

## PPHA 36650 – Spring 2024

### Persuasive Communication for Public Policy Professionals

#### Lectures with [David Chrisinger](#)

- Sections 1 & 2: Tuesdays, 9:30-10:50 am (Keller 0001)

#### Discussion Sections Led by [Matthew Fleming](#):

- Section 1D01: Thursdays, 9:30-10:50 am (Keller 0001)
- Section 1D02: Wednesdays, 9:00-10:20 am (Keller 0010)

#### Discussion Sections Led by [Isabeau Dasho](#):

- Section 2D01: Wednesdays, 1:30-2:50 pm (Keller 0007)
- Section 2D02: Thursdays, 2:00-3:20 pm (Keller 1022)

### Course Description:

This writing-intensive course introduces students to evidence-based communication tools, frameworks, and strategies that can be used to craft persuasive policy narratives for audiences that need to be targeted and reached by public policy professionals. Each week, students will have ample class time to experiment with and receive extensive feedback on their writing to ensure they are able to communicate public policy as clearly, concisely, and compellingly as possible.

Similar to the pedagogical structure employed by the University of Chicago's [Little Red Schoolhouse](#), the content in this course will be delivered on Tuesdays by David Chrisinger in large lectures. On Wednesdays OR Thursdays, students will meet in groups of 15 for discussions and group work led by either Isabeau Dasho or Matthew Fleming.

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

## 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 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 Course Schedule:

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>March 18-22</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Introduction to Persuasive Communication in Public Policy</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to the Five Approaches to Persuasive Policy Communication</li> <li>• Statement Starters</li> <li>• Three Types of Policy Research Questions</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abstraction Laddering &amp; “Plussing”</li> <li>• Crafting Better Research Questions</li> <li>• Peer Review: Role Reversal</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mastering the Three Policy Narratives</a></li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	<p>Personal Style Guide (<b>Due Finals Week</b>)</p> <p>Discussion Board: Statement Starters &amp; Three Research Questions (<b>Due Week 2</b>)</p>

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>March 25-29</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Meeting the Unique Needs of Readers</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the Moral Foundations Theory</li> <li>• Meeting the Unique Needs of Your Reader</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Stakeholder Mapping</li> <li>• How to Research and Build a Reader Profile</li> <li>• Introduction to Ethical Lobbying</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Using Moral Foundations Theory to Analyze Audiences</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Meeting the Unique Needs of the Reader</a></li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	<p>Discussion Board: Reader Profile (<b>Due Week 3</b>)</p> <p>Reader Profile for Policy Decision Memo (<b>Due Week 4</b>)</p>



<b>Week 3</b>	<b>April 1-5</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Four Elements of a Persuasive Policy Recommendation</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Elements of a Persuasive Policy Recommendation</li> <li>• Framing the Outlook with Prospect Theory</li> <li>• Introduction to Affinity Clustering</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affinity Clustering</li> <li>• Peer Review: Questions Only</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Four Elements of Persuasive Policy Writing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">USAID: A Four Elements Case Study</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to Write a Policy Memo That Matters</a></li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Policy Decision Memo ( <b>Due Week 4</b> )

<b>Week 4</b>	<b>April 8-12</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Five Essential Elements of Policy Storytelling</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aristotle’s Dramatic Arc</li> <li>• Kurt Vonnegut’s “Shapes of Stories”</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Types of Policy Storytellers</li> <li>• Uncovering the Object of Desire</li> <li>• Peer Review: Starting with One True Thing</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Chapters 5 &amp; 12, Public Policy Writing That Matters</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">“Local Government Has Too Much Power,”</a> by Jerusalem Demsas, <i>Atlantic</i> (2023)</li> <li>• <a href="#">“Never Give AI the Nuclear Codes,”</a> by Ross Anderson, <i>Atlantic</i> (2023)</li> <li>• <a href="#">“The Real Lesson of Sept. 11,”</a> by Joe Quinn, <i>New York Times</i> (2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Policy Reform Narrative ( <b>Due Week 5</b> )



<b>Week 5</b>	<b>April 15-19</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Introduction to Ethical Persuasion</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture (Matthew &amp; Isabeau):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respecting the Limits of Persuasion</li> <li>• Review of Bad-Faith Arguments</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claims of Fact vs. Value vs. Policy</li> <li>• Combating Mis- and Disinformation Effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">“Winning arguments: Interaction dynamics and persuasion strategies in good-faith online discussions,”</a> by Chenhao Tan, et al., <i>Proceedings of the 25<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the World Wide Web</i> (2016)</li> <li>• <a href="#">“The Psychological Drivers of Misinformation Belief and Its Resistance to Correction,”</a> by Ullrich KH Ecker, et al., <i>Nature</i> (2022)</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Discussion Board: Bad Faith Argument Rebuttal <b>(Due Week 6)</b>

<b>Week 6</b>	<b>April 22-26</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Crafting Coherent Paragraphs &amp; Clear and Concise Sentences</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving Paragraph Coherence with Deductive Structure</li> <li>• Improving Paragraph Cohesion with the Old-to-New Sequence</li> <li>• Improving Sentence Clarity with Strong Sentence Cores</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Online Editing Tools</li> <li>• Peer Review: Highlighters Only</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Chapters 7-10</a>, <i>Public Policy Writing That Matters</i></li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Discussion Board: Dissenting Opinion Rebuttal <b>(Due Week 7)</b>



<b>Week 7</b>	<b>April 29-May 3</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Engaging Effectively with the Research Community</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture (Matthew &amp; Isabeau):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mastering the Literature Review</li> <li>• Citing Sources Appropriately</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a Narrative Arc for the Literature Review</li> <li>• Bull’s Eye Diagramming</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Literature Review ( <b>Due Week 8</b> )

<b>Week 8</b>	<b>May 6-10</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Pitching, Working with Editors, and Publishing Your Writing</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitching for Publication</li> <li>• Guest Speaker Panel: Writers and Editors</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing for the <i>Chicago Policy Review</i></li> <li>• Peer Review: Deep Listening</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Final Portfolio ( <b>Due Finals Week</b> )

<b>Week 9</b>	<b>May 13-17</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Engaging with the Critical Sectors of Policy Change</b>
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><u>Lecture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging with the Critical Sectors of Policy Change</li> <li>• Guest Speaker Panel: Communication Practitioners</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is incremental change a moral failure?</li> <li>• Importance / Difficulty Matrix</li> </ul>
<b>Readings:</b>	<p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">“Incremental Change Is a Moral Failure,”</a> by Denzel Smith, <i>Atlantic</i> (2020)</li> <li>• <a href="#">“Brokenism,”</a> by Alana Newhouse, <i>Tablet Magazine</i> (2022)</li> </ul>

## Finals Week: May 20-24

You will need to submit a Final Portfolio by the end of the day on **May 23, 2024**, that includes:

### 1. Literature Review

- A comprehensive and critical summary of existing scholarly research on a specific topic or research question. Literature Reviews provide an overview of the current state of knowledge in a particular field, identifies gaps, debates, trends, and areas where further research is needed.

### 2. Policy Decision Memo — Analysis of Proposed Policy Reform

- A 2-3-page document that communicates key information, recommendations, and justifications to decision-makers within an organization or government. Policy decision memos are crucial tools in policy analysis and decision-making processes, as they help stakeholders understand the context, implications, and potential outcomes associated with a particular policy choice.

### 3. Policy Reform Narrative

- A 1,500-word narrative that shows the changes, intentions, and impacts associated with a specific policy reform. Such narratives should communicate the rationale behind the reform, the process of its development, the key stakeholders involved, and the observed or expected outcomes. They should also aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the policy reform, making it accessible to a diverse audience, including policymakers, the public, and other key stakeholders.

### 4. Personal Policy Writing Style Guide

- Throughout the course, students need to create a personal style guide of at least 10 writing tools, frameworks, and strategies encountered in class that helped them communicate more effectively. More than a simple list of “rules,” students will be required to name the tool they found helpful, 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 Your Final Portfolio Will Be Evaluated:

Criteria	Novice = 4	Proficient = 6	Distinguished = 8	Master = 10
<b>Audience &amp; Purpose</b>	Appropriate audience not clearly identified and insufficient 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.
<b>Coherence &amp; Organization</b>	Executive Summary / Inciting Event is confusingly worded/ineffective.	Executive Summary / Inciting Event contains some elements of a policy finding.	Executive Summary / Inciting Event contains most elements of a policy finding.	Executive summary/inciting Event contains all required elements and tells a story.
	Writing lacks logical organization.	Writing is mostly coherent and organized.	Writing is coherent and logically organized with deductive structure, and transitions are used between ideas and paragraphs.	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.
<b>Content</b>	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 evidence's original thought and support.
	Caveats and alternative viewpoints are not considered.	Caveats and alternative viewpoints are mentioned 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.
<b>Development</b>	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.	Main points are well developed with high-quality support.
	The Conclusion / Resolution is missing or inappropriate.	Some critical thinking is present.	Critical thinking is weaved into the main points.	Reveals high 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.
<b>Paragraph Structure</b>	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.	
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Mostly weak sentence cores and little or no variety in structure or diction.	Approaches graduate-level usage of strong sentence cores and some variety in sentence structures and 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.
<b>Grammar &amp; Mechanics</b>	Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors are distracting, fragments, comma splices, and run-ons evident.	Most spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct, allowing reader to progress through the story fairly easily.	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.
<b>Format</b>	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; correct margins and spacing.	Meets length and format requirements and evidences attention to detail.
	Neatness of document needs attention.	Document is neat but may have some presentation errors.	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 [Harris Pass/Fail request 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.

### 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](mailto: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.

## Please Use Your Words – They’re the Best 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 [discipline procedures](#), 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:**

The 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:

- [Citing Resources](#): 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.
- [RefWorks](#): 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.
- [Citation Management](#): A helpful guide on how to use RefWorks and other citation management tools, including EndNote and Zotero.

We expect you to acknowledge the source material consulted—whether that’s by using direct quotations or paraphrases—with proper citations according to the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

## **Managing Any Disruptions That May Arise:**

We're committed to helping everyone pass this course in a way that ensures the materials are learned and the work gets done. That said, our 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 we suggest: As soon as possible, you should email your discussion leader and copy your academic advisor with a note about the missed work and an explanation. We hold everything in the strictest confidence, and we will work together to find a way for you to make up missed assignments.

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing or personal safety should notify us, if you are comfortable doing so. If we cannot help, we 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.