

PPA 500

Culminating Experience

Fall 2022

Required Sunday night class dates:

Sept 11 & 25 (5:30–7 pm)

Oct 9 & 23 (5:30–7 pm)

Nov 6, 20, & 27 (5:30–7 pm)

Required Final Project Presentations:

Date TBD in early Dec 6 (6–9 pm)

Zoom Link:

<https://csus.zoom.us/j/84341341711>

Updated 8/1/2022



Instructor:

Professor Rob Wassmer

Office Hours: By appointment

Cell: (916) 752-2910

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Welcome to PPA 500!

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?*

We will reflect on these questions during the semester, and your Culminating Project will demonstrate the answers.

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 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.

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 2) or academic paper (Option 3) 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.uaqc.edu/writing-executive-summary>.

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 (Rob or Ted) on a culminating option, a topic, and the selection of artifacts constituting prior systematic study of the topic (Ahrum, Amal, and Christian could be a secondary advisor)

Culminating Project/PPA 500 Course Purpose

The Culminating Project may seem complicated because we offer structured alternatives for you to select based on your interests, prior work in the MPPA program, strengths, and professional objectives. But you are entering 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 your artifact(s). 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](#) 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.

Summer Preparation for Week 1 Meeting (Week of Sept 5)

- **Step 1:** Identify the policy or administrative topic you will focus on throughout the semester of PPA 500 to generate your admin or policy report. (1) Write this topic in an email as a problem statement as described in Meltzer and Schwartz (M&S) pp. 40-42. Select at least one artifact 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. (2) Include these artifacts as attachments in the email you send me. **This email to me (rwassme@csus.edu) is due Aug 1, 2022.**
- **Step 2:** Sketch a map or diagram of other artifacts that relate (or may relate) to this 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. (3) Include this map or diagram in PDF or picture form as an attachment in the email you send (hand drawn and converted by taking a picture of your drawing). Do not worry if your artifacts do not stack into a neat box with a decorative ribbon. 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? Here we are beginning to formalize the *systematic study* of the topic using your artifacts. (4) Briefly answer the previous questions in the body of the email you send me.
- **Step 3:** **Send the outcomes of revised Step 1 and first-draft Step 2 to (rwassme@csus.edu) by Aug 29, 2022.** Prepare a PowerPoint lightning talk for the week of Sept 5 on your topic and artifacts. A lightning talk is a five-minute presentation to the class on what you are doing and why you are doing it. 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 Reasonable Progress (RP) or No Credit (NC). Grading is simple: if you finish all elements of your Culminating Project, present your showcase, and earn your primary advisor's approval, you earn an RP. If you do not, you will earn an NC 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 RP *if and only if* you have: (1) completed the course milestones (presentation and written, see below) along the way; (2) completed all of the products required for your Culminating Project; (3) participated in all of 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 fall 2022 semester. Only in rare occurrences, and with the agreement of the PPA Department Chair (me), will I grant an RP without completing all these expectations.

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 milestones *ahead* of schedule. We are meeting as a class for less than half of the scheduled semester hours, so you should use the non-class time to complete your project. It is essential to your success that you attend and participate in the sessions when we do meet.

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 particular deadline. If Ted is your primary advisor, you should also share all your assignments with him (send them to your secondary advisor if you have one).

Academic Honesty

I 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)

Group #	Primary Advisor (Secondary)	Name	Topic
1	Ted	Chris E.	Too many GSAs have not been able to meet the requirements and timeline outlined under SGMA, generating regulatory compliance and over drafting concerns
1	Ted	Chris Z.	Climate change and increased reliance on renewable energy has rendered Californians with a vulnerable and unreliable electrical grid
2	Ted (Ahrum)	Maria	Enlightened perspective on the quality of reproductive health services provided to California residents
2	Ted	Vanessa	California K-12 students in rural communities are less likely than students from urban areas to go into higher education due to the lack of resources available in rural
2	Ted	Alex	California should address the increasing wealth and wage inequality between skilled and unskilled workers
3	Rob	Michael	Does exposure to various environmental pollutants negatively impact students' performance on standardized tests? (regression)
3	Rob	Analisa	California's immigrant populations need more comprehensive healthcare to combat the immigrant health paradox.
4	Rob	Diana	Early care and education policy, politics, and administration in California
4	Rob	Kyle	How has the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the opportunity gap between California's white, Asian, and wealthy student populations and their Black, Latino, and poor peers?
4	Rob (Amal)	Ryan	While California's community colleges have very low tuition, living costs remain a barrier to obtaining a college degree

I have done my best to capture your initial topic ideas and subsequently paired you in groups that include students with similar topics. 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 (Tentative)

I require your attendance at all evening meetings reflected in the schedule below. Please note that I ask you to submit the assignments outlined below in the week they are due for feedback. However, I will only provide a final review (pass/no pass) and sign-off on your completed Culminating Project at the end of the semester. I designed this assignment schedule to ensure you stay on track for completion and should allow you to receive regular feedback on your progress.

Date	Topic	Tentative Assignments for Option 2 (If Option 3, I will suggest other assignments)
<u>Sept 11</u> On Zoom 5:30-7:00 pm	What is your contribution? PPA lenses and tools Your professional <i>Why</i> Rough working outline Sketch or map of artifacts that relate to your topic Discuss format choice, audience analysis, and framing	Due Aug 29 (or earlier) to rwassme@csus.edu Artifact(s) from prior class(es) Initial Artifact Map/Sketch Revised Problem Statement <i>Lightning Talk on above</i>
<u>Sept 25</u> On Zoom 5:30-7:00 pm	Finalize your problem statement Who is your client? Why are they interested in your policy brief? History of why/how this became a policy concern for your client?	Due (5 to 10 pages that describe topics covered) Figures, charts, and tables that illustrate Think about Munger's Triangles and review Meltzer and Schwartz pp. 43-45
<u>Oct 9</u> On Zoom 5:30-7:00 pm	Why is this a policy concern worthy of government intervention? How do you understand what is known about your policy problem?	Due (5 to 10 pages that describe topics covered) Reference List and Review of Previous Work What policy report example is your model? <i>Lightning Talk on above</i>
<u>Oct 23</u> On Zoom 7:30-9:00 pm	Review of Previous Work How do you communicate implications and alternatives? Crafting and refining your issue analysis	Due (outline of primary analysis)
<u>Nov 6</u> On Zoom 5:30-7:00 pm	Full primary analysis	Due (20 to 30 pages) <i>Lightning Talk on above</i>
<u>Nov 20</u> On Zoom 5:30-7:00 pm	What are the political/institutional/administrative hindrances to implementation?	Due (3 to 5 pages)
<u>Nov 27</u> On Zoom 5:30-7:00 pm	Full project done What do you need to know to wrap it up? How to write an Executive Summary How to present in the showcase	Due (Full Project) <i>Lightning Talk on above</i>
<u>Dec 2 @ 3 pm</u>	<i><u>Deadline to Submit to OGS</u></i>	
<u>Early Dec</u> In Person Day and Place TBD 6:00-9:00 pm	Present your analysis in a showcase that includes other PPA students and faculty, friends and family, and client/stakeholders	Final PP Presentation (15 minutes max with time for questions) <i>Bring 12 paper copies of Exec Summary for the student audience</i>