PUBP 570 DL2: Policy Writing Fundamentals (3 credits) DRAFT VERSION 2, July 11, 2023

Fall Semester 2023

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Office hours: Monday 4:00 – 5:00 pm on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra as arranged via Calendly.
8/28   Last day to add classes.
9/5   Last day to drop classes without penalty.
9/12   Last day to drop classes (50% tuition penalty).

Course Description

Diversity Statement for PUBP 570 DL 2

Mason's Diversity Statement and Mason's Non-Discrimination Policy affirm our belief that student diversity is an invaluable asset for enriching the learning in our courses (whatever modalities we may use). I will promote an equitable and just learning environment that welcomes individuals and their differences. Drawing on material from the School of Integrative Studies, I will:

- value our diverse student body,

- commit to supporting those who have been victims of bias and discrimination,

- promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse viewpoints and life experiences,

- create an environment that engages diverse perspectives,

- foster a willingness to hear and learn from different sources and views, thereby enhancing competencies in communication, critical thinking, and global understanding, and

- develop a greater understanding of our biases and how they affect interactions with each other and our world.

Because this class deals with political issues, we must respect diverse political views.

Warning: Not everyone taking this course will receive an A as a final grade.

 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Communicating is something we continuously do. We write. We speak. We produce visual material. The environments in which we share ideas, images, and opinions constantly change. Understanding how we interact – ethically and honestly -- with policymakers is essential to success in our professional lives, whether in government, private or nongovernmental organization (NGO) sectors. All of you write well – otherwise, you would not be here in the Schar School. But writing well is not enough to prosper in the policy communication marketplace.

Think – Plan - Organize[1]

Above all, this seminar helps you think about communicating in a public policy environment, whether written, visual, or oral. I have two objectives. First, help you identify the tools for skillfully and expertly presenting your writing to senior policymakers whose most precious commodity is not the information you are conveying but the time they devote to hearing or reading what you express. Second, help you take responsibility for communicating with policymakers according to ethical standards centered on objectivity and integrity.

Policy communication does not happen in a vacuum. Therefore, I will stress the importance of team building and peer review for good communication. It will include class participation through oral briefings and written papers. You will learn how peer review can improve your message's quality – and, above all, learn how to take helpful critiques of your work.

Edit – Edit – Edit [2]

This seminar is a writing class where you must focus on improving your writing for policymakers. Editing is key. In managing time for your written products, you must build in time for editing. This seminar is not a public speaking class, but we will discuss briefing techniques for effectively conveying essential information. It is not a new-media class, but we will discuss social media's impact on policy communications, especially the role of images. It is not an AI class, but we will consider how AI impacts writing.

Blackboard

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[1] Perlmutter, A Practical Guide to Effective Writing
[2] Perlmutter, A Practical Guide to Effective Writing

This class will use Blackboard (mymasonportal.gmu.edu) as the authoritative PUBP-570 DL 2: Policy Writing Fundamentals information source. It will contain the class syllabus, course readings (including the required books as noted below), session content, and assignments. Students will submit all written assignments via Blackboard. I will not accept assignments submitted via email or in hard copy. I will provide all grades and feedback via Blackboard.

Activities and lessons are conducted online in synchronous and asynchronous formats. We will regularly use web-conferencing software (Zoom/Blackboard Collaborate). In addition to the requirements above, students must have a device with a functional camera and microphone. Students can connect through a telephone call in an emergency, but a video connection is the expected norm. (See technology requirements below.)

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course sites are private. By federal law, you must not share materials identifying specific students (via their name, voice, or image) with anyone not enrolled in this class.

- Video recordings of class meetings that include audio or visual information from other students are private and must not be shared.
- Live Video Conference Meetings (i.e., Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household.

NOTE: We will use Zoom to conduct class synchronously – although circumstances may require a shift to Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. I will record our synchronous meetings to provide the necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard and only accessible to students taking this course this semester. Privacy concerns are serious matters. I will respect student privacy and rights under FERPA (https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/).

Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to MyMason and GMU email is required to participate successfully in this course. Please update your computer and prepare to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check the I.T. Support Center website. Navigate to the Student Support page for help and information about Blackboard. You will find all the tools you need to become familiar with this course's tools in the menu bar to the left. Take time to learn each. I will prepare a video on the features of Blackboard that we will use for this class. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

Required Textbooks

Kahneman, Daniel *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2011

Pinker, Steven *The Sense of Style*, Penguin Group, New York, 2014

Almossawi, Ali. *An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments.* The Experiment, L.L.C., New York, NY, 2014

Thompson, Neil, *Effective Communication: A Guide for the People Professions,* Macmillan Education, London, 2018

Dryer, Benjamin, *Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style*, Random House, New York, 2019

Gest, Justin, *Mass Appeal: Communicating Policy Ideas in Multiple Media*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2020

VandeHei, Jim, Mike Allen, and Roy Schwartz, *Smart Brevity: The Power of Saying More with Less,* Workman Publishing, New York, 2022

These will be the core texts for the course. I will assign specific sections of the books relevant to the topics under discussion in each session. I will note other readings by linking the syllabus and pdf document in the course content folders. See Annex 1 for additional resource material and sources you may wish to draw from during the course.

Other Required Readings

Ford, Harold P. *The Primary Purpose of National Estimating*. CIA
http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_GIF_anal_meth/tradecraft/purpose_of_estimating.pdf

FS *The Knowledge Project #68 Daniel Kahneman* – see Course Content folder for Session 9

Haseley, Ken. *4 Key Communications Skills for Business Leaders.* The Moscow Times Aug. 6, 2013,
https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/4-key-communication-skills-for-business-leaders-26512

Gawande, Atul. *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right.* New York: Metropolitan Books. 2010.

Hocking, Brian, and Jan Melissen *Diplomacy in a Digital Age* Clingendale Report July 2015
https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Digital_Diplomacy_in_the_Digital%20Age_Clingendael_July2015.pdf

Heikkilia Melissa.
https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/05/30/1073680/how-to-talk-about-ai-even-if-you-dont-know-much-about-ai/

Heuer, Richards J. Jr, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, C.I.A., 1999 Ch.1,8 Part IV
https://www.cia.gov/static/9a5f1162fd0932c29bfed1c030edf4ae/Pyschology-of-Intelligence-Analysis.pdf

Johnson, R.L.G. *Briefly* The Economist Aug. 6, 2015, http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2015/08/johnson-style?fsrc=scn%2Ffb%2Fte%2Fpe%2Fed%2FBriefly

Kent, Sherman "Words of Estimative Probability" from *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates* edited by Donald P. Steury, Historical Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, C.I.A., 1994 https://www.cia.gov/static/Words-of-Estimative-Probability.pdf

Levick, Richard S. *The Communicator's Leadership in the Age of Crisis* Washington DC, Watershed Press, 2010

Lowenthal, Mark. *Intelligence from Secrets to Policy*, Los Angeles: C.Q. Press, 2012. Chapter 9, Chapter 13.

Lufkens, Matthias. *Twiplomacy Study 2020 How World Leaders Connect on Twitter,* Geneva, July 20, 2020.
https://www.twiplomacy.com/twiplomacy-study-2020

O'Grady, Kathleen, and Noralou Roos. *It's time for a global movement that pushes academic research beyond journal paywalls so it makes a difference in the world.* Policy Options Aug. 1, 2016. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/august-2016/linking-academic-research-with-the-public-and-policy-makers/?utm_content=bufferf45e9&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Orwell, George *Politics and the English Language*, 1946 http://www.utdallas.edu/~aria/research/resources/orwell.pdf

Parish, Shane. *Using Multidisciplinary Thinking to Approach Problems in a Complex World*. Farnam Street, Nov. 8, 2016.
https://www.farnamstreetblog.com/2016/11/steven-pinker-what-is-true-complex-world/

Parish, Shane. *Steven Pinker Tells us Why our Professional Writing Sucks (And What to Do)*, Farnam Street, March 7, 2016.
https://www.farnamstreetblog.com/2016/03/stephen-pinker-tells-us-why-our-professional-writing-sucks-and-what-to-do/

Parish, Shane. *William Deresiewicz: How To Learn How to Think*. Farnam Street. Aug. 13, 2015. https://www.farnamstreetblog.com/2015/08/william-deresiewicz-learn-how-to-think/

Peterson, Martin *What I learned in Doing Intelligence Analysis for U.S. Foreign Policy Makers*, Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Extracts, March 2011) https://www.cia.gov/static/What-I-Learned-40.pdf

Salmon, Felix *Why Journalists Need to Link?* Feb. 27, 2012, https://archives.cjr.org/the_audit/why_journalists_need_to_link.php

Sherman Kent Center "Occasional Papers Rethinking' Alternative Analysis' to Address Transnational Threats," Volume 3, Number 2, October 2004 https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA525417.pdf

Shovel, Martin *How to Be an Outstanding Communicator*. October 11, 2011, https://mannerofspeaking.org/2011/10/11/how-to-be-an-outstanding-communicator/

Shultz, George P. *Diplomacy in the Information Age* from Virtual Diplomacy Conference U.S. Institute of Peace September 1997 http://www.usip.org/files/resources/pwks18.pdf

Smith, Catherine. *Writing Public Policy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Chapter 9 on electronic reserves.

The Knowledge Project #68 Daniel Kahneman, FS. Blog, 2019 Farnam Street Media (in Course Content folder for Session 9)

Trubek, Anne *Proper Spelling? Its Tyme to Let Luce!* From Wired.com Jan. 31, 2012, https://www.wired.com/2012/01/st-essay-autocorrect/

Tufte, Edward. *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*, 2016 https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/courses/pi/2016_2017/phil/tufte-powerpoint.pdf

Viner, Katharine. *How technology disrupted the truth.* The Guardian. July 12, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jul/12/how-technology-disrupted-the-truth

Walt, Stephen M. *Why Is Academic Writing So Bad?* Feb. 12, 2013, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/02/15/on-writing-well/

Wiens, Kyle, and Julie Bluff *Tech Writing Handbook* https://www.dozuki.com/hubfs/PDFs/Dozuki_Tech_Writing_Handbook.pdf

Course Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

The core of the course is how to "…break down complicated problems into basic elements and then reassemble them from the ground up." See https://fs.blog/first-principles/.   Before we write for policymakers, we think. We must understand how policymakers think – and process information – but, more importantly, how we think.

A. Learn different forms of written (and oral) communications for policymakers.

B. Understand how written analysis affects policymaking.

C. Understand how to think and structure before writing and making policy presentations. What is the key policy question?

D. Develop ethical principles and analytical standards: the foundation for written and oral communications based on integrity.

E. Consider how AI developments might impact A-D above

Analytical Skills and Abilities

A. Develop critical thinking skills to process information, develop hypotheses, understand the importance of assumptions, drivers, and wild cards, and explore cause-and-effect relationships and alternative outcomes.

B. Determine reliable information sources in an environment filled with conflicting, self-serving information designed to influence as much as inform. What is the impact of AI?

C. Working as part of a team and peer-review process.

D. Understand how analysis affects policymaking and implementation (practice). Analysis must lead policy making.

Professional development

A. Effectively communicate policy-oriented research and analytical conclusions in written and oral form.

B. Learn tools and approaches for delivering presentations to senior policymakers. Integrate the role of social media and AI.

C. Conceptualize complex technical issues – making them understandable -- for policymakers so that senior officials can make and implement decisions.

D. Evaluate the impact of your policy proposals – who read them, how they reacted, and what changes they made.

E. **Follow instructions**.

Technology Requirements

Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content. A headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. You will also need a camera. For the amount of hard disk space required to take a distance education course, consider, and allow for the following:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you are considering the purchase of a new computer, please go to Patriot Tech for recommendations.

Software: Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system listed as compatible or certified with the Blackboard version on the myMason Portal. See supported browsers and operating systems. Log in to myMason to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Java, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, or Real Media Player. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Ensure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so that Windows will run on it. Watch this video about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you can install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Course Schedule (Weekly Course Timeline is available in tabular format in the Syllabus section of Blackboard.)

<div align="center">

I.   Introduction

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SESSION 0: – Orientation to Blackboard for PUBP 570 DL2 Policy Writing Fundamentals

Objective:

Getting familiar with Blackboard

Theme: Blackboard as a learning and course management venue

Watch:

introduction video

video on the syllabus

video on class rhythm

video on the discussion board

Read:

the syllabus

Politics and the English Language, George Orwell

How to talk about AI (even if you don't know much about AI, Melissa Heikkila

Assignment #0: Post introduction on Discussion Board, Introduction Post thread

SESSION 1: – Introduction and Overview of the Syllabus

Objective:

    Understand class scope and requirements.

Theme: Who are we, and why are we here?

    Read:

        The Syllabus

        Smart Brevity, VandeHei, Allen and Schwartz, Introduction and the Fog of Words

        An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi Argument from Consequences & Straw Man

        Proper Spelling? Its Tyme to Let Luce! Anne Trubek,

        Briefly, The Economist Aug. 6, 2015, R.L.G. Johnson

        4 Key Communications Skills for Business Leaders, Moscow Times Aug 6, 2013, Ken Haseley,

        How to be an Outstanding Communicator, Manner of Speaking, October 11, 2011, Martin Shovel

    Assignment #1: One-page (double-spaced) essay: You and course objectives.

SESSION 2: – Thinking About Thinking

Objective:

The importance of "to understand is to know what to do" (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

Theme: How to approach writing: outline and checklist

Read:

Mass Appeal, Justin Gest, A Multilingual Tool Kit

Smart Brevity, Part 1 What is Smart Brevity?

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Appeal to Irrelevant Authority

Psychology of Intelligence Analysis, Richards J. Heuer, Jr. Chapter 1 – skim rest

Effective Communication, Neil Thompson Chapter 1

The Checklist Manifesto, Atul Gawande Introduction

How to Think Better: The Skill You've Never Been Taught, Shane Parish, FS

Assignment #2: Outline for a 3-½ minute policymaker presentation

SESSION 3 – Characteristics of Good Writing and Editing

Objective:

Understand the importance of editing to good writing.

Theme: Separating Fact from Commentary. Omit Needless Words.

Read:

Smart Brevity, Part 1 What is Smart Brevity?

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Equivocation and False Dilemma

The Sense of Style, Steven Pinker, Chapter 1 and Chapter 6

Effective Communication, Neil Thompson, Chapter 3

Diplomacy in the Information Age, George P. Shultz's article

Assignment #3: Concept essay for Policy Paper (one page)

III.   WRITING TO INFORM

SESSION 4 – Talking points and notetaking.

Objective:

Understand that policy writing takes different forms.

Theme: When points are points and notes are notes

Read:

Smart Brevity, Be Worthy, Grab Me!, ONE Big Thing

Mass Appeal, Justin Gest, The Elevator Pitch

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Not a Cause for a Cause

Effective Communication, Neil Thompson, Chapter 5

Why Journalists Need to Link. Felix Salmon

Why is Academic Writing So Bad? Stephen Walt

Tech Writing Handbook. Kyle Wiens and Julie Bluff

Assignment #4: Written Outline for Elevator Pitch to Supervisor on Policy Paper

SESSION 5 – Analysis 1 Briefing the President

Guest Lecturer:

Objective:

Appreciate the process/preparation for briefing the President. Whom are you writing for, and why?

Theme: "But I will never brief the President."

Read:

Smart Brevity, Go Deeper

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Appeal to Fear

"What I learned…." Marty Peterson

Words of Estimative Probability Sherman Kent

Linking Academic Research with the Public and Policymakers Kathleen O'Grady and Noralou Roos

Assignment # 5: Written Outline (2-page) Policy Paper

SESSION 6 – Analysis 2 Briefing the President

Guest Lecturer:

Objective:

Understand that each policymaker determines the format.

Theme: Varieties of Communications

Read:

Smart Brevity, Go Deeper, Mike's Playbook

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Appeal to Ignorance

The Sense of Style, Steven Pinker, Chapter 2

"Rethinking "Alternative Analysis'…." Sherman Kent Center

Mass Appeal: Communicating Policy Ideas in Multiple Media. Justin Gest

"The Primary Purpose of National Estimating…." Harold Ford

Assignment # 6: Two-page briefing/talking points for a foreign leader to call President Biden

SESSION 7 -- Congressional Testimony

Guest Lecturer:

Objective:

Understand the different approaches to Congressional testimony.

Theme: "Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity…."

Read:

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Hasty Generalization

Mass Appeal: The Press Release. Justin Gest

Smart Brevity, Your Speeches

Writing Public Policy Catherine Smith Chapter 9 Testimony: Witness in a Public Hearing.

Effective Communication, Neil Thompson Chapter 4

Ambassador (ret) Richard D. Kauzlarich Testimony and Oral Statement on Azerbaijan, Sept. 15, 2016.

Assignment #7: Rev. 1 Policy Paper Outline.

SESSION 8 – Ethics in Policy Communications

Objective:

Appreciate the critical role of ethics in policy communication and the impact of AI.

Theme: Truth to Power and Dissent

Read:

Smart Brevity, Communicate Inclusively

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: No True Scotsman and Genetic Fallacy

Mass Appeal: Op-ed and the Blog. Justin Gest

How Technology Disrupted Truth, Katharine Viner

"*Ethical and Moral Issues in Intelligence."* Lowenthal

Thinking Fast and Slow, Expert Intuition Daniel Kahneman

Assignment # 8: One-page PDB note

IV. WRITING FOR DECISION MAKING

SESSION 9 – Recommending Policy Action

Guest Lecturer:

Objective:

Understand the difference between writing to inform and recommending policy action.

Theme: Answering "So what?" while avoiding Hanlon's Razor

> **Read:**
>
> > *Smart Brevity*, The Cheat Sheet
> >
> > *An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments*, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Affirming the Consequent and Appeal to Hypocrisy
> >
> > *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman, Conclusions
> >
> > FS *The Knowledge Project #68,* Daniel Kahneman – See Course Content Folder Session 9
> >
> > *The Sense of Style,* Steven Pinker, Chapter 3
>
> **Assignment #9**: First Draft 10-page Policy Paper

SESSION 10 – Presenting Options

Guest Lecturer:

Objective:

> Understand real versus false actionable options.

Theme: Shape Meaningful Options for Policymakers.

> **Read:**
>
> > *Mass Appeal* Justin Gest Executive Summary
> >
> > *An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments*, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Slippery Slope and Guilt by Association
> >
> > *The Sense of Style*, Steven Pinker, Chapter 5

Assignment #10: Testimony based on your policy paper

SESSION 11 – Sourcing and Alternative Views

Objective:

Understand how to incorporate alternative sources and views.

Theme: Importance of Sourcing and Alternative Views

Read:

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Appeal to Bandwagon

Effective Communication, Neil Thompson Chapter 8

Assignment #11: Team oral presentation of NIE

SESSION 12 – AI and Beating the Clock

Objective:

Understanding how to take advantage of policymakers' time.

Theme: Time is the policymaker's most valuable asset

Read:

Mass Appeal Justin Gest A Multimedia Strategy

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Ad Hominem

Assignment # 12: Writing Shorter

SESSION 13 – Communication and New Media

Guest Lecturer: Graham Lampa SnapScreen (TBC)

Objective:

Exploring Social Media in an AI World

Theme: Fitting Social Media into Policy Communication

Read:

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Circular Reasoning

Mass Appeal Justin Gest The Web Site and Social Media

Richard Levick, *The Communicators Leadership in an Age of Crisis* Chapter Leadership in the Digital Era

Edward Tufte *The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint*

Assignment #13: Final 10-page Policy Paper

SESSION 14 -- Final Policy Paper – Oral Presentation

Objective:

Review class and lessons learned.

Theme: Why Orwell had it right.

Read:

Politics and the English Language, George Orwell

An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments, Ali Almossawi, Logical Fallacies: Composition and Division

How to Optimize an Essential Communication, Axios HQ

Assignment #14: Oral Presentation of Policy Paper

Assignment Description

Important: All assignments and grading of assignments will take place on Blackboard. (Note: I will grade participation separately.) I will not accept hard copy or email submissions. If you do not know how to use Blackboard, learn it now.

     I.   **Discussion/Policy Presentation**

Written outline:

    The basis for a short (3 1/2 minute) oral presentation to policymaker

    You chose the topic. (Note: There may be exceptions.)

    It can be for your boss -- or the President of the United States

    Focus on brevity, clarity, and relevance.

Elements in outline: A.B.C. (Page 1); D.E. (Page 2)

    A. The critical point for the policymaker

    B. Why important — so what?

    C. Policy recommendations

    D. Sources — newspapers, blogs (specify 2-3 sources; not links alone)

    E. Tweet – 280 characters based on your outline.

One-page max for outline (sources and tweet only on a second page)

Criteria for grading:

Follow instructions/format;

Understand the use of an outline;

Usefulness for oral presentation;

Clarity of written/oral presentation.

II. Talking Points

Prepare a two-page briefing memo and talking points for the President/Prime Minister of the country assigned in Session 3.

Your country has arranged for a 15-minute phone call with President Biden. Each side will have 7 and 1/2 minutes to make their points.

The first page should have two paragraphs: first, background for your principal on what to expect from President Biden. Personality and priorities are essential to cover. Second, background on the issues your principal should raise with President Biden.

The second page should contain the talking points -- no more than two lines each. Make sure you prioritize issues in organizing the talking points.

Criteria for grading:

Follow instructions/format.

Organization and Background

Clarity of talking points

III. PDB Item for the President

The topic of your choice based on

What POTUS needs to know

It can be a foreign/national security policy or domestic policy topic.

1-½ page narrative

One chart/map/table that conveys the critical point in the report.

Lead with a crucial policy point: "So what?"

Criteria for grading

Follow instructions/format.

Clarity of written presentation

Addresses "So what?" test?

IV. ORAL PRESENTATIONS

(A) Team Briefing of the President

Assigned a declassified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)

Setting: a 7-1/2-minute (or 15 minutes, depending on team size) briefing for the President of the day

The team must decide who will brief what aspect.

No visual aids

No script

Outline for each presenter

Fit on a 4 x 6 card.

Criteria for grading

Follow instructions.

The segue between presenters.

Clarity of presentation

"Presidential"

Meet time limits.

(B) Individual Briefing of your 10-page policy paper (see VI. below)

Based on the final version of the policy paper, especially the executive summary

Setting: a five-minute oral presentation to the policymaker.

Outline

Fit on 4X6 card.

Criteria for grading

Identified key point for policymaker.

Organization of presentation leading to policy recommendations

Clarity of presentation

V. Participation and Discussion Board
In the synchronous part of this class, we will begin each session by discussing a thread (to be graded) on the Discussion Board. On one occasion, we may do an in-class exercise that will be graded.

VI. Policy Paper

A 10-page paper on a topic you suggest organized as follows (A-F):

    A. Key policy question (s)

    B. Time period

    C. Executive Summary

    D. Assumptions

    E. Analysis
       i. Drivers
       ii. Wild Cards
       Iii. Alternative outcomes

    F. Policy recommendations

Criteria for grading

    a. Follow instructions/format.

    b. Understanding of Drivers/Wild Cards/Alternative Outcomes

    c. Executive Summary

    d. Clarity

    e. The connection between policy recommendations & the key policy question

Due Dates for elements in the policy paper process:

    A. Concept paper (1 page) – Session 2

    B. Outline (2 pages) – Session 5

    C. Outline (2 pages) rev. 1 – Session 7

    D. First draft (10 pages) – Session 9

    E. Final (10 pages) – Session 13

Assignments Description and Grading Performance

A. **Weekly Policy Presentations (**10%**)** Each week (3-4), students will make an oral presentation (3-1/2 minutes) either based on their choice of a policy-relevant topic. Sources cannot be from readings for the class. The presentation will be based on a written outline submitted as an assignment.

B. **ZOOM/Collaborate Ultra Attendance & participation in class and discussion board** (15%). [i] I will grade your discussion based on the rubric, which looks at quality, timeliness, responsiveness, and moving the discussion forward. Discussion threads will be identified each week. You will be graded based on the quality of your responses.

C. **Written Policy Paper** (30%) This is the most essential written product for the course. It begins with a concept essay, an outline (with a revised version), and a draft. Each step will substitute for and be graded as a weekly presentation. Your grade on the written policy paper is based on the final version submitted. See the separate paper "Assignments Connected with 10-page Policy Paper."

D. **Oral Policy Briefings** (30%) There are two briefings: First, early in the class, I will select two-three students (depending on class size). Each team will brief the President of the day on a National Intelligence Estimate. Second, as the final assignment, you will make an individual presentation based on your ten-page policy paper.

E. **PDB item** (15%). This assignment is the course's second most important item. You are communicating with a unique policymaker who needs timely and easily understandable information. Think about a chart or map to accompany this.

Course Policies

Students must attend class via ZOOM or Collaborate Ultra every Tuesday, starting at 4:30 pm.

Students must attend the course's entire class period (i.e., 4:30 – 7:10 pm). In-class participation is essential not only for the individual student but also for the class. Because class participation is a factor in grading, I may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as evidence of non-participation. Unlike life, showing up is not enough to demonstrate class participation. You may need to miss a synchronous class for work, sickness, religious observances, and family obligations. Please tell me if that is the case so we can plan accordingly.

Here is a link to the [Mason University Life religious holiday calendar](). (NOTE: The University has not updated the religious holiday calendar for the fall of 2023.) Within the first two weeks of the semester, students are responsible for telling me the dates of major religious holidays on which the student will be absent or unavailable due to religious observances.

I will record a formal lecture and the synchronous section of the class.

Students will prepare to discuss the reading assignments each week. These classes will be discussion-based and often involve an oral presentation of a relevant topic by selected students, although each student should be prepared to present each class. You will also be expected to critique assigned readings during the course. If you do not contribute, you will lose participation points. I will grade your participation at the end of the semester. Forms of participation include:

- Students prepare for and actively engage in class discussion (e.g., demonstrate active listening, not distracted by electronics or others in your learning environment)

- Students thoughtfully engage in in-class assignments and activities as assigned on the Discussion board.

- Students constructively participate in group activities.

- Students participate in class discussions, including in discussion forums, by
    - raising informed discussion points;
    - connecting analysis to reading material, news, and relevant experiences;
    - asking questions;
    - listening to other perspectives;
    - sharing the floor with others; and
    - posting thoughtfully to course discussion boards.

Please observe basic standards of "Netiquette" in postings on discussion forums. These standards also apply to all the writing done in this course.

Netiquette For Online Discussions [1]

Our discussion should be collaborative, not combative; you are creating a learning environment, sharing information, and learning from one another. Respectful communication is important to your success in this course and as a professional. Please re-read your responses carefully before you post them so others will not take them out of context or as personal attacks. Be positive to others and diplomatic with your words; I will try my best to do the same. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications, your joke may be viewed as criticism. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be easily misconstrued.

[1] Netiquette prepared by Charlene Douglas, Associate Professor, College of Health & Human Services, G.M.U.

Late Assignments: You must turn in all assignments in Blackboard on the due date for the assignment listed on Blackboard.

Instructor-Student Communication: I will respond to your emails sent between Monday and Thursday within 24 hours. Students who email after 4 pm on Friday or over the weekend should not expect a response before noon on the following Monday. I do not check or respond to emails after 10 pm. I will post an announcement on Blackboard if I am away from email for over a day. Before sending an email about an assignment, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is personal:

1. Syllabus as posted on the Blackboard Page for PUBP570 DL2 (Fall 2023)
2. Ask the Professor forum on the Discussion Board
3. Feel free to respond to other students in the Ask Professor forum if you know the answer.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percent
A	95-100%
A-	90-94.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%
C+	77-79.9%
C	70-76.9%
D	60-69.9%
F	<60%

NOTE: Final class grades are non-negotiable. Grading written and oral assignments is complicated and subjective. I will use a rubric (based on the criteria for grading associated with each task) against which I will grade each gradable event. There is a separate rubric that I will use for grading participation. I will grade participation only at the end of the class to record the grades you earned for this course.

Submission of documents

Students should use Microsoft Word (or Microsoft Word compatible) word processing software. Please use Times New Roman font with a font size of 12. Left, right, top, and bottom page margins should be 1 inch only. **All papers should be double-spaced.** Where appropriate, footnotes, endnotes, and sources (bibliographies) will follow the Chicago documentation style. (See Hacker and Sommers pp. 235-275.) Assignments that do not follow these rules will lose 10% of the total scored points. I will indicate deadlines on assignments in Blackboard. All documents must be submitted on time via Blackboard.

Writing help

Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *A Pocket Manual of Style* is the standard style manual for the School. It is available in the Bookstore. If you would like help with learning about how to compose your arguments or write more clearly, please contact the University Writing Center, http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

Schar School Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship, the intellectual life of a university, and the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus, any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the Schar School of Policy and Government (Schar School). It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics, and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources are essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. The appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating and can ruin a professional career.

The Schar School faculty takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero-tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of F. This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript. For international students on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-1, or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases and submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may, at any time, submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted electronically and printed. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

Resources:

Avoiding Plagiarism https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources/citing-sources/plagiarism

University Policies and Resources

a. Academic Honesty: You must know and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found here. You must see me if you have questions about these policies. George Mason University has an honor code that states the following:

   To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this **honor code: student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work**.

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing

c. Student services: The University provides a range of services to help you succeed academically, and you should use these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier, the better).

d. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and must activate their account and check it regularly. All university, college, school, and program communication will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

e. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs) to enhance student's personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.

f. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform me, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that accommodations MUST BE MADE BEFORE assignments or exams are due. I cannot adjust your grade after the fact.

g. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound-emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. (NOTE: This will not apply to the synchronous part of the online course.)

h. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides various resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, and handbooks) to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center assists students for whom English is a second language.

i. George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services, and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth.

j. Regarding coronavirus, follow the Safe Return to Campus Policies.

k. You should be aware of how to report incidents of sexual misconduct. Mason is committed to creating a campus free of sexual misconduct and interpersonal violence incidents to promote community well-being and student success.

i Attendance recorded on Blackboard does not constitute a grade for "Attendance and Class Participation." See NOTE under Grading Scale.

Annex 1 Additional Resource Materials for PUBP 570 DL2

Communications Resources

Bernstein, Theodore M. *The Careful Writer*. New York: Athenaeum, 1965.

Bernstein, Theodore M. *Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins.* New York: The Noonday Press, 1971

Garner, Bryan. *The Oxford Dictionary of American Usage and Style*. New York: Berkley Books, 2000.

Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *A Pocket Style Manual.* 8th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's 2018

Newman, Edwin. *Edwin Newman on Language*. New York: Warner Books, 1980.

Perlmutter, Jerome. *A Practical Guide to Effective Writing.* New York: Dell Publishing, 1965.

Safire, William. *On Language*. New York: Times Books, 1980.

Shaw, Harry. *Punctuate It Right!* New York: Harper and Row, 1986

Smith, Catherine F. *Writing Public Policy.*3rd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Strunk, William, Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style.* 4th Edition New York: Pearson Education Company, 2000.

The Mason Style Guide. https://brand.gmu.edu/visual-identity-and-style/what-is-editorial-style/

Venolia, Jan. *Write Right!* 4th Edition Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2001.

Venolia, Jan. *ReWrite Right!* 2nd Edition Berkeley: Ten-Speed Press, 2000.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well.* 2nd Edition New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

Internet Tools

AP Stylebook https://www.apstylebook.com/ -- available in book form and online

MiniNote Pro (for Mac) https://fiplab.com/apps/mininote-for-mac -- outline

Google Keep https://www.google.com/keep/ -- notes, lists ("synchs across devices")

Grammarly https://app.grammarly.com/ -- check grammar, punctuation, spelling

Scrivener https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php -- for the serious writer: from ideas to completing long documents.

Farnam Street https://www.farnamstreetblog.com/ From the blog: "Farnam Street helps you make better decisions, innovate and avoid stupidity."

AdviceToWriters http://www.advicetowriters.com/ A bit overwhelming but great little pieces of advice for writing.

XMind8 https://www.xmind.net/xmind8/ Great for mind-mapping.

Evernote https://evernote.com/ Great organizing application. It grows on me.

Zotero https://www.zotero.org/ Have not tried Zotero but it seems a useful tool for research

Additional readings/articles will be posted on the course Blackboard site.