



MASTER OF
Public Administration
SCHOOL OF POLICY STUDIES

MPA 897- DIRECTED READINGS

GUIDELINES

A student enrolled in the MPA or Professional MPA program may choose to undertake a Directed Reading course (MPA 897*), in consultation with a faculty advisor and the MPA Program Director. This option is designed for individual students with special interests that cannot be satisfied through course offerings in the School or other departments in a given year. Students should consult the Program Director before approaching a potential faculty advisor.

A written proposal, which includes the purpose of the course, a preliminary bibliography, an evaluation scheme, and a tentative schedule for the completion of the work signed by the student and faculty advisor should be submitted to the Program Director for approval no later than the first week of the term in which the student plans to undertake this work.

A Directed Reading course involves in-depth study on a particular topic of interest, under the direct supervision of a faculty advisor with expertise in the subject field. The format usually includes regular tutorial meetings with the supervisor, and written assignments are often a significant part of the course. Normally, the work should be completed in one term. The workload and intellectual effort must be equivalent to a graduate level half-course.

The major purpose of a directed reading course should normally be to read a substantial body of literature on a theme. The reading list may be generated by the student as part of the course preparation, in consultation with the faculty advisor, or may be provided by the faculty advisor on the basis of a course not otherwise available to the student. The reading list would generally include the principal theoretical sources in the academic literature on the theme, and in addition other scholarly sources, and such policy-related sources as government documents, international organization reports, think tank studies, and civil society organization reports. Students interested in learning more about how to conduct such a literature review should consult

McMenamin, Iain, (2006) 'Process and Text: Teaching Students to Review the Literature,' PS: Political Science & Politics 39:1 (January 2006), 133-5.

Knopf, Jeffrey W., (2006) 'Doing a Literature Review,' PS: Political Science & Politics 39:1 (January 2006), 127-32.

"How do you find and use the literature of economics?"

"<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/students/Econliterature.htm>

On completion of the course, the faculty advisor is required to assign a numerical grade as an assessment of the student's performance in the course. Evaluation will normally be based on a paper that synthesizes and assesses the state of knowledge on the theme, including policy-relevant knowledge. The paper may include an empirical probe of the ideas, and it may conclude with either suggestions for further research, or policy recommendations.

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