

PLCY 698: Senior Capstone in Public Policy (4 credits)
Department of Public Policy, UNC-Chapel Hill
Fall 2019

MWF 12:20-1:10 pm, Greenlaw 101
F 1:25-2:15 pm, Carolina Hall 104 and 213, Alumni 203, Dey 303A, Greenlaw 316

Please note that because this course focuses on working with partner organizations outside the university, it may require meetings, travel, or other commitments outside of normally scheduled class times. You must communicate scheduling constraints to your team and your instructor as early as possible.

Instructors

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Course Description

The Public Policy Capstone Course offers students the opportunity to integrate and apply their academic knowledge and skills in a real-world policy environment. Student teams work as consultants for government agencies or non-profit organizations that seek policy research or analysis. This course provides a bridge between policy analysis as it is studied in an academic setting and policy analysis as it is practiced in the workplace. Students also develop important skills in teamwork, leadership, communication, professional etiquette, and time management.

Prerequisite: PLCY 460

Pre- or Co-Requisite: PLCY 581

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Set personal and professional goals and evaluate your progress toward those goals through active reflection
2. Exhibit professionalism in written and in-person interactions with your teammates and clients
3. Describe and put into practice behaviors that foster strong teams
4. Approach an organizational problem with logic and creativity, based on a nuanced understanding of your client's problem, stakeholders, and the larger policy context
5. Design and manage a complex project as part of a team, including designing and carrying out a realistic work plan
6. Produce high-quality research and actionable policy analysis for a client
7. Present and defend your policy analysis orally and in writing with poise and confidence

Course Materials

You are not required to purchase any texts for this course. All course materials will be available on Sakai, including required readings, recommended readings, assignment instructions, sample documents, and other supplemental materials.

Graded Course Components

Component	Individual grade	Team grade
Contribution and Professionalism	25%	
Self-Assessment and 360 Assessments	5%	
Individual documentation	5%	
Team Documentation (MOU and minutes)		5%
Client Background		5%
Work Plan		5%
Intermediate Deliverables		25%
Poster		5%
Oral Presentation	5%	
Final portfolio		10%
Final Exam	5%	
Totals	45%	55%

Contribution and Professionalism (Individual grade, 25%)

Many people are depending upon your professional behavior: Your teammates will rely on you to carry your share of the workload, and your clients are entrusting you with a project important to their organization. Your grade will be based on your performance in written and in-person interactions, with grades reflecting your peers' as well as your instructors' assessment of your performance. You will be graded 3 times during the semester: September 30, November 4, and December 13. **Missing a client**

meeting (except in case of emergency or university-excused absence) will result in a failing grade for this portion of the course. Expectations for professionalism will be discussed further during class sessions; also see the rubric on Sakai > Assignments. In general, your contribution and professionalism grade will reflect:

- Timeliness (including timely communication) and preparation for meetings
- Appropriate style and tone in oral and written communication
- Demonstrated effort in all team activities, including completing an equitable share of work
- Performance of assigned team role
- Productive participation in team discussions

Self-Assessment and 360 Assessments (Individual grade, 5%)

The following assignments will be graded for completion and effort:

- At the beginning of the semester, an individual self-assessment (Assignment #1)
- 360 assessments (self- and peer-evaluation) (Assignment #6a and 6b)

Individual Documentation (Individual grade, 5%)

The following assignment will be graded for completion:

- Assignment #2, Administrative Documents (CITI Human Subject Certification, completed Participant Agreement)

Team Documentation (Team grade, 5%)

- Your team’s Memorandum of Understanding (Assignment #3) will serve as a contract for your team’s processes this semester, including team roles, communication protocol, and conflict resolution strategies. You will revisit your team’s MOU periodically in order to evaluate and improve your teamwork.
- **You are required to keep minutes of every team meeting and post them during or immediately following the meeting.** This includes meetings during class time or outside of class time; virtual meetings, in-person meetings, or telephone calls; meetings on your own, with an instructor, with a client, or with an outside expert.

Client Background (Team grade, 5%)

This brief background paper (Assignment #4) is the first step in understanding your client and your charge for the semester.

Work Plan (Team grade, 5%)

Your work plan (Assignment #5) is a critical element in your team’s success. It is the roadmap for your work and also serves as a contract between you, your teammates, and your client. You will refer to your work plan and keep it up to date throughout the semester. **The first draft of your work plan is due to your instructor 3 business days after your first client meeting, and the final version is due for your client’s approval 5-7 business days after your first client meeting.**

Intermediate Deliverables (Team grade, 25%)

The number, format, and purpose of your intermediate deliverables will vary depending on your client’s needs. You will set your own due dates, but you are responsible for turning in your deliverables by these

due dates. In your planning, keep in mind that it's normal to produce three drafts of any deliverable, and allow time for your instructor to give you feedback and for your team to respond to that feedback. **Drafts of all intermediate deliverables are due to your instructor at least 1 week before you send them to the client. Discuss additional minimum turn-around times with your instructor.**

Poster (Team grade, 5%)

Your team will design a poster (Assignment #7) for the Experiential Education Showcase. Your poster should convey your project's goals, challenges, major findings, and recommendations in an engaging way to a broad audience. You will attend the Experiential Education Showcase to further explain your project to your peers, department members, and other on- and off-campus visitors.

Oral Presentation (Individual grade, 5%)

The oral presentation (Assignment #8) is your team's chance to present your major findings and recommendations to your client at the end of the semester. The presentation should be comprehensive but brief (10-12 minutes) and engaging. You should use audiovisual aids (slide decks and/or handouts) to help make your case.

Final Portfolio (Team grade, 10%)

The format of your final portfolio will vary depending on your client and work plan, but all final products should be the best work you and your team are capable of. For many projects, the final report will take the form of a brief summarizing the client's problem, your methods, your findings, and your analysis and recommendations. The brief might include appendices of information you have gathered. All findings must be documented and cited appropriately.

Final Exam (Individual grade, 5%)

Friday, December 13, 12-3 pm: An essay exam requiring you to reflect on and apply course concepts to your work and your team's work this semester.

Evaluation and Grading

Although we sometimes think of learning, evaluation, and grading as synonymous, these activities are quite different. To help you **learn**, your instructors will provide lots of constructive feedback on your written assignments, verbal reports, and team processes. To **evaluate** your participation and written work, we will use grading rubrics. In general, our **grading** is guided by the following principles:

Excellent	Makes creative and insightful contributions that demonstrate original thought, thorough research, a strong grasp of necessary skills and concepts; writes fluidly and concisely; consummately professional in all interactions; takes the initiative and uses feedback to improve.	A	94-100%
		A-	90-93%
Strong	Makes authoritative but conventional contributions that demonstrate adequate research; writing and thinking are reasonably clear; responds well to feedback.	B+	87-89%
		B	84-86%
		B-	80-83%
Adequate	Makes superficial contributions that demonstrate limited scope or insight of client's problem; may not well respond to feedback.	C+	77-79%
		C	74-76%
		C-	70-73%
Inadequate	Fails to participate in a meaningful way in team processes; contributions are garbled, confused, or disjointed and demonstrate limited understanding of necessary skills and concepts; does not respond to feedback.	D+	67-70%
		D	60-66%
Unacceptable	Does not come to class or fails to participate in team processes; contributions are incoherent and demonstrate lack of understanding of central concepts; does not respond to feedback.	F	<60%

Deadlines, Drafts, and Revisions

In this course, your team sets many of its own deadlines—but once those deadlines are set, you are accountable for meeting them. **Late work (including drafts) will be penalized a letter grade (10%) for each day it is late.**

Your instructor will work intensively with you and your team to help improve the quality of materials you submit to clients. Grades on deliverables will reflect the **quality of drafts as well as the quality of final versions**. The first draft will count for 25% of the grade for that assignment; the final assignment grade (the remaining 75%) will reflect the quality of subsequent drafts and your responsiveness to instructor feedback. This grading schema applies to the following assignments:

- Work Plan
- Intermediate Deliverables
- Poster
- Final Portfolio

Grade Appeals

We take the evaluation and grading of your work very seriously because we know that most of you take your courses very seriously. If you think you deserve a higher grade on an assignment, you must wait at least 24 hours before speaking to your instructor about your grade. In this time period, you should review your work and your instructor's feedback. To request a meeting to discuss your grade, you must write a brief letter (email is okay) to explain why you would like to appeal the grade. After your instructor

receives your letter, s/he will re-read your paper within a week and we will meet to discuss your concerns. Depending on your instructor's re-reading, your grade may stay the same, be raised, or be lowered. This system is designed to minimize frivolous grade appeals and to ensure that you have carefully examined and reflected on the quality of your work before deciding to initiate a grade appeal.

Digital Tools and Electronics

Sakai

We will use Sakai as the official digital record of the course. At the end of the semester, **you must post to Sakai final versions of all assignments/deliverables** and your full meeting minutes.

Electronics

At some moments during class we will ask you to put away your laptop, tablet, phone, etc.; at other times you may use such devices to take notes or for class exercises. **If we see you using an electronic device for any other purpose, your "professionalism" grade will suffer.** Please alert us if there is an emergency situation, and we will make an exception.

University Policies and Resources

Honor Code

As a UNC student, you are bound by the Honor Code, suspected violations of which are adjudicated by the student-led Honor System. It is your responsibility (as it is mine) to understand and uphold the ideals of honor and integrity. In particular, students are expected to refrain from "lying, cheating, or stealing" in the academic context. Submission of exams or written work signifies understanding and acceptance of the Honor Code's requirements. If you are unsure about which actions violate that Honor Code, please see me or consult honor.unc.edu and the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, which contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it at all costs. In written work, words drawn from others should be indicated by quotation marks and ideas drawn from others should refer to their source. If you are unsure about what needs to be cited, please talk with me or ask for assistance from the Writing Center. Plagiarism is a serious offense which can result in failure of the course and suspension from the University. To make sure that you understand what plagiarism is, please read <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>. Also see the following link for an interactive tutorial on plagiarism: <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/>.

UNC Policy addressing Discrimination and Harassment

Acts of discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and related retaliation are prohibited at UNC-Chapel Hill. If you have experienced these types of conduct, you are encouraged to report the incident and seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator (Adrienne Allison, adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators (Ew Quimbaya-Winship, eqw@unc.edu; Rebecca Gibson, rmgibson@unc.edu; Kathryn Winn kmwinn@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPs) (confidential) in Campus Health Services at (919) 966-3658, or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (confidential) (Cassidy

Johnson, cassidyjohnson@unc.edu; Holly Lovern, holly.lovern@unc.edu) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Accessibility Resources & Service

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu. Relevant policy documents as they relate to registration and accommodations determinations and the student registration form are available on the [ARS website under the About ARS tab](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

UNC Learning Center

The Learning Center: The UNC Learning Center is a great resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent falling behind. They offer individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.

Schedule of Course Meetings and Assignments

Note: The class will meet in the assigned classroom (Greenlaw 101, assigned recitation classroom, or overflow rooms) during every class session EXCEPT when teams meet with their instructor, their client, or a subject-area expert. Up-to-date room assignments are listed in the Capstone Room Spreadsheet, available on Sakai.

If you are meeting with your team *outside* of class time, you may meet anywhere, including the Social Innovation workspace (Abernethy 218), Abernethy 102, or study rooms in the libraries. Remember that you must post minutes of all Team Time sessions and other team meetings.

The instructors reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, including assignment due dates (excluding the officially scheduled final examination), when unforeseen circumstances arise. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that you can adjust your schedule.

PHASE 1: LAUNCH

Wed., Aug. 21: Introductions

- Overview of course, roles, and expectations
- Guest speaker: Sam Arbes, UNC PP 2017; Public Health Analyst 2, Health Care Quality & Outcomes Program, RTI International
- Preview of Assignment #1, Individual Self-Assessment and Learning Goals
- Preview of Assignment #2, Administrative Documents (submit certification of completed CITI training and completed Participant Agreement to Sakai)
- Meet your team
- CURE survey

Fri, Aug. 23: Building Strong Teams for Real-World Work

Due: Assignment #1, Individual Self-Assessment and Learning Goals

- ◇ Schwarz, R. (2013). Eight Behaviors for Smarter Teams.
- ◇ Recommended: Ancona, A. et al. (2007). In Praise of the Incomplete Leader. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Leadership and Strong Teams
- Preview of Assignment #3: Team Memorandum of Understanding
- Preview of Assignment #4: Client Background
- Team Time with your instructor

Mon., Aug. 26: Problem-Driven Research Design

Due: Assignment #2, Administrative Documents

Due: Assignment #3, Team MOU

- ◇ Chapter 4, Be Credible: Using the Policy Research Toolbox, pp. 88-110 in Springer, J.F., Haas, P.J., & Porowski, A. (2017). *Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases (2nd edition)*. New York: Routledge.
- ◇ UNC Writing Center. Literature Reviews. <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/literature-reviews/>.
- Defining the terrain and the problem
- Problem-driven research design

Wed., Aug. 28: Working Beyond the University

- ◇ Selections (pp. 31-41) from Chapter 2, Be Real: Navigating the Policy Research Terrain, in Springer, J.F., Haas, P.J., & Porowski, A. (2017). *Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases (2nd edition)*. New York: Routledge.
- ◇ Recommended: Boyer, E. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Public Service and Outreach*, 1(1), 11-20.
- Consulting best practices: Guest speaker: Dr. Micah Gilmer, Partner, Frontline Solutions
- Working beyond the university
- Professionalism

Fri., Aug. 30: Tools for Applied Policy Research

Due: Assignment #4, Client Background

- ◇ Selections from Chapter 4, How to Design and Conduct Policy Research: A Practical Approach, pp. 69-81 in Haas, P. J., & Springer, J. F. (1998). *Applied Policy Research: Cases and Concepts (1st edition)*. New York: Garland.
- ◇ Recommended: The Four Phases of Project Management, pp. 3-29, in Sheen (2012), *HBR Guide to Project Management*.
- Research and Data tools: Guest speakers from Davis Library, Philip McDaniel and Kristan Shawgo
- Project Management
- Preview of Assignment #5: Work Plan
- Planning for Client Meetings

Mon., Sept. 2: No Class; Labor Day

Wed, Sept. 4: Client meeting or Team Time

- **Client meetings begin** (initial work plan is due 3 business days after meeting with your client). If your team does not have a client meeting, you should be refining your work plan and/or reviewing relevant literature.

Fri., Sept. 6: Client meeting or Team Time

- Client meetings continue. If your team does not have a client meeting, you should be refining your work plan and/or reviewing relevant literature.

Mon., Sept. 9: Client meeting or Team Time

- **Last day for client meetings.** If your team does not have a client meeting, you should be refining your work plan and/or reviewing relevant literature.

PHASE 2: RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Wed., Sept. 11: Mixed-Methods Research for Public Policy

- ◇ Selections (pp. 62-70 and 212-34) in Remler, D. and Van Ryzin, G. (2011). *Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- ◇ Recommended if you are conducting interviews: Selections (pp. 31-46) from Ch 2, A Survey of Qualitative Data Collection Methods, in Saldana, J., Leavy, P., and Beretvas, N. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: Understanding qualitative research*. New York: Oxford Press.
- ◇ Recommended (skim) if you are conducting case studies: U.S. GAO (1990). Program Evaluation: Case Study Evaluations.
 - Creating informal and formal interview protocols
 - Strategies for collecting qualitative data
 - Real-world applications

Fri., Sept. 13: Team Time

Mon., Sept. 16: Team Time

Wed., Sept. 18: Data Visualization

- ◇ Chapter 1, Data and decision making: Opportunities and challenges, and Chapter 2, What can data visualisation contribute to research communications? in Robinson, I. (2015). *Data visualisation: Contributions to evidence-based decision-making*. Retrieved from <https://scidev.net>.
- Guest speaker: Lorin Bruckner, Data Visualization Services Librarian

Fri., Sept. 20: Team Time

- Team Time

Mon., Sept. 23: Team Time

Wed., Sept. 25: Professional Presentation of Information; Giving and Receiving Feedback

- ◇ Selections from Chapter 5, Be Useful: Developing and Delivering Actionable Information, pp. 111-19 in Springer, J.F., Haas, P.J., & Porowski, A. (2017). *Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases (2nd edition)*. New York: Routledge.

- Effective communication of research findings
- Mid-term class reflection
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Reviewing your work plan

Fri., Sept. 27: Team Time

Due: Assignment #6a, 360 Assessment

Mon., Sept. 30: Mid-term check-in OR Team Time

- Over the next week each team will meet with a capstone instructor (NOT that team's instructor) to discuss the team's process and the project so far.

Wed., Oct. 2: Mid-term check-in OR Team Time

Fri., Oct. 4: Mid-term check-in OR Team Time

Mon., Oct. 7: Team Time

- Second client meetings should happen around now

Wed., Oct. 9: Careers in Public Policy I

- Guest speaker: Nadia Korobova, Associate Director, University Career Services, UNC-Chapel Hill

Fri., Oct. 11: Team Time

Mon., Oct. 14: Team Time

Wed., Oct. 16: Careers in Public Policy II

- Guest speakers TBA

Fri., Oct. 18: No Class; Fall Break

Mon., Oct. 21: Team Time

Wed., Oct. 23: Team Time

Fri., Oct. 25: Designing Visual Presentations

- ◇ UNC Health Sciences Library, "Designing Effective Posters" tutorial
- Effective posters and other visual presentations
- Preview of Assignment #7, Poster
- Preview of Assignment #8, Presentation Aids
- Preview of Final Portfolio
- Team Time

Mon., Oct. 28: Team Time

Wed., Oct. 30: Team Time

Fri., Nov. 1: Effective Oral Presentations; Team Time

Due: Assignment #6b, 360 Assessment

- Effective oral presentations
- Outlining your final products
- Team Time

Mon., Nov. 4: Team Time

Wed., Nov. 6: Poster and Presentation Workshop

Due: Drafts of Assignment #7, Poster, and Assignment #8, Presentation Aids

Fri., Nov. 8: Team Time

PHASE 3: SYNTHESIS

Mon., Nov. 11: Team Time

Due: Assignment #7, Poster

Wed., Nov. 13: Practice Presentation or TT

- Each team presents at scheduled time.

Fri., Nov. 15: Practice Presentation or TT

- Each team presents at scheduled time.

Mon., Nov. 18: Practice Presentation or TT

- Each team presents at scheduled time.

Wed., Nov. 20: Experiential Education Showcase, 12:30-2:00 pm, Hitchcock Multipurpose Room, Sonja Hanes Stone Center for Black History and Culture

Fri., Nov. 22: Client Presentation or Team Time

Mon., Nov. 25: Client Presentation or Team Time

Wed., Nov. 27-Fri., Nov. 29: No Class; Thanksgiving Break

Mon., Dec. 2: Client Presentation or Team Time

Tues., Dec. 3: Research and Making Expo, 3:00-5:00 pm, Blue Zone, Kenan Stadium

Wed., Dec. 4: Class Wrap-Up

- **Final client presentations end**
- **Last day to submit Final Portfolio to Client**
- **All team documentation due, including meeting minutes and copies of deliverables**

Fri., Dec. 13, 12:00-3:00 pm: Final Exam

Course calendar at a glance

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	PHASE 1: LAUNCH Aug. 21: Introductions	Aug. 23: Building Strong Teams for Real-World Work Due: Assignment #1, Individual Self-Assessment and Learning Goals
Aug 26: Problem-Driven Research Design Due: Assignment #2, Administrative Documents Due: Assignment #3, Team MOU	Aug. 28: Working Beyond the University	Aug. 30: Tools for Applied Policy Research Due: Assignment #4, Client Background Assignment
Sept. 2: No Class; Labor Day	Sept. 4: TT or Client meeting	Sept. 6: TT or Client meeting
Sept. 9: TT or Client meeting	PHASE 2: RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS Sept. 11: Mixed-Methods Research for Public Policy	Sept. 13: TT
Sept. 16: TT	Sept. 18: Data Visualization	Sept. 20: TT
Sept. 23: TT	Sept. 25: Professional Presentation of Information; Giving and Receiving Feedback	Sept. 27: TT Due: Assignment #6a, 360 assessment
Sept. 30: Mid-term check-in or TT	Oct. 2: Mid-term check-in or TT	Oct. 4: Mid-term check-in or TT
Oct. 7: TT (Second client meetings around now)	Oct. 9: Careers in Public Policy I	Oct. 11: TT
Oct. 14: TT	Oct. 16: Careers in Public Policy II	Oct. 18: No Class; Fall Break
Oct. 21: TT	Oct. 23: TT	Oct. 25: Designing Visual Presentations; TT
Oct. 28: TT	Oct. 30: TT	Nov. 1: Effective Oral Presentations; TT Due: Assignment #6b, 360 assessment
Nov. 4: TT	Nov. 6: Poster and Presentation Workshop Due: Drafts of Assignments #7 and #8, Poster and Presentation Aids	Nov. 8: TT
PHASE 3: SYNTHESIS Nov. 11: TT Due: Assignment #7, Poster	Nov. 13: Practice Presentation or TT	Nov. 15: Practice Presentation or TT
Nov. 18: Practice Presentation or TT	Nov. 20: Experiential Education Showcase, 12:30-2:00 pm	Nov. 22: Client Presentation or TT
Nov. 25: Client Presentation or TT	Nov. 27: No Class; Thanksgiving Break	Nov. 29: No Class; Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 2: Client Presentation or TT	Dec. 4: Class Wrap-Up Last day to submit Final Portfolio to client	Fri, Dec. 13, 12:00-3:00 pm: Final Exam