

Fall 2021
PPPM 637 (1 credit, CRN 15268)
MPA 48-Hour Policy Analysis Project
Syllabus

Professor Laura Leete
Cell phone: 503-362-8795
Email: leete@uoregon.edu

Course Schedule/Key Information

- **Program launch – 12:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 22nd, Hendricks Hall** (outside). Lunch with incoming 1st year students available at 12 Noon. Groups will be assigned their paper topics.
- **Presentations – 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m., Friday, September 24th, 176 Lokey** (Please bring your presentation on a USB drive for use on a Windows laptop or bring it on a laptop ready to plug into an HDMI connector for presentation.). Presentations will begin at 12:30. Please arrive early.
- **Papers due by email by 9 a.m. Monday, September 27th.** Please email your paper in .docx or .pdf format along with a copy of your presentation slides to leete@uoregon.edu. Only one individual in each group needs to submit the paper and presentation.

Adjustments Due to Covid-19

- 48-Hour team composition is normally assigned at the launch on Wednesday. As discussed below, all teams should adopt levels of social distancing that are appropriate for all team members. **To give each team time to discuss and develop a work plan prior to the Wednesday launch, teams are being assigned in advance by email by Monday, September 20th.**
- Papers for the 48-Hour project are normally due on Friday at the presentations. Because of the need to socially distance while working together during Covid, **the paper deadline is extended until the morning of Monday, September 27th.** This is not meant to increase your work burden, but to compensate for the increased difficulty of working together during Covid. It is not expected that team members continue to work all weekend on their project, only that you have a little bit of leeway to finalize your product over the weekend if you wish to.

Course Description

The 48-Hour Project is a 1-credit course that requires second-year MPA students to work in teams to produce a policy memo on an assigned topic. This work is to

be completed in a 48-hour time frame, simulating the kinds of deadlines and schedules that often characterize professional work in the public sector. Students will attend a 'program launch' on the first day of the project at which work teams and projects will be assigned; 48 hours later, student groups will present their findings. The project takes place during the week prior to the beginning of classes for Fall term.

Enrollment

Second-year MPA students should enroll for 1-credit of PPPM 637 in the Fall term for the 48-Hour Project. Exceptions will only be allowed in the case of lack of pre-requisites, a documented emergency or unavoidable conflict due to professional or family obligations. If an exception is granted, the requirement can be fulfilled by completing an individual policy analysis paper on an assigned topic during Fall term or by completing the group 48-Hour Project the next year.

Course Pre-Requisites

All students are required to have completed the full 1st year MPA curriculum prior to participating in the 48-Hour Project. This includes the following courses: Public Sector Theory, Public Sector Economics, Quantitative Methods, Research Methods, Public Policy Analysis, Public Management, and Public and Nonprofit Financial Management.

48-Hour Project and the MPA Curriculum

This is a graded course; a passing grade in this course is required for completion of the MPA degree. Any student who does not receive a passing grade on the 48-Hour Project will be required to complete the course by writing an individual policy analysis paper on an assigned topic during Fall term.

Assignment

The 48-Hour Project is completed in groups. Each group is assigned a specific topic. Topics will be assigned at the project launch. The required products are as follows.

- **Policy Memo**

Your team is required to respond to your assigned topic with a double-spaced 5-7 page (exclusive of tables, figures, technical appendices, or bibliography) policy memo. A policy memo is a short analytic paper that summarizes essential information in a manner that allows the reader to weigh alternative courses of action on a specific question. More guidelines for this document are provided below.

- **Presentation**

Your team will also be asked to make a 15-20 minute PowerPoint presentation at the Friday program wrap-up that outlines your findings on your assigned topic.

Course Grades

Individual grades will be based on the following components:

- **The policy memo and presentation.** The policy memo and the presentation will be graded for the whole group based on the grading rubric, which can be found on the class Canvas site.
- **Responses on the peer- and self-evaluation form.** Each group member will fill out a peer- and self-evaluation form. These forms may factor into an individual's grade if there is a general pattern across forms indicating that an individual's contribution to their group was either exemplary or subpar. The peer- and self-evaluation form will take the form of an online survey on Canvas that becomes available after the presentations on Friday. You must complete the form **by 5 p.m. Tuesday, September 28th.**

Project Components

Your policy memo should address your assigned topic and contain the components listed below. A grading rubric corresponding to these components will be provided. In addition, you should focus on answering any questions posed specifically in your topic assignment.

1. *Problem Definition, Topic Summary* -- Describe the problem that is being addressed and its significance, explain the root causes of the problem (e.g. market failure, the presence of externalities, inequality), and provide the reader with enough relevant background/history on the topic to understand the basic context for your analysis.
2. *Policy Discussion* -- Describe the rationale for policy intervention in this case and describe key features of existing policy(ies) and/or any proposed policy(ies) that might be expected to improve the current situation.
3. *Expected Outcomes* – Describe outcomes that can be attributed to any existing policies as well as outcomes expected under any proposed policies. This should include a discussion of any unintended consequences, as well as distributional consequences.
4. *Evaluation Criteria* – Explain what evaluative criteria are particularly relevant to making a policy recommendation in this area. At a minimum, you should consider economic efficiency, efficacy and equity, unless there is a clear reason to disregard one of these. You may consider other criteria if they are particularly salient to your topic.
5. *Policy Recommendations* – Based on the above analysis, provide a policy recommendation, or explain why a recommendation is not feasible or warranted at this time. Also make note of any important implementation constraints and/or political feasibility issues that would likely be an issue if one of your recommended policy were to be implemented.
6. *Technical Appendix* (optional) – If necessary, include a description of your analytical methods in sufficient detail to permit replication of your analysis.

Policy Memo Guidelines

- Your policy memo should be 5-7 pages double-spaced (exclusive of any tables, figures and bibliography), 12 point font, 1-inch margins.
- Include names of all team members on the front page.
- Include page numbers and appropriate section headings.
- Use APA (or similar) citation format to identify sources of ideas and material, and include all properly formatted references in a bibliography at the end of the paper.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be treated accordingly. The words on the page and the analysis presented should be of your team's own construction. However, this constraint should not discourage you from drawing on the information and ideas presented by other authors; it is essential to do so while citing them appropriately.
- The credibility of your work hinges in large part on the credibility of the sources that you cite. Your contribution is largely in how you interpret the work of others and how you draw connections between previously unconnected analyses or pieces of information. The most credible sources include (in order of preference): refereed journal articles, published books, published government reports or government data sources, fact-checked media sources, 'white papers' or briefing reports from well-known research institutions based either at universities or at independent 'think tanks'.
- There is no set minimum or maximum number of sources you should draw on; however, you should do the best job you can within the time allotted, using the best available resources. **Please make sure to consider the standards for research publications that were discussed in your 1st MPA coursework.**
- The original analysis of available data is encouraged, although we recognize that this is may not be feasible given the time constraints in place.
- **Assume that the audience for your written memo is made up of professionals with comparable backgrounds to yourselves.** Thus, assume a level of professional sophistication and the some familiarity with concepts in policy analysis, but do not assume that your reader is an expert on your particular topic.
- **Your policy memo will be held to professional standards. Make sure to check for spelling, grammar, and typos.** Your writing should be clear and concise.

Presentation Guidelines

- PowerPoint presentations should last 15-20 minutes.

- The PowerPoint presentation must be made by a minimum of three team members. As a team, you should choose your presenters to most clearly and effectively present your material.
- Ten minutes will be allotted for questions from the audience following your presentation. Team members who were not part of the primary presentation should take the lead in answering questions following the presentation (presenters can respond to questions as well, but should generally defer the initial response to a non-presenter).
- As noted above, your written memo should be directed at a professional audience; your PowerPoint presentation, however, should be accessible to the general public.
- Groups will present in numerical order.
- Please treat your presentation as a professional event and dress accordingly.
- All material covered in your presentation (including tables and figures) should be included in your written report.
- It is recommended that your group practice the presentation beforehand.

Teamwork Guidelines

Each individual on the team brings with them different talents and skills, and these must be combined effectively and efficiently in order to produce the highest quality product possible. Each team member is expected to participate fully and equally in producing the required outputs, although each may do so in different ways. Thus, it is the team's responsibility to allocate tasks according to each individual's strengths and to use each individual's effort effectively.

- You should begin your project by having a candid discussion regarding which team members are best suited to be team leaders, researchers, synthesizers of information, writers, editors, presentation outliners, preparers of PowerPoint and public speakers.
- Make a general plan for completing your tasks and assign specific tasks to individuals.
- Make an approximate schedule for completing different portions of your assignment over the course of the allotted time period.
- Be flexible. If a plan does not seem to be working, regroup and try another approach.

Group members are expected to conduct themselves and interact with one another according to professional standards. This entails, among other things, treating one another with respect, respecting differences of background, opinion and style, recognizing that each individual approaches problem-solving with different assumptions and biases, and interacting with one another in ways that are free of any form of harassment or discrimination.

Teamwork During Covid

The university is returning to in-person instruction this term and following careful measures to prevent the spread of Covid. It is expected that your team will work together as efficiently as possible, while observing social distancing and Covid prevention measures that meet the needs of all team members. **Each team member may choose to participate remotely vs. in-person according to their personal risk level.** Any in-person meetings should meet university standards for covid safety (e.g. wear masks, meet in well-ventilated areas large enough to allow for social distancing, avoid personal contact and use hand sanitizer). **If any team member feels that their team is not accommodating their need for social distancing or remote work, please contact me immediately.** The deadline for turning in the paper for this project has been extended to help accommodate any slowdown that may occur due to remote work.

Workload

As with professionals on the job, you are not expected to go without food or sleep for 48 hours, but you are expected to use your waking hours effectively. Keep in mind any resource constraints that you face; during the time period of the 48-Hour Project most campus resources will be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. only.

Course Website

The course website is located on the University of Oregon's Canvas system (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu>). The class syllabus and grading rubrics will be posted on the Canvas site.

Assistance

Each group may contact me with clarifying questions on Wednesday afternoon, to help clarify the scope or content of your topic prompt. You may reach me by email or text.

After Wednesday afternoon, it is expected that groups will work on their own. **Do contact me, however, if any member of your group faces a personal emergency or there are serious problems in your groups ability to work together for whatever reason.**

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is prohibited and includes, but is not limited to, tampering with grades, resubmitting assignments for more than one class, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and furnishing false information. Please see the Dean of Student's web site for the complete definition of academic misconduct. You are responsible for ensuring that your actions do not constitute academic misconduct. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is your obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. By way of example, students should

not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor.

Violations of Course Policies

Students who fail to adhere to the guidelines described in this document may receive an F for the course, and may be subject to additional penalties from the Department or the University.