Course Schedule 2018

Weeks 1 through 6: Policy Brief Module

The primary course objective of this first 6-week module in the semester is to gain increased competency in the construction of short, succinct policy briefs and presentations derived from larger research projects or aggregations of information. On the way we will explore some theory around the use of information and perception. The two main outcome goals of the policy brief module are as follows:

1) Produce an individual "deliverable": a written (4 page) and oral (10 minute) policy brief story that are an honest reflection of the information and that articulate recommendations.
2) Build skills on intentionally developing content through:

- Working within a team of four to five students to test elements of your brief and strengthen issue presentation
- Understanding political mapping and how to pinpoint decision-makers and powerbrokers as well as identify yourself as presenter among stakeholder locations on the map
- Reducing information to the salient highlights without misleading the audience(s)
- Building storytelling graphics or charts that visualize valid information

Statement on Academic Integrity:
Students are expected to conduct themselves consistent with the University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity, which presents standards regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions and other actions. Students are expected to be familiar with the Code, which can be found at http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/.

Readings. There will be no required readings for this course, though reference readings will be included on the syllabus. In response for removing reading requirements, students will not be permitted to have their computers on so that we may deepen classroom discussions and cover material fully. Participation in class discussions will be 10 percent of the grade.

Assignments

Assignment 1 due Week 2: *(10 percent of the grade)*
   Complete a statement of your approach (incremental, breakthrough, disruptive) and build a policy map of your MSSP628 final policy analysis issue or another well-researched issue by defining stakeholders and their proximity to decision-making. Identify where you are located on the map. Help on formulating the elements of your map may be found in:
o   Ganz, Marshall 2006. *Organizing People, Power and Change*. Cambridge: Harvard University (pp. 10-23).

o VeneKlasen, Lisa & Valarie Miller 2007. *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*: Stylus Publishing (pp. 185-208)

Assignment 2 due Week 3: (*10 percent of the grade)*

Complete a <u>one page bulleted list</u> of critical information for your brief. Rank the first 10 items in order of importance to supporting your recommendation(s). This bulleted list should include data, legislation and/or critical information as well as a statement of the recommendation(s) you will focus on for your 4-page brief and oral presentation. Prepare to discuss and support your choices to your team. You may find it helpful to bring 2 copies of this assignment to class on the 3rd week; **one to hand in** and another to mark-up after you get comments from your peers.

Assignment 3 due Week 4: (*10 percent of the grade)*

Bring one chart, graphic or another visualization that displays critical information you intend to use in your brief and "tell the story" of the displayed information to your classmates. Original charts or graphics are preferred so you may edit these after getting suggestions. Get critical feedback. **Hand a copy of this in at the end of class.**

Assignment 4 due Week 6: *(20 percent of the grade)*

Present your brief in an engaging fashion, identifying the intended audience and using story-telling techniques. The presentation must include at least 1 visual element. Slides are not required. Present for 8-10 minutes and answer up to 2 questions. Complete a feedback sheet for selected presentations of your peers. The order of presentations will be posted in advance. All presentations must be <u>practiced</u> and of <u>professional quality</u>. Each student identifies the audience the presentation is intended to persuade before the start and delivers a "story" supported by evidence that leads to recommendation(s).

Assignment 5 due Week 7 (1 week after the module ends): (4*0 percent of the grade)*

Submit the completed policy brief drawn from your work from week 1through the end of the module. The brief should be **no longer than 4 pages including references**, incorporate a narrative, graphic(s) or chart(s), recommendation and be responsive to the audience that you wish to influence. This should be a polished piece and can be a formal styled brief or contain columns and boxes and other interesting elements.

Class Participation: due each week in class: *(10 percent of the grade)*

Note re: CANVAS: Any updates on changes in the syllabus, new background readings and assignments during the module will be noted on Canvas and announced in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1: – WHY A BRIEF, POLITICAL MAPPING AND PUBLIC NARRATIVE

Class topics:
- Overview of 6-week Policy Brief Module and class expectations
- Overview of the second module- Media and Communications
- Ways of knowing and what is being Objective?
- Incremental versus Disruptive Change
- Examples of political storytelling in the digital age – identities and personal locations
- Political mapping as a tool for writing a successful policy brief
- Your place in the political map: locating your public narrative within your topic
- Dividing into working groups, introducing your topic and starting the political map

Optional references for Week 1:
- Alcoff, Linda and Satya P. Mohanty. 2006. Reconsidering Identity Politics: An Introduction. In *Identity Politics Reconsidered*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.
- Ganz, Marshall 2006. *Organizing People, Power and Change*.
- VeneKlasen, Lisa & Valarie Miller 2007. *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*

Week 2: – REDUCING DATA FOR STORYTELLING: ETHICS AND "TRUTH"
Class topics:
- How do our identities affect the narratives we tell?
- May we speak for others? Using stories that don't belong to us
- Authoritative data: The ethics of using data to convince – what is the "right" number
- Identifying crucial data for storytelling – getting started on a narrative
- Working within your team to identify critical data

Optional references for Week 2:
- Best, Joel. 2004. Contentious Numbers. In *More Damned Lies and Statistics: How Numbers Confuse Public Issues*. Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. 144-169)
- Yau, Nathan. 2007. *How to Spot Visualization Lies*, FLOWINGDATA: https://flowingdata.com/2017/02/09/how-to-spot-visualization-lies/

Week 3: – VISUALIZATION OF DATA AND NARRATIVE
Class topics:
- Putting narrative with critical data – effectively using evidence
- How do we understand data when it is displayed? What are the ethics around data visualization?
- Props for storytelling
- Working within teams to think about graphic and other data displays to tell the story
- What does social theory have to say about data visualizations and interpretation?

Optional references for Week 3:

- FiveThirtyEight. 2016. *Gun Deaths in America*: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/gun-deaths/
- Rosling, Hans. 2016. The truth about HIV: *Ted Talk*: https://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_the_truth_about_hiv

Week 4: – CRITIQUING WRITTEN AND ORAL POLICY BRIEFS
Class topics
- Displaying of graphics and charts for feedback and review
- Do we rely on democracy to "get it right"?
- Critiquing written policy briefs
- Identifying elements of successful oral presentations
- Developing a tool to critique oral presentations
- Scheduling of presentations

Optional references for week 4:
- Talisse, Robert B. 2010. An epistemological defense of democracy, critical review: *A Journal of Politics and Society*, 22:2-3,281-291, DOI: 10.1080/08913811.2010.508636

Week 5: –MEASURING IMPACT OF POLICY PRESENTATIONS
Class topics:
- Measuring the impact of policy research briefs
- Secondary research measures -- using the unexpected to demonstrate value
- How do we deal with conflicting theories of change that reach the same outcome?
- Preparation for powerful speaking – research driven approaches

Optional references for week 5
- Organizational Research Services. 2007. *A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*. Baltimore, Maryland: Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Chamorro-Premuzic. 2016. *Persuasion Depends Mostly on the Audience*. Harvard Business Review June 2, 2015.

Week 6: – PEER REVIEW OF POLICY BRIEFS
Class topics:
- Presentations from the class: you will present your oral presentation for10 minutes or less using some visual element.
- Critiquing selected other oral presentations during the sessions.
- Completing and handing in all required critiques
- Wrapping up. How does writing a brief and presenting help prepare you for communicating via various media?