

PIA 2096: Capstone Seminar in Planning, Governance, and Economic Development -- Information Technology, Neighborhood Indicators, and Local Government: The Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System

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Monday, 9:00 a.m. - Noon
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How do we learn about local conditions? What indicators are used for understanding local government and neighborhood revitalization? This course will work with a set of communities in the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments to develop an extension of Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System (PNCIS – www.pghnis.pitt.edu). Students will become familiar with Neighborhood Indicator Projects and the PNCIS. Students will do a scan of the Turtle Creek COG communities and determine their data availability and readiness for becoming part of PNCIS. Students will be able to conduct analyses of conditions using the data in the system, when available. They will make recommendations to the COG and state representatives on their findings. This Capstone is for students interested in urban affairs and planning, housing conditions and foreclosure data, governance issues, information technologies, neighborhood information systems, and community revitalization

This Capstone is "hands on." The actual outline and report will be developed by the class, given the issues above. Guest speakers will address specific issues of interest to the class and the project. Students will work together to produce a project report, including analyses and policy recommendations derived over the term. Students will also present their results to an invited audience at the end of the term.

The final products of this course are:

1. ***Final written report, with recommendations and cost/resource estimates of a TCVCOG-related system;***
2. ***Final presentation.***

Prerequisites: This course is designed for second year masters degree students in GSPIA and satisfies the Capstone requirement for graduation. Others interested in enrolling in the course should have some background in urban and regional affairs or regional development. *This course is a project course. It is not an introductory course with a lecture*

format. This course is not for students who want to write their own research paper or for students who do not want to work within a group format. This course is NOT for students whose primary motivation for taking it is to fulfill a requirement for graduation.

Much of the project is designed by the class. Students are expected to be able to design and implement a research agenda, complete their work on time, be able and willing to work in groups, be flexible and creative, and produce a major research report.

Requirements: Students are expected to ***attend all classes, complete readings, including readings on own, formulate and conduct research on their particular topic, and complete all assignments on time, including the progress reports.***

Students will work individually and in groups to complete parts of the final project. Students will be graded on the basis of their written assignments and progress reports, classroom participation, contribution to the final presentation, web site, and report, and peer evaluations.

Required and recommended readings: Most of our readings are either on the web or in journals in the GSPIA library. Other materials will be distributed in class. Below are some suggested readings for the class. You may find these in the library.

For students with disabilities, please contact me (see above) and the Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible. We will make reasonable accommodations for this course.

Weekly Schedule

August 25: Introduction.

1. Begin discussion of students' areas of interests.
2. Learn about the Pittsburgh Community and Neighborhood Information System (www.pghnis.pitt.edu).
3. Schedule a tour of the Turtle Creek COC communities. Please check your availability on Tuesday afternoons.

Readings:

1. Elwood, S. and Leitner, H. (2003). GIS and spatial knowledge production for neighborhood revitalization: Negotiating State Priorities and Neighborhood Visions, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 25(2): 139-157.
2. Sawicki, D. and Craig, W. (1996). The democratization of data: Bridging the gaps for community groups. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 62(4): 512-523.
3. Sieber, R. (2006). Public participation Geographic Information Systems: A literature review and framework. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96(3): 491-507.
4. Review PNCIS web site at www.pghnis.pitt.edu
5. Review National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) web site at: <http://www2.urban.org/nnip/>

September 1: No class today, Labor Day.

Readings: Continue from Week 1.

September 8: Neighborhood Indicator Projects

1. Discuss what you've read and learned about neighborhood information systems this week. Please be prepared to discuss the NNIP partners you selected.
2. Discuss the Seiber, Elwood and Sawicki readings from above, if time permits.
3. Training session today on the PNCIS at the Posvar Hall Campus Computing Lab classroom (1201) from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

Due this week: First assignment: On the NNIP web site, review a few of the "Partners." Select two and prepare a brief (1-2 paragraph summary) of the program. Visit the partners' web sites and think about what you can learn from the program that will help you in this class. You should post this to the courseweb site so that everyone in the class can share their impressions of other projects.

Readings:

1. Kingsley, G.T. (1999). Building and Operating Neighborhood Indicator Systems: A Guidebook. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, March (<http://www2.urban.org/nnip/pdf/guidebk.pdf>).
2. Coulton, C. (2008). *Catalog of Administrative Data Sources for Neighborhood Indicators*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, January.
3. Guernsey, E.H. and Pettit, K.L.S. (2007). *NNIP Data Inventory 2007: A Picture of Local Data Collection Across the Country*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, December 2007.

NNIP publications at:

<http://www2.urban.org/nnip/publications.html#community>

September 15: Information Technology and Councils of Government

1. Continue discussion on the previous weeks' readings, including the Kingsley, Coulton and Guernsey readings, as well as any additional readings you selected.
2. We will discuss the Turtle Creek Valley COG and information technology.

"The Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments is comprised of twenty municipalities located in the Eastern Suburbs of Pittsburgh. It includes the boroughs of Braddock, Chalfant, Churchill, East McKeesport, East Pittsburgh, Edgewood, Forest Hills, North Braddock, Pitcairn, Plum, Ranking, Swissvale, Turtle Creek, Wall, Wilmerding, and Wilkinsburg; the townships of North Versailles and Wilkins; and the municipalities of Monroeville and Penn Hills."

Readings:

1. Continue with readings above.
2. Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments, TCVCOG, www.tvcog.com

Guest speaker: Amanda Settlemeier, Executive Director, Turtle Creek Council of Governments (10 a.m.)

September 22: Continue discussion of readings above, NNIP projects, and begin discussion of project sections, research design and report. Discuss Amanda Settlemeier's presentation and develop contact list in TCVCOG.

Due this week: Second assignment. Each of you will write 2-3 annotated entries for selected readings on the syllabus (exclusive of entries already available on courseweb) plus any that you would like to add. We will assign these in class.

Readings:

1. To be announced.
2. 2-3 readings of your choice from NNIP site, other readings and references.

September 29: Councils of Government: What They Are, What They Do + continued discussion of your project.

Due this week: Third assignment: First progress report. For this progress report, everyone should complete one on their own. Include what you have done, read, thought about, and what you have decided to work on for this class. Give as much information as you can. If you've started group work, attach progress from group. Make it as detailed as you can. What is your main research question or problem? What data are you gathering? What methods are you using for each stage of your research? Follow principles used in core policy course; apply methods and knowledge gained from your study program at GSPIA.

Readings:

1. Read about Pennsylvania's Councils of Governments at:
<http://www.pacog.com/southwest.shtml>
2. Other readings to be announced.

Guest speaker: David Miller, Associate Professor and Director of the Innovation Clinic at GSPIA, 10:30 – noon.

October 6: From this week on, much of our class time will be continued work on your project design, research, and products. This week we will focus on what is the current capacity of the COG and its municipalities for information. What will they have to do? What is needed? What might their resources be? How can we link this to Neighborhood Information Systems? We can we learn from the NNIP partners?

Guest speaker, invited: Dr. Michael King, Director, Legislative Office of Research Liaison

Due this week: Fourth assignment: Your workplan for the next six weeks and an outline to date.

NOTE: The Pennsylvania Planning Association's Annual Conference will be held in Pittsburgh, October 12-14th. There is a student registration rate, if you are interested, plus volunteer opportunities.

Tuesday, October 14 – Please note: we meet on Tuesday this week, after the University's Fall Break: Continue discussion from previous week. Discuss each group's final workplan and progress.

October 21-28: We will continue discussion your work and the project.

November 3: Classroom working session on each team's project and writeup.

Due this week:

Fifth assignment: Second progress report. This may include final write ups – side bars, partial chapter drafts, etc.

November 10: Discuss and begin revisions of final draft.

November 17: Classroom working sessions: Revise final report. Discuss organization of report and final presentation.

Due this week : Draft of final project due today.

November 24: Plan final presentation and finalize written report.

December 1: Final report completed and ready for printing this week. Dress rehearsal of final presentation.

December 8th or week of December 8th: Final presentation and final report distribution: Place and time to be determined