real-world professional policy research & to share that research, ie make it publishable/public
- To develop the skills to consume policy research and make it 'actionable'
- To learn how to bring research evidence to real world policy challenges & how to assess policy-relevant evidence
- To develop skills to work effectively in shifting policy organizations
- To learn to apply policy research in shifting policy contexts – political, economic, social, global

How these objectives will be reached:

- Course will be structured around **learning skills by doing**
- Assignments, in addition, to the individual applied policy projects, will enable the acquisition of skills and the **application of skills acquired to new situations/environmentss**
- Exposure to guests in class who will introduce students to their skills and experiences;

also good for networking

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES (HOUSE-KEEPING REQUIREMENTS):

1. A missed assignment means no credit for that assignment. Make-up assignments will only be allowed if the student can demonstrate that s/he could not meet the deadline because of reasons beyond her/his control (e.g., illness). Arrangements for make-up assignments must be made with the instructor **before** the regularly scheduled due date of the assignment.
2. All written papers are expected to be turned in in class on the due date. Late papers could be penalized.
3. An incomplete in the course is warranted only in circumstances beyond your control (e.g., a major illness) **and** if the majority of the course work has been completed.
4. This course may be dropped by January 16 without the instructor’s permission and without paying tuition or receiving a “W” on your transcript. Between January 16 and February 19, students may withdraw from this class without instructor permission, however, tuition and fees will be assessed and a “W” will appear on your transcript. **After February 19, written permission from the instructor is needed to withdraw from this course.**
5. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered.
6. It is the student’s obligation, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with the student’s sincerely-held core beliefs, to consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impractical may request a context accommodation from the instructor. This request must be made to the instructor in writing, and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the Program Director. The student’s request must specify the burden the requirement would place on the student’s beliefs. The instructor will respond to the request in writing within two working days of receiving it. Please see: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/accommodations-policy.pdf> for further details.
7. Students’ papers will be kept for two months after the end of the semester in the instructor’s office. After that time, they will be destroyed. If you wish to pick up your papers, please do so before June 23, 2008.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are sprinkled throughout the term, with lots of opportunities to learn by doing. Specifically, marks will be based on the following:

NOTE: FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, QUALITY OF WRITING COUNTS. IDEAS ARE INSUFFICIENT IF THEY ARE NOT COMMUNICATED IN A WAY THAT PEOPLE CAN UNDERSTAND! GOOD, CLEAR WRITING TAKES PRACTICE AND PRACTICE IS OFFERED IN THIS COURSE.

Jan 15 & 22: Presentation of policy proposals	10%
Constructive written comments on others’ proposals and argument to policy – quality of writing counts!	5%

Jan 29: Revised proposals due	5%
Feb 5: Practical reasoning paper #1 due	5%
Feb 12: Practical reasoning paper #2 due	5%
Feb 26 : Short “illuminating policy” oral presentations	5%
March 4: Written preparation for interview situation	5%
March 11: Policy maker meeting paper	5%
March 25: Policy research publishing: key questions paper	5%
April 1: Changing policy organizational context interview and integrative paper	10%
April 8: Shifting policy context paper	10%
April 15 & 22: Presentation of Policy Project to group -- mark is based on both quality of written and oral presentation	20%
Throughout semester: Participation in seminar by offering quality insights, constructive comments that demonstrate professionalism as a policy analyst	10%
TOTAL GRADE:	100%

READINGS:

CONSISTENT WITH THE FACT THAT THIS IS THE LAST COURSE IN THE PROFESSIONAL GRADUATE MPP PROGRAM, THERE ARE NO REQUIRED ‘A PRIORI’ READINGS. RATHER, READINGS WILL BE SUGGESTED BY GUEST VISITORS TO THE COURSE, AND BY EACH OF YOU. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HAPPENS IN A POLICY WORK ENVIRONMENT WHERE TEAM MEMBERS SHARE THEIR WORK WITH EACH OTHER, LOOK FOR NEW INSIGHTS WHEREVER THEY MIGHT BE FOUND AND THEN RECOMMEND THEM TO COLLEAGUES, AND DEAL REGULARLY WITH NEW KNOWLEDGE AS IT DEVELOPS.

COURSE OUTLINE: EACH 3 HOUR CLASS WILL HAVE A BREAK, ABOUT MIDWAY THROUGH.

***NOTE: OUTLINE MAY NEED ADJUSTMENT, DEPENDING ON WHEN VISITORS TO CLASS CAN COME. ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES WILL NOT CHANGE.**

Jan 8 Overview of Course

Introductions // **Expectations**
Sharing of backgrounds, experience and hopes

Jan 15 Presentations of Policy Project Proposals

Each student will share with all of us, in advance of class by e-mail (BY THURS, 10 JAN) their policy project proposals in whatever form they are in by January 10th
ASSIGNMENT in two parts due January 15: 1) a one-page constructively helpful commentary on each of the proposals to be presented on January 15th; and 2) another half page that conveys to policy-makers EXACTLY why and how this research is worth policy attention or funding. This totals 1.5 pages for EACH proposal to be presented.

Jan 22 Presentations of Policy Project Proposals

Each student will share with all of us, in advance of class (BY THURS, 17 JAN) their policy project proposals in whatever form they are in by January 10th
ASSIGNMENT in two parts due January 22: 1) a one-page constructively helpful commentary on each of the proposals to be presented on January 22th; and 2) another half page that conveys to policy-makers EXACTLY why and how this research is worth policy attention or funding. This totals 1.5 pages for EACH proposal to be presented.

Jan 29 Discussion of what was learned and how the new learning was applied & What principles related to policy research might be drawn from the exercise and exchange

ASSIGNMENT: Revised proposals due.

Feb 5 Practical Reasoning: Making research 'actionable'

ASSIGNMENT (Modeled on new public policy and law school exercises designed to make knowledge 'talk' in practical terms): Choose a journal article or newspaper/magazine report on new research – NOT in your area of interest please. Write a 2 page paper on how to make this research work in public policy. Be very specific. **Paper is due in class today, and should be shared with us all.** No collaboration please.

Feb 12 Practical Reasoning continued

Bring to class, for discussion, two examples of good use of evidence in relation to policy – can be from Letters to Editor, editorials, news articles, etc.
ASSIGNMENT: In a two page paper due in class today, choose two examples of good use of evidence for policy and two examples of bad use of evidence for policy; compare and contrast them, concluding with a list of what constitutes good evidence for policy, based on your analysis.

Feb 19 **No class. Instructor will be out of the country on policy-relevant work.**

Keep working!

Feb 26 **Illuminating Policy with Evidence**

Bring to class to share with colleagues a journal article that exemplifies well the clear illumination of policy with evidence.

ASSIGNMENT: Prepare a short oral presentation (not more than 5-10 minutes) for us presuming that we are busy policy-makers with limited time and zero familiarity with the area of research you are talking about. Be clever in informing us how this study matters to policy. Energize us about the issues involved.

March 4 **Interviewing as applicant and as employer**

As professional policy analysts, you will at some point be called upon to interview job applicants, or you could be one yourself.

ASSIGNMENT: Come to class prepared to conduct an interview with a potential job applicant, and to be interviewed as job applicant. In order to prepare, you must research in advance of class and the interviewing situation, what kind of job in the policy field you are seeking an applicant, develop criteria for that position, and appropriate questions to ask. All of this should be in writing in advance of the class.

As well, if you are the job applicant, you should come with a resumé/curriculum vitae, prepared for your interview for a policy analyst job.

Marks will be based on written preparations each student makes for the interview situation. No collaboration on this exercise please.

March 11 **Meeting with Policy-makers**

ASSIGNMENT: Exercise similar to above. Come to class prepared to present your research to a policy maker in a 10 minute meeting when her/his mind is preoccupied with what he/she sees as a bigger issue than your policy research. Prepare well with **a half-page summary of key points emerging from your ongoing policy project**. Your mark will be based both on the oral exchange in the simulated meeting and on the written summary you provide.

March 18 **Spring Break – No Class**

March 25 **Making Policy Research Public – Publishing**

ASSIGNMENT: Come to class with a one-pager on what you see as the key questions or barriers in publishing policy-relevant research or in getting that research out to the public. Be insightful yet honest.

April 1 **Changing Organizational Contexts for Policy Analysis**

ASSIGNMENT: Interview someone working in a policy context about the changes they have experienced in their organization over the past decade. Instead of summarizing what they say, integrate their experiences with what you anticipate you will experience as a policy analyst over the coming decade. What insights can you draw about what you will

face and how you will negotiate the changes. Paper should be no more than 5 pages.

April 8 Shifting Policy Contexts

What are the shifting contexts in which policy is made in the early 21st century? Are they ideological, political, global, economic, etc?

ASSIGNMENT: Write a well-crafted paper, from a policy analytical standpoint, well documented in the literature, about what these challenges are and how you as a professional policy analyst will handle them. Paper should be no more than 7 pages.

April 15 Presentation of final policy projects

Assignment: Written project due to all class members in advance of class on April 15. Project supervisors are invited to attend these last two classes – Please invite them long in advance.

Marks will be based BOTH on written and oral presentations – 15%

April 22 Presentation of final policy projects

See above

End of course celebration – to be discussed

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, which appears at: www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/accommodations-policy.pdf

FACULTY 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. A copy of these responsibilities can be found at: www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-12-4.html