Tufts University Department of Urban & Environmental Policy and Planning

UEP 255 Field Projects: Planning & Practice

Spring 2016

First class: Wednesday, January 27, 9 am to noon in Sophia Gordon Hall

Time: Wednesdays 9 am-noon (mandatory)
Mondays 9-11am (optional workshops and group meeting time)

Other key dates:
Final Presentations: Tuesday May 3, 5-9:30 pm and Wednesday May 4, 1-5 pm
Final Debrief Session: Thursday May 5, 9-11am

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Course Overview
Field Projects: Planning and Practice (UEP 255) strives to integrate theory and practice by providing students the opportunity to work on real-world challenges in their areas of interest, while offering community and nonprofit organizations, cities and towns, private firms and public agencies research, analysis, and advice that enhances insight into priority issues and advances strategic objectives. The Field Projects course combines research, practical planning and problem-solving, accompanied by the development – through discussion, small group meetings, and continuous interplay among students, TAs, and instructors – of skills integrally connected to the projects themselves. With its emphasis on experiential learning, this workshop-style course provides hands-on experience applying theories of policy and planning, using an array of problem-solving techniques.

Each student is expected to devote ~12 hours a week (up to 600 hours per team) to the project, including weekly Wednesday 9-noon sessions at Tufts in which teams meet with instructors and receive training and project support. Students are expected to develop and reinforce professional work practices, such as
building successful teams, building relationships with project hosts and other stakeholders, and communicating effectively. Students learn deeply and broadly, as they struggle to comprehend complex, real-world problems and to contribute valuable services to organizations working to address these challenges. Each team negotiates a detailed work plan with their project partner, interacts directly with the partner and other stakeholders, produces a thorough analysis of their findings, and completes the semester with a polished presentation to the class, partners and interested members of the community. Because Field Projects teams conduct university-based research, UEP expects that project reports and outputs will be fully available to the Tufts community and to the wider public.

Course Objectives

Field Projects is designed to address five educational and professional objectives:

1. Acquaint students with planning and policy processes and practices.
2. Provide students with opportunities to develop professional practice competencies and develop professional networks.
3. Support students to develop the skills required to work effectively with a team of peers.
4. Contribute useful services to community groups, non-profit organizations, cities and towns, private firms and public agencies.
5. Connect field-based learning to planning and policy theory in a manner that broadens and deepens the understanding of both.

Structure of Course

Field Projects is not the typical classroom-based course, as learning is centered in the project. Although each project is different, all go through similar phases of development. For the first month, the focus will be learning about your partner’s needs and issues, negotiating an Initial Scope of Work, and developing a detailed Project Work Plan. In this opening phase, you will also obtain necessary Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals for human subjects research. In the second phase, you will be focused on executing the work plan, including data collection (interviews, surveys, etc.) and analysis. At the end of this second phase, you will submit a 75% draft of your deliverables for review and comment by your instructor/TA and in some cases by your partner. In the final few weeks, the emphasis shifts to producing your final deliverables and presentation.

The Field Project instructors and TAs serve as mentors and coaches to the student teams. Class and lab sessions are used for teams to work on their projects, develop necessary skills and team capacities, meet with instructors and TAs, and reflect on their progress and development. In addition to the Monday morning lab sessions and Wednesday morning class times, students are also expected to work individually and with other team members as necessary to accomplish the project work scope, including interacting with project partners and other stakeholders. (Please refer to the course schedule below for details.) The typical Wednesday class (mandatory for all) will involve some or all of the following:

- Meeting with all the teams guided by your instructor/TA to share and reflect on your project experience.
- Time for your team to plan for and work on your project.
- Team meeting with your instructor/TA to get guidance and feedback.
- Critical skills workshops, such as research design, interview and survey methods, project management.
The Monday morning lab sessions (optional, but highly encouraged) will be used for two primary purposes:

- Optional skills workshops, such as public speaking, report design, SketchUp modeling, and others as determined by the needs of the teams.
- Time for teams to schedule your own meetings, site visits, interviews, meetings with your partner, and work sessions.

**Schedule of Assignments**

Instructions for all assignments will be posted on Trunk and emailed to students.

- Feb 2 (Class 2) IRB tutorial (CITI) completion certificate submitted
- Feb 10 (Class 3) Initial Scope of Work agreed to by team and partner
- Feb 17 (Class 4) Team Self Assessment due
- Feb 23, 8pm Project Work Plan due
- Mar 16 (Class 8) Mid-semester presentations
- Apr 8, 5pm 75% Draft of Deliverable(s) due
- Apr 29, 4pm Final Draft of Deliverable(s) due
- May 3, 5-9:30pm Final Presentations 1 (5 groups)
- May 4, 1-5pm Final Presentations 2 (4 groups)
- May 6, by midnight Final Assessment/Reflection Memo due
- May 13, 4pm Final Deliverable(s) due

**Schedule of Classes**

**Week 1**

Wed, Jan 27 *Plenary meeting* (in Sophia Gordon Hall)
- Introduction to the instructors, TAs, and course
- Team-building exercise
- Team development training

**Week 2**

Mon, Feb 1 lab [workshops to be scheduled]
Wed, Feb 3 *Team Meetings*
- IRB CITI tutorial completed

**Week 3**

Mon, Feb 8 lab [workshops to be scheduled]
Wed, Feb 10 *Team Meetings*
- Initial Scope of Work agreed to by your team and your partner.
Week 4
[Mon, Feb 15 Presidents’ Day - No lab]
Wed, Feb 17  

Team Meetings

❖ Team Self Assessment due

Thurs, Feb 18 lab [Mon schedule]

Week 5
Mon, Feb 22 lab
Tues, Feb 23, 8pm  

❖ Project Work Plan due

Wed, Feb 24  Team Meetings

Week 6
Mon, Feb 29 lab
Wed, March 2  Team Meetings

Week 7
Mon, Mar 7 lab
Wed, Mar 9  Team Meetings

Week 8
Mon, Mar 14 lab
Wed, Mar 16  Mid-semester Presentations (in Sophia Gordon Hall)

Spring Break: No Class March 21 and 23

Week 9
Mon, Mar 28 lab
Wed, Mar 30  Plenary meeting (in Sophia Gordon Hall) – 9 to 10:30 am, followed by Team Meetings

➢ Planning ethics and cultural competency. Please read the AICP code of ethics (on Trunk and at: www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm.)

Week 10
Mon, Apr 4 lab
Wed, Apr 6  Team Meetings
Fri, Apr 8 5pm  ❖ 75% Draft of Deliverable(s) due

Week 11
Mon, Apr 11 lab
Wed, Apr 13  Team Meetings

Week 12
[Mon, Apr 18 Patriots’ Day - No lab]
Wed, Apr 20  Team Meetings

Week 13
[Mon, Apr 25 - No lab]
Fri, Apr 29 by 4pm  ❖ Final Draft of Deliverable(s) due

Week 14
Tue, May 3, 5-9:30pm  Team Presentations 1 (5 groups, room t.b.d.)
Wed, May 4, 1-5pm  Team Presentations 2 (4 groups, room t.b.d.)
Thur, May 5, 9–11am  Final Debrief session (in Sophia Gordon Hall)
Fri, May 6 midnight  ❖ Assessment/Reflections Memo due

❖ Fri, May 13 Final Deliverable(s) due

**Meeting Rooms**

The plenary sessions will take place in Sophia Gordon Hall. For the team meetings and workshops on Monday and Wednesdays, we have reserved a number of rooms at Brown House, White House, and 574 Boston Ave.

- Teams working with Penn and Danielle: Brown House
  - Brown House classroom
  - Student Lounge
  - Penn’s office (2nd floor)
  - Small conference room
- Teams working with Christine and Rachel: White House
  - White House classroom
  - Student Lounge
  - Christine’s office (2nd floor)
- Teams working with Fran and Kate:
  - Rm 111C in 574 Boston Ave.
  - Fran’s research office in 574
  - Huddle and conference rooms, as needed

If your team wishes to meet elsewhere, you’ll need approval of your instructor/TA. Unless directly related to a project-related task, *no Wednesday morning meetings should be held off campus.*

**Student Responsibilities**

Working with a Field Project partner demands that each student exercise significant sensitivity, responsibility and commitment. Failure to perform thoughtfully and professionally not only will undermine the efforts of other team members, but also is likely to jeopardize the partner’s interests and UEP’s reputation. Thus, it is important to be forthright and clear in your communications to help prevent misunderstandings. In situations where misunderstandings or tensions arise, it is important to address them directly, and with sensitivity. Ultimately, each student must accept responsibility for the tasks he or she agrees to complete, and for the respect and competence with which these tasks are undertaken.

**Team Expenses**

UEP will reimburse each team up to $100 for project-related expenses, such as report printing, materials for community meetings, supplies related to surveys and focus groups, and travel beyond metropolitan Boston. If you have any questions about whether an expense is reimbursable, please ask your instructor. To obtain reimbursement, you should retain original receipts, or for public transit and vehicle mileage, you need only provide an accurate accounting (names of travelers, mode of travel, date, purpose, number of miles). To receive reimbursement from UEP, each team must maintain accurate and complete records of all of its expenses and submit them by June 1, 2016 on a single reimbursement form (available on
Trunk) to Department Administrator Maria Nicolau. Please keep records whether or not you think you’ll be seeking reimbursement.

**Assessment**

Your final course grade will be based on assessments of the following elements:

- Effectiveness of team process and partner relations (25%).
- Final deliverables (50%).
- Final presentation (25%).

Usually, each member of a team receives the same grade, even though it is understood that students often fulfill very different roles on a team. Occasionally, however, based on instructor observations, discussions with the team, and the final assessment/reflection memos, an individual’s contribution to the team is considered sufficiently different to warrant a higher or lower grade than that conferred on the rest of the team.

**Students with Disabilities**

Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty, recognizing the important contribution that each individual makes to our unique community. Students with disabilities are assured that the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office will work with each student individually to create access to all aspects of student life. Tufts is committed to providing equal access and support to all qualified students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in the Tufts experience. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the Student Accessibility Services office at Accessibility@tufts.edu or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment with an SAS representative to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect of this provision.

**Academic Integrity**

All Tufts students must strictly adhere to policies regarding academic integrity. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in Tufts’ Academic Integrity Handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask one of the instructors for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. If we suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, we must report the situation to the Dean.