

Senior Seminar in Planning and Public Policy/ Urban Studies
(10:762:494 and 10:975:494)
Spring, 2007

Syllabus, updated January 15, 2007

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Office hours: Mondays, 1-5 pm; Tuesday afternoons during regular class hours on
February 6, February 20, and March 6; Tuesday mornings by appointment

Class hours: Tuesdays, 1:10 to 4:10 pm, CSB 168

The senior seminar focuses on writing and researching a substantial individual paper on a subject that interests you. There will be several phases to this process:

1. Find a topic that interests you; write a paper proposal and refine it.
2. Carry out a literature review to see what others have written about the subject.
3. Drawing upon your literature review, design your research plan. This plan may include collecting original data.
4. Research the topic in more depth. Collect data, as needed.
5. Write a first draft of the paper.
6. With feedback from your colleagues and from me, write a second draft.
7. With feedback from your colleagues and from me, write the final version.

This seminar is designed to provide a closing experience to your undergraduate studies at Rutgers. The success of the seminar depends on your participation and attendance. We will try to develop an intellectual community in which we can have an open and thorough conversation of everyone's work.

You will write all assignments using Microsoft Word and submit them electronically using our class Sakai site. You will receive comments on your writing from me through the "track changes" function of Microsoft Word. You will use the same function to make comments on other students' papers.

The major assignment for the senior seminar is a 25 to 50 page paper. (A double-spaced page of typed text contains approximately 250 words.) All papers must be footnoted in one of the standard formats and must include a bibliography. All papers should be based at least partly on "primary sources" such as Census data; transcripts of interviews or surveys; news articles; legal decisions; historical documents; or some combination of these, depending on your course of research.

How is this paper different from all other papers? The senior seminar paper both concludes your undergraduate education and begins your career. It is an opportunity to pursue an area of particular interest to you in depth. You will be able to synthesize what you have learned about urban policy and planning over the last three years and to demonstrate the writing, research, and analytical abilities you will employ in your career.

The senior seminar paper is not simply a longer-than-usual term paper. It involves a multi-step process, as described above. Your paper will require several weeks to write *after* you've conducted your research.

Who is your audience? All writing is done to communicate something of importance to others. Until now you have written for your instructors, but in the future you will have to write for a variety of audiences with differing levels of expertise. One real audience you have for this class is your classmates, who will be reading your work. Another audience is anyone who might be interested in what you are writing—whether a community organization, a private company, or a public agency. Another potential audience is a jury of reviewers for possible publication in an academic journal. Finally, you may use your paper as a work sample for potential employers or graduate schools.

Evaluation

There will be three major types of assignment:

1. **Attendance and citizenship.** You must attend all classes and presentations; do the assigned readings; lead discussions, and read the work of other members of the class and give feedback to them.
2. **Interim assignments.** Complete the literature review, research design, first draft, and second draft of your paper by the deadlines in the schedule.
3. **Final paper,** presented in writing and visually/orally.

No incompletes will be granted for this class. Any paper handed in after the due date will be considered late; late papers are lowered one letter grade. All work must be submitted under the “Assignments with Grades” function on our course Sakai site (sakai.rutgers.edu).

Your work will be evaluated based on content, quality, and timely submission. The following weights will be used to determine the course grade:

- ◆ Feedback on others' work, attendance, and participation: 25%.
- ◆ Literature review and research design: 15%
- ◆ First draft, second draft, and final paper: 50%
- ◆ Presentation: 10%

Reading

This is a reading-intensive course, because you will be doing your own research. In addition, I have assigned readings from two books, available at the Rutgers University Bookstore:

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Jane Miller, *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Writing style

Clear, concise writing is very important. In your professional life, you will often be judged by how well you express yourself in writing. Your sentences should be short and jargon-free, and written in active voice.

There are many good books on writing. You should own a copy of at least one. A classic text is *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White (Longman). The New York Times *Manual of Style and Usage* (Times Books) and *The Chicago Manual of Style* (U of Chicago Press) are both good references to help write better sentences and use punctuation properly.

Rutgers has Learning Resource Centers on each campus (see lrc.rutgers.edu). You will make two appointments with staff at the LRC to discuss (a) your paper proposal and bibliography (Week 4, Feb 5-9) and (b) your literature review (Week 6, Feb. 19-23).

Schedule

Below is a description of each class meeting. The first thing to take a look at is the table below summarizing submission deadlines. I expect you to make these deadlines so that I can give you timely feedback and keep you on track. Late submission will result in a severe grade penalty for each late assignment.

Summary of submission deadlines			
Assignment	Due date	Day	Week
Draft proposal	Jan 23	Tue	2
Revised proposal and bibliography	Jan 29	Mon	3
Final proposal and revised bibliography	Feb 7	Wed	4
Literature review	Feb 26	Mon	6
Research design	Mar 7	Wed	8
Sample data	Mar 20	Tue	9
First draft of paper	Mar 27	Tue	10
Feedback on drafts (workgroup)	Apr 2	Mon	11
Second draft of paper	Apr 10	Tue	12
Feedback on drafts (workgroup)	Apr 16	Mon	13
Final paper	Apr 27	Fri	14
Presentation	May 1/2	Tue/Wed	15

January 16 (Week 1)

Introduction; syllabus and schedule; introduction to course website (Sakai); discussion of possible research topics; writing exercise (“my life so far”); fill out schedule for individual meetings.

Submit draft paper proposal via Sakai and hard copies (2) by 1:10 pm on Tuesday, January 23rd. Bring **two** hard copies to class and turn in via Sakai before class begins. This should be your idea about some urban planning or policy issue that you are interested in, passionate about, wondering about, or find mysterious. Whatever it takes to get you to do lots of reading on your own and write an in-depth, 25-50 page paper!

January 23 (Week 2) (Meet at Alexander Library, room 413**)**

Discussion of preliminary proposals. Introduction to literature review research
Read *The Craft of Research* Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Skim *The Craft of Research* Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Submit revised proposal and bibliography (3-5 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Monday, January 29th. This assignment is a revision of your initial proposal based on our discussions in class, and the additional reading you have done. It should include two elements. (1) A **more sophisticated proposal** naming your topic, implying the question, and stating the rationale. (See pages 42-45 in *The Craft of Research*.) This proposal reflects your current thinking on what your data are going to be; that is, what primary research you will conduct to pursue this topic and question. (2) A **list of references** that will provide the theoretical background for your paper. Your references should emphasize books, journal articles, and research reports. You may also refer to a few Internet sources, but these should be minimized.

January 30 (Week 3)

Read and discuss revised paper proposals and bibliographies. Oral report on progress and problems. Creating a bibliography.
Skim *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 7 to 14.
Make appointment with LRC and Chatman to discuss final revisions to your proposal and bibliography.

February 6 (Week 4)

No class meeting. Meet with Chatman and LRC staff to discuss paper proposal and bibliography (2 meetings, 30 minutes each).
Read *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 4 and 5.

Submit final proposal and revised bibliography (5-7 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Wednesday, Feb. 7. Refine your topic so that it is manageable for a one-semester exercise. Revise your proposal and bibliography based on (a) comments from Chatman, (b) a meeting with Chatman, and (c) a meeting with a tutor in one of the Rutgers Learning Resource Centers.

February 13 (Week 5)

How to write a literature review.
Read *The Craft of Research*, Chapter 6.

Make appointment with LRC and Chatman to discuss literature review (two 30-minute meetings).

February 20 (Week 6)

No class meeting. Meet with Chatman and with LRC staff to discuss literature review.
No reading.

Submit literature review (7-10 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Monday, Feb. 26.

Read and synthesize the sources for your paper that you identified in your bibliography. This assignment has two parts:

1. Present the research question as you now understand it (one paragraph)
2. Discuss the literature related to your topic. The literature review is your opportunity to situate your research within the theoretical and/or policy discussion on the topic you are studying. Your review should not be organized as a blow-by-blow description of each author in your bibliography and what they said. Rather, it offers a rationale for doing the research you have proposed and helps the reader see why your work is important and how it will contribute to understanding on your topic. Your literature review might be organized in a number of different ways to synthesize the ideas relevant to your research. In it, you might answer the questions: What are the main arguments or points of view on this issue? What holes are there in the research on my topic that my work will fill? How can my work extend or follow up on existing research by looking at another setting or another group of people? What does the research literature offer as a template or guidance in pursuing my topic and focus?

This assignment is essentially a draft of the first part of your final paper, consisting of the primary research questions and a discussion of the background research and how it shaped and provides a context for your research.

The literature review will be used in revised form for your paper drafts.

February 27 (Week 7)

Assign work groups. Discuss literature reviews. Discuss implications of literature review for research design. How to make and revise a research plan.

Read *The Craft of Research* Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Make appointment to meet with Chatman to discuss research design.

March 6 (Week 8)

No class meeting. Meet with Chatman to discuss research design.

Read *The Craft of Research* Chapters 10 and 11.

Submit research design (4-6 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Friday, Mar. 9. Create a chart/table and write a narrative that lays out your research hypothesis and associated research questions. For each question, list (a) sources of information, (b) what original data you will collect, and (c) what methods you will use to collect the data. Discuss what problems you anticipate and what you will do about them. This assignment will be used for the methodology section of your paper.

March 12-16 - Spring Break

No class.

Submit sample data & write-up (2-3 pages) via Sakai and bring two hard copies by 1:10 pm on Tuesday, March 20th. [Bring two hard copies to class and turn in via Sakai before class begins.] In this assignment, you will provide a sample of the data you have collected. It could be a transcript of an interview, a chart of quantitative data, a historical document, photographs of an urban site, notes from an observation of an event, etc. In class, we expect to discuss how your data met your expectations or what surprises you found, and whether you are having any problems collecting or analyzing your data. Briefly discuss the implications of the data for your research question and the structure of your literature review.

March 20 (Week 9)

Challenges in working with data. Revising your outline. Writing a first draft of your paper based on your outline, literature review and research design.
Read *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 12, 13 and 14, and *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers*, Chapter 10 and 11.

March 27 (Week 10)

No class meeting. Meet with Chatman to discuss your first draft prior to submitting it.
Read *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers*, Chapters 1-4.

Submit first draft of complete paper (20-30 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Tuesday, March 27th.

Submit comments on two first drafts of student papers (about 2 pages for each, total of about 4 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Monday, April 2.

April 3 (Week 11)

Writing about numbers, part 1. Group discussions of first draft. Final drafting and stylistic changes. Location TBD.
Read *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 15 and 16.

April 10 (Week 12)

No class meeting. Meet with Chatman to discuss completed first draft and planned changes to second draft, before submitting your second draft.

Submit second draft of complete paper (20-40 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Tuesday, April 10th.

Submit comments on two second drafts of student papers (about 2 pages for each, total of about 4 pages) via Sakai by midnight on Monday, April 16th.

April 17 (Week 13)

Read *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers*, Chapters 5-8.
Writing about numbers, part 2. Group discussions of second draft. Location TBD.

April 24 (Week 14)

Making presentations. Displaying data.
Reading to be determined.

Submit final paper (25-50 pages) via Sakai AND in hard copy to my box by 5 pm, Friday, April 27th.

May 1st or 2nd (Week 15)

Oral presentations of papers, using PowerPoint (presentation times/dates determined by lottery).