



JOHN GLENN

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

John Glenn School of Public Affairs 808N Policy/Management Capstone Autumn 2009 Syllabus

Meets: M 5:30-8:18 **Room:** 130 Page Hall **Credit hours:** 5

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Prerequisites:

MPA students will enroll in 808 upon completion of all core courses (801, 802, 804, 830, 730, 834, 810, 811, 820, 821, 822), with the exception of 812 and 852.

Online Course Material:

Course material will be available on Carmen at <http://www.carmen.osu.edu/>

Course Description:

PPM 808 builds on the core curriculum students have completed in their first year. This is an opportunity for students to integrate the knowledge and skills gained in the MPA program by applying theory to practice on a topic of each student's choice. It serves as an important bridge between the classroom and the world of professional practice.

Course Objectives:

The objective of PPM 808 is to synthesize and apply the knowledge, skills, and values acquired in the MPA core curriculum to a public policy or management problem. The active use and integration of material from core courses in public policy, public sector economics, public management, and decision support and quantitative methods in the Policy/Management Paper informs issues faced by public policy analysts and managers. The course also prepares students to critically assess policy and management analysis as well as prepares students to produce their own analysis that informs a real world policy or management issue.

In preparing the paper, described in more detail below, students will be expected to produce high-quality policy analysis while operating under a tight deadline. In the structured environment of the class, we will walk through the major steps of completing the paper over the course of 10 weeks. This step-by-step approach should position students well to be able to complete a similar analysis in a job situation under even tighter deadlines and with less structure.

Students will have an opportunity in PPM 809 to engage in activities designed to foster skills related to the effective presentation of the analytic results to various stakeholders. Such written documents may include the following: executive summaries, policy memoranda, op-ed articles, constituent letters, written testimony, and press releases. Additionally, 809 will encompass a variety of communication modalities such as oral testimony, policy briefings, and press conferences.

Policy/Management Paper:

The paper is an integral component of the policy analytic process, serving as a bridge between the core MPA curriculum and the world of practice. The paper is the written analytic presentation of a policy or management issue. Dunn (2008, 1) defines this analysis as the “process of multidisciplinary inquiry designed to create, critically assess, and communicate information that is useful in understanding and improving policies.”

Elements of the Policy/Management Paper are adapted from William N. Dunn, *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction, Fourth Edition*, David McNabb, *Research Methods in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, Catherine F. Smith, *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Process*, E.S. Quade, *Analysis for Public Decisions*, and Harry Hatry, et al., *Program Analysis for State and Local Governments*. Readings from a number of these books will be used in the class. Each student will also design his or her own reading lists tailored to their research topics.

The paper should provide sufficient background on the problem, discuss the significance of the problem with an appropriate review of the relevant literature and an identification of the barriers to solving the problem, carefully articulate the research question, analyze policy or management alternatives, and provide policy or management recommendations that follow directly from the analysis.

Paper components

- I. Define the Problem, Identify Goals and Objectives, and Assemble Evidence
 - A. Clearly define the problem to be addressed in the policy/management paper using evidence to assess the nature and extent of the problem
 - B. Assess previous efforts to solve problem
 - C. Define goals and objectives
 - D. Identify relevant stakeholders
 - E. Identify analysis strategies

II. Construct and Analyze Alternatives

- A. Describe Alternatives
- B. Systematically compare alternatives, specifying choice criteria
- C. Identify relevant spillovers and externalities associated with alternatives
- D. Identify tradeoffs

III. Decide, Conclude, and Recommend

- A. Describe Preferred Alternative
- B. State conclusions
- C. Specify political, organizational, and economic conditions that will affect successful implementation of your choice
- D. Summarize monitoring and evaluation plan

Topic

By no later than the 1st of August (see the course outline below), each student will have chosen a paper topic. Ideally, the topic will draw upon the student's internship. Alternatively, the topic can come from the student's job, research started in 730, 801, 804, 820, and 822, other courses, or from other personal or professional interests. Any students who have not identified a topic by August 1st will have a topic assigned to them by the instructor.

Types of questions a policy issues paper might seek to address:

- Has a particular program met its stated objectives?
- Should a particular management information system/management reform/incentive scheme be implemented?
- Should the governor/president sign a particular bill passed by the legislature?
- Should Ohio adopt a program that some other state has implemented?
- Should a particular government service be privatized or regulated differently?
- Should an agency director agree to more flexible work rules?
- How should the tax system be reformed?

Topics students have investigated in recent years

- "Philanthropic Leadership: National Standards for Community Foundations"
- "Ohio's Annexation Law: Does it Limit Growth and Economic Development?"
- "Planning and Oversight In the State-Level Procurement of Information Technology Services"
- "Hey, Where Did Everyone Go? A Look at College Migration in America"
- "Drawing Better Districts: An Analysis of State Legislative Redistricting Processes"
- "Election Versus Merit Selection: Finding an Independent System to Seat Ohio Supreme Court Justices"
- "Time is Money: Legislative Term Limits and Ohio's Budget Process"
- "The Statewide Rental Housing Analysis For The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program"
- "Measuring Performance for Ohio's Strategic Analysis and Information Center"

Selected Topics students investigated last year

- “A Sale Method Analysis: State of Ohio General Obligation Bonds”
- “Combating climate Change with Passenger Rail: An Examination of the Potential for the Ohio Hub Rail System to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Ohio”
- “Customer Satisfaction and Process Improvements: How the Twain meet in Washington State’s GMAP Program”
- “Foreign Aid, Property Rights and Foreign Direct Investment: A Quantitative Study of the Effects of USAID Democracy and Governance Assistance”
- “Microfinance: Exploring the Success of Non-Financial Services in Combination with Microenterprise Loans”
- “Prevalence of Underinsurance in Ohio: Analysis from the Ohio Family Health Survey, 1998”
- “What Happens with all those Comments? A Case Study Exploration of Different Methods for Processing Public Comments on Proposed Rules for Federal Agencies”
- “Why We Should Bowl Together: A Quantitative Study of the Effect of Citizenship Activities Performed in High School on Future Civic, Political, Academic, and Professional Outcomes Using Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988”

Examples of the types of analysis that might be found in a paper:

IBM Center for The Business of Government

<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/publications/index.asp>

- [Performance Budgeting: How NASA and SBA Link Costs and Performance](#)
- [Modernizing Human Resources at the Internal Revenue Service](#)

University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research Policy Briefs

<http://www.ukcpr.org/PolicyBriefs.aspx>

- [Policy Insights No. 1](#), Rhetoric and Reality of the Minimum Wage
- [Policy Insights No. 2](#), A State Earned Income Tax Credit: Issues and Options for Kentucky

Health Policy Institute of Ohio Publications

<http://www.healthpolicyohio.org/publications.html>

- [Directions in Mental Health and Primary Care Integration in Ohio](#)
- [A Strategic Roadmap and Policy Options for the Effective Adoption of Health Information Technology and Exchange in Ohio](#)

Governing Magazine Government Performance Project

<http://www.governing.com/gpp/index.htm>

- [Grading the States '08: A Management Report Card](#)

Tax Policy Center Discussion Papers

<http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/library/listpubs.cfm?Listpubs=true&TypeID=201>

- [The President's Proposed Standard Deduction for Health Insurance: An Evaluation](#) (Discussion Papers/Tax Policy Center)
Availability: [HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

- [**The Distributional Consequences of Federal Assistance for Higher Education: The Intersection of Tax and Spending Programs**](#) (*Discussion Papers/Tax Policy Center*)
Availability: [HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions Policy Reports

<http://www.buckeyeinstitute.org/query/reports>

- [*Shortchanging Disadvantaged Students: An Analysis of Intra-district Spending Patterns in Ohio*](#)
- [*An Economic Analysis of a Proposal to Legalize Casino Gambling in Ohio*](#)

Policy Matters Ohio Publications

<http://www.policymattersohio.org/publications.htm>

- [*Pulling Apart: Inequality Growth in Ohio*](#)
- [*Trapped in Debt: The Growth of Payday Lending in Ohio*](#)

Course Format:

Class sessions will combine lectures and discussions on topics related to the building of a successful policy/management paper. These discussions will build on the reading material distributed in class and will also focus on deconstructing some example papers. In addition, class time will be devoted to small group breakout sessions in which students will provide oral feedback on one other's paper sections. All assignments are to be submitted in Carmen by the start of class each week.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

An 808 grade of B or better allows the student to waive the Master's Comprehensive Examinations. Students with grades *lower than B or incompletes* are required to take the comprehensive examinations *in addition to* completing the policy/management paper.

Forty percent of the course grade will be comprised of successful completion of weekly assignments. First drafts are to be turned in **by 5:30 pm** on the dates specified below. Group members are expected to provide written feedback (substantive feedback beyond grammatical issues) on the drafts by the following class. Quality of the feedback will be graded by the TAs and peer group mates and is worth 5 points. The drafts and feedback are to be submitted on Carmen in the discussion groups (your group has a separate page for each week – make sure you submit this in the proper week). The second draft for each section is to be submitted to the Carmen drop box by **the end of the day** on the dates specified below. The grade for the weekly assignments are based on timely submission of assigned work, the quality of the work turned in, and the quality of the written feedback given to your group mates. Each draft is worth 5 points. One point per day will be deducted for late submissions. Five points of that grade is based on the feedback you provide to your group mates. Feedback on late submissions is not guaranteed. Grades will be accessible on Carmen. **Fifty percent** of the grade will be based on the final paper (see below) (10% daily penalty for late papers, and papers turned in more than 3 days late will receive an incomplete), and **10 percent** will be based on participation. The participation grade is based on active participation and attendance at all classes (automatic 1 point deduction for

missing any class, with the exception of absences due to illness), including active group participation. Grading is based on the OSU Standard Scheme (93+ A, 90-92 A-, 87-89 B+, etc.).

Students will receive written feedback from the instructor, TA, and classmates on each paper section they turn in. Students will be broken into groups based upon their paper topics and methodological approaches and assigned to the TA and instructor that most closely match their topics and methods. Group discussion forums will be established in Carmen for students to post their work and receive feedback from their classmates and TA (provision of this feedback will be the basis of the participation grade). There will also be class time set aside for students to work together in their groups. In order to receive adequate feedback, it is important that drafts be posted to Carmen by the deadlines. After you have turned in the final draft for each component (Introduction, Analytic Framework/literature review, Methodology/data, Results, Conclusions) for grading, it is the student's responsibility to address the feedback and incorporate that in the final paper. The instructors will generally not review additional drafts of that section. When you turn in the second draft of each section and your final paper, you are to also turn in a document that explains how you have addressed the comments you received on the draft sections.

Final Paper Evaluation

The final paper will involve putting together the various sections you have worked on throughout the term. Here, it is important that the components actually fit together with appropriate transitions. Below, the point value for each component is designated.

The paper must include

1) *Title Page and Executive Summary* (5 points)

The title page should include "The Ohio State University," "John Glenn School of Public Affairs," your paper title, your name, the phrase "A Policy/Management Paper submitted in partial fulfillment for the Master of Public Administration Degree," and the quarter and year of completion.

The executive summary, written last, should provide the reader an overview of the various sections of the paper, including the main research questions and highlights of the conclusions. The executive summary should be no more than one single-spaced page.

2) *An Introduction* (10 points)

This provides an overview of the topic being studied and its importance/relevance within the proper political, organizational, or other appropriate context. The introduction should also provide a concise statement of the particular research hypothesis or hypotheses being investigated. Typically, the introduction should also briefly report the results or findings and their implications.

3) *Analytic Framework/Literature Review* (15 points)

This will provide a more detailed background on the topic. Here, you should provide a relevant review of the appropriate theoretic and practice-oriented research drawing from academic journals and professional literature. You will also want to draw on relevant material from some of your other classes. It should establish what the important or unanswered questions are regarding your topic. Thus, this review of the literature should provide a theoretical basis that sets up your analytic framework.

4) *Methodology and Data* (15 points)

This section clearly presents your research problem or hypotheses and describes whatever methodology you will use to examine or test your hypotheses. You should be clear regarding what evidence or results would lead to support or rejection of your hypotheses. In this section, you should also describe any data you use, its source(s), and descriptive statistics. You should also discuss the steps you will take to ensure the validity of the research design or project methodology, and you should discuss any potential methodological problems you might encounter.

5) *Results* (15 points)

This is where you discuss your findings of the tests of your research hypotheses: Are your hypotheses confirmed or rejected? If you are doing an empirical study, make sure that you present the results in easy-to-read tables and that you refer to the tabular results in the text.

6) *Conclusions* (15 points)

Clearly and concisely discuss your results and any policy or management implications. Be sure to present your findings in the context of the literature you reviewed earlier. Discuss whether there are any alternative explanations for your findings and be clear about the limitations to your analysis and note how these limitations might affect your results and conclusions. You should also discuss areas for future research. Finally, you should make recommendations *that follow from* your findings. Resist the temptation to make recommendations that are not supported by your analysis.

7) *References and appendices (if any)* (5 points)

Any non-original ideas should be referenced. All of the papers in the references should be cited in the text using a common style such as APA or Chicago (This is very easy to organize using Word 2007's references features.)

8) *Good grammar/organization/presentation* (15 points)

The quality of the prose is important in terms of being able to relay your findings.

9) *Revision Statement* (5 points)

Provide a statement describing how you addressed the feedback received throughout the term.

Students are reminded to obey all Ohio State rules regarding academic misconduct, which can be found at http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

THIS MATERIAL IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS UPON REQUEST. PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL'S OFFICE AT 292-8696 FOR ASSISTANCE. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THEIR NEEDS KNOWN AND FOR SEEKING THE AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE IN A TIMELY MANNER.

Preliminary Course Outline

Class	Date	Topics	Assignment Due	Points
	June	Review syllabus and explore general topic area		
	June-Aug	Review the relevant literature and investigate possible data sources Read the readings listed for the Sep29th class		
	By 1-Aug	Post to Carmen drop box your research topic, preliminary research hypothesis, and an initial reading list. Failure to do so will result in a topic being assigned to you.		
	By 15-Aug	Post to Carmen drop box a short description of data (qualitative and/or quantitative) to be used for the analysis. Include the key variables you plan to use		
1	28-Sept	Introduction and research overview (McNabb, ch 4-6) Structuring policy problems (Dunn, ch 3) Research paper (Dunn, ch 9, McNabb, ch 24) Writing an introduction (Bardach, ch 1; Smith, ch 3; McNabb, ch 24) Writing a literature review (Bardach, ch 2) Professional Writing (Stimson) <i>Groups: discuss research hypotheses, approach to analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st draft Introduction and Literature review sections 	5 g
2	5-Oct	Identifying stakeholders (Dunn, ch 3; Quade, ch 21) Discuss paper examples of intros and lit reviews Tips on formatting a paper (McNabb, ch 25) Discuss example of a revision statement <i>Groups: discuss stakeholders and give oral feedback on intro and lit review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on classmates' introductions and literature review 	1 g
3	12-Oct	Quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches to testing your hypotheses & presentation of your data (McNabb, ch 11, 17,18) Research Ethics/IRB (McNabb, ch 3) <i>Groups: ethics exercise and discuss methodological approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd draft Introduction and lit review <i>with revision statement</i> 	5 d
4	19-Oct	Mapping your data/GIS (handout) <i>Groups: discuss data/methods; optional: work through GIS tutorial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st draft methods and data sections 	5 g

Class	Date	Topics	Assignment Due	Points
5	26-Oct	Discuss paper examples of methods and data sections Describe alternatives & identify tradeoffs (Quade, ch 8, 12; Bardach, ch 3) <i>Groups: Feedback on methods and data sections and discuss possible alternatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on classmates' methods and data 	1 g
6	2-Nov	Presenting results Presenting conclusions (Dunn, ch 5) Policy recommendations (Dunn, ch 8) Relevant spillovers and externalities associated with alternatives Bardach, ch 5-6) Political, organizational, and economic conditions affecting implementation (Quade, ch 21) <i>Groups: Discuss possible policy implications of your research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd draft methods and data sections <i>with revision statement</i> 	5 d
7	9-Nov	Guest lecture: Travis Masters and Marvin Bonner, GAO: “Applying lessons from the policy/management paper to the GAO” <i>Groups: Discuss results and possible spillovers and externalities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st draft results and conclusions 	5 g
8	16-Nov	Discuss paper examples of results and conclusions <i>Groups: Feedback on results and conclusions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on classmates' results and conclusions 	1 g
9	23-Nov	Title page and executive summary (McNabb, ch 24) Monitoring and evaluation plan (Dunn, ch 6) <i>Groups: discuss remaining challenges to finishing the paper</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd draft results and conclusion <i>with revision statement</i> 	5 d
10	30-Nov	Discuss paper examples of executive summaries Putting it all together <i>Groups: give feedback on executive summaries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-page executive summary Peer evaluations of group-mates' feedback 	5 g 2 d
7-Dec		Post final paper and revision statement to Carmen by 5:30pm		50 d

Note: Submit drafts and comments to your group's Carmen discussion group page for the proper week (denoted by “g” in the points column above). Submit second drafts and your final paper and your revision statement to the Carmen drop box (denoted by “d” in the points column above).