Syllabus

Autumn Quarter 2022 – Equity and the Social Safety Net Policy Lab (PPHA 60000)

Faculty Advisor: Robert Goerge (rgoerge@uchicago.edu)

Professional Advisor: David McQuown (Dmcquown@uchicago.edu)

Tuesday 3:30-6:20

Office hours: By appointment

This Policy Lab focuses on domestic social policy with three projects that aim to support and improve the lives of disadvantaged populations in the areas of the social safety net. Students will take direction from state and local policymakers and administrators on priority topics and have access to unique datasets to address these topics.

This is practicum style course. Students work in teams to develop and execute a project for their client. There are no quizzes or exams. Grades are based on active participation in class and team project work, and the quality of the final presentation, final slide deck, and the policy memo.

All HPL students will receive a letter grade at the conclusion of Winter Quarter. Pass/Fail is not permitted. Grading criteria:

- 20%: Attendance and active participation in class: This entails attending all classes, scheduled client meetings, and presentations; and being prepared, professional, and engaged throughout the quarter

- 20%: "Process" and "Milestone" deliverables, such as: Being prepared for client meetings, team project work plan, preliminary results, policy memo draft, and the practice presentation

- 60%: "Final" deliverables, such as: Policy memo, presentation (slides & delivery) and in some cases, additional materials (code files, Excel files, survey draft, etc.)

WEEK #/CLASS DATE   **KEY MILESTONES**

Week 1/September 27   **Course Orientation & Overview**

-Course overview, introduction to Lab projects, meet in project teams

Assignment: Read all project materials and do your own research

Assignment: Return signed confidentiality pledge before leaving class

Assignment (Upload 9/30 by 3pm): CITI training and any project-specific requirements

Week 2/October 4   **Understanding the Client, Client's Organization and Client's Goals for Lab Projects**

-Introduction to client organization. Meet with client staff to discuss draft project scope and timeline (some groups will meet with clients in Week 3)

Week 3/October 11   **Defining Project Scope**

-Meet with client staff to discuss draft project scope and timeline (groups that did not meet with clients in Week 2)

-Discuss project scope, timeline, and potential challenges

Assignment (Upload 10/14 by 5pm): Completed project plan document

Week 4/October 18   **Team Information Exchange**

-Student teams present project scope, including process, preliminary results, challenges, etc., followed by class Q&A/discussion. This is an opportunity for students to learn about other team's projects and issues, provide feedback, and share suggestions.

Week 5/October 25   **Writing a Policy Memo + Visualizing Results**

-Short lecture on data visualization tips

-Policy memo writing workshop in class

Assignment (Upload 10/25 by 9pm): Draft executive summary paragraph

Week 6/November 1   **Presenting Project Results**

- Student teams present preliminary findings and get feedback from peers and instructors

Assignment: Present preliminary findings to class

Week 7/November 8   **Conduct Analysis and Draft Deliverables**

-Student teams meet with instructors to discuss progress and troubleshoot outstanding issues

Assignment (Upload by 11/8 by 3pm): Submit keys draft data visuals (charts, infographic, tables, etc.)

Week 8/November 15   **Team Mock Presentations**

-Student teams do a practice presentation for the class and give and receive feedback from faculty and classmates

Assignment: Present draft final presentation to class

Week 9/November 22   **No Class**

Week 10/November 29   **Student Teams Make Final Presentations to Clients** *(client site or on campus or Zoom)*

-No class this week

Assignment (Upload 48 hours before presentation): Submit presentation slides to course instructors 48 hours before final presentation is scheduled

Assignment (Upload 11/29 by 9pm): Submit draft policy memo

Finals Week   **Submit Final Presentation and Policy Memo**

Assignment (Upload 12/9 by 9pm): Submit electronic versions of final presentations and accompanying policy memo

Requirements and Administrative Information for all Harris Policy Labs

Objectives of Harris Policy Labs

Harris Policy Labs (HPL) is intended to provide students with an action-based academic experience that offers important "hands-on" learning opportunities to analyze, develop, advocate for and help drive the execution of effective policy solutions in a real world context, involving actual client organizations. In addition, HPL is intended to strengthen and expand students' professional experience, professional skills development and professional networks in the public policy sector.

To meet these objectives, HPL students are expected to develop strong working knowledge in a number of areas during the quarter, including but not limited to the following:

* Familiarity with the client organization's mission, scope and policy context in which it operates

* Understanding of the assigned policy area, including background, critical research, current debates, and context as it relates to the client organization

* Ability to obtain data, identify research, and conduct and present rigorous policy analysis in a manner that is appropriate and relevant to the client organization

* Ability to work as a part of a multi-disciplinary team to scope, undertake and manage a project from start to finish

* Experience engaging with senior level policy professionals and managing a client relationship

 In general, students will find that the more they put into a "Labs" experience, the more value they will obtain from it, academically, professionally and personally.

Important issues regarding HPL (and experiential learning environments generally):

The process of working on a real policy challenge for an outside client organization raises certain issues not typically encountered in other academic courses. It is essential for students to be aware of these issues upfront.

* Flexibility, courtesy and respect are important: Working on a real project with a client organization is generally not as smooth or as structured as working on a hypothetical assignment in a class, and generally involves some unpredictability. For instance, clients may occasionally need to reschedule a meeting with students or slightly modify the direction of a project. Expect challenges and be flexible, courteous and respectful in accommodating them.

* Expect imperfect data: A client will rarely have all the data needed for a project. Expect to work with imperfect data and expect challenges associated with an imperfect data set. Faculty

Advisors and Professional Advisors may be able to help you work with what you have, and help direct you to other data sources to fill gaps.

* Confidentiality: Unless a Faculty Advisor explicitly states otherwise, students are expected to keep strictly confidential any data and materials shared by the client organization and keep strictly confidential the content of any conversations with clients. Any breaches of confidentiality are extremely serious and could jeopardize the project and the relationship between UChicago and the client.

* Additional data management requirements for sensitive data sets: In certain instances, students may need to work with sensitive data sets for which there are additional protocols (e.g., more restrictive confidentiality requirements, very specific data handling requirements, etc). Faculty Advisors will inform students about these restrictions and requirements where relevant, and students are expected to abide them without exception. Any breaches of data management requirements for sensitive data sets are extremely serious, could jeopardize the project and the relationship between UChicago and the client organization, and may have additional legal ramifications.

Team dynamics:

An important component of the HPL experience is working with peers on a team. Students should invest time at the beginning of the project to establish the team's purpose and how the team will work together to jointly achieve project goals. All team members are expected to make substantive contributions to the project.

Grading:

All HPL students will receive a letter grade from their Faculty Advisor at the conclusion of Fall Quarter, including students who intend to remain in a Lab for Winter Quarter. Pass/fail is not permitted.

Requesting reasonable accommodations:

Any student requesting accommodations related to disabilities should review UChicago's policy at https://disabilities.uchicago.eduLinks to an external site. and communicate requests as soon as possible to both the Faculty Advisor and Kate Biddle, Director of Student Affairs at Harris, (773) 702-4753 or kbiddle@uchicago.edu.

Questions:

Faculty Advisors and Professional Advisors can likely answer most questions. General questions about the Labs may be brought to Carol Brown, Executive Director, at carolbrown@uchicago.edu, or Paula Worthington, Academic Director, at pworthington@uchicago.edu.

Resources Available to Students

The University has a comprehensive set of student support services (described [here](#)), including [student health services](#). And in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruptions, the University has provided links for students via its "Learning Remotely" [website](#); specific resources are listed [here](#).

*If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, remote counseling services are available. Student Counseling Service (SCS) urges you to attend to your mental wellbeing and to reach out to them for support during these challenging times. All SCS services are covered by the Student Life Fee, and there is no additional cost for students to access their services. See https://wellness.uchicago.edu/mental-health/student-counseling-service-spring-quarter-faq/ . Students seeking new services/resources can call 773.702.9800 during business hours (Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.) and ask to speak with a clinician. **Students needing urgent mental health care can speak with clinicians over the phone 24/7 by calling the SCS at 773.702.3625.***

The Harris School itself provides both academic and non-academic support services for students. These resources are described (and links provided) on [this page of the Harris website](#).

Harris School and University of Chicago Policies

General expectations are presented in the University's [Student Manual](#) and the [Harris School's own student policies and regulations](#).

Academic Integrity

All University of Chicago students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic Integrity and honesty. Among other things, 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.

- The University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty are described [here](#). It is worth explicitly stating the University's approach here: "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. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously."
- The Harris School's student policies are available on the [policies page of our website](#).
    - The *Academic Honesty and Plagiarism* section expresses the main principles.

- o Detailed guidelines for more specialized student work (e.g., problem sets including computer code) are offered in the sub-section titled *Harris Integrity Policy for Problem Sets Involving Code.*
- 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* and are also re-produced as an Appendix to this document.
  - o All students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students (Kate Biddle) for investigation and adjudication. The disciplinary process can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University.
  - o Other penalties for violations that may be imposed include:
    - The student will receive a grade of 0 on the assignment or exam in question.
    - The student may be asked to re-do the assignment or retake the exam (without credit) to ensure that the student has learned how to properly cite sources or demonstrate that he or she has command of material covered.

Disability Accommodations

The University's policies regarding students with disabilities are available [here](#).   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 must follow the [procedures established by the Harris School of Public Policy](#).

Timely notifications are required to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Currently registered students are asked to notify the Harris Student Disability Liaison, Eman Alsamara (ealsamara@uchicago.edu) of their access requests by the end of the first week of the quarter. The Harris Student Disability Liaison will work with the student and instructor to coordinate the implementation of student accommodations. *Harris students are not required to submit their accommodations letter to the instructor.* Students from other divisions in the University must submit their accommodations letter to Eman Alsamara (ealsamara@uchicago.edu) in the Harris Dean of Students Office.

Students who are facing extenuating circumstances at any point during the quarter should reach out to their Academic Advisor in the Dean of Students Office for support. If you feel you need accommodations on an ongoing basis, contact Student Disability Services. To contact SDS: website: [disabilities.uchicago.edu](#) 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 insure 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]: "The Harris School of Public Policy welcomes and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives as part of our commitment to building an inclusive community. *Fostering an environment that encourages rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the involvement and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions*. As a leading public policy school, Harris holds diversity as a core value. That includes not only diversity of opinion, but diversity along a broad spectrum of factors, including race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, socio-economic background, and social or political belief. Recognizing the value of diversity and inclusion is essential to combating discrimination, addressing disparities, and cultivating ethical and clear-eyed policy leadership."
- Since English language proficiency also varies within the student body, instructors are also encouraged to affirmatively communicate to students, particularly international students, how class participation features in the classroom experience and affects final course grades, since some students have limited experience expressing their ideas in English. Other course components, such as regular TA sessions, TA or instructor office hours, etc. should also be carefully explained since some international students have had little to no previous exposure to the U.S. academic system.

Video and Audio Recordings

The University has developed specific policies and procedures regarding the use of video/audio recordings: these policies are explicitly described in the University's [student manual]().

By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that:
i. They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course;

or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.

ii. They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.

iii. Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.

iv. Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.