COURSE INFORMATION
Course title: Research Methods in Policy Analysis
Course number: PUAD 5180
Time: Wednesdays 11:30 – 14:30
Room: 1007 Rowe Building
Tutorial time: Fridays 12:30 – 14:00
Tutorial room: 1014 Rowe Building

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Name: Dominika Wranik, PhD
Office number: 3012 Rowe Building
Office hours: Wednesdays 14:30 – 15:30 (or by appointment)
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TEACHING ASSISTANT
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Office hours: Thursday 15:30 – 16:30 (or by appointment)
Phone: 904.999.1315
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REQUIRED WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Weight of components</th>
<th>Total weight in final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Project</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>6 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project presentation</td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>25 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td></td>
<td>45 %</td>
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</tbody>
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NOTES
• A student must pass the final examination in order to be eligible for a passing grade in the course.
• Students are responsible for all material covered in all classes. A student who misses a class must obtain the material from fellow class mates. Any student is welcome to ask the professor pointed questions about the course material at any time (and particularly during office hours).
• Every student is responsible for every part of their group’s assignments, presentations, and the final report. The professor reserves the right to ask questions of any group member about the content of their group’s work. A student who is not able to respond to questions meaningfully might lose marks.
GRADE DISTRIBUTION

In accordance with the Dalhousie University Faculty of Graduate Studies guidelines, the following pass standard applies:

"Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations stipulate that graduate students must achieve a minimum, or passing, grade of "B-" in all classes required of their degree program. Any lower grade will be recorded as a failure."

The grading scheme for this course is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical (%) Equivalent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>65-69</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Be prepared, read ahead, be on time, be awake, work through problems, get help early, and you will do well. Avoid leaving everything to the last minute.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to provide students with hands on experience in research and data collection, with specific focus on public policy issues. Students are to “get their hands dirty” – to use sophisticated technical jargon. The course gives an introduction of a variety of research methods, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, which will prove useful in public sector work. The list of methods covered is not exhaustive – there are many approaches to social research and only those most common in policy analysis will be explored.

Course Goal
To provide students with tools and experience necessary to plan, carry out, and critically assess a research project to be used in support of public policy decision making.

Course Objectives
Students will be able to create and execute a research plan on any issue related to public policy. Students will gain the skill to take an objective stance on public policy issues, upon critically reviewing a variety of information sources. Students will be able to evaluate the quality of research performed by others.

COURSE MATERIALS


Some supplementary readings might be provided from a variety of sources.
## CLASS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 6th</td>
<td>Introduction to social research; Research design;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class project selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 13th</td>
<td>Literature review; Quantitative versus qualitative methods;</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20th</td>
<td>Qualitative methods – historical records, field work, observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27th</td>
<td>Qualitative interviews – unstructured and semi-structured; focus groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 3rd</td>
<td>Questionnaire design – part 1</td>
<td>A1 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10th</td>
<td>Questionnaire design – part 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17th</td>
<td>Research design; Proposing research methodology in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19th</td>
<td>Interview workshop</td>
<td>A2 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24th</td>
<td>Reading week</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3rd</td>
<td>Focus group workshop</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 10th</td>
<td>Pilot questionnaire administration</td>
<td>A3 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 17th</td>
<td>Quantitative methods review – focus on questionnaire analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24th</td>
<td>SPSS workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31st</td>
<td>Analysis of qualitative data; writing research reports</td>
<td>A4 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7th</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 9th</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>FINAL EXAMINATION</td>
<td>EXAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12th</td>
<td>FINAL REPORT DUE</td>
<td>REPORT</td>
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</table>
DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR PROJECT

The major project in the course is a report on the state of a selected policy, the effectiveness of the policy, and policy components in need of improvement. At the end of the course, the final report will be submitted to a client, who will use it for policy improvement or as a basis for further research. Students must ensure that their work is of high standard and professional quality.

All assignments are to serve as working documents toward the completion of the final report. It is expected that the feedback on the assignments and presentation will be used to improve the components of the final report. The components must be refined to ensure that they mold into one coherent and logical document. While the assignments are building blocks towards the final project, all three must be flushed out and additional components must be provided to create one structured package.

Students will work in teams of five students. Team work is standard practice within government. Learning to balance a variety of perspectives is an important part of the experience gained in this course. All team members are responsible for the content of all their assignments and final report, and are responsible for the management of team dynamics. In cases of adversarial team dynamics, the professor may be consulted. Under no circumstances should a team discuss team dynamics with the client.

Much of the students’ work relies on other people. Students have to schedule semi-structured interviews with their client, a semi-structured interview with a government or program representative, conduct five semi-structured interviews with representatives of the target population, and administer a questionnaire to at least 100 members of the target population (or a substitute population, depending on the project). Solid planning is a key to success.

Below is a brief description of each assignment, and the main project. The instructions below are not detailed. Some additional instructions will be provided. Beyond this, students are expected to work independently, which means that they begin with minimal instruction, think through class discussions, apply appropriate concepts, and discover problem areas about which to ask.

**Assignment 1 – Literature and document review**
You will conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on the topic of your choice, critically analyze the literature and synthesize findings. The goal of the literature review is to flush out a primary research question that you will explore throughout the course using a variety of methods. The research question is to logically flow from the literature review.

Maximum 4 pages, single spaced, 1 inch margins on each side, 10 point font Arial, not Arial narrow. The space limit does not include the bibliography. Do not use footnote citation, provide all references in the bibliography at the end of your document.

**Assignment 2 – Interview guide and Focus group guide**
You will begin the quest to answer your research question with qualitative semi-structured interviews. This assignment asks you to develop a guide to semi-structured interview that you will hold with at least one (1) government representative (or another key informant), and a guide to the semi-structured interviews that you will hold with at least five (5) members of the target population. The total minimum number of interviews to be held is six (6). The total number of interview guides to be prepared is two (2). There might be overlap between your interview guides,
as some of the questions you ask the key informant might be the same as ones you ask the target population.

Assignment 3 – Draft questionnaire
You will prepare a quantitative questionnaire that is to be administered to the target population served by the policy you have chosen to analyze. The questionnaire will be administered to your class members during the March 10th class. This assignment cannot be late under any circumstances. You will receive instant feedback from your classmates, and feedback from the instructors. The feedback will allow you to revise the questionnaire and begin questionnaire administration. You have to plan administration of the questionnaire well, in order to be able to collect and enter all responses by March 31st.

There is no page specification for this assignment, but keep in mind that lengthy questionnaires typically have lower response rates.

Assignment 4 – Finalized questionnaire with responses
You will submit a final version of your questionnaire that you have administered to at least 100 members of your target population. By this date, you will have entered all responses, and will be able to provide the responses received for each question. This requires that you have set up an SPSS dataset for your data and have entered all responses. The workshop on March 24th will help you with the setting up of the SPSS dataset. Ideally, you will have a finalized version of your questionnaire to bring to the workshop.

Final Research report
The final report is a compilation of your four assignments, with the additional requirement that you analyze all quantitative and qualitative findings, draw conclusions from your findings, and provide policy recommendations. Your analysis needs to be completed by the presentation date. After the presentation, you will have the chance to revise your project if needed. A final copy in writing is due on April 12th.

The final report is a report of findings. The document must situate your research within the literature, pose research questions, and present the answers that you have been able to find. The report should have the following components. If this template is not appropriate for your particular case study, please discuss with me directly. Adjustments can be made, but please make them in collaboration with me.

- Introduction
- Literature/document review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion of findings
- Conclusion
- Appendices – research instruments

You will revise all research instruments according to feedback provided. You will have opportunity to learn in class, and to ask questions about the analysis of your data, as well as the presentation and discussion of findings. Your final project will be a deliverable to government. Please make sure it is professional.
Your final report will be no longer than 10 pages, using the same formatting specifications as assignment 1. The 10 page limit does not include appendices and bibliography.

**Presentations**

Presentations take place on April 7th and April 9th. Each presentation will take roughly 30 minutes, with 10 minutes left for comments from the audience. The purpose of the presentation is to share your work with the class, and to garnish feedback. Feedback is useful for revisions to the final project.

**Submission guidelines**

- All your work must be submitted electronically in one document.
- The **document titles** should be
  - A1 – name name name;
  - A2 – name name name;
  - A3 – name name name;
  - A4 – name name name;
  - Final report – name name name.
- The submissions should carry the following **subject lines** in the e-mails “PUAD5180 A1”; “PUAD5180 A2”, etc.

This allows for organization of your documents and speedier turnaround.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

I have designed the course in order to enable you to carry out an analysis of a policy (or policy related issue). Policy analysis cannot be performed in isolation from the understanding of the theory and methods of research. While you will learn a variety of research tools that are most common in policy analysis, the presentation of these tools is embedded within a broader theoretical framework of social research.

I am in the classroom to facilitate your learning and to guide you through the completion of the major project. My role is threefold: (i) to provide instruction; (ii) to answer questions; and (iii) to evaluate your work. Your role is to take an active approach to your own learning, read the course material, read whatever additional material you find will improve your learning, and to keep on top of your course work. Given the practical nature of the course, while there is value in my presentation of concepts, there is also great value in your application of those concepts. Your key to success is to work on the understanding of the theoretical basis behind a variety of research methods, and to apply those methods to a given research situation.

It is my assumption that you are all bright students and have enrolled in the MPA program because you are motivated to learn what the program has to offer. You want to take skills with you for future employment. Evaluation and grading of your work signals how well you have mastered the skills. My goal is to provide truthful and fair signals, and to provide suggestions for improvement.

**UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Dalhousie defines plagiarism as the presentation of the work of another author in such a way as to give one’s reader reason to think it to be one’s own. Plagiarism is a form of academic fraud and is considered a serious academic offence, which may lead to loss of credit suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree.
The commitment of the Faculty of Management is to graduate future leaders of business, government and civil society who manage with integrity and get things done. This is a nonnegotiable in our community and it starts with your first class at Dalhousie University. So when you submit any work for evaluation in this course or any other, please ensure that you are familiar with your obligations under the Faculty of Management’s Academic Integrity Policies and that you understand where to go for help and advice in living up to our standards. You should be familiar with the Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations; so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize and cite information for use in assignments is called being “information literate.” Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through online tutorials. See Researching Ethically tutorial at http://infolit.library.dal.ca/tutorials/Plagiarism/.

Do not plagiarize. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, please see http://plagiarism.dal.ca/Student%20Resources/.

Please note that Dalhousie University now subscribes to Turnitin.com, a computer based service that checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie, there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Dalhousie web site at: http://www.registrar.dal.ca/calendar/ug/UREG.htm#12.

Furthermore, the University’s Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer readable format, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by Turnitin.com. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Copies of student papers checked by this process will be retained by Turnitin.com.

Finally: If you suspect cheating by colleagues or lapses in standards by a professor, you may use the confidential email: managementAIO@dal.ca which is read only by the Dean of Management.