Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

UEP 289-01: Integrative Seminar (MPP II)
Spring 2019

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Wednesdays: 4:30 – 5:45pm @ 97 Talbot Ave UEP classroom
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 and by appointment

Description

MPP Integrative Seminar (MPP II) is the second half of the required graduate seminar (half-credit) for all MPP students. It continues building the foundation for understanding how public policy is made, implemented, and discussed in various contexts. The readings and course discussions are aimed at strengthening conceptual skills, basic data and spatial analysis, and integrating all these in investigating current policy issues. In MPP II, students will have opportunities both in class and through assignments to continue to integrate their learning and policy interests identified in MPP I, as well as explore new interests.

Course Objectives

This spring will cover the following

- Access and use of Census data and basic spatial analysis
- Communications and media
- Legislative process
- Courts and public policy
- Policy implementation
- Public finance
- Community organizing
- Power mapping and analysis
- Nonprofits
- Community knowledge and action research

Course Requirements and Assessment

Class Preparation and Participation (10%)

All students are expected to complete required readings before class and to be fully present to participate in class discussions. Much of the learning in this course will be through dialogue and engaging with each other. Assessment of participation will include presence/absence (5%) and contributing to in-class discussions (5%). Course readings can be accessed online.

Policy Portfolio (90%)

The major project for the semester is a portfolio of assignments presented on a website relating to a specific policy area of your choosing. Your policy topic should be the same or similar to your Fall MPP Seminar topic, though you may change topics with permission of instructor. The portfolio includes:

- Session 2 - 1/30: Create website with home page and menus. Home page should include 2-3 paragraph description of your policy topic, framing the problem and providing a brief history. Aim your writing to a broad audience of decision makers and non-experts. (5%)
- Session 4 - 2/13: Resource links with annotated bibliography. Include summaries of at least 2 policy reports/briefs. (5%)
• Session 6 - 2/27: Visualization/analysis of a relevant data set. (15%)
• Session 8 - 3/13: Stakeholder analysis and power map. (15%)
• Session 10 - 4/3: Write-up of an interview with a stakeholder or decision maker. (15%)
• Session 13 - 4/24: Video Presentation of Policy Recommendations (3-4 minutes). (10%)
• Policy Recommendations Brief, due 5/3 (25%). This brief will build on the Policy Research Memo from the Fall. The purpose is to frame your issue and persuade decision makers to take concrete actions based on your recommendations. 5 pages maximum.

**Schedule at a Glance**

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**Schedule**

**Session 1 (1/16)  Overview and Portfolio Website**

Overview of seminar objectives and topics. Discussion of portfolio assignment. Hands-on exercise to create portfolio website using Tufts blog tool (Wordpress). Students should bring a laptop of they have one.

**1/23 No Class - MLK Holiday makes Wednesday a Tufts Monday**

**Session 2 (1/30)  Communications and Media**

Explore the role of communications and mass media as critical vehicles for shaping worldviews and public opinion. How are frames and messages embedded in broader world views? How are media and communications used strategically to advance various approaches to policy and planning?

*Portfolio:* Share website link with home page that includes problem framing and history on your policy topic.

*Readings*

- Chapter 6: Facing the Ecological Crisis: A Call to Innovation. (101-110)


Session 3 (2/6) Census Data and Mapping Tools (Barbara Parmenter)

Understand the US Census basic datasets and how to access them. Explore and demonstrate the use of online data and mapping tools, including Policy Map and Social Explorer. Location: Tisch Mark Lab.

Readings
Browse Tufts GIS Center’s Census Workshop Materials: http://tinyurl.com/tufts-census

Recent news coverage on politics of Census 2020

Session 4 (2/13) Legislative Process

Understand the legislative process, with a focus on Massachusetts. Discuss the role of legislation in public policy. Draw on examples in Massachusetts, such as the 2014 minimum wage and earned sick time.

Portfolio: Post resource links with annotated bibliography. Include summaries of at least 2 policy reports/briefs.

Readings

Readings on 2014 Minimum Wage and Earned Sick Time legislation
Session 5 (2/20) Courts and Public Policy

What is the role and impact of the U.S. judiciary system on public policy? Focus on environmental justice.

Readings


Session 6 (2/27) Community Organizing

Popular education, community building, and network models of organizing and social movements. What is the role of organizing in policy?

Portfolio: Post visualization/analysis of a relevant data set on your topic.

Readings


Session 7 (3/6) Power Mapping and Analysis

How to map and analyze power among decision makers and stakeholders. Apply power map tool to specific case.

Readings


• Section II B: “Political Spectrum”
• Section III A-D and Z to BB: “Power Analysis”

Session 8 (3/13) Nonprofits and Nonprofit Industrial Complex

Role of nonprofits in public policy. Implications of nonprofit structure and funding for communities and social change.

Readings


3/20 No Class – Spring Break

Session 9 (3/27) Community Knowledge and Action Research
What is the role of local knowledge in policy practice? Introduce Participatory Action Research and some models of community-university partnerships based on this model.

Readings


Session 10 (4/3) Public Finance
Understand basics of how local and state governments are financed.

Readings


Session 11 (4/10) MPP Guest Panel
Panel of MPP alumni to speak about their work and UEP experiences.

Session 12 (4/17) Policy Implementation
How is policy implemented once passed? Explore the process and politics of making policies work on the ground with multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, nonprofits, and civic groups.

Readings:


Session 13 (4/24) Portfolio presentations & Year-end celebration

Final presentations of portfolios and celebration for completing MPP Seminar.

Students with Disabilities

Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty; recognizing the important contribution each student 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 for their provision.

Academic Integrity

Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to 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 me 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 I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, I must report the situation to the dean.

Pronouns

You can now make a note of your preferred name on SIS, although there is currently no similar process available on Trunk. If you have any specific pronoun preferences, please let us know.