Date of this version: January 5, 2009

The up-to-date edition of this syllabus and other important course materials are posted on the class Blackboard site. You should be familiar with this site: http://blackboard.tufts.edu.

Class meets in: Sophia Gordon East, meeting room

Time: Tuesday mornings, generally from 9-11 a.m. or 9 a.m.-noon, depending on the topic(s). In addition, individual team meetings will be scheduled at other times (see below for more information). Finally, final presentations during the last class meeting will take place in the evening, from 5-9 p.m.

First meeting: Tuesday, January 20, 9 – 11:15 a.m.
Sophia Gordon East, meeting room

Faculty

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Course Overview

Introduction
A distinguishing feature of a UEP education is its emphasis on balancing classroom-based learning with practical work experience in a focused area of urban and environmental policy and planning.

Field Projects: Planning and Practice (UEP-255) endeavors to integrate theory and practice by providing students with an opportunity to work on real-world challenges in their areas of interest, while offering to community organizations and agencies access to expert advice and analysis of priority issues and tasks. The Field Projects course combines research, practical planning and problem-solving in a community setting, accompanied by the development – through reading, discussion, role playing, class exercises and guest presentations – of skills centrally related to the field projects themselves.

With its emphasis on service learning, Field Projects provides an excellent opportunity to test existing social theories and identify new ones, while building experience in an array of problem-solving techniques. Its community focus means that policy advice can be woven into a coherent and effective implementation strategy, thus minimizing the potential for unintended social and environmental side-effects.

During the spring semester, ten student teams work with a client to advance the understanding of a specific problem or challenge. Teams work within a consultant/client model, negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their client and then completing the project consistent with the scope of the work negotiated.

In the classroom, students explore topics directly related to their projects. These include planning theory and practice, ethics, community research, teamwork, conflict resolution, organizational behavior of non-profit organizations and agencies, public speaking skills and the visual display of qualitative and quantitative information. Class meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss problems in the field. Five so-called “Think Tank” sessions have been set aside to facilitate this exchange. During brief presentations, one or two teams will describe current challenges they are facing that also apply to the work of other groups, with the class as a whole providing strategy advice and support. Think Tanks will occur during Classes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9; the instructors will assign teams to specific sessions.
For clients, Field Projects presents an opportunity to draw on student expertise and energy to advance the resolution of critical issues. Over the course of the semester, the average Field Projects team will devote 500-650 hours to their project. In the process, the students perform necessary background research, gather critical data, make an assessment of a proposed course of action, or address other high-priority concerns. Because this course receives academic credit, students may not be compensated, although clients may elect to defray team expenses (and in fact we ask them to make a small contribution to those expenses). In addition, given the academic setting, UEP expects that – except in rare circumstances, identified in advance – project data and results will be available to the Tufts community and to the public.

The Q&A Expectations Memorandum is a supplement to information provided in this Syllabus. An updated version of this memo is posted on the course Blackboard site, and has been emailed to clients, its primary audience. However, each student is advised to read it as well.

**Primary Objectives**

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

1. To acquaint students with community-oriented planning, policy analysis and program implementation – within a planning framework.
2. To provide students with specific work skills directly related to real-world practice, and help them to develop professional networks.
3. To offer to all students the opportunity to develop the skills required to work effectively as a part of a team of peers.
4. To contribute useful services to institutions that face challenges involving the urban and natural environment.
5. To connect community-based learning to planning and policy theory in a way that broadens and deepens understanding of both.

**Details**

**Class Sessions**

Classroom sessions generally will focus on one or two skills or techniques that are critically important to both research and policy analysis, and the Field Projects work products (most, but not all, of which are analytic reports of 40-60 pages). For midcourse and final presentations, respectively, the two classes immediately prior to spring break and the three that end the semester will take a
full three hours. Clients, Tufts students, staff and faculty, and the community at large will be invited to the final presentations. All students are expected to attend all classes, including all 10 final presentations. All other classes will run for about two hours, although time and space will be made available for team meetings, if desired.

Given the connection between Team #5 (College of the Bahamas) and the Water Systems, Science and Society (WSSS) Certificate program practicum, some non-UEP students who are enrolled in the practicum may join us for certain presentations and class discussions.

**Team Meetings**

You should plan on meeting with your team at least once a week. It will be possible to do this during a part of most class sessions, although you may choose to meet at some other time (we have our classroom for three hours, and will use it for lectures and discussions for only about two of them). We expect Field Projects teams to meet with their instruction team three to four times during the course of the semester. One of these meetings should include the client. The following is a suggested schedule for Field Project team/instruction team meetings, which includes the instructor and TA assigned to your team.

- Between Jan. 20 and Feb. 5: one meeting
- Between Feb. 6 and Feb. 24: one meeting
- Between Feb. 25 and March 25: one meeting (including your client\(^1\))
- Between March 26 and April 24: one meeting

For your weekly team meeting, you should develop an agenda and submit it to the instruction team. If that meeting will involve your instructor and TA, the agenda should be emailed to them at least 18 hours in advance. Formal meetings with your instruction team will serve as your weekly meeting for that week. These meetings will be 60-90 minutes in length. They will generally be held in the instructor’s office. The third hour of the Field Projects class, 11:00 or 11:15- to noon, generally will be available for Field Projects team/instruction team meetings. It is the responsibility of the Field Projects team to arrange the meetings with the instruction team.

\(^1\) In some cases, a phone meeting may be necessary. Given the structure of the WSSS practicum, the client may not be included in the third meeting for Team Bahamas.
Readings

There is no reading list. However, specific classes will feature short readings, some assigned and some recommended. A few of these are listed in the Syllabus; others may be added later. In general, these readings will be available on Blackboard or emailed to you. All PowerPoint presentations used in class will be posted on Blackboard.

Also, as the semester progresses, the instructors and TAs may email short articles or news reports the entire class if they address topics of interest to multiple teams. And they will send to individual teams items that relate to that group’s project.

Deliverables

Students will:

- Submit a copy of the certificate indicating that they have completed the IRB on-line self-study (CITI tutorial).
- Enter into an MOU with their client.
- Develop agendas for each weekly meeting.
- Participate in in-class Think Tanks.
- Provide a midterm in-class update (the midcourse presentation) describing their team’s progress.
- With regard to the final deliverable(s), submit these documents:
  - Concept Sketch;
  - Initial outline;
  - Interim draft of the final project; and
  - Final written report.
- Deliver a professional in-class presentation attended by clients and members of the community.

As the final deliverable, teams are expected to provide:

(i) Two bound copies of the complete final written report, including all attachments, if any; and

(ii) Two CDs, each containing (A) a complete version of the report and all attachments in .pdf format; and (B) the text of the report (minus attachments) in Word format; and (C) your presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) slides.
Final reports and CDs are due no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, May 1, delivered to the UEP office, 97 Talbot Avenue.

Specific, updated instructions for each assignment will be posted on the course’s Blackboard website as the semester proceeds. Below you will find a one-page summary – in clip and save form – of the written and oral deliverables, and their deadlines. These generally are introduced on the Syllabus by the following icon: ✤

**Faculty Supervision**

Each team will be assigned a faculty supervisor and a teaching assistant to provide project management guidance, help ensure that the team is functioning effectively, act as a technical resource, and furnish feedback on drafts of the interim and final products. At times, all members of the instruction team will assess all projects; it is also possible that the instruction teams will switch for one or two tasks. Finally, the TAs are asked and expected to assist with project assessment – although final grades are the sole responsibility of the instructors.

The two Instructor/TA teams will focus on these projects:

- **Rusty Russell/Holly Elwell:** City of Boston Environment Department, College of the Bahamas, Groundwork Somerville, Medford CAN, and TNC
- **Rachel Bratt/Chrissy Ungaro:** ACE, CPA, CHAPA, Marlborough 2010, and Success By 6

**Project Time Commitment**

Students are expected to devote time each week to some aspect of their project. On average, individual team members should plan to spend 10-12 hours a week outside of class on their project. Although each project is different, your work probably will proceed in phases. In the beginning, a major focus will be determining the exact nature of the issue you’ve been asked to address, negotiating an MOU with the client and ensuring that necessary IRB approvals, if any, have been obtained (for more on the IRB, see below). Next, efforts probably will turn to data collection and analysis, supplemented by background reading. Once that is well underway, emphasis moves to preparation of the final report and presentation. You should identify interview sources and written resources – particularly knowledgeable insiders, technical reports and useful websites – as early in the process as possible.
Responsibilities

Working with a community organization or agency requires that each student exercise significant sensitivity, responsibility and commitment. Failure to perform thoughtfully not only will undermine the efforts of other team members, but also is likely to jeopardize the client’s interests as well as the long-term interests of the UEP program. Still, no matter how diligent one tries to be, the potential for misunderstanding is always present. Willingness to be careful in one’s work and forthright in one’s communication constitutes an excellent way to avoid a serious crisis. Ultimately, however, each student must accept responsibility for the tasks he or she agrees to complete, and for the sensitivity, respect and competence with which these tasks are undertaken.

Memorandum of Understanding

An important initial task is the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with your client. The MOU outlines the scope of the work the client expects your team to perform. The scope should be as specific as possible in describing the services the team will provide, including deadlines and deliverables. The MOU is an agreement between the student team and the client. It must be signed by the client and the student team, and be submitted for final approval and signature by the instructor assigned to that team. This latter step should occur no later than the third class meeting on Feb. 3.

A form of MOU is posted on the Field Projects Blackboard site. It contains certain representations that you and your client need to review carefully. In addition, sections of the Q&A Expectations Memorandum (on Blackboard) provide important information on key topics to address in the MOU.

Other Interim Tasks

Updated instructions for all interim tasks will be posted on Blackboard in a timely fashion. Prior to that, last year’s instructions remain; in most cases, they closely track what this year’s assignment will be. (However, you should use only the 2009 instructions to complete required tasks.)

Expenses

Most teams incur some project-related expenses. UEP will reimburse each team up to $100 for these. We have also asked each client to help teams defray expenses by contributing additional funds to UEP. These can be allocated based on team need. To obtain reimbursement from both funding sources, Tufts regulations require that original receipts (not copies) be submitted. For public transit and mileage, however, you need only provide an accurate accounting (name(s) of traveler(s), type of expense, date, purpose – and, if mileage, the
number of miles). For 2009, the latter is reimbursed at 55 cents per mile. The appropriate form is posted on the Blackboard website. The UEP contact for this is Department Administrator Ann Urosevich. To receive UEP and client funds (which are treated as a single source), it is very important that each team keeps timely, accurate and complete records of all of its expenses and submits them on one reimbursement form.

**Grades**

This course is graded. Students must participate actively on a team and complete their project to the satisfaction of the client and the course instructors. It is understood that students often fulfill very different roles on a team. Indeed, a successful team will take care to divide labor among essential tasks, while appointing one individual or sub-group to supervise continuity and overall quality. It follows that you will not be expected to do the same thing as your other teammates, but rather to perform an equivalent share of the work.

Your final course grade will be derived from the following components:

- **Final Written Report:** 50%
- **Final Presentation:** 25%
- **Interim Deliverables** (meeting agendas, MOU, Think Tanks, midcourse presentation, concept sketch, outline and draft), and **Class Participation:** 25%

Each team will be assessed as a group for each deliverable, with the exception of class participation. Final grades also may be adjusted based on an individual’s role in the two oral presentations. To assist the faculty in the assessment process, at the end of the course each student must submit a page that:

- Reflects on the challenges their team faced in completing its project; and
- Evaluates their own contributions to this effort and includes a proposed numerical assessment for yourself and each of your teammates.

Only the final report and final presentation will be given letter grades by the instructors. We will provide comments and a “team grade vector” to each group at two points during the semester:

(i) After the midcourse presentation (based on that presentation, as well as on the other interim deliverables up to that point); and

(ii) After the first draft has been reviewed (based on the draft, plus all other interim deliverables up to that point).
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Tufts University Institutional Review Board, or IRB, implements federal regulations designed to ensure that any research conducted under the auspices of Tufts University protects the rights and welfare of human subjects. Because they involve research, and are published and made available to the broader community, Field Project reports are subject to IRB review.

The IRB process involves two steps.

The first step, applicable to all Field Projects students, must be finished prior to the second class session on Jan. 27.² Specifically, each team member should complete the IRB tutorial (the CITI program), the link to which is found at: www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/HumanEducation.htm. The entire tutorial will take you about 2-3 hours, although its six modules may be completed at different times. After you finish the tutorial, you will receive a certificate, which you should print out and keep. In addition, please email a copy of the certificate to the instruction team (via Chrissy).

The second step will vary, depending on the type of project. Here are the primary pathways:

Many if not most projects will involve substantive discussions and interviews with persons who have expertise pertinent to a project-related inquiry. If all proposed questions are about planning and policy matters, rather than the personal experiences of the respondents, then the projects are not subject to review by the IRB.

In certain cases, however, IRB review will be required. Generally, this is necessary when research directly involves subjects who are being interviewed about how a policy or program affects them personally. This is particularly relevant if people to be interviewed are members of a vulnerable group (e.g., minors, persons with disabilities, single women on welfare). If only policy makers, business people and other “key informants” are being interviewed, and only being asked about policy matters, then this would not meet the definition of “human subject research.”

If your project will require IRB review, project team members should discuss the situation among themselves, with their supervising instructor and with the IRB. Since full IRB review may call for the submission of a formal application

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² And in fact you should make every effort to complete this task before the spring semester begins.
(including a research plan and data collection instruments) for review at a monthly meeting of the board, it is important to plan ahead.

Less rigorous, but still requiring a level of review (typically, by IRB staff, not the full board, a process that often can be completed in a matter of days) would be a research plan that called for either of the following:

- Surveys (whether subjects are randomly selected or members of particular groups) – including a draft survey instrument; or
- Focus groups – including a draft focus group plan.

But, whether or not your work is subject to detailed IRB review, please be aware that many project-related discussions (apart from those with the course instructors, the TAs and the client, as well as conversations intended solely to obtain impersonal information (e.g., to ask a town assessor how to find data on the location and valuation of specific property)) will be deemed to involve human subjects. Hence, before you have such discussions, each member of your team will need to take the CITI tutorial, discussed above. In addition, no formal interviewing of vulnerable groups or surveying of anyone can take place without at least an initial level of IRB review.

If your project requires formal review, at any level, the course Blackboard site contains additional information on how to fill out the IRB forms. If you do file documentation with the IRB, you must provide a copy of it, as submitted, along with the IRB’s decision, to the course instructors (via Rusty).

We are hoping to develop a short screening tool (perhaps six questions) to help determine, at the outset, whether a given project must be reviewed by IRB.

Finally, a great deal of detail about the Tufts IRB (including forms) is posted at: www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/main.htm.
**Syllabus**

**Class #1: Introduction to the Course**
Tues., Jan. 20
9 – 11:15 a.m.

Readings:
- The Grove Consultants, *Team Performance: Creating and Sustaining Results* (1994) [selections] [Blackboard]

Classroom:
- Brief introductions of the instructors and TAs, and the course (all)
- Team-workings – an exercise (Chrissy)
- IRB (Yvonne Wakeford, Administrator, the Social, Behavioral and Educational Research (SBER) Institutional Review Board (IRB))
- Research methodologies – range of research approaches generally applicable to Field Projects (Rachel)

- Team meetings: if you have not done so yet, you may want to meet with your client from 11:15 a.m. to noon.

**Class #2: Structure, Structure, Structure**
Tues., Jan. 27
9 – 11 a.m.

Classroom:
- Concept Sketch (see assignment posted on Blackboard)
- Problem Definition (Rachel)
- MOUs (Rusty)

- Concept Sketch .ppt’s submitted by 5 p.m. on Mon., Jan. 26 (to Rusty)

- Please complete the IRB’s individual CITI tutorial (available on line) prior to this class, and submit your certificate by email to Chrissy
Class #3:  
**Skill Sessions I** 
Tues., Feb. 3 
9 – 11:15 a.m.

Classroom:
- Think Tank A
- Three simultaneous skill sessions will be offered, each lasting about 75 minutes. Absent special circumstances (which should be discussed in advance with your instruction team), at least one member of each team should attend each session. They are:
  - Session 1: Interviewing in the community: techniques and ethics (Rusty/Chrissy)
  - Session 2: Community meetings and focus groups (Justin Hollander/Holly)
  - Session 3: Literature review and Field Projects (Rachel/Regina Raboin, Reference Librarian, Tisch Library)

- MOUs signed by your team and your client to be submitted to your team’s faculty supervisor – that is, to Rachel or Rusty – at the start of class today.
- After coordination with your client, each team should develop at least three prioritized preferences for the date/time of your final presentation (see below for options). Communicate your preferences to your TA.

Class #4:  
**Research Design and Analysis** 
Tues., Feb. 10 
9 – 11 a.m.

Classroom:
- Think Tank B
- Problem-solving research design issues (Rachel)
- Analysis and use of data from interviews and focus groups (Laurie Goldman)
Class #5:  
Ethics and Institutional Responsibility  
Tues., Feb. 17  
9 – 11:30 a.m.

Classroom:
- Think Tank C
- Planning ethics (Rusty)
- A group activity/discussion on ethics and research responsibility in Field Projects (all)
- Panel Discussion: “Working in (and with) the Community”
  - [we plan to draw on the experiences of 3-4 of the UEP MPP students]

Class #6:  
Oral Presentation and Public Speaking  
Tues., Feb 24  
9 – 11 a.m.

Reading:
- Gelb, Michael J., Present Yourself! Captivating Your Audience with Great Presentation Skills (Carson, Calif.: Jalmar Press, 1988) [selections] [available on Blackboard]

Classroom:
- Think Tank D
- Discussion and exercise (all)
- Draft project outlines to be submitted by 8 p.m. on Mon., Feb. 23. (See Blackboard for more detailed instructions)

Class #7:  
Midcourse Presentations – Week 1  
Tues., March 3  
9 a.m. - noon

Classroom:
- Midcourse presentations by five teams
  - Each team will have 25 minutes to discuss their project and the results to date
- Discussion about course progress so far (the Instruction Team)
Class #8: Midcourse Presentations – Week 2
Tues., March 10
9 – 11:30 a.m.

- Midcourse presentations by five teams
  ✓ Each team will have 25 minutes to discuss their project and the results to date
- Response to student input on course progress so far (the Instruction Team)

→ Have a Great Spring Break! ←

Class #9: Visual Design of Reports and Presentations
Tues., March 24
9 – 11 a.m.

Readings:
- Samples of reports to be critiqued for visual design presentation [handed out or posted on Blackboard]

Classroom:
- Think Tanks E
- Lecture and discussion: Melanie St. James, Senior Interactive Media Designer, UIT Academic Technology, Tufts University
  ✓ Presentation and report design – an introduction
  ✓ Visual design examples: the good, the bad, and the …
  ✓ Technologies, new and useful
  ✓ Integrating the message, the medium and the means

Class #10: Skill Sessions II
Tues., March 31

Classroom:
- Three simultaneous skill sessions will be offered, each lasting about 75 minutes. We expect your team to be represented in either Session 1 or Session 2 (depending on what program you plan to use), and Session 3. They are:
  ✓ Session 1: In Design – a primer (TBA)
✓ Session 2: Publisher – a primer (TBA)
✓ Session 3: PowerPoint – presentation tips (TBA)

Suggested reading:

➢ Draft of the final report/project to be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 3 (instructions available on Blackboard)

⇒ No Class on April 7 (this week reserved for team meetings, with or without instructors) ⟷

Class #11:  
*Team Presentations: Round #1*  
Tues., April 14  
8:45 – 11:45 a.m.

Round #1: Sophia Gordon East, meeting room

✓ Each presentation, including *at least* 15 minutes for questions, will last approximately 45 minutes.

Class #12:  
*Team Presentations: Round #2*  
Tues., April 21  
8:45 – 11:45 a.m.

Round #2: Sophia Gordon East, meeting room

✓ Each presentation, including *at least* 15 minutes for questions, will last approximately 45 minutes.
Class #13: Team Presentations: Round #3
Tues., April 28
5 – 9 p.m.

Round #3: location TBA

6:40 – 7:10 p.m.: dinner break

☑ Each presentation, including at least 15 minutes for questions, will last approximately 45 minutes.

❖ Final reports due by Friday, May 1, at 4 p.m., delivered to the UEP office, 97 Talbot Avenue

❖ Assessment/Reflections Memo due by Monday, May 4, at midnight, emailed to both instructors and TAs (500 words maximum, including a numerical assessment (see form on Blackboard))
Field Projects 2009: Schedule of Assignments

Please consult the Syllabus for details

- Weekly starting Jan. 20: Class meetings begin at 9 a.m. and end at various times between 11 a.m. and noon (see Syllabus for details)
- Weekly starting Jan. 26: Team meeting agendas (emailed to that team’s instructor/TA)
- Jan. 20 – Feb. 5: Sit-down meeting with instruction team (to schedule)³
- Jan. 26, 5 p.m.: Concept Sketches due
- Jan. 27 (Class #2): Concept Sketches presented
- Jan. 27 (Class #2): Submission of copy of certificate indicating completion of IRB (CITI) tutorial
- Feb. 3 (Class #3): MOU signed by team and client
- Feb. 3 (Class #3): Submit date/time preferences for final presentation
- Various dates (Classes ## 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9): Think Tanks
- Feb. 6 – Feb. 24: Sit-down meeting with instruction team (to schedule)
- Feb. 23, 8 p.m.: Initial project outline due
- Feb. 25 - March 25: Sit-down meeting with instruction team and client (to schedule)
- March 4 and 11 (Classes ## 7 and 8): Midcourse in-class presentations
- March 26 – April 24: Sit-down meeting with instruction team (to schedule)
- April 3, 5 p.m.: First draft of deliverable(s) due
- April 14, 21 and 28 (Classes ##11-13): Final in-class presentations
- May 1, 4 p.m.: Final deliverables due at UEP
- May 4, by midnight: Assessment/Reflections memo due

³ Note that 3-4 of these meetings are expected over the course of the semester.