

PPHA 36630

Trauma-Informed Policy Communication: Writing Effectively about War, Catastrophe & Crisis

Winter 2023: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50 pm (Keller 2112)

Student Hours with David Chrisinger: Tuesdays, 9 am-12:00 pm (Keller 1013-A)

Course TA: Connor Christensen (ctchristensen@uchicago.edu)

Optional TA Discussion Section: Mondays, 3:00-4:20 pm (Keller 0010)

The central question this course will try to address is: How might we best tell policy stories that help our readers see the humanity in each other? Throughout the course, we will explore promising tools, techniques, and frameworks that can help us do just that. Regardless if you're interested in writing about social justice, the pandemic, war, genocide, climate change, violence against women, extreme poverty, gun violence, or some other catastrophe or crisis, we can control how well we write to ensure the stories we tell not only resonate with those who need to read them most but also persuade those with the power to do something meaningful in response.

The writing tools we will cover in this course fall into one of three categories:

- 1. **Nuts and Bolts**: Tools for making meaning and creating connection at the paragraph, sentence, and individual word levels
- 2. **Blueprints**: Frameworks for organizing and building effective evidence-based policy narratives that meet the unique needs of the intended audience
- 3. **Special Effects**: Strategies to best structure policy narratives to ensure they are as clear, concise, and compelling as possible.

Besides addressing the question above, we will also test a theory I have about the world: The essence of tragedy is the *expectation* of catastrophe. Refusing to expect catastrophe as inevitable is the best way I have found to help make the world a bit more habitable. As long as there are storytellers willing to document with integrity what they know to be true, and as long as they use what they know to be true to stand up against violence and dehumanization, I believe we stand a fighting chance to contribute something positive and useful to the world.

Learning Outcomes:

By committing to the rigorous process of reading, discussing, writing, and rewriting, students who complete this course will be better positioned to:



- Discern the differences between more and less effective communication approaches and/or styles in public policy.
- Recognize the relationship between power and influence and develop sound strategies to structure policy narratives in anticipation of the audience's expectations.
- Define the limits and ethical constraints of persuasion as they apply to bias, belief, attitude, and moral foundations.
- Use a human-centered approach to ask better research questions, organize evidence efficiently, and frame narratives to meet the unique needs of the intended audience.
- Read actively to understand and test an author's claims, evidence, and opinions.
- Write persuasive policy narratives based on original analysis and synthesis that provide valuable recommendations to address the root causes of pressing policy challenges.
- Distinguish between substantive revision and surface editing; practice both and rethink and reshape their writing based on audience and purpose.
- Assess their peers' writing and provide useful feedback on matters ranging from content to structure and evidence to grammar.

Weekly Agenda (More Details on Canvas):

Week 1	January 3				
Topic:	Rigorous Creativity				
Lecture:	 Purpose, assessment methods, and overall structure of the course Introduction to Trauma-Informed Policy Communication and the Strategic Policy Communication "Lifecycle" Developing better research questions with Statement Starters Peer Review: "Question Only" Reconsidering a policy problem with Abstraction "Plussing" 				
Readings:	Required: • "When Facts Are Not Enough," by Katharine Hayhoe, Science (2018) • "We Need to Talk about How We Talk about Catastrophe," by Ezra Markowitz and Lucia Graves, Washington Post (2020)				
Assignment(s):	Due This Week: NA New Assignment(s): Polished Research Statement with Key Questions (Due Week 2) Complete Social and Behavioral Sciences IRB Human Subjects Protection Training Course through CITI (Due Week 4) Personal Policy Writing Style Guide (Due Finals Week)				



Week 2	January 10			
Topic:	Putting People Center Stage			
Lecture:	 Analyzing policy landscapes using Key Stakeholder Mapping People-First Language Exploring contributing factors and effects with Problem Tree Analysis The Three Types of Policy Narratives Claims of Fact vs. Value vs. Policy Required: 			
Readings:	 "How Human-Centered Design Contributes to Better Policy," by Angelica Quicksey, Kennedy School Review (2017) "When to Use User-Centered Design for Public Policy," by Steve Moilanen, Stanford Social Innovation Review (2019) "A Radical Idea for an Ancient African Conflict – Talking to the Enemy," by Ruth Maclean, Guardian (2019) "Climate Change Will Force a New American Migration," by Abraham Lustgarten, ProPublica (2020) Supplemental: "The Group Engagement Model: Procedural Justice, Social Identity, and Cooperative Behavior," by Tom R. Tyler and Steven L. Blader, Personality Psychology Review (2003) "Public Engagement and the Impact of Fairness Perceptions on Decision Favorability and Acceptance," by Besley, John C., Science Communication (June 2010) "Increasing Political Sophistication through Public Deliberation," by John Gastil and James P. Dillard, Political Communication (1999) 			
Assignment(s):	 Due This Week: Polished Research Statement with Key Questions New Assignment(s): Screenshot of Key Stakeholder Map and/or Problem Tree Analysis & Reflection (Week 3) 			

Week 3	January 17		
Topic:	Sensitivity to Our Subjects		
Lecture:	 Organizing evidence into the Four Elements using Affinity Clustering Discussion: Traumatic Stress and its effects 		
Readings:	Required: • "We Need to Take Away Children," by Caitlin Dickerson, The Atlantic (2022) Supplemental:		



•	"The Pornography Trap: How Not to Write about Rape," by Jina Moore,
	Columbia Journalism Review (2011)

• "The Invisible Army of Women Fighting Sexual Violence in Colombia," by Jean Friedman-Rudovsky and Débora Silva, *Cosmopolitan* (2016)

Due This Week:

Assignment(s):

Screenshot of Key Stakeholder Map and/or Problem Tree Analysis & Reflection

New Assignment(s):

• Table of Four Elements for Each Key Finding (Due Week 4)

Week 4	January 24				
Topic:	Accounting for the Psychological Diversity of Your Audience: Part I				
Lecture:	 Using the Moral Foundations Theory to explore audiences, what they value, and how they understand the world Analyzing audiences with Persona Profiles 				
	Required:				
	 "Moral Foundations Theory: The Pragmatic Validity of Moral Pluralism," by Jonathan Haidt, et al., Advances in Experimental Psychology (2012) "What's Wrong with Moral Foundations Theory, and How to Get Moral Psychology Right," by Oliver Scott Curry, Behavioral Scientist (2019) "Cultural Cognition and Public Policy," by Dan Kahan and Donald Braman, Yale Law & Policy Review (2006) "Boomerang Effects in Science Communication: How Motivated Reasoning and Identity Cues Amplify Opinion Polarization About Climate Mitigation Policies," by Sol P. Hart and Erik C. Nisbet, Communication 				
Readings:	Research (2012)				
	Supplemental:				
	• "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations," by Henri Tajfel, Annual Review of Psychology (1982)				
	• "A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications,"				
	by Shalom Schwartz, Comparative Sociology (2006)				
	 "Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory: A Historical <u>Review</u>," by Matthew J. Hornsey, Social and Personality Psychology Compass (2008) 				
	Due This Week:				
	Social and Behavioral Sciences IRB Human Subjects Protection Training Course through CITI				
Assignment(s):	 Course through CITI Table of Four Elements for Each Key Finding 				
	New Assignment(s):				
	• Draft Persona Profiles (3) (Due Week 5)				



Week 5	January 31				
Topic:	Accounting for the Psychological Diversity of Your Audience: Part II				
Lecture:	 Destabilizing the stasis to tell stories that matter Ranking priorities using Bull's-eye Diagramming 				
Readings:	 **Grange Centric Violence Narrative**. By Lakeidra Chavis, The Trace (2021) **The Gun Control Debate: A Culture-Theory Manifesto," by Dan M. Kahan, **Washington and Lee Review* (2003) **Fear Appeals and Persuasion: A Review and Update of the Extended Parallel Process Model," **Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 5 (2011) **The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, **Science** (1981) **Psychic Numbing and Genocide,"** by Paul Slovic, **Judgment and Decision Making** (2007) **Supplemental: **One or Many? The Influence of Episodic Thematic Climate Change Frames on Policy Preferences and Individual Behavior Chance," by Philip Solomon Hart, **Science Communication** (2011) **A Public Health Frame Arouses Hopeful Emotions About Climate Change," by Teresa Myers, et al., **Climate Change** (2012) **Using Political Efficacy Messages to Increase Climate Activism: The Mediating Role of Emotions," by Lauren Feldman and P. Sol Hart, **Science Communication** (2016) **Effects of Goal Framing and Emotions on Perceived Threat and Willingness to Sacrifice for Climate Change," by Helena Bilandzic, Anja Kalch, and Jens Soentgen, **Science Communication** (2017) **Framing Climate Change: Exploring the Role of Emotion in Generating Advocacy Behavior," by Robin L. Nabi, Abel Gustafson, and Risa Jensen, **Science Communication** (2018) **Due This Week: 				
Assignment(s):	 Draft Persona Profiles (3) New Assignment(s): Draft Policy Decision Memo – Analysis of Proposed Policy Reform (Due Week 6) 				



Week 6	February 7				
Topic:	Narrative Policy Framework				
Lecture:	 Aristotle's Dramatic Arc Kurt Vonnegut's Shapes of Stories Starting with One True Thing 				
Readings:	 "The Case for Reparations," by Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic (2014) "The Six Main Arcs in Storytelling, as Identified by an A.I.," by Adrienne LaFrance, Atlantic (2016) "Narratives as Tools for Influencing Policy Change," by Deserai Crow and Michael Jones, Policy & Politics (2018) Supplemental: "Advancing the Narrative Policy Framework: The Musings of a Potentially Unreliable Narrator," by Michael D. Jones, Policy Studies Journal (2018) "Narrative in the Time of Trump: Is the Narrative Policy Framework Good Enough to Be Relevant?" by Michael D. Jones and Mark K. McBeth, Administrative Theory & Praxis (2020) "What If There's No Such Thing as Closure?" by Meg Bernhard, New York Times (2021) 				
Assignment(s):	 Due This Week: Draft Policy Decision Memo – Analysis of Proposed Policy Reform New Assignment(s): Draft Solutions Narrative (Week 8) 				

Week 7	February 14				
Topic:	Pragmatic Ideas for Solutionsor No?				
Lecture:	 Three Types of Policy Recommendations Establishing reform priorities with an Importance/Difficulty Matrix Limits and ethics of persuasion Discussion: Theories of Policy Change 				
Readings:	 * "The Power of Solutions Journalism," by Alexander L. Curry and Keith H. Hammonds, Solutions Journalism Network * "The Mobilizer's Dilemma: Crisis, Empowerment, and Collective Action," by Ion Bogdan Vasi and Michael Macy, Social Forces (2003) * "How Hope and Doubt Affect Climate Change Mobilization," by Jennifer R. Marlon, et al., Frontiers in Communication (2019) * "Incremental Change Is a Moral Failure," by Denzel Smith, The Atlantic (2020) 				



Supplemental:

- "Framing Persuasive Appeals: Episodic and Thematic Framing, Emotional Response, and Policy Opinion," by Kimberly Gross, Political Psychology (2008)
- "A Review of the Effects of Uncertainty in Public Science <u>Communication</u>," by Abel Gustafson and Ronald E. Rice, *Public Understanding of Science* 29 (2020)

Due This Week:

Assignment(s):

• NA

Assignment(s):

• Draft Solutions Narrative (Week 8)

Week 8	February 21				
Topic:	Specificity, Accuracy & Transparency = The New "Objectivity"				
Lecture:	 Improving clarity with strong Sentence Cores The Three Principles of Choosing and Integrating Sources Summarize vs. Paraphrase vs. Gist vs. Mention vs. Citation Only vs. Quote Know-Checking Conclusions Peer Review: Role Reversal 				
	Required: • " <u>Hiroshima</u> ," by John Hersey, <i>The New Yorker</i> (1946) • " <u>Politics and the English Language</u> ," by George Orwell, The Orwell Foundation (1946)				
	Supplemental:				
Readings:	"Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: <u>Problems with Using Long Words Needlessly</u> ," by Daniel M. Oppenheimer, Applied Cognitive Psychology (2006) "We have the second to				
	• "Winning arguments: Interaction dynamics and persuasion strategies in good-faith online discussions," by Chenhau Tan, et al., <i>Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on the World Wide Web</i> (2016)				
	• " <u>Signaling the Trustworthiness of Science</u> ," by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, et al., <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i> (2019)				
	• " <u>American Autocracy and the End of Meaning</u> ," by Masha Gessen, LitHub (2020)				
	Due This Week:				
Assignment(s):	 Draft Solutions Narrative 				
rissigninent(s).	New Assignment(s):				
	• Final Portfolio (Due Finals Week)				



Week 9	February 28				
Topic:	Outliers, Anomalies, and Rare Occurrences: Prepare to be Unprepared				
Lecture:	 The Four Types of Policy Storytellers Building trust with personal narratives Peer Review: "Highlighters, Start Your Engines!" 				
Readings:	 **Gaining Trust as Well as Respect in Communicating to Motivated Audiences About Science Topics," by Susan T. Fiske and Cydney Dupree, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2014) **Personal Narratives Build Trust across Ideological Divides," by David Hagmann, et al. (2021) 				
Assignment(s):	Due This Week: • NA New Assignment(s): • Final Portfolio (Due Finals Week) • Optional: Personal Narrative Op-Ed (Due Finals Week)				

Finals Week: March 6-10

Students will need to submit a Final Portfolio that includes:

1. Policy Decision Memo – Analysis of Proposed Policy Reform (with Persona Profile)

• 2-3-page memo that helps the intended reader make an informed decision on whether to support a specific policy reform.

2. Solutions Narrative (with Persona Profile)

• 1,500-word article that tells the story of people who are affected by trauma and those who are working to do something about it to educate and empower readers and—hopefully—heighten accountability.

3. Personal Policy Writing Style Guide

• Throughout the course, students will add 10 writing tools, frameworks, and strategies to communicate effectively as a policy analyst and leader into a personal style guide. More than a simple list of "rules," students will be required to name the tool, describe when and how to use it, and provide an example of how it was used effectively.

Please submit your portfolio as a single document, with your assignments in the order listed above. Use Chicago Style footnotes for all citations. Standard formatting requirements also apply: 1-inch margins, size 12 Times New Roman font, and 1.5 line spacing.



How You Will Be Evaluated:

Criteria	Novice = 4	Proficient = 6	Distinguished = 8	Master = 10
Audience & Purpose	Appropriate audience not clearly identified and insuffient awareness of purpose.	Shows limited awareness of appropriate audience and purpose.	Shows general awareness of appropriate audience and purpose.	Audience and purpose are clear throughout.
	Problem not addressed.	Problem addressed but not solved.	Problem addressed/potentially solved but needs more.	Problem solved.
Coherence & Organization	Executive Summary / Inciting Event is confusingly wordedineffective. Writing lacks logical organization.	elements of a policy finding.	Executive Summay / Inciting Event contains most elements of a policy finding. Writing is coherent and logically organized with deductive structure, and transitions are used between ideas and paragraphs.	Executive summary/inciting Event contains all required elements and tells a story. Writing shows attention to logic and reasoning, as well as audience interest.
	Shows little coherence.	Some points are misplaced or irrelevant.	All points are relevant to central idea	Writing clearly leads the reader through the key findings in a logical, persuasive way.
	Shows some elements of a policy finding, but most ideas are underdeveloped.	Shows most elements of a policy finding, and ideas are more developed.	Shows all elements of a policy finding and develops ideas with appropriate and sufficient evidence.	Shows all elements of a policy finding and clear synthesis of ideas, in-depth analysis, and evidences original thought and support.
Content	Caveats and alternative viewpoints are not considered.	but not rebutted.	Caveats and alternative viewpoints are presented and rebutted, but the writing could be stronger.	Caveats and alternative viewpoints are recognized and rebutted convincingly.
	Data presented do not advance the argument.	Data presented are interesting but not easy to connect to the story.	Data presented are easy to understand and advance the story.	Data presented are easily understood, advance the argument, and are persuasive.
	Main points lack detailed development. Ideas are vague with little evidence of critical thinking.	Main points are present with limited detail and development.	Main points are well developed with supporting details.	M ain points are well developed with high-quality support.
Development	The Conclusion / Resolution is missing or inappropriate.	Some critical thinking is present.	Critical thinking is weaved into the main points.	Revealshigh degree of critical thinking.
		The Conclusion / Resolution is present but could be better developed.	The Conclusion / Resolution is present and generally makes a good argument.	The Conclusion / Resolution is compelling, persuasive, and ends the story effectively.
Paragraph Structure	Paragraphs lack unity and coherence and are not written deductively.	Some paragraphs are unified, coherent, and written deductively.	Most paragraphs are unified, coherent, and written deductively. Some illustrative examples are present	All paragraphs are unified, coherent, are written deductively, and are supported with examples and have smooth transitions.
		Transitions are weak	Transitions are relatively strong.	and have sindound ansidons.
Sentence Structure	Mostly weak sentence cores and little or no variety in structure or diction.		Sentence cores are consistently strong. Tone is appropriate, and sentence variety and diction are used effectively.	Shows outstanding style; strong sentence cores throughout; tone used effectively; creative use of sentence structure and coordination
Grammar & Mechanics		correct, allowing reader to progress though the	Document has few spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors, allowing reader to follow the story easily.	Document is free of distracting spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.
	Errors are frequent.	Some errors remain.	Very few fragments or run-on sentences.	Document is free of fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences.
Format	Fails to follow length and format requirements; incorrect margins and spacing.		Meets length and format requirements, correct margins and spacing.	Meets length and format requirements and evidences attention to detail.
	Neatness of document needs attention		Document is generally neat and approaching professional look	Document is neat and correctly assembled with professional look.



Course Expectations

Late Assignments:

The late penalty is one grade level per day (A- to a B+). I can waive the penalty if you have a timely, legitimate, and documented excuse. If you are missing classes or have a late assignment because of sickness or religious observance, I can accommodate you.

If possible, please alert me by email before being late on an assignment to make specific arrangements for extensions. It is much easier to accommodate timely requests. Please do not wait until weeks after a missed assignment to reach out to me. I especially advise against waiting to contact me until the last week of classes or after I have submitted final grades.

Re-Grading Policy:

Feel free to discuss your grades with me at any time. If, following such a conversation, you feel that an error was made, please submit a re-grade request to me by email, within two weeks of the assignment being handed back. Please include an explanation or justification for the re-grade request. It's far more effective to discuss why you thought your work was effective and why you feel your grade did not accurately reflect that. If I make a mistake, I will own up to it, correct it, and try not to make the same mistake again.

Pass/Fail Policies:

Students can request to take this course pass/fail. Students must use the <u>Harris Pass/Fail request</u> form and must meet the Harris deadline, which is generally 9:00 am CST on the Monday of the 5th week of courses. I keep the right to deny a student's pass/fail request if the student has not met performance or attendance standards. Students who are approved to take the course pass/fail must turn in all assignments, attend class meetings, and meet all other course requirements.

Managing Any Disruptions That May Arise:

I'm committed to helping everyone pass this course in a way that ensures you learn the materials and get the work done. That said, my students' safety and wellbeing is more important than anything going on in class. If you find yourself unable to complete an assignment because of illness or other personal reasons, here's what I suggest: As soon as possible, students should email me and copy their academic advisor with a note about the missed work and an explanation.



I hold everything in the strictest confidence. We will work together to find a way for students to make up missed assignments.

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing or personal safety should notify me—if you are comfortable doing so. If I cannot help, I will connect you with someone who can. Students can also reach out to their academic advisor and the Dean of Students, Kate Shannon Biddle, for support.

Please Use Your Own Words:

All University of Chicago students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. This means that students shall not represent another's work as their own, use un-allowed materials during exams, or otherwise gain unfair academic advantage.

What is plagiarism?

"Simply put, plagiarism is using words and thoughts of others as if they were your own. Any time you borrow from an original source and do not give proper credit, you have committed plagiarism," according to the University of Chicago's Office of International Affairs. "While there are different degrees and types of plagiarism, plagiarism is not just about honesty, it is also a violation of property law and is illegal."

Furthermore, "It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work," according to the University of Chicago's policies and regulations on academic honesty and plagiarism.

What are the consequences if you plagiarize?

Besides earning a grade of 0 on the assignment (and no higher than a B- in the course, regardless of performance on other assignments), students will also be reported to the Dean of Students and may be punished under the University of Chicago's <u>discipline procedures</u>, which "can result in sanctions that severely disrupt or even end your studies at the University."

The Harris School's policies related to academic integrity and dishonesty can be found on this page. Harris's specific procedures for handling suspected violations of these policies are available in the section *Harris Procedures for Allegations of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty*.

If a student has been found in violation of academic honesty and does not believe that either the finding or the sanction is fair or correct, the student has the right to appeal the finding by requesting a hearing from the Area Disciplinary Committee. More information about the Area Disciplinary Committee is available here.

How to Avoid Unintentional Plagiarism:



After all my years of teaching writing, I've come to believe that the vast majority of incidents related to plagiarism are unintentional. The best way to avoid unintentional plagiarism is to keep good notes of your sources so that you do not forget where a piece of information comes from. The University of Chicago has created several citation management resources you may want to consult:

- <u>Citing Resources</u>: A detailed guide to citation from the University of Chicago Library. Includes instructions on locating and using major citation manuals and style guides, as well as information about using RefWorks bibliographic management tool.
- <u>RefWorks</u>: RefWorks is a web-based bibliographic management tool provided by the
 University of Chicago Library that makes creating bibliographies and citing resources
 quick and easy. The Library's RefWorks' web site links to information about classes and
 extensive online tutorials, as well as help guides on keeping organized and citing
 resources using RefWorks' Write-N-Cite feature.
- <u>Citation Management</u>: A helpful guide on how to use RefWorks and other citation management tools, including EndNote and Zotero.

I expect you to acknowledge the source material you consulted—whether that's by using direct quotations or paraphrases—with proper citations according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Accessibility

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. Timely notifications are required to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Please meet with me to discuss your access needs in this class after you have completed the SDS procedures for requesting accommodations.

Phone: (773) 702-6000

Email: disabilities@uchicago.edu

Diversity and Inclusion

The Harris School welcomes, values, and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and we believe that rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the expression and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions. The University and the Harris School have developed distinct but overlapping



principles and guidelines to ensure that we remain a place where difficult issues are discussed with kindness and respect for all.

- The University's policies are available here. Specifically, the University identifies the freedom of expression as being "vital to our shared goal of the pursuit of knowledge, as is the right of all members of the community to explore new ideas and learn from one another. To preserve an environment of spirited and open debate, we should all have the opportunity to contribute to intellectual exchanges and participate fully in the life of the University."
- The Harris School's commitments to lively, principled, and respectful engagement are available here: "Consistent with the University of Chicago's commitment to open discourse and free expression, Harris encourages members of the leadership, faculty, student body, and administrative staff to respect and engage with others of differing backgrounds or perspectives, even when the ideas or insights shared may be viewed as unpopular or controversial." We foster thought-provoking discourse by encouraging community members not only to speak freely about all issues but also to listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others.