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| PPA 500 | **Culminating Experience**  Spring 2023  **Required Sunday night class dates:**  January 29 (5:30–7 pm)  February 26 (5:30–7 pm)  April 16 (5:30–7 pm)  **Required Final Project Presentations:**  TBD for the week of May 16 (6–9 pm)  **Zoom Link**:  <https://csus.zoom.us/j/86940700901>  Updated 12/31/2022 |  | PPA graphic mark  **Instructor:**  Professor Rob Wassmer  **Office Hours:** By appointment  **Cell:** (916) 752-2910  **Email:** [rwassme@csus.edu](mailto:rwassme@csus.edu) |

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| **Welcome to PPA 500!**  **Required Texts and Online Resources**  There is no new required textbook for PPA 500. Meltzer and Schwartz’s *Policy Analysis as Problem Solving* offers valuable lessons that you will apply here. It is worth a review in the months before classes start). I offer an example of a project and an academic paper type of MPPA Culminating Project from last semester on CANVAS.  I will ask you to submit assignments to me via my email in this course. Make sure to check your CSUS email account on a regular basis. |

**PPA 500** represents the beginning of the end of your MPPA journey. This course is not a rite of passage or a Herculean test of your stamina. It is not your *magnum opus* or a hazing ritual that you do simply because students before you had to.

Instead, the Culminating Project has three closely related purposes:

1. Integrate, synthesize, and apply.
2. Demonstrate learning objectives.
3. Showcase your capabilities.

This experience should help you answer multiple questions:

* *What can you do that you could not do before your graduate study?*
* *What are you capable of doing and contributing that distinguishes you in the world of policy and administration?*

You will reflect on these questions throughout the semester with your primary advisor and as a group during three Sunday night Zoom sessions and a final Culminating Project Showcase.

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| Course Information | ***Writing Expectations:*** *As always, submit well-written, typed, proofread writing assignments on time and with appropriate APA citations. Include a cover page containing your name, email, and assignment title. Use one-inch margins and 12-point font, pagination, and double-spacing. Unless otherwise described in instructions, papers should be analytical, and you should use the theories and concepts from class in your analysis*  *Your final policy/admin report (Option 1) or academic paper (Option 2) cannot be longer than 40 double-spaced pages (including an appendix).*  *To receive your MPPA/MSULD by completing a project, you must submit an “Executive Summary.” Here is a link that describes what an Executive Summary is* [*https://writingcenter.uagc.edu/writing-executive-summary*](https://writingcenter.uagc.edu/writing-executive-summary)*.* |

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| **Culminating Project/PPA 500 Course Prerequisites**   1. Advancement to candidacy 2. Completion of all but one of the core courses in the MPPA curriculum and one of the electives 3. GPA of 3.0 or better 4. Agreement with a primary faculty advisor (Ahrum, Amal, Ted, or Rob) on a culminating option, a topic, and the selection of an artifact(s) constituting prior systematic study of the topic.   **Culminating Project/PPA 500 Course Purpose**  The Culminating Project is meant to be less complicated than the past Thesis requirement because we offer two structured alternatives for you to select based on your interests, prior work in the MPPA program, strengths, and professional objectives. Your previous MPPA study also allows your entry into this class with a plan, an advisor, and a structure to complete the work. The *systematic study* of a topic required by the University for the capstone has started through the artifact assignments(s) produced in earlier MPPA courses. The Culminating Project’s purpose is three-fold:   1. **Integrate, synthesize, and apply.** Over your graduate study, you have worked with a dizzying array of tools, frameworks, concepts, and ways of thinking from economics, political science, management and administration, behavioral science, ethics, quantitative and qualitative research methods and design, public finance, institutions, and more. In the capstone, we weave these strands together, and you apply them to an actual policy and administration problem. 2. **Demonstrate learning objectives.**  Conferral of the MPPA degree represents the achievement by a student of [19 learning objectives](https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/public-policy-administration/_internal/_documents/guide-mapping-ppa-specific-learning-objectives-2020.pdf) in three general groups: critical and integrative thinking, practical application, and professional role. 3. **Showcase your capabilities.**  While #2 is necessary for the faculty to confer a degree, demonstrating your learning is crucial for professional employers, future education like doctoral study or fellowships, and, of course, yourself. The products of your culminating experience are an opportunity to showcase what you can do in multiple ways and for varied audiences. |

### **What is a Master’s Project in the CSU?**

The California Code of Regulations: Title 5 Education, Section 40510 defines a project as: *A significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality, independent thinking, appropriate form, organization, and rationale. It is described and summarized in a written executive summary that includes the project’s significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation.*

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| **January 2023 Preparation for Week 1 Meeting (Sunday, January 29)**   * **Step 1:** Understand that the two standard options for an MPPA Culminating Project are a report on a public policy or administration topic, or a paper written in the style of an academic journal articles. Examples of each of these are on CANVAS site for this course. You may only pursue another form of Culminating Project with express permission of the PPA 500 instructor and te agreement of your primary advisor. * **Step 2:** Look over the artifacts (final assignments) you completed in your previous MPPA coursework and choose at least one of them (or more if they are related) as the basis for your Culminating Project. For example, in PPA 220A this would have been a Policy Prospectus, in PPA 220B a group presentation of a specific policy problem and an evaluation of alternatives to mitigate it, and in PPA 207 a regression study in the form of an academic paper. From this choice, identify the specific policy or administrative topic you will focus on throughout the semester of PPA 500 to generate your Culminating Project. Write this topic in an email as a problem statement as described in Meltzer and Schwartz (M&S) pp. 40-42. Then attach to this email the artifact(s) from a PPA course in which you have introduced, defined, and explored this topic. This artifact acts as an overview of what you know about your topic at this point. Send this email to [rwassme@csus.edu](mailto:rwassme@csus.edu) (and your primary advisor if different) by Sunday, January 22. * **Step 3:** Sketch a map or diagram of your chosen artifact(s) that relate to your chosen Culminating Project topic. This does not need to be a direct relationship—it could be, for example, that you have conducted a CAM analysis or stakeholder map on a different topic, but you believe you could apply a similar method to better understanding your Culminating Project topic. Have this map or diagram ready for our first Sunday meeting on January 29. Do not worry if your artifact(s) does not fit neatly in a box with a decorative ribbon. You are doing well if this exercise leads to further questions like: Where are the gaps? What did you learn from artifacts that did not turn out as planned? Did the economics, political science, management, quantitative, and research design artifacts produce contradictory results? How did the course framework from each artifact relate to the other frameworks? The purpose of all this is begin to formalize the systematic studyof the topic using your artifact(s). * **Step 4:** Prepare a PowerPoint lightning talk of no more than five minutes (slides) for presentation at our first group meeting on Sunday, January 29. Your plan is in the early stages of development, so do not worry about extensive detail or coherence. Do not present recommendations or conclusions. Focus on problem definition(s), methods, concepts, frameworks, and tools you used to explore and understand your topic. Present an overview of your artifact map. What questions, tensions, gaps, and new approaches might you pursue as we move forward this semester? |
| **Grading**  In PPA 500, you can only receive a grade of Pass or No Credit. Grading is simple: if you finish all elements of your Culminating Project, present your showcase, and earn your primary advisor’s approval, you earn a Pass. If you do not, you will earn a No Credit and must retake the course to complete the MPPA. Once you submit your culminating project paperwork to the Sac State Office of Graduate Studies, the RP earned in this course changes to a Credit towards degree completion. You will earn a grade of Pass *if and only if* you have: (1) completed the course milestones (presentation and written, see below) along the way; (2) completed all the products required for your Culminating Project; (3) participated in all our required class sessions, and (4) secured the concurrence of your primary advisor and the Department Chair (me). The firm expectation is that you will finish this all in the spring 2023 semester.  I understand that you have other personal and professional obligations (I do, too). The schedule below is a shared contract allowing us to plan our work in that context. If you are anxious about other stressors and life demands interrupting your class work, my advice is to take every opportunity to complete the requested milestones ahead of schedule. We are meeting as a class for only a small percentage of the normally scheduled semester hours. So, use the non-class time to complete your project. And always remember, your primary advisor (listed below) is just that. You should consult with them throughout the semester, send them all required assignments asked for here, and abide by the additional exercise, assignment, and/or meeting times that they choose to set up. It is essential to your success that you work closely with your primary advisor, but also attend and participate in the sessions when we do meet as a group.  **Differently Abled Students** (campus refers to students with disabilities)  Should you need assistance with portions of class due to being differently abled, please let me know as soon as possible. The University offers services and I would be glad to refer you to the appropriate campus unit. You can also find more information via the following link: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/>  **Class Participation & Absences**  We have a tremendous opportunity to learn from each other. The best way to do that is to be prepared for class and willing to share your own thoughts and experiences. You will receive a reduced class participation grade if you consistently fail to engage in class participation.  I expect you to attend all class sessions unless you have a compelling reason not to do so. Please notify me in advance if you need to miss a class. If you must be late, leave early, or miss a class for an emergency, please let me know.  **Basic Needs Support**  If you are experiencing challenges in food and/or stable housing, help is just a click, email or phone call away! Sacramento State offers basic needs support for students who are experiencing challenges in these areas. Please visit our Basic Needs website to learn more about your options and resources available <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/resources.html>. | |

**Late Assignments**

I will not accept late assignments unless you experience a highly unusual circumstance. You will find it challenging to accomplish your required Culminating Project and pass PPA 500 if you fall behind on assignments, so don’t hesitate to contact me immediately if you have difficulty meeting a deadline.

**Academic Honesty**

All PPA Faculty take issues of academic honesty (including plagiarism) seriously. If unfamiliar with the specifics of University policy in this area. I recommend you review the appropriate section of the University Policy Manual: <https://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/stu-100.htm>.

**Students and Project Topic (Tentative)**

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| Group # | Primary Advisor | Student Name | Culminating Project Topic |
| TBD | Professor  Ahrum Chang | Karina Martinez-Arroyo |  |
| TBD | Professor  Amal Kumar | Michael Valdez |  |
| TBD | Professor  Ted Lascher | Nicole Cropper |  |
| TBD | Professor  Ted Lascher | Justin Hearst |  |
| TBD | Professor  Ted Lascher | Sarah Vaira |  |
| TBD | Professor  Rob Wassmer | Connor Leahy |  |
| TBD | Professor  Rob Wassmer | Jake Linn |  |
| TBD | Professor  Rob Wassmer | Thomas Nguyen |  |
| TBD | Professor  Rob Wassmer | Alena Rybachuk |  |

I will do my best to capture your topic and subsequently pair you in groups that include students with similar topics, after I receive the information requested from you by January 22. Before turning in an assignment, I ask that you share it with another person in your assigned group for comment. Feel free to swap into another group, providing you both have the same primary advisor and agree to the change.

**PPA 500 Course Outline and Schedule**

I require your attendance at all Sunday evening meetings in the schedule below. Please note that I ask you to submit the assignments outlined below by the Saturday evening before they are due on a Sunday. I designed this assignment schedule to help ensure you stay on track for completion and should allow you to receive regular feedback on your progress.

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| **Date** | **Topics (Tentative)** | **Assignment** |
| Sunday, Jan 29  On Zoom  5:30-7:00 pm | **What is your MPPA Culminating Project contribution?**  PPA lenses and tools used  Your professional why?  Sketch or map of artifacts that relate to your topic  Rough working outline  Discuss format choice, audience analysis, and framing  Who is your client?  Why are they interested in your policy brief?  History of why/how this became a policy concern for  your client  Product promised for next meeting  How do you plan to seek advice from your primary advisor? | Due Jan 22 to [rwassme@csus.edu](mailto:rwassme@csus.edu)  Problem Statement  Artifact(s) from prior class(es)  Initial Artifact Map/Sketch  *Lightning PP Talk on Topics During Meeting* |
| Sunday, Feb 26  On Zoom  5:30-7:00 pm | **Have you completed the products promised at last meeting?**  Summarize your progress  What has been your greatest successes?  What do you need to concentrate on during further work?  Insights for others garnered from your primary advisor  Updated working outline  Products promised for next meeting | Lightning PP Talk on Topics During Meeting |
| Sunday, April 16  On Zoom  5:30-7:00 pm | **Are you on track to finish written product and present at MPPA Culminating Project Showcase?**  Important due dates  **May 5:** Final written version of report/paper & exec  summary due  **May 16:** Prepared to offer 10-minute (max) PP slide  presentation in MPPA Culminating Project Showcase  Summarize your progress  What has been your greatest successes?  What do you need to concentrate on during further work?  Insights for others garnered from your primary advisor  Updated working outline  Products promised for next meeting | Lightning PP Talk on Topics During Meeting |