MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MANAGEMENT AND URBAN POLICY

LABORATORY IN ISSUE ANALYSIS
Spring 2011

Plenary Sessions: Monday
6-10 p.m.

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The Laboratory in Issue Analysis is an applied policy analytic experience in which students work together on teams of roughly five students to resolve a policy issue for a public or nonprofit decision-maker. Over the course of the semester students will work on two different issues for different clients. Each experience or "round" will be supervised by a faculty member ("Lab Advisor") and assisted by a Lab Assistant, an experienced and analytically talented second year Master's student. Each round culminates in a formal briefing at which each team's client and both the faculty member supervising the team and at least one other faculty members are briefed in an interactive setting and the team's performance is assessed in terms of its analytic strength and policy relevance for the client. Following the briefing, and in response to the feedback students receive, the team prepares a written policy brief.

The Lab follows Policy Analysis and builds on the techniques and intellectual frameworks for analysis that were mastered through case analysis in the previous semester. In the Lab, students Labor under the more realistic constraints of limited data, time and resources to provide rigorous analysis to clients with decision-making responsibility. The goal of the experience is to build strong analytic skills and research logic in the service of rational decision-making to further the policy objectives of public and nonprofit clients and their organizations. We will rely on the principal tools from policy analysis: "The Schema for Issue Analysis", supplemented by course materials such as Eugene Bardach's ***A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis***. In addition students

will work individually on their teams to develop a range of issue specific knowledge and analytic techniques appropriate to the problems they are attempting to resolve.

Since interviewing and fieldwork are key to data collection, and planning and managing the research of the team are central to success, plenary sessions will feature discussion of research strategies and project management. Further, since productive use of the entire resources of the team is essential, students will be sensitized to the importance of group dynamics and peer interaction. The goal of the semester is to prepare students with the intellectual, social and communication skills to provide rigorous policy analytic advice to decision-makers in public and nonprofit settings.

The course is organized to meet the needs of part-time and full time students and of students, Lab Assistants and Lab Advisors who also have full- or part-time jobs, so some flexibility will have to be expected from everyone. The Lab will meet regularly on Monday evenings as a group for plenary sessions when indicated on the *syllabus*, and for one of each team's two regularly scheduled weekly meetings with Lab Advisors and Lab Assistants. We will also schedule a second such meeting later in the week, either on Thursday morning, afternoon or evening, or on Friday morning – you will be polled on your preferences for when that second meeting is routinely scheduled. But a variety of products, meetings and activities will be scheduled ***outside these two regular meeting times***. Students in the Lab will need to be aware that work is done by a team, and that regular meetings with the team, faculty supervisor, and Lab Assistant will be on-going throughout the semester. Further, the Lab involves client work and data gathering that necessitates meetings and interviews. Working students should be advised that *some* meetings or interviews and research may need to be done during working hours, even if they are only by telephone. Final briefings at the end of each round of analysis will be held during briefing weeks indicated on the *syllabus*. ***While some briefings will be scheduled during class time, some may need to be scheduled at other times. This may be required to meet the needs of the clients and students should be aware of these occasional schedule changes. Working students may need to alert their supervisors about these occasional conflicts.***

Finally, the Laboratory in Issue Analysis is an effort to engage students in a professional activity. The products produced and the relationships undertaken should be of a professional character. Thus, responsibility and accountability to your team members, your faculty supervisor and especially, your client will be paramount, and performance in the Lab will be judged by professional standards. As such, failure to meet deadlines or complete an analytic report on time will meet with a significant grade penalty**.**

Grading Policy

The Laboratory in Issues Analysis has a variety of goals. It seeks to further each student's personal growth and achievement. It also seeks to promote successful team performance. The collective success of all students depends in large part upon each person's level of effort and sense of responsibility to the overall enterprise. Grades, therefore, will reflect both a student's individual contribution -- the quality of his/her individual performance -- as well as the performance and collective achievement of the team as a whole. Toward this end (and recognizing the range of products that each student produces or contributes to over the course of the semester), a grading formula has been devised which takes into account assessments of students individually and assessments of the work of teams as a whole. The final grade, therefore, evaluates students equally on their individual performance and the performance of their team. Arrayed below are the components of the final grade for the Lab.

Team Performance (50%)	Evaluator(s)
Round I Policy brief (12.5%)	teams' Lab Advisor
Round I Briefing (12.5%)	teams' Lab Advisor & 2nd faculty member
Round II Policy brief (12.5%)	teams' Lab Advisor
Round II Briefing (12.5%)	teams' Lab Advisor & 2nd faculty member

Overall Individual Performance (50%)	Evaluator(s)
Round I	teams' Lab Advisor (20%), peers (5%)
Round II	teams' Lab Advisor (20%), peers (5%)

Policy Briefs

The Policy Brief is the complete written record of your work, including your information and sources, data analysis, and a more detailed account of the information you presented at the briefing. The first draft of the analytic brief must be turned in as quickly as possible after the briefing, usually the Monday following the briefing. To accomplish this, a team may want to do a detailed outline of the analytic report before the briefing and to have a first draft of the brief practically ready at the time of the briefing. This will assist you in organizing your analysis prior to the oral presentation and facilitate the writing of your final report. Analytic briefs are team products and are never to be distributed as the work of an individual. ***Analytic briefs also may not be distributed without the express permission of the client!***

The Lab depends for its success on relationships with outside agencies and organizations. When students fail to meet their obligations they threaten our ability to attract and retain important clients and organizations for future projects and student employment. Grades for policy briefs are based on both quality and timeliness. Any team that does not produce an acceptable product (even after multiple drafts) by the dates indicated* will receive a grade of "F". If a brief fails to be received by the client on the date indicated, the team runs the danger of failing the round.

Due Dates for Policy Briefs during the 2011 Spring semester:

Round I	First draft to Faculty Advisor by: Monday, March 7 Final draft to client no later than Monday, March 21*
Round II	First draft to Faculty Advisor by Monday, May 2 Final draft to client no later than Monday, May 16*

Finally, since next year's trial round issues rely on this year's live issues, ***all data packs, including a table of contents, all data collected, interview notes, tables, sources and reports, must be handed into your team's Lab Assistant with the final copy of the policy brief in order to receive a passing grade for the round.***

SYLLABUS
Spring 2010

Dates	Student Activity	Deadlines
Monday, January 24th	After Plenary, students gather as teams to discuss when they will get together to collaborate on **Team presolve/research design**.	Monday Plenary Session , @ 6:00 PM: "Welcome to the Lab;" introductions of Lab Advisors & Lab Assistants (LA&LA); descriptions of first round Lab issues; Director assigns students to teams as breakout sessions begin.
Tuesday & Wednesday, January 25th & 26th	Students develop individual presolves & research designs; Teams develop Team Presolves & Research Designs.	Individual presolves & research designs are due to LA&LA prior to team meeting to integrate them. Team presolves & research designs are due to Advisor prior to Initial Client Meeting.
Thursday & Friday, January 27th & 28th	Students attend **Initial Client Meeting** & first regularly scheduled Thursday/Friday team meeting with LA&LA.	Some teams will use regularly scheduled meeting with LA&LA to rehearse, others to debrief, depending on timing.
Saturday-Monday, January 29th-31st.	Revise presolves & research designs & prepare to meet with faculty supervisors on Monday.	
Monday, January 31st	Meet as team with LA&LA to discuss revised presolve & research design	Monday Plenary Session @ 8:00 PM: "Data Collection and Research Strategies; online sources, data bases and best practice research," by guest lecturer Jeannette Rausch, followed by discussion
Monday, February 7th (and during the week before)	Meet as team with LA&LA; research in the field; & critique of Policy Briefs.	Monday Plenary Session @ 8:00 PM: "Structuring and Delivering Effective Client Communications," by guest lecturer Jan Sotan, discussion.
Monday, February 14th (and during the week before)	Meeting with LA&LA; research in the field	Monday Plenary Session @ 8:00 PM: "Preparing for the briefing; reviewing policy memos, structure and strategy of the presentation"
Monday, February 21st (and during the week before)	Meeting with LA&LA; draft of policy memo due; outline of policy brief & PowerPoint outline due.	***Monday, February 21st is Presidents' Day, no class***

Monday, February 28th- Friday , March 3rd	Prepare for own briefing & attend at least 4 others	***BRIEFINGS***
Monday, March 7th	First Draft of policy brief due to Lab Advisor.	No Plenary
Monday, 14th	Final Draft of policy brief due to Lab Advisor; *if draft not accepted, teams must arrange to complete revisions over vacation.*	***Spring Break*** all week. School is closed, but students should monitor newschool.edu email for links to Peer Review and Round II surveys, and notifications of where they will meet at 6 PM on Monday, March 21st. Students must complete online Peer Reviews, and reviews of Lab Advisors and of Lab Assistants.

Monday, March 21st	Teams deliver completed Round I policy brief due to *client*, data packs to Lab Assistants.	6:00 PM – 7:50, students will meet with new teams, go over team dynamic exercise. @ 8 PM Plenary, Director, other Advisors will assess Round I, distribute Round II mandates.
Wednesday, March 24th	Students develop individual presolves & research designs; Teams develop Team Presolves & Research Designs.	Individual presolves & research designs are due to LA&LA prior to team meeting to integrate them. Team presolves & research designs are due to Advisor prior to Initial Client Meeting.
Thursday & Friday, March, 24th & 25th	Students attend **Initial Client Meeting** & first regularly scheduled Thursday/Friday team meeting with LA&LA.	Some teams will use regularly scheduled meeting with LA&LA to rehearse, others to debrief, depending on timing.
Monday, March 28th	Meet as team with LA&LA to discuss revised presolve & research design	***No Plenary Scheduled***
Monday, April 4th	Teams revise presolves and research designs; meet with LA&LA	
Monday, April 11th	Meeting with LA&LA; research in the field	
Monday, April 18th	Meeting with LA&LA; research in the field	
Monday, April 25th - Friday., April 29th	<u>Round II Briefings</u>	After briefings, Lab Advisors should go online and complete briefing evaluations.
Monday May 2nd –	First Draft Policy Brief Due: *team must arrange with Lab Advisor to revise draft to meet deadline*	

Monday, May 9th	Final draft of policy brief due; copies and distribution to clients and faculty supervisor.	Students must complete online Peer Reviews, and reviews of Lab Advisors and of Lab Assistants. Lab Advisors must complete "Overall" evaluations of the students on their teams.
Monday, May 16th		***Last Class:*** Round II assessed; students fill out course evaluation. Data Packs handed in to Lab Assistants.

DRAFT December 7, 2010.