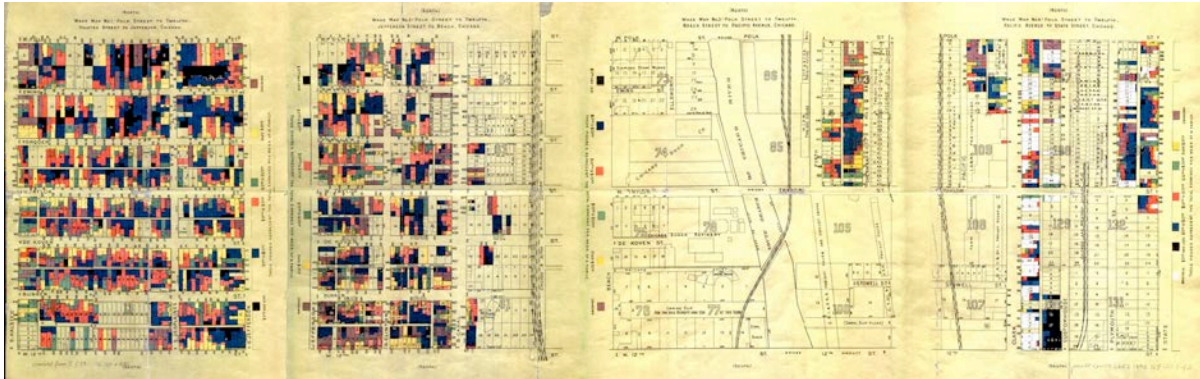


Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy

NURP 6008—Advanced Seminar



Household income maps created by researchers at Hull House in Chicago (1886).

Spring 2015
M 6-7:50pm
6 East 16th St., Rm. 1104

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Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they extended their knowledge to the utmost;
And this extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

--Confucius

Course Description

The Advanced Seminar is the culmination of your master's degree work, and an invitation to join a long tradition of creating new knowledge through practical research for which Milano and The New School are known. The course is devoted to the conduct and presentation of a substantial project in collaboration with an external client such as a non-profit organization, city agency, cultural institution, or advocacy group. Each student establishes a relationship with a client in her field of interest and signs a contract that outlines the scope of work to be completed during the semester. The bulk of work in the course takes the form of in-class discussions, regular writing deadlines, progress meetings with the instructor, and peer review through multiple drafts of your reports. This seminar is your opportunity to bring together the many strands of your education at The New School, and to organize them into a professional project of your own design.

Course Goals

In this course, you will work closely with the instructor to do the following:

- Establish a contractual relationship with an external client
- Conceptualize, design, and execute a research project based on client needs
- Sharpen your analytical reading and writing skills
- Increase proficiency in the use of research tools and resources
- Explore varied modes of exposition, e.g. descriptive, argumentative, and analytical
- Develop an understanding of the nature, function, and responsibilities of research
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively with appropriate audience
- Strengthen your voice and identity as a writer, scholar, and critic

In addition to satisfying the requirements of the masters degree, the Advanced Seminar also prepares you for further graduate work, and for conducting major projects in your future careers.

Course Format

Students will meet and work together on a regular basis to address common concerns, such as developing topics, reviewing the nature of research and writing, sharing important resources, and learning advanced methods. We will have several different kinds of meetings, including:

- *In-class discussion.* In these sessions, students and instructor review aspects of writing, research, and organization--occasionally with guest speakers.
- *Writing workshops.* In these sessions, students and instructor meet to read and critique one another's work. These will take place virtually through document sharing.
- *Conferences.* In these sessions, students meet individually or in small groups with the instructor to evaluate the progress of research and writing, to discuss challenges and roadblocks, and to strategize ways to improve the work.

Readings

One book is required, and should be purchased through your regular on-line sources:

Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving, 2nd edition, by Eugene Bardach (CQ Press, 2005).

In addition, we recommend that you obtain at least one good 'writing for research' guide. There are many such guides, but the following are among the best:

The Craft of Research, 3rd edition, by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, & Joseph M. Williams (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

The Everyday Writer, 4th edition, by Andrea Lunsford (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008).

Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing, 4th edition, by Linda Flower (Harcourt 1993).

The Term Project: Professional Development Report

Each of you will undertake a Professional Decision Report (PDR). The PDR is an intensive, integrative experience that demonstrates your professional abilities as well as the analytic you have acquired through graduate study. The final document should exhibit both a facility with technical and formal skills of analysis and an understanding of the political and operational dimensions that condition policy and management responses. It should be written, organized and *argued* to convince a decision-maker of the wisdom of a particular policy or management decision; a simple description of policy choice options is not enough.

The course supports you to produce your PDR in a timely manner, with structured deadlines of relevant deliverables. These include finding a client, identifying and refining an issue, developing a statement of the analytic approach, outlining the report, and producing and refining the draft. We will use class time to explore these topics. As your work unfolds we will schedule time in class and individual meetings to review your progress and to work through any administrative or intellectual problems that may arise. Each of you will also have an opportunity to present your problem and preliminary analysis to the seminar.

During the first three weeks of class, we will meet in seminar to discuss broad issues of applied research, including ethics, methods, argumentation, evidence, and presentation. We will also discuss the challenges and opportunities of the PDR process. These sessions will provide a chance for you to solicit feedback from your peers, and to develop informal groups pursuing topics in common. After these sessions, class meetings will be replaced by individual meetings with the instructor, reconvening for informal presentations. The major requirements are timely completion of deliverables toward the PDR, and active, constructive engagement with your peers. These peer-to-peer engagements, as much as your work with the PDR client, help to build important professional relationships for the future.

Course Requirements

The primary function of the seminar is to assist you in organizing your efforts to complete a professional analytic project in a timely fashion. Thus, several specific intermediate deliverables will be due on particular dates throughout the semester. All work must be doubled spaced in 12-point Times or Times New Roman font, 1.25-inch side margins, and page numbers. Please hand in hard copies as well as email a copy.

A. Written Requirements

1. Client and topic report with brief bibliography: A one-page statement to identify the client and the issue to be examined. This statement should be based on at least one conversation with the client, in which the client has expressed interest in the identified topic and in working with you on that topic. Also include a bibliography of five relevant secondary sources (journal articles, reports, etc). Due in class on February 3rd.
2. Project Proposal with expanded bibliography: A completed and approved description of the client, the institution, and a formal statement of the problem. This three-page proposal should move beyond the general issue or topic to the specification of both an analytic question or problem and the types of data that will form the basis for the analysis. Also include an expanded bibliography. Due in class on February 10th.

3. Detailed Work Plan: A complete research design including statement of the problem, analytic approach, data collection effort, and timetable for completion of each task. Due in instructor's mailbox on February 17th.
4. Client Memo: A memorandum of understanding between the student and the client. It should describe the working definition of the problem, the data collection effort, the general analytic approach, the timetable and any other mutually agreed upon terms of the relationship (such as formal or regular meeting times, terms of access to data, or schedule of intermediate products). This memo should be worked out with the client, who should have the opportunity to review it and request revisions (if necessary) before it is signed by both parties. Due in instructor's mailbox on February 17th. A signed hard copy should be handed in at the next scheduled individual meeting with the instructor.
5. Detailed Analytic Outline of PDR with full bibliography: This document should identify each section of the report and specify its content. It should provide a more refined statement of the analytic problem, spell out the key alternatives that will be applied, identify the types of data actually available and the analyses that are being conducted, and indicate any preliminary or tentative conclusions. Due in class on March 10th.
6. Complete First Draft of PDR: This draft should include all tables and other presentations of data, as well as a clear statement of key findings and recommendations. It should also include a draft of the report's executive summary and the most updated bibliography. Due in class on April 14th.
7. Completed Final PDR: This final report should be presented in professionally produced form to the faculty member. The report must be submitted to the client with the prior approval of the faculty member. Due in class on May 12th.

B. Other Requirements

1. Class preparation and active class participation. Class sessions are designed to assist you in producing a professional-quality report. The amount of reading and preparation required (beyond the necessary work on your PDR) is modest. Preparation for sessions at which student presentations are made will require reviewing the analytic outlines of the projects being presented. These readings will not be long, but they are important. Active, constructive engagement in class discussions is the primary vehicle through which you and your colleagues can learn from one another's experiences.
2. Oral presentation of the analytic work in progress. Each student will make a presentation of work in progress during the second half of the semester. These sessions are intended to provide students with an opportunity to test their developing ideas and to share suggestions about how to deal with analytic or client-relations problems. The order in which student presentations are made will be determined by the faculty member.
3. Student-faculty meetings. During each of the periods designated on the course schedule for individual student-faculty meetings, each student must meet with the faculty member. Sign-up sheets for these meetings will be circulated in class.

C. Deadlines and Grading

The usefulness of policy analysis is heavily dependent on the timeliness with which it is prepared and presented as well as on its quality. Hence, course grades depend on both the timeliness and quality of all intermediate products as well as the final product. The following deadlines apply:

Monday, February 2	Client and topic report with brief bibliography
Monday, February 9	Project proposal with expanded bibliography
Monday, February 16	Detailed work plan and client memo
Monday, March 9	Detailed analytic outline with full bibliography
Monday, April 13	First draft of PDR
Monday, May 11	Final PDR

All deadlines are final and must be met. Any deadlines missed will be taken into account in assigning the final grade.

Regular class attendance and active participation are expected throughout. Level and quality of participation will be used, as appropriate, to adjust the final grade up or down by half a grade.

Grades will be weighted with the following distribution:

Overall evaluation of written assignments (other than final PDR):	30%
Class participation, presentations, preparation for meetings:	30%
Final Professional Development Report:	40%

The following rubric will be used for assigning the final grade in the course:

A	90 - 100	Work of the highest caliber; excellent in all respects; exemplary.
B	80 - 89	Good work; meets all criteria and excels in some measures.
C	70 - 79	Work of average quality; meets basic expectations, but doesn't excel.
D	60 - 69	Below average work; is incomplete or falls short of expectations.
F	0 - 59	Poor quality work; falls far below expectations; unacceptable.

Incompletes will entail substantial grade penalties. They must be requested in writing and approved by the faculty member before May 1 and will only be granted in the event of an extraordinary circumstance beyond the control of the student. Further, at that time a work schedule and deadline for completion will be agreed upon which will be firm.

Week 1, January 26: Becoming part of a research community

The ethics and responsibility of research
The production of knowledge and the craft of policy
Situating the work in the wider world
Developing and refining a research question

Reading: Bardach, Part I.
Forsyth, "Literature Reviews" www.planetizen.com/node/36600

Week 2, February 2: Producing a Professional Development Report

The qualities of successful PDRs
Organization and presentation of material
Argumentation and evidence
Writing strategies (*keep calm, write the hell on*)

Reading: Bardach, Part II and sample PDRs

Due: Client and topic identification, with preliminary bibliography (in class)

Week 3, February 9: Client relations and applied research

The condition of reciprocity
Theoretical and instrumental knowledge
Working with clients in the co-production of knowledge

Reading: Bardach, Part III

Due: Project Proposal with expanded bibliography (in class)

Week 4, February 16: Individual conferences to review research program

President's Day, no class meeting.
Students meet with instructor for one-on-one consultations during the week.

Due: Client memo
Detailed work plan with full bibliography
(Both due electronically on February 17 no later than 5pm)

PART TWO: RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION

Week 5, February 23: Individual conferences

Students meet with instructor for one-on-one consultations during the week.

Due: Oral progress report

Week 6, March 2: Individual conferences

Students meet with instructor for one-on-one consultations during the week.

Due: Oral progress report

Week 7, March 9: On line discussions

Students exchange analytic outlines for peer review.

Due: Detailed analytic outline with full bibliography
Due electronically by March 10, no later than 5pm

Week 8, March 16: Regrouping for progress reports and good practices review

Students comment on analytic outlines and raise challenges and issues.

Due: Bring one or two questions, issues, challenges to the group (in class)

Week 9, March 23: Spring Break, no meetings scheduled

Since we do not have meetings over spring break, I highly recommend that you use this week to make substantial progress on the research and writing of the PDR. I will be available throughout the break via email for any questions that arise.

Week 10, March 30: Individual conferences

Students meet with instructor for one-on-one consultations during the week.

Due: Oral progress report

Week 11, April 6: On line discussions

Students check in with instructor to discuss research progress and presentation strategy

PART THREE: THE FINAL SPRINT

Week 12, April 13: First drafts due / No class meeting

Students turn in first drafts of PDRs via e-mail attachments.

Due: First drafts of PDR

Week 13, April 20: Student presentations, part I

Students present their work to the group, incorporate feedback

Due: Power point presentation (in class)

Week 14, April 27: Student presentations, part II

Students present their work to the group, incorporate feedback

Due: Power point presentation (in class)

Week 15, May 4: Individual conferences

Students meet with instructor for one-on-one consultations during the week.

Due: Oral progress report

Week 16, May 11: Celebration and debriefing

Students meet to debrief on the PDR process and to celebrate completion

Due: Final PDR; submit to client upon approval by instructor.