

SYLLABUS FOR PPA 500 – PROJECT SEMINAR FALL 2005
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

Coordinating Professor: Miguel Ceja

E-Mail: cejam@csus.edu

Office: Room 3029, Tahoe Hall

Office Phone: (916) 278 - 5591

Facilitating Professors: Ted Lascher, and Bob Waste

Contact each Professor individually for office availability

Course Held: Wednesday, 6:00 – 8:50 p.m., Mendocino 3007

I. Required Reading Material:

1. *CSUS Guide For Thesis Format*, Latest Edition, Office of Research and Graduate Studies, CSUS, available free on web at <http://www.csus.edu/gradstudies/forms/Thesis.pdf>;
2. *A Pocket Style Manual*, 2000, Diana Hacker, Third Edition, Bedford Books; available for purchase at bookstore or on web at Amazon.Com (Many PPA students have already purchased this for an earlier class).
3. *Writing Literature Reviews*, 2004, Second Edition, Jose Galvin, Pyczak Publishing; available for purchase at bookstore or on web at Pyczak Publishing. (Many PPA students have already purchased this for an earlier class).

II. Suggested Reading Material:

1. **For benefit-cost analysis approaches** - *Cost-Benefit Analysis for Public Sector Decision Makers*, Diana Fugitt and Shanton Wilcox. 1999. Westport, CT: Quorum Books. (Many PPA students have already purchased this book or a course pack assembled by Professor Rob Wassmer for an earlier class). See also, *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics*, Steven Hackett. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1998.
2. **For best practices approaches** - *Benchmarking for Best Practices in the Public Sector*. Patricia Keehley, Steven Medlin, Sue MacBride, and Laura Longmire. Josey Bass Public Administration series.
3. **For CAM Analysis and Bardach approaches** - *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, Eugene Bardach, Chatham House - for CAM Analysis approaches, available for purchase at bookstore or on web at Amazon.Com; also available free at <http://www.puaf.umd.edu/courses/puaf790/bardach.pdf> (Many PPA students have already purchased this for an earlier class).
4. **For case study approaches** - *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods, 3rd edition* (Sage Publications paperback) available at the bookstore or at <http://www.Sagepub.com>. - For case study approaches. (Many PPA students have already purchased this for an earlier class).

5. **For logic model approaches** - see <http://www.the2professors.com/Logic%Models.htm> or the *Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide* at: <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.PDF>.
6. **For program evaluation approaches** - *Evaluation*, 5th Edition. Peter Rossi. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. **For this and all of the approaches above, see also, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd. Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.**
7. **For regression approaches** – *Using Econometrics: A Practical Guide*, Studemund, Boston, MA: Addison Wesley Longman; *Multiple Regression: A Primer*, Paul Allison. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; *SPSS Base 11.0 (Graduate Pack)*; and *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*. Washington, DC: CQ Press (Many PPA students have already purchased these books for an earlier class).
8. **For survey research approaches** - *The Survey Kit*, 2nd Edition. Arlene Fink. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

III. Thesis and Report Examples

The following are good studies, and solid examples of professional policy or organizational analysis reports.

[Wassmer *et al.*: An Analysis of Subsidies and Other Options to Expand the Productive End Use of Scrap Tires in California](#)

[Legates: The Region is the Frontier](#)

[Moore, Shulock, and Lang: "Funding Adult Education: Does California Put the Money Where the Needs Are?"](#)

[Price-Stogdill: Should the California Legislature Redefine the Meaning of Blight?](#)

[Robilliard: Evaluation of Social Service Agencies in Sacramento County](#)

IV. Logistical Details & Words of Advice

I strongly recommend that all readings be purchased in the semester break before classes begin. Get a head start on readings and assignment. When a reading assignment for a particular class meeting is given, the text should be brought to the class meeting.

Internet Access: Access to the Internet is also required for this class. If you do not have it at work or home, access is provided to students at the university library. Some of the links given here require the use of a Sac Link account to access.

Objective: This course provides faculty and peer guidance in preparation of material to satisfy the Master's project requirement. This includes clarification of general program expectations, familiarization with research resources, presentation of models of effective policy and administrative analytical reports, and provision of basic support in a structured environment of feedback.

Method: Each class session will include interactive work sessions involving students reporting on progress and problem solving with peer feedback and consultation. Students are required to complete all assignments and consult with their project committee throughout the semester. I would estimate that besides the 3 hours of

classroom time required each week, this course will require an additional minimum of 10 hours a week of work outside of the classroom. This amount is likely to grow larger in the final weeks of the semester.

Prerequisite: To enroll in this course you must have completion of all but one of the courses in the Public Policy and Administration Program [PPA 200, 205, 207, 210, 220A, 220B, 230, 240 (or 240A and 240B if appropriate), plus two electives] with at least a B- in each course and an average grade of B or better in all. Accordingly, students cannot enroll in PPA 500 until their last semester of course work and are no longer allowed to take more than one course (other than an internship course) in addition to PPA 500. It is also necessary to have advanced to candidacy before enrolling in PPA 500. The department chair is authorized to modify these restrictions (but not the advancement to candidacy mandate, which is a University requirement) in exceptional circumstances.

PPA 500B Rest in Peace: There is no longer a formal second semester of PPA 500. Students will now need to take PPA 500 (in the manner presented here) a second time if they fail to complete an acceptable Master's project in one semester or within the break following the semester.

Primary/Secondary Advisors: All students are required to identify primary and secondary advisors who have agreed to supervise and assist in the completion of the assignments required for this class. A form for that purpose (due in week 2) is included at end of this syllabus. A primary advisor can be drawn from Professors Cejá, Gerth, Hodson, Jensen, Kirlin, Lascher, Moulds, Shulock, Wassmer, and Waste. A secondary advisor can be chosen from among this same group, part-time PPA instructors Detwiler and Booher, and other part and full-time professors and instructors at CSUS.

I suggest you work on developing your thesis question and lining up your advisors in the winter break preceding the class. It is essential that you secure the permission of your desired advisors early. If a primary advisor already has their share of thesis supervision they will suggest another PPA professor that you should contact.

You should be in weekly contact with your primary advisor throughout the semester. All the assignments listed here are to be given to them on the due dates given. Your advisor will get comments back to you by the next week's meeting. Individual arrangements should be made with your secondary advisor on the specific amount of contact to occur during the semester, but all assignments should also be shared with that person and a meeting with the secondary advisor should occur at least once a month. Remember that both your primary and secondary advisors must sign off on your final product. It is essential that they be both be "kept in the loop" throughout the semester.

Research Partner: Each student will be paired with another who will serve as a partner in the quest to finish the thesis. Besides their primary and secondary advisors, this partner will serve as a sounding board, confidant, and a third set of eyes to read all that is written. This is meant to be a reciprocal relationship where your help will be equally rewarded by the help of another. Please secure this person's signature also on the sheet attached to syllabus.

Format of Class Meetings: This course will meet initially a total of 4 times from 6 to 8:50 p.m. on Wednesday night from Aug. 31st to September 21st. We will meet on November 9th for a final scheduled meeting. We will meet in additional class sessions on an as-needed basis. It is essential that you attend all class meetings. Some meetings have writing and oral presentation assignments that should be completed before class meetings. This is absolutely not a lecture-based course. The format of most classes will be student-based discussion on specific concerns that students have at the current stage of their work. All students are required to participate in these

discussions and should come prepared to class each week with a summary of progress in the previous week, and questions/concerns that need to be addressed. Expect to be called on each week to make such a report.

Flexibility in Seminar Products: The faculty recognizes that there is a need to maintain flexibility with respect to the order and nature of thesis components. While we have included a default ordering in the syllabus, this approach may not work for all people. For example, some people may be well served by postponing development of a thesis introduction until they have completed other parts of the document. You should work out any such modifications with your Primary Advisor for your Culminating Project.

IV. Schedule:

The following schedule lists the major topics covered each week and the assigned reading that accompanies them, as well as an assignment that is due that week. A list will be forthcoming of professors who will be leading each class after the first four weeks. The professors in the classroom each week will only act as facilitators of student-based discussions. They will not collect assignments. These are to be turned into your primary and secondary (if they request) advisors. I reserve the right to make minor changes and additions to the following schedule.

Session 1 - Aug. 29th - Professors Ceja, Lascher & Waste

Assignment Due:

- 1) One-page memo defining the research problem to be addressed in your Project. This may be an updated version of the thesis overview you sent Professor Lascher in mid-January, or the same version if you have not made further progress.**

1. Rules and Regulations

Read: [Memo on New Culminating Project Guidelines](#)

2. Campus Requirements for Format, Style & Human Subject Research

Read: [CSUS Guide for Thesis Format](#), and PPA Department Human Subjects guidelines available on line at: http://www.csus.edu/mppa/human_subjects/document.pdf

3. What is "Mastery" in MPPA Master's Projects? A Quick Overview

TABLE I.

Successful Master's Projects Exhibit Mastery at Four Distinct Levels:

- ? **A graduate-level mastery of the professional scholarly literature** appropriate to the subject at hand.
- ? **A graduate-level mastery of the appropriate method of inquiry** to be utilized in the inquiry at hand (for example: bene fit-cost analysis, benchmarking and best practices research, Bardach 8 Step or CAM analysis, case study methodology, logic model analysis, OD (organizational development), program evaluation, regression analysis, or survey research.
- **A graduate level application of that method of inquiry to the inquiry at hand.**
- **A graduate level analysis of the policy implications and the potential contribution to the professional literature and convention policy/program/administrative wisdom implied by the study at hand**

A Quick Orientation to the MPPA Project - What is the proper research and analytical framework for MPPA Projects? - Welcome to the Diverse World of MPPA Culminating Projects

SUGGESTED SIX-SECTION OUTLINE FOR PPA PROJECT

Below are two ways - cleverly labeled "Plan A" and "Plan B" - to think about the organization of the MPPA Project. Plan A is our traditional Bardach-oriented six-section format. Plan B is an alternative developed for Culminating Projects that do not easily lend themselves to the Bardach 6 section approach. You should work out the specific format of your thesis with your principal advisor. Five to ten pages are the suggested lengths for each section. The format that follows below in Table II has emerged as the standard or typical pattern for an MPPA Culminating Project. A second format, which has also proven successful, is included below as Table III.

TABLE II.	
<i>Plan A -</i>	
THE CONVENTIONAL BARDACH CULMINATING PROJECT APPROACH	
Section 1: DEFINE THE PROBLEM	
	Specific problem
	Larger context and background
	Others' experiences
	Literature review
Section 2: ENVIRONMENT	
	Political environment and constraints
	Legal mandates and issues
	Economic factors
	Social issues
Section 3: ALTERNATIVES	
	Analyze causes of problem
	Define the variables inherent in alternatives
	Reduce and simplify number of alternatives
Section 4: CRITERIA	
	Select and justify criteria for evaluating alternatives (e.g. cost/benefit, political feasibility, accountability)
	Relative weighting of criteria
	Methodology
Section 5: ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES	
	Project outcomes of all alternatives
	Analyze outcomes in terms of criteria
	Summarize and contrast alternatives
	Confront the trade-offs
Section 6: RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSIONS	
	Tailor recommendation to proper audience/clients
	Long-term versus short-term issues
	Pay attention to implementation

TABLE III.

Plan B:*

SUGGESTED FIVE-SECTION OUTLINE FOR PPA PROJECT

Section 1	Overview of Your Project/Problem/Inquiry
Section 2	Literature Review , including a chart showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "prevailing views" within the existing literature or• reports illustrating the "conventional wisdom, including "schools of thought"
Section 3	Explanation of Methodology & Application of that Method to the subject of inquiry.
Section 4	Findings, Explanation of Results
Section 5	Conclusion: Policy Implications & Contributions to the Literature . <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the policy implications of your findings?• Are they obvious but trivial, obvious but important, non-obvious but trivial, neither obvious nor trivial?• Do they confirm, or disconfirm the prevailing conventional wisdom in this area? Why or why not?

LENGTH: Each section should be 5-10 pages. Overall length should be 50-60 pages.

⌘ For Culminating Projects that do not lend themselves to the Bardach-oriented Six Section Outline for PPA Projects described in Table B, above.

Session 2 – Sept. 7th - Professor Ceja

Assignments Due:

- 1) **An up-dated version of your project summary, including an identification of the academic literature and/or professional research reports appropriate to your subject. This new summary should be no more than two pages in length. We are expecting that in general students will cite at least 10 sources, although a smaller number may be appropriate for particular types of thesis projects.**
- 2) **Bring in a completed copy of the form included in Appendix A, below, "Thesis Question, Advisors' and Research Partner's Signatures."**

Read:

1. For the problem identification section - *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, Eugene Bardach. On web free at <http://www.puaf.umd.edu/courses/puaf790/bardach.pdf>. For week 2, see "Step One: Define the Problem" pp. 1-10, and Appendix C, "Defining the Problem," p. 133.

2. For the literature review section - *Writing Literature Reviews*, 2004, Second Edition, Jose Galvin, Pyczak Publishing (entire).

The following professional report and thesis examples may help your thinking at this point:

[Wassmer *et al.*: An Analysis of Subsidies and Other Options to Expand the Productive End Use of Scrap Tires in California](#)

[Legates: The Region is the Frontier](#)

[Moore, Shulock, and Lang: "Funding Adult Education: Does California Put the Money Where the Needs Are?"](#)

[Price-Stogdill: Should the California Legislature Redefine the Meaning of Blight?](#)

Session 3 – Sept. 14th - Professor Ceja

Assignment Due:

- 1) A final version of your project summary, including a presentation of the methodology you plan to use as well as any revisions to the types of literature you plan to review. This final project summary should be no more than three pages in length.**

Be prepared to defend your topic, literature selection and methodological and data selection. When considering methodological issues, it is strongly recommended that students consult one or more of the previously listed sources as a guide to appropriate methodological approaches to be used in your Project.

Session 4 – Sept. 21st – Professors Ceja, Lascher, Waste. Other PPA faculty will also be invited to attend this session.

Assignments Due:

- 1) Be prepared to present a 10 minute Power Point presentation summarizing progress to date, key assumptions in the literature on your Project topic, your methodological approach & data source(s), and your findings and progress to date. A faculty panel will give you spirited feedback on your Project as outlined in your Power Point presentation.**
- 2) Additionally, bring in a calendar timeline with tasks and completion dates outlining how you will complete your MPPA Project by the end of this semester.**

Session 5 – Week 11, Nov. 9th – Formal Project Presentations – Professors Ceja, Lascher & Waste

Assignment Due:

- 1) Each student will present his/her Project findings and recommendations. Based on this presentation, the faculty will make a formal determination certifying that you are making Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory Progress to date in the MPPA Project.**

PPA 500 Calendar with "Deliverables" Listed:

- September 7** Refined one-page memo due containing the following MPPA Project ingredients:
- 1. Define your research problem; and**
 - 2. Identify the academic literature and/or professional research reports appropriate to your topic area (a minimum of 10 sources required for this assignment)**
- September 14** Further refined one page MPPA Project Prospectus due including:
- 1. Explain the thesis of your Project.**
 - 2. Describe the literature to be examined in your Project.**
 - 3. Describe and defend your methodological approach and data source(s)**
- September 21**
- 1. 10 minute Power Point presentation of progress to date, lit review, methodology, data sources and initial findings.**
 - 2. Also submit "Thesis Question, Advisors' and Research Partner's Signature" form Due to PPA Chair Ted Lascher**
 - 3. Calendar timeline with tasks/completion dates outlining how you will complete your MPPA Project by the end of this semester Due. What are your biggest challenges? Present a realistic & detailed week by week completion schedule.**
- October 5** Draft of Section 1 & 2 (Introduction & Literature Review Sections) Due
- October 10-14** Review Methodological Section draft with Primary Advisor
- Deadline for graduate students to apply for graduation (for Winter 05)
- November 1** Application for Fall 2005 Graduation (to appear in commencement ceremony program)
- November 1-8** Review Findings Section draft with Primary Reader
- November 21-30** Review Policy Implications Section draft with Primary Reader
- December 9** Master's Project Due in Graduate Office (Graduation Winter 2005)

APPENDIX A

PPA 500

Fall 2005

Thesis Question, Advisors' and Research Partner's Signatures

(Due to PPA Chair, Dr. Ted Lascher, September 21, 2005)

Student's Name:

Thesis Question:

Primary Advisor's Signature:

Secondary Advisor's Signature:

Research Partner's Signature:
