**PPDE 682 Capstone in Nonprofit Leadership and Management**

**Term:** Spring 2017 Tuesdays, 6:00 - 9:20pm

**Location:** RGL 215

**Professor:** Nicole Esparza

**Office:** RGL 208

**Office hours:** By appointment

**E-Mail:** neesparz@usc.edu

##### Course Description

This capstone course is the final requirement for the MNLM degree, and thus aims to apply and integrate the knowledge and techniques of core competencies taught throughout the curriculum.

The focus of the course is on the professional practice of nonprofit leadership and management, which includes applying management and leadership theories, relying on strategic thinking and planning, understanding organizations in context, using ethical approaches to make key decisions, and promoting the public value for the sector.

The course is designed around the concept of learning in action. Therefore, your major task will be to produce a report resolving a problem or conducting an analysis for a client organization. The course is structured to provide a blend of in-class discussions about theoretical principles you have learned throughout your coursework, and application of these principles through case studies and analyses of real-world situations. During this course, you will work in teams of four or five for a client on a semester-long project for a nonprofit or philanthropic organization.  This project might entail recommendations for better managing the client’s organization, new methods for advocating for social change, or strategies for funding and community engagement.  At the conclusion of the course, you will present your recommendations to the client. Class sessions will include lectures, discussions, group exercises, guest practitioners, evaluation of relevant cases, and work on a particular project. Student learning will be achieved through reading assigned material, participation in class activities, and completion of required written assignments. Furthermore, you are expected to learn from each other by sharing your academic, practical, and personal knowledge and experience of the requirements of effective public administration. Skills in problem analysis, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and oral and written communication will be honed throughout the semester. By the end of the semester, you should have developed a strong foundation for success in future leadership and managerial positions and on-going career development.

Prerequisites: (PPD 542 and PPD 675 and PPD 689)

##### Learning Goals and Objectives

As one of the final courses required for completion of the MA in Nonprofit Leadership and Management, the capstone experience should provide a setting for the integration of core knowledge, skills, and values acquired throughout your coursework. Course learning objectives include:

* Nonprofit leadership. Enhance the ability to speak, listen, write, analyze, think creatively and strategically, collaborate, take risks, make and implement decisions.
* Conduct research on public problems. Investigate, analyze, and address policy and administration problems within nonprofit organizations.
* Creation and assessment of public value. Identification and enhancement of public value in communities through the actions of nonprofit organizations.
* Analyze and manage. Apply strategic management approaches in improving the performance of nonprofit organizations.
* Program Evaluation. Evaluate and assess the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations in achieving their mission, purpose and goals.
* Team management. Develop a team management system and a work plan to support collaboration and interface with the client.
* Client relations. Meet with the clients and keep the client apprised of progress, be respectful of the organizational and political environment within which the client operates.

##### Reading Material

Readings that are required in advance of class meetings are identified in the syllabus. The instructor may suggest other readings as necessary for the development of project methods. Students will also be responsible for reading the literature identified by the student team in conducting research related to the project. Three books are required. Articles and chapters are available on the course Blackboard site. <https://blackboard.usc.edu/>

### Required Texts:

Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E.M. (2015). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving.* CQ Press.

Mintrom, M. (2003). *People Skills for Policy Analysis.* Georgetown Press.

Crutchfield, L. & McLeod Grant, H. (2012). *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits.* Jossey-Bass.

**Course Grading and Requirements**

The course grade will be based on five components. It is designed so that grades are roughly based on 50% individual work and 50% group work.

### Participation (10%)

Active engagement in general class discussions, case analyses, and group exercises is an important element in the learning experience in this class. Students must attend class regularly and prepare for participation in discussions. Students will be assessed on participation reflecting attendance (including arriving for class on time and staying until the end of the session), the quantity and quality of input in class discussions, and the extent to which they stay focused on class activities (rather than, for example, checking phone messages, texts, and emails, surfing the web, or engaging in side conversations not relevant to the focus of the class).

### Case analyses (10%)

A number of times during the semester, class discussion will focus on the analysis of a case that exemplifies the challenges involved in making decisions in the context of the nonprofit organizations. To prepare for these discussions, students are required to write a brief statement (450-500 words, or about one page single-spaced) that analyses the key issues involved in the case and summarizes your thoughts about the recommended course(s) of action. More details regarding these assignments will be provided later. Grading will be on a 3-point scale, with a 3 indicating a very good analysis, a 2 indicating an adequate analysis, and a 1 indicating a weak analysis. The total points you accumulate on these analyses will be converted in 10% incorporated into the calculation of your course grade.

### Individual Research Memo (10%)

All individuals in each group are required to inform themselves on the broader intellectual, political, and organizational context of the issue through a review of pertinent published literature (academic studies, government reports, etc.) Each group member will write a 2-to-3-page (single-spaced) literature review memo to the group that summarizes his or her independent thoughts on the issue. Groups should work together to “parse out” their understanding of the issue in a manner that permits the individual research memos to speak to the group project as a whole. These memos may then be incorporated into the group’s final research report. Due February 14th before class.

### MAP Assignment (10%)

The Management Advancement Plan (MAP) assignment encourages students to create and assess their professional goals, knowledge, skills, values, and abilities. It serves as a personal strategic plan that “MAPs” where students are currently in terms of professional knowledge and skills, where you want to go in ten years, and how you plan to get there. Thus, this assignment is an opportunity for students to reflect upon your life and career in the nonprofit sector. More details regarding this assignment will be provided later. Due at the beginning of class Tuesday March 21th.

### Organizational Management Project (Parts A, B, C & D) (60% in Total)

Each student will be assigned to a management project that will comprise a semester-long project done for a nonprofit organization. Students will work in teams and collaborate in the researching, analyzing, writing, and presenting of each project. This assignment has four parts/deliverables (described below).

### *Resume and Writing Sample*

Students must upload an updated resume and an individual writing sample to the appropriate links under the Assignments tab on Blackboard no later than Sunday, by 11:59pm January 15, 2017. Following review by the instructor, the resumes will be provided to the client.

### *Work Log*

Students are expected to maintain an individual, personal work log to hand in with the draft prospective, final perspective, draft report, final report, and presentation.

### *Part A: Research Prospectus (Draft & Final) (15%):*

Each team will prepare a 10-to-12-page (single-spaced) prospectus, for approval by the client and instructor. This will include a brief issue statement/literature review, researchable questions, research methodology, and work plan. Students will “define” the problem from the perspective of the client and with consideration of public values such as efficiency and equity, scope a project that can be completed with the resources available (time and team skills), develop the appropriate research design, and identify data needs and analytic frameworks. This will inevitably require narrowing and refining of the issue or problem focus of the project. The instructor will review and critique a draft prior to submission to the client, and the score will be weighted between the individual and final versions. The draft prospectus will be evaluated on a 10-point scale, and the quality of the revisions incorporated into the final version will be evaluated on a 5-point scale.

The draft is due by 11:59pm Monday February 20th. Each group member must contribute to the draft; therefore, I would like each team member to upload his or her specific contribution. The final version is due by 11:59pm Tuesday February 28th.

### *Part B: Organizational Project Briefing (15%):*

Each group is required to prepare a briefing (15-20 minutes in length, not including questions from the instructor and class) in which group members make a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation to the class that reviews their project and presents their findings. These briefings will take place during class on April 18, and they will be evaluated on a 15-point scale taking into account my assessment as well as those of the other members of the class. A copy of the presentation should be sent to me via email by the beginning of class.

### *Part C: Client Deliverable (25%):*

Each group is required to prepare a written report for the client that accomplishes the goals of the project. A draft of this report is due by 11:59pm Monday, April 10th. Groups will be given suggestions for revisions, and based on these suggestions as well as input from the class briefing, groups must then upload a final version of the report by 11:59pm Tuesday April 25th. The draft and final report and final presentation will be evaluated on a 25-point scale.

Powerpoint or Prezi presentation to the client will be scheduled sometime between April 27-May 5th.

### *Part D: Peer Review (5%):*

Peer evaluations will be used to assess each student’s individual contributions to the group project. This evaluation will be based on a structured peer-review instrument that is also used to evaluate group contributions in the MPP Policy Analysis Practicum. Your evaluations of the other members of your group are due by 7pm Tuesday May 9th.

### To summarize, the course grade is assigned as follows:

Class participation 10

Case analyses 10

Individual Research Memo 10

MAP assessment 10

Organizational Management

Part A 15

Part B 15

Part C 25

Part D 5

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**Total points 100pts**

***Form and Style.*** All products should be single-spaced, with 12-point type and one-inch margins. Page lengths do not include attachments such as appendices, references, or tables/charts. All assignments must be written in plain, concise prose, as described in Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. The client also will have the opportunity to provide expectations with regard to form and style.

***Submission policies.*** Assignments are due on the dates listed below and uploaded onto blackboard. If it is a group assignment, then only one copy is necessary. Assignment grades will be penalized 10% for each day late. After one week, late papers and assignments will not be accepted unless the student has a physician-certified illness or injury or has obtained permission from me in advance. Make-up assignments will not be given. Students must complete all assignments to earn a passing grade.

##### Academic Conduct

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriatesanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

### Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

### Emergency Preparedness

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

##### Course Schedule

*Assigned readings should be completed for the day they are listed*

# Week 1, January 10: Course Introduction

Course overview, student and instructor introductions, and assignment of teams for case studies and organizational assessments.

McGaw, D. and Weschler, L. (1999). Romancing the capstone: The jewel of public value. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 5(2), 89-105.

***Reminder Due:*** *Resume and writing sample due by 11:59pm January 15th.*

# Week 2, January 17 Problem Definition and Issue Diagnosis

Foundations for the practice of problem solving in today’s environment, and an expanded role for nonprofit organizations.

\*We will meet with client for an interview.

Bardach & Patashnik. (2015). Introduction, Step One: Define the Problem, and Step Two: Assemble Some Evidence. (pp. xv-xx, 1-18).

Darling, M., Perry, C., & Moore, J. (2005). Learning in the Thick of it. *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 2005.

Daudelin, M.W. (1996). Learning from Experience through Reflection. *Organizational Dynamics* 24(3): 36-48.

# Week 3, January 24: Assembling Evidence and Critiquing Literature

# Past Capstone Participant Panel

A panel of past capstone students will discuss what they learned from capstone projects and offer suggestions to teams as they structure project plans

Bardach & Patashnik (2015). Step Three: Construct the Alternatives, Step Four: Select the Criteria, and Appendix E: Tips for Working with Clients (pp. 18-46, 181-204).

*Strategic Planning and Management Readings*

Allison, M., & Kaye, J. (2015). Introduction. *Strategic planning for nonprofit organizations: a practical guide for dynamic times*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Porter, M.E. (1996). What is Strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, Nov/Dec 1996.

Mankins, M. & Steele, R. (2006). Stop Making Plans, Start Making Decisions. *Harvard Business Review*, January 2006.

# Week 4, January 31: Work Plans and Project Management

Mintrom, M. (2003). Chapter 6: Working in Teams, Chapter 7: Facilitating Meetings, Chapter 9: Conflict Management. *People Skills for Policy Analysts*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Moore, T. (1991). A Practical Guide for Managing Planning Projects. *Journal of the American Planning Association*,57(2), 212-222.

*SWOT Analysis & Planning Readings:*

Better Evaluation. (2014). *SWOT Analysis.* Author, May 2014.

Day, G.S., Schoemaker, P.J.H. (2005). Scanning the Periphery. *Harvard Business Review*, November.

Case: To Build A Different Model: The Case for Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc. (handed out in class)

***Due:*** *Case analysis of Affordable Housing, Inc due before class.*

# Week 5, February 7: Gathering Data and Determining Best Practices

Bardach & Patashnik. (2015). Part II: Assembling Evidence and Part IV: Smart (Best) Practices. (pp. 83-111, 125-139).

Yin, R. K. (2003). Chapter 4. *Case Study Research: design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Dichter, S., Adams, T., & Ebrahim, A. 2016. “The Power of Lean Data.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review* winter 2016.

# Week 6, February 14: Proposal Workshop

Miller, D. C., & Salkind, N. J. (2002). Chapter 2: Basic Design for the Design of a Social Research Proposal. *Handbook of research design & social measurement.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Musso, J., Biller, R., & Myrtle, R. (2000). Tradecraft: Professional writing as problem solving. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Managemen*t, 19(4), 635-646.

Mintrom, M. (2003). *People skills for policy analysts*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, Chapter 8: Writing for Multiple Audiences.

Example of previous capstone project proposal: TBA

***Due:*** *Individual research memo due before class.*

***Reminder due:*** *Research Prospectus draft and work log due by 11:59pm Monday February 20th.*

# Week 7, February 21: Review of Research Prospectus

We will go over the draft prospectus.

# Week 8, February 28: Creating Public Value

Bardach & Patashnik. (2015). Step Five: Project the Outcomes, Step Six: Confront the Trade-Offs, and Step Seven: Stop, Focus, Narrow, Deepen, Decide! (pp. 46-72).

Moore, M. (1995). Chapter 1: Managerial Imagination, and Chapter 2: Defining Public Value. *Creating public value: Strategic management in government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UniversityPress.

Crutchfield, & McLeod Grant. (2012). Introduction and Chapter 1. *Forces for Good.* Jossey-Bass. (pp. 13-46).

***Reminder due:*** *Final Research Prospectus and work log due by 11:59pm Tuesday February 28th.*

# Week 9, March 7: Fieldwork

We will not meet this week. Instead concentrate on conducting fieldwork/ data collection before spring break. Also read:

Crutchfield, & McLeod Grant. (2012). Read Chapters 2-3; Skim Chapters 4-7. *Forces for Good.* Jossey-Bass. (pp. 47- 202).

# Week 10, March 14: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

# Week 11, March 21: MAPS Conversation and Strategic Leadership

Here we will discuss data collection and fieldwork up to date.

Mintrom, M. (2003). Chapter 10: Professional Networking, and Chapter 11: Pursuing Excellence. *People skills for policy analysts*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Case: LA Philharmonic and Walt Disney Concert Hall: Turnaround Vehicle? (A) (handed out in class)

***Due:*** *MAP Assignment due before class.*

***Due:*** *Case analysis of LA Philharmonic and Walt Disney Concert Hall due before class.*

# Week 12, March 28: Analyzing Data

Readings TBA

*Sustaining Strategic Leadership Readings:*

York, P. (2009).*The Sustainability Formula*. TCC Group.

Case: LA Philharmonic and Walt Disney Concert Hall: Turnaround Vehicle? (B) (handed out in class)

Case: Crutchfield, & McLeod Grant. (2012). Chapter 8: Sustaining Impact and Chapter 10: Thriving in Tumultuous Times. *Forces for Good.* Jossey-Bass. (pp. 203-232).

***Due:*** *Cases analysis of Forces for Good due before class.*

# Week 13, April 4: Visually Presenting Results

Pomerantz, J.R. (2015). *Accelerating Evaluation Use Through Infographics and Visual Design.* Webinarhandout prepared for USAID, PPL LER.

Better Evaluation. (2014). *Infographics to make your evaluation results go viral*. Author, April 2014.

[**https://www.good.is/infographics**](https://www.good.is/infographics)

***Reminder due:*** *Draft final report for client and work log due by 11:59pm Monday, April 10th.*

# Week 14, April 11: Project Briefing Preparation

Former clients will discuss their presentations and what makes/made a successful of unsuccessful presentation.

Bardach & Patashnik. (2015). Step Eight: Tell Your Story (pp. 72-82).

Mintrom, M. (2003). Chapter 5: Giving Presentations. *People skills for policy analysts*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

# Week 15, April 18: In class Project Briefing

This week we will hold the organizational briefing, which is a 15-20 minute presentation on the final results that will be presented to your client.

***Due:*** *Project Briefing and work log due in class.*

# Week 16, April 25: Client Deliverables

***Due:*** *Final report to be given to client and work log due by 11:59pm Tuesday, April 25th.*

# Final Evaluation

***Due:*** *Presentation to client organization: TBD April 27-May 5th*

***Due:*** *Peer evaluation distributed after the presentation and due by 7pm Tuesday, May 9th.*