

**Fall 2019**  
**PPPM 637 (1 credit, CRN 15197)**  
**MPA 48-Hour Policy Analysis Project**  
**Syllabus**

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**Course Schedule:**

- **Program launch – 12 Noon, Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, Hendricks Hall** (Lawn or Hearth, depending on weather).
- **Presentations – 12 Noon, Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, Gerlinger Lounge.** (Please bring your presentation on a USB drive.)
- **Lunch will be provided on both Wednesday and Friday.**

**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 turn in their final memos and present their findings. The program takes place during the week prior to the beginning of classes for Fall term. New and continuing PPPM students, and PPPM faculty, alumni, and advisory board members are invited to attend both the program launch and the program wrap-up.

**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 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.

**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. Groups and 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. **Policy memos should be turned in in hard copy and submitted by email to Professor Leete in MS Word .docx format.** Only one individual in each group needs to submit the policy memo.

- **Presentation**

Your team will also be asked to make a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation at the Friday program wrap-up that outlines your findings on your assigned topic.

- Presentations at the **Friday program will begin at 12 Noon**. Please arrive early.
- **You should bring your PowerPoint for the presentation on a USB drive. PowerPoint presentation files should also be submitted by email to Professor Leete.** Only one individual in each group needs to submit the PowerPoint file.
- A Windows laptop and projector will be provided for making the presentation. More guidelines for the presentation are presented below.

## 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 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, October 1<sup>st</sup>**.

## **Project Components**

Your policy memo should address your assigned topic and contain the components listed below. In addition, you should focus on answering any questions posed specifically in your topic assignment.

- *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 some relevant background and history on the topic.
- *Policy Alternatives* -- Describe any major policy approaches that could be expected to address the problem.
- *Outcomes* – Describe possible expected outcomes from one or more policy alternatives. This should include a discussion of any possible unintended consequences. In addition, you may also wish to consider potential gains (or losses) to possible winners (or losers) and whether either policy allows for compensation for any losers.
- *Evaluation Criteria* – Explain what criteria are primary in making a policy recommendation (e.g. efficiency, equity, other social values, well-being of a target group?).
- *Policy Recommendations* – based on the above analysis, explain which policy alternative you would recommend (or if no acceptable policy is feasible, explain why). You may wish to make note of any important implementation constraints and/or political feasibility issues that would likely be an issue if recommended policies were implemented.
- *Technical Appendix* – 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.
- The original analysis of available data is encouraged, although we recognize that this 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 from 10 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.
- Five to 10 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 in order to avoid common presentation mistakes such as focusing on the screen rather than the audience.

## **Team Work 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.

## **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 other materials will be posted on the Canvas site.

## **Email**

Please email me if you have questions about course logistics during the project, but I cannot answer questions related to presentation topics.

## **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.