PMPA 802: Approaches to Policy Analysis
Fall/Winter 2017/18

Instructor: Eugene Lang
E-mail: **Eugenelang4@gmail.com or Eugene.Lang@Queensu.ca**

Office hours: Friday: 11:30--1:00 p.m. or by appointment for another time.
Office: Room 330, RSH
Course time
Fall term: Fridays 1:30-4:30 p.m., Saturdays 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Winter term: Fridays, 8:30-11:30, Saturdays 12:30-3:30
Location: RSH Room 448

<u>Course Objectives</u>

The core of the course will consist of a specific, evidence-based policy analysis project/ exercise, carried out in groups of 3-5 students, who will present findings each month on various elements of the project.

Student groups will be formed based on areas of common interest among students. Topics will be selected by the groups in consultation with the instructor. The project will take the form of a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC), the main instrument required for policy, program and legislative approval in the federal government.

At the end of the course students will understand, through experience, the process of effective problem identification, problem solving, policy design, policy implementation and strategic policy communications--all of which are critical to effective policy analysis and the provision of advice to government. Students will gain experience in:
- Researching, shaping, writing and presenting a **Memorandum to Cabinet** and associated briefs;
- Identifying a key problem/issue which needs resolution through policy change
- Researching and analyzing the scope, scale and ramifications of the policy problem
- Identifying policy options to help resolve the policy problem
- Thinking strategically, and framing policy issues and options for government decision-makers
- Developing effective policy argumentation
- Writing policy documents in a clear, concise and precise fashion for decision-makers
- Delivering oral briefings suitable for senior decision makers on complex policy issues
- Preparing realistic, implementable recommendations for a course of action
- Identifying financial and HR implications and risks of their recommendations
- Articulating expected results and how they can be measured (key indicators)

- Preparing a **Strategic Communications Plan**
- Preparing an **Implementation plan** with stages of delivery and expected results
- Preparing a **Parliamentary Plan** and environment analysis
- Preparing and presenting a summary PowerPoint presentation of the final MC

Memoranda to Cabinet (Templates):
The Federal Government provides Templates to draft a MC as well as a Drafter's guide:

http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=mc/mc-eng.htm

These templates provide the basic model and structure we will follow in preparing the MC:
1) the Ministerial Recommendations /MR (about six single spaced pages in English, legal sized paper)
2) Annexes X,Y and Z (two pages each, legal sized paper)

Preparing a MC requires extensive background research, consultation, analysis, cost estimation, consideration of political and parliamentary dynamics, implementation feasibility, and implications on the government's fiscal framework and policy/legislative agenda. The MC needs to be written in a clear, concise and persuasive manner, free of jargon, such that non-experts can grasp its analysis and recommendations—recognizing that the ultimate audience for MCs are Ministers who are not normally policy experts or technocrats in the given field. A significant emphasis will be placed on developing strong briefing and presentation skills, both of which are central to the policy analysis process itself.

Please note that students who wish to present a MC in an area of provincial or territorial jurisdiction can do so and will use, for the purpose of this exercise, the Federal Government Templates.

Course Format:
The course format is that of a seminar based on teamwork, with monthly presentations by students on their team's progress at various stages of the project, class discussion and regular peer feedback, the goal being to simulate as much as possible the actual process of MC development which is iterative and involves many different interests and stakeholders within and external to government. The course instructor will provide regular guidance and feedback throughout the process, as well as lectures on specific dimensions of policy analysis. Core readings will compliment lectures.

Communication with the instructor:

Students are encouraged to communicate with me individually or as a team, whenever they have a question, need special guidance or wish to discuss a particular aspect of their project and deliverables. You can e-mail me at Eugenelang4@gmail.com or set up an appointment to meet on campus, in Ottawa or speak by telephone.

Required Readings

Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis* (in Queen's bookstore) You should have completed reading this book by the November class.

Government of Canada, Privy Council Office, *A Drafter's Guide to Cabinet Documents: Drafting Cabinet Documents*
http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=mc/guide-eng.htm#IV.1

Recommended Readings

David L. Weimar and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice,* New Jersey, Prentice Hall (in Queen's library or available for purchase online)

Chapter 7, "Correcting market and government failures: Generic policies"
Chapter 8, "Landing on your feet: How to confront policy problems"
Chapter 9, "Benefit-Cost Analysis"
Chapter 10, "Thinking Strategically About Adoption and Implementation"

Michael Mintrom, *Contemporary Policy Analysis,* Oxford University Press, 2012

Evaluation:

Ninety percent of your individual grade will be based on your group's performance, as assessed on the basis of the following assignments.

Assignments:
- **Problem Definition**—two page issue brief defining the policy problem to be addressed—Due at December classes—20%
- **Ministerial Recommendation –** Due at January classes--30%
- **Parliamentary, Communications and Implementation Plans—**Due at February classes—30%
- **Final PowerPoint Brief on MC—**To be presented at March classes—10%
- **Group member assessments—**At the end of the winter term, each member of

each group will provide an anonymous assessment of the performance of each of his/her group colleagues. An average of these scores will form the basis for an individual grade worth 10% of the final grade.

Course Schedule

October

Friday, October 13– Description of and goals for the course.

Lecture: *What is policy analysis and what makes a good policy analyst?*

Saturday, October 14— Selecting Groups and identifying a broad policy area for inquiry.

Lecture: *Problem definition, Research sources/strategies*.

November

Friday, November 3. Groups present a brief report of initial findings on their issue area and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues to shape further inquiry and problem definition. 15 minute PowerPoint presentation per group.

Lecture: *Theory and the role of Ideas*

Saturday, November 4--Lecture: *Policy and Money*

December

Friday, December 1—Groups present report on problem definition and research findings and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues (15 minute Powerpoint presentation).

Saturday, December 2—*Lecture—Instrument Choice.*

January

Friday, January 12—Groups present draft Ministerial Recommendations and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues (15 minute Powerpoint presentation).

Saturday, January 13—*Lecture: Policy Implementation*
Lecture: Strategic Communications

February

Friday, February 9**—**Groups present draft Implementation, Parliamentary and Communications Plans (15 minute Powerpoint presentation) and receive feedback from instructor and peers.

Saturday, February 11**---**Lecture— *Stakeholder Engagement*

<u>March</u>

Friday, March 23—Groups present MC PowerPoint (15 minutes) and receive feedback from instructor and peers.

March 24—Lecture: Guest lecturer (tbd)