

**Harris School of Public Policy/University of Chicago
Policy Lab in Labor Market Regulation
PPHA 60000-4**

Fall 2024 – Thursdays, 3:30 – 6:20 pm

WEEK 1: WE MEET AT 5:00 PM ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1!!

Keller 0010

Faculty Advisor:

Paula R. Worthington

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Professional Advisor:

TBD

Course Description & Client

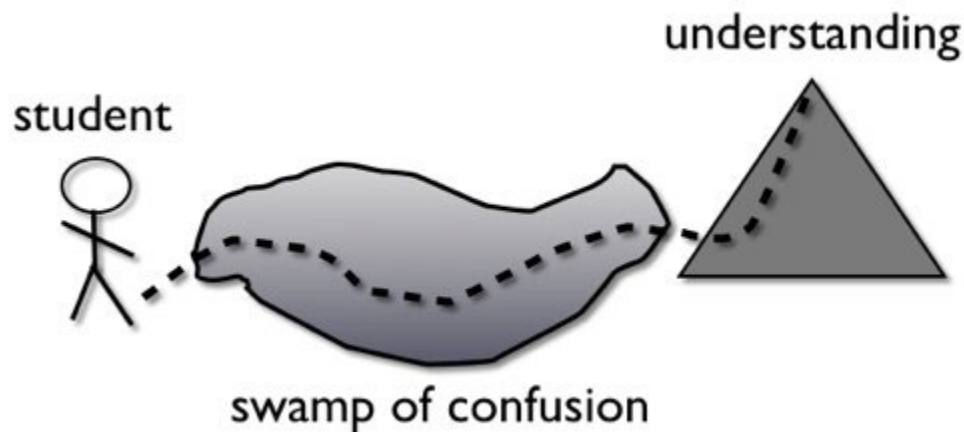
This Policy Lab has one client, the Institute for Justice Clinic on Entrepreneurship at the University of Chicago Law School (the IJ Clinic). The IJ Clinic (like the Policy Lab) engages university students in vital, real-world work – advocating for and assisting low-income entrepreneurs in Chicago. In the last few years, the IJ Clinic has focused on occupational licensing – the requirement that people need permission from the state to enter an occupation. It helped create a bill to investigate licensing in Illinois and supported the work of Illinois’s Comprehensive Licensing Information to Minimize Barriers (CLIMB) Task Force. The IJ Clinic is part of the Institute for Justice (IJ), a nationwide nonprofit, public interest law firm with a mission to push back against government abuses and protect Americans' rights to shape their own lives and chase their own dreams. IJ has worked on licensing issues for many years, producing related reports, analysis, litigation support, and model legislation. *This Lab is an approved elective for the Markets and Regulation Specialization.* Three distinct projects and teams will be part of this Lab; see the course Canvas site for more details:

- Conducting a Sunset Review of Illinois’s Cosmetology Act
- Assessing the Costs and Value of Training and Educational Requirements
- Increasing Opportunities for Justice-System Involved Individuals

Under guidance from faculty and professional advisors, teams will conduct research and analysis, draw conclusions, develop recommendations, and present final deliverables to client leadership at the conclusion of the quarter. Client meetings will occur throughout the quarter as needed.

Learning Objectives

Before itemizing any specifics, it is worth emphasizing how this class differs from many others at Harris. In a nutshell, in the Harris Policy Labs program we both fear and embrace the idea that the “path of learning goes through the swamp of confusion.”¹



(Image from Allain, Rhett. “Learning Goes through The Land of Confusion.” *Wired*, February 3, 2010. <https://www.wired.com/2010/02/learning-goes-through-the-land-of-confusion/>.)

In other words, the Policy Labs experience can be messy and even scary! There are no problem sets or exams, and there are few clear-cut and specific “problems” to solve. In that sense, the course is intended to provide a taste of real-world policy analysis and policymaking, albeit with the structure of a course, advisors, and other supports.

So! We intend that by the end of this course, students will:

- Learn or enhance capacity to work with incomplete data, frustrating clients, conflicting priorities, and other ambiguities
- Learn or enhance capacity to manage a complex project from inception to completion
- Develop or enhance teamwork skills
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the assigned policy area by researching, analyzing, and synthesizing data related to the topic, drawing conclusions from the analysis, and developing concrete policy recommendations
- Collaborate extensively with fellow students, faculty advisors, and clients to develop and produce deliverables that provide useful information to the client and meet the client’s needs
- Develop or enhance oral and writing skills by delivering final analysis and recommendations to the client organization in the form of verbal and written deliverables

Prerequisites

Second-year graduate students and one-year masters students (not in their first quarter) are eligible to enroll.

¹ Rhett Allain, “Learning Goes through The Land of Confusion,” *Wired*, February 3, 2010, <https://www.wired.com/2010/02/learning-goes-through-the-land-of-confusion/>.

Class Meetings and Weekly Time Commitment

Formal class meetings are weekly on Thursday afternoons. ***In week 1, we will meet on Tuesday, October 1, from 5:00 to 7:20 pm in Keller 1022, and we will NOT meet at all on Thursday October 3.*** Weekly sessions will be devoted to team work on your project as well as occasional lectures or small group activities. In addition, you should plan to spend 7-10 hours per week outside of class on your project (this includes team meetings, client meetings, etc.).

Course Structure and Expectations

As discussed above, this course is structured differently than a traditional academic course. Class meetings will utilize a combination of seminar format with discussion, time for teamwork and other meetings, and hands-on learning activities in place of traditional, one-way lecture. Policy Labs are “experiential learning” courses, and we have found that successful experiences for students, advisors, and clients are built on several key elements:

- **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. Expect the unexpected, be flexible, and be courteous and respectful to your teammates, to your client and to accommodating the client’s needs.
- **Expect imperfect and incomplete data—and lack of clarity about your project!** A client will rarely have all of the data needed for a project, and what data are available may be in a terrible format, incomplete, etc. Expect to work with imperfect data, and expect challenges associated with its use. Clients may say one thing in week 2 and another in week 6, complicating your team’s efforts. Frustrating! But remember, your advisors are here to help you work with what you have and/or direct you to other sources as needed, and despite these challenges, we set and maintain high quality standards for the work produced and shared with clients.
- **Confidentiality is critical.** In your work for this class, you will interact with confidential information, including not only confidential data provided by clients but also insights gleaned from that data and from client meetings. Clients trust us to help them solve difficult problems, and trust that we will not divulge what we learn in ways that could be detrimental to them. Students are required to keep all data and materials shared by the client confidential, as well as to keep the content of conversations with clients in confidence. All students are required to sign a confidentiality pledge at the start of the quarter. Violation of the pledge may result in academic penalties.

Course Materials

Background materials and client materials will be posted to Canvas. Students may also choose to store and share their work using other platforms as well (Box, Google Drive, etc.).

I will use the Canvas site intensively. The site's navigation tabs on the left-hand-side panel will help you find what you need; key tabs include:

- Syllabus: links to this document, plus links to project team pages
- Modules
 - Week 00: General resources for all students and teams
 - Weeks 01 to 09: weekly plans and schedules
- Assignments, by category, with assignment weights

Teaching and Learning Environment and Expectations

This course is planned as an in-person experience, and students are expected to attend class each week at the Keller Center. Because of the interactive nature of this class, I will not record class sessions, nor will I use contemporaneous Zoom sessions. Students who miss class without a valid excuse will be penalized. I will rely heavily on Canvas, and students are responsible for any and all material posted there. I encourage the use of email and try to respond in a timely fashion. **Please do not use the Inbox/Messaging feature of Canvas to communicate with me.** I also do not text, tweet, or Facebook message regarding course matters, and I don't even use Slack! *So please check your UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO email and CANVAS regularly.* **I will schedule office hours as needed throughout the term and post the details to Canvas.**

That said, of course, public health and/or personal health circumstances may evolve in ways forcing changes to these plans. Potentially relevant university policies and resources include:

- COVID guidance: <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/medical-services/covid-19/>
- “Learning Remotely” resources: <https://learningremotely.uchicago.edu/>

Deliverables and Grading

In some sense, the final work product delivered to the client is the “only” thing that matters. However, these Labs are intended to develop your emerging skills—analytical, communications, interpersonal, and overall professional skills. This means the *process* matters along with the *product*. Furthermore, in this course, you will be evaluated at both the individual and group (team) level. Professor Worthington will assign course letter grades after consultation with Mr/Ms/TBD and with input from our client **and your fellow teammates**, and these grades will reflect your quarter-long effort, commitment, and engagement. Products and processes will be judged on quality and timeliness. More specifically, your course grade will be based on the components listed below:

- 15%: Attendance, participation, and professionalism
 - This entails being prepared, on-time, professional, and actively engaged throughout the quarter.
 - For example, students are expected to contribute to positive team dynamics and interactions, receiving and providing feedback with respect throughout the term.
- 15%: “Process” deliverables, such as:
 - Team contract
 - Preparing for initial client meeting
 - Team work plan and execution
 - Preparing for mid-quarter client meeting
 - Reflections on team contract and work plan
- 20%: “Milestone” deliverables, such as:
 - Data assignment
 - Qualitative interview
 - Drafts of slides
 - Drafts of policy brief
- 50% “Final” deliverables such as
 - Policy brief or memo, which likely includes a short “executive summary” as well as technical appendices
 - Presentation
- In some cases, additional materials (computer programs, Excel files, etc.)

A few other comments about grades:

- Your course grade will reflect both your individual effort and accomplishments as well as those of your team. Peer evaluations *will* be a factor in determination of your course grade.
- In general, I do not use rigid numeric scales for assigning letter grades. Instead, I “scale” each item to have a max score of 100 and then compute your numeric course score as the weighted average of those scores (with the assignment weights as specified above). With those numeric scores in hand, I consider the distribution of scores and aim to assign letter grades to scores in a manner no less generous than the “standard” Harris School grade distribution:
 - A (1/8)
 - A- (1/4)
 - B+ (1/4)
 - B (1/4)
 - B- or lower (1/8)
- Students sometimes wish to request review and regrading of their returned work. If you wish to request reconsideration of your work, please follow these guidelines:
 - All requests must be submitted by email to me, with appropriate files and documentation, along with an explanation of why your work should be reconsidered.
 - All regrade requests should be submitted within one week of having the work returned to you.

Harris School and University of Chicago Resources

- Harris School supports are described here: <https://harris.uchicago.edu/student-life/dean-of-students-office/academic-support-programs>
- From the home page of the University's [Learning Remotely](https://learningremotely.uchicago.edu/) site, links to learning and health and well-being resources are provided: <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/> and <https://learningremotely.uchicago.edu/learning-resources/>.
- Students needing urgent mental health care can speak with clinicians over the phone 24/7 by calling (773) 702-3625.

Harris School and University of Chicago Policies

No surprises here, but all University and Harris School policies apply to this course. The best source of information is from the Harris School's Dean of Students Office:

<https://harris.uchicago.edu/student-life/dean-of-students-office>. That page includes links to [Harris School policies](#), [University Academic Policies](#), and [University General Policies](#).

Some specific items to highlight:

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.

- It is worth explicitly stating the University's approach: "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."
- Any students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students (Kate Shannon Biddle) for investigation and adjudication. The disciplinary process can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University. In addition to those penalties, I reserve the right to assign a grade of "F" for any assignment for which a student is found to have committed academic dishonesty; in a subset of such cases, a student may also receive a grade of "F" for the course, earning zero credit.

Artificial Intelligence

TBD.

Occupational Licensing and Regulation

Sponsoring Organization: Institute for Justice

The [Institute for Justice](#) (IJ) is a nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to promoting economic and political rights, hereby allowing Americans full opportunities to pursue educational, labor market, and other opportunities. The IJ's [Economic Liberty](#) initiative includes multiple projects aimed at reducing unnecessary occupational licensing requirements, which can serve as barriers to entry into selected occupations and professions. Specifically, the IJ has a long-standing focus on low-to-moderate income occupations, many of which are regulated by states across the country, and the IJ supports a number of projects and programs to increase opportunities for entrepreneurs and workers. Close to home, the IJ sponsors the University of Chicago Law School-based [Entrepreneurship Clinic](#), providing “free legal assistance, support, and advocacy for low-income entrepreneurs in Chicago.”

Mission of Client and Context for Project

In the state of Illinois, many occupations and professions are regulated by the state's Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR); separate statutes govern groups of related occupations, typically for a 5 or 10-year time period, after which the statutes are repealed barring action by the Illinois General Assembly. In June 2022, the IJ highlighted its role in crafting two licensure-related bills signed by Illinois Governor Pritzker: P.A. 102-1078, the Comprehensive Licensing Information to Minimize Barriers Task Force Act; and P.A. 102-0984, Amending the Regulatory Sunset Act (Wimer 2022). The legislation was intended to advance the state's efforts to “right-size” its regulatory approach particularly for low and moderate income occupations and to increase economic opportunities for all workers.

- CLIMB Act (State of Illinois 2022a)
 - This Act established the CLIMB taskforce, whose mandate was to prepare an analysis of occupational licensure administered by the state's Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, with a particular focus on “persons from historically and economically disadvantaged groups.”
 - The taskforce report was to include recommendations “for continued required reporting from the Department to better support the General Assembly in revoking, modifying, or creating new licensing Acts.”
 - The report is not yet finalized, but it may be available in draft form by early fall (CLIMB Task Force 2024).
- Amending the Regulatory Sunset Act (State of Illinois 2022b)
 - This Act amended the Regulatory Sunset Act to require the state to periodically review its occupational and professional licensing requirements with a focus on regulating only to the extent “necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare from significant and discernible harm or damage.”
 - Under the amended Regulatory Sunset Act, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) is required to prepare reports to consider whether a given agency or regulatory program should be terminated, modified, or continued, making recommendations to the Governor. The amended statute specifically added and itemized factors to be included in the analysis.

Overview of Projects

Project 1: Sunset Review of the Cosmetology Act

The state's *Barber, Cosmetology, Esthetics, Hair Braiding, and Nail Technology Act of 1985* is set to be repealed on January 1, 2026 (State of Illinois, n.d.-a, sec. 4.36; n.d.-c). **In this project, students will prepare a sunset review of the licensing act based on the amended sunset review expectations.** Section 6 of the Sunset Review Act specifies the factors to be included in the sunset review (State of Illinois, n.d.-a, sec. 6). This review will include recommendations regarding future state regulation of this group of occupations, providing GOMB with a model report that it can emulate in future sunset reviews. The report should demonstrate a genuine effort to set the need for regulation against the burdens imposed by the existing regulation. By preparing this report for the client, the team will learn where some of the source material can be found to address the requirements of the Sunset Act and will also learn if some of the criteria in the Sunset Act are confusing/unattainable, which might help the client propose amendments to the underlying sunset review requirements.

Focusing on cosmetology makes sense for several reasons:

- The Task Force report will likely recommend reform in this area, particularly in braiding.
- The client will be able to use the report in advocacy and media, presenting the need for licensing reform.
- The General Assembly can use neutral information about the needs for regulation and the utility of current regulatory requirements, as it evaluates the coming suggestions for reform. The report can balance out and fact check private interest groups.
- Because cosmetology is such a large chunk of the IDFP budget, it particularly needs outsider, neutral reporting.

Specifically, students should expect to:

- Review “best practices” in sunset reviews, including sample reviews from other states (National Conference of State Legislators 2022).
- Review GOMB’s existing sunset reports for 2024 and 2023 and assess alignment with the amended review act (Governor’s Office of Management and Budget, n.d.). For example, how do the Shorthand Reporters and the Electrologist reports compare (Sturm and Governor’s Office of Management and Budget 2024; 2023)?
- Review the CLIMB task force report and its discussion of hair braiding (CLIMB Task Force 2024).
- Compare Illinois’s regulations to those of other states (Knepper et al. 2022).
- Analyze IDFP data on licensees to investigate applications, renewals, and disciplinary actions in Illinois. In addition, use the data to explore the geographic distribution of active licensees to highlight potential disparities by race, ethnicity, and/or income. (Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation 2024b).
- Interview at least one practitioner covered by the *Act* to provide a licensee’s perspective on the depth and breadth of the state’s regulations.

- Explore how online reviews (e.g., Google, Yelp) may be exploited to investigate service quality, consumer satisfaction, and related issues.
- Make recommendations for each occupation covered by the *Act* regarding future regulations.

Project 2: Training and Education Requirements

Training and educational requirements potentially comprise among the heaviest burdens of licensing, both for initial licensure as well as for renewals. The CLIMB Task Force was not able to gather information about the costs and availability of required training for its 16 targeted low and moderate income occupations, yet such an inventory would be valuable for several reasons:

- Quantifying the expense of required training for low-income occupations is necessary for subsequent analysis and potential advocacy re: such requirements.
- To the extent that licensing’s education and training requirements are linked to student debt problems, the political dynamics and calculations may change, broadening a potential reform coalition.
- Documenting links—or the lack thereof—between the content of required training and its relevance to the justifications for the law will support subsequent advocacy to eliminate unnecessary training requirements for initial licensure, renewals, or both. For example, continuing education requirements on pretty braiding styles seem unlikely to be tied to health and safety. It might be a nice-to-have for a braider, but it might not be a need-to-have for a braider; it might raise costs on braiders and their customers; and it seems unlikely to directly affect public safety and consumer welfare.

Specifically, students should expect to:

- Group the 16 occupations by the relevant statute governing their practice.
- By statute and then occupation:
 - Document initial as well as continuing educational requirements. This might include items such as: number of hours, weeks, or months required; approved providers of required training and/or education; tuition, supplies, and/or other out-of-pocket costs associated with training and/or educational requirements; and/or the possible role of federal or state student aid programs to fund attendance.
 - Estimate the “opportunity cost” of meeting training and educational requirements for initial licensure as well as renewal.
 - Where relevant, assess the ease of out-of-state current licensees interested in practicing in Illinois to meet the training and educational requirements without duplication of previous programs.
- If time permits, assess IDFPR-licensed schools covered by these statutes and their current public reports on program costs, financial aid, earnings, debt levels of graduates, enrollments, and so on. How close are these schools to meeting recently finalized federal requirements on public disclosure on their “gainful employment” programs? (American Association of Community Colleges 2023; Unglesbee 2024; Norris and Ullrich 2024;

Ullrich and Norris 2024; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.; Tarnow and Pheasant 2024; U.S. Department of Education 2023).

Project 3: Treatment of Justice-Involved Individuals

Occupational regulation can limit employment opportunities for individuals with criminal records without improving public safety in any meaningful way. In Illinois, statutory occupational regulations often include vague language describing how previous felony or misdemeanor convictions affect the ability of an applicant to obtain a license issued by IDFPR.² Furthermore, the CLIMB report notes that several licensing acts currently do “not reflect research-driven best practices” and that statutory language and IDFPR “FAQs” are sometimes in conflict (CLIMB Task Force 2024). How can Illinois do with its laws and procedures to open doors for justice-involved people looking to enter an occupation? **In this project, students will analyze IDFPR data and reports to identify patterns in license applications, approvals, renewals, and denials for justice-involved individuals and will make recommendations for changes to existing statutes, administrative rules, and/or reporting practices to better align the state’s licensing practices with evidence-based approaches.**

Specifically, students should expect to:

- Review the IDFPR’s annual reports on disciplinary actions, with a particular focus on the low and moderate income occupations studied by the CLIMB task force (Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024a).
- Analyze licensee-level data from IDFPR to identify patterns of disciplinary actions (including probation, revocation, and other actions) for those same occupations (Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation 2024b).
- Make recommendations for changes to existing statutes, administrative rules, and/or reporting practices to better align the state’s licensing practices with evidence-based approaches. Specifically, review the relevant recommendations made by the CLIMB report and document and analyze the effects of such recommendations in states that have already implemented them (CLIMB Task Force 2024).

² For example, applicants for a license to practice massage therapy must be “at least 18 years of age and of good moral character. In determining good moral character, the Department may take into consideration conviction of any crime under the laws of the United States or any state or territory thereof that is a felony or a misdemeanor or any crime that is directly related to the practice of the profession. Such a conviction shall not operate automatically as a complete bar to a license, except in the case of any conviction for prostitution, rape, or sexual misconduct, or where the applicant is a registered sex offender” (State of Illinois, n.d.-b, sec. 15).

General Resources

- CLIMB Task Force report (CLIMB Task Force 2024)
- Data on IDFPR licensees (Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation 2024b)

Logistics and Project Details

Skills needed

Students must be able to read, concisely summarize and distill, and learn from existing reports and studies; locate, prepare, and analyze multiple data sets; and create professional quality graphs, maps, and tables with their analysis. In other words: students will need to use Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint); R and/or Stata; and ArcGIS or some other geographic information software.

Deliverables

Students will provide their findings and analysis in one or more memos to IJ staff. Each team will prepare a one pager summarizing key insights and recommendations. Each team will also deliver a polished final presentation to the client and provide any background analytical files prepared during the project.

Primary Contact Person(s) at Client

- Noah Bazis, Policy Fellow, IJ Clinic on Entrepreneurship: nbazis@ij.org
- Beth Kregor, Director, IJ Clinic on Entrepreneurship: bkregor@ij.org
- Catherine Gryczan, Associate Director at the IJ Clinic on Entrepreneurship: cgryczan@ij.org

Project Timeline

September 30, 2024 – December 13, 2024

Weekly Class Meetings

- The first week of the fall term, we will meet on **Tuesday, October 1, from 5:00 to 7:50 pm** in Keller 0007
- For the remaining weeks of the term, we will meet on **Thursdays, from 3:30 pm to 6:20 pm** in Keller 0010, with dates as follows:
 - October 10
 - October 17
 - October 24
 - October 31
 - November 7
 - November 14
 - November 21
 - December 5

- **Pre-Scheduled Client Meetings:** (*additional meetings/calls scheduled as needed*)
 - Week of October 7: Initial client meeting?
 - Week of November 2: Midpoint client check-in meeting?
 - Week of December 2 or December 9 (exact date TBD): Final presentation to client?

References

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Appendix: Targeted Low-to-Moderate Income Occupations

The CLIMB report targeted these 16 occupations:

DFPR TARGET OCCUPATIONS
LICENSED ACUPUNCTURIST
LICENSED BARBER
CANINE HANDLER AUTHORIZATION CARD
LICENSED CEMETERY CUSTOMER SERVICE EMPLOYEE
LICENSED COSMETOLOGIST
LICENSED ELECTROLOGIST
LICENSED ESTHETICIAN
LICENSED HAIR BRAIDER
HOME MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES PROVIDER
LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST
LICENSED MASSAGE THERAPIST
LICENSED NAIL TECHNICIAN
LICENSED NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR
PHARMACY TECHNICIAN
LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR
LICENSED PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTOR