PIA 2096: Capstone Seminar in Planning and Government in Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania: Assessing the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC)

Professor Sabina Deitrick
Tuesday, 6:00 - 9:00
Room 3200 Posvar Hall

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In 2000, the University of Pittsburgh was awarded a $400,000 Community Outreach Partnership (COPC) Center grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The COPC brought together University and community partners to focus on a number of initiatives in the South Oakland, Central Oakland, West Oakland, Allequippa Terrace/Oak Hill, and Hazelwood neighborhoods. In 2004, the University’s COPC received a New Directions grant to continue this work. This Capstone will evaluate the University’s COPC in a program evaluation, benchmarking, policy analysis, and planning study. Students will apply research methods and community approaches from their GSPIA studies to this project. Outcomes include: Final written project report, formal presentation to community and University partners, and web site. You can learn about the University’s COPC at: www.pitt.edu/~copc.

This Capstone Seminar evaluate this program, its impacts on the communities and its effects on the university, students, and organizations. We will use various techniques of evaluation research.

This Capstone is "hands on." The specific areas of the project will be developed during the first weeks of the course, based on students’ skills and interests. Students will formulate a research agenda for the term, based on their interests and those of their classmates. Guest speakers will address specific issues of interest to the class and the project. Students will work together to produce a project report and web page, 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;
2. Web site of the project and resources (www.pitt.edu/~copceval); and
3. 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.*

**Most 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.

**Books:** We will read some of the selections as required readings and discuss in class. We will not get to discuss all the readings directly, but you are advised to use them for your research and work in the class.


**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.

[www.huduser.org/periodicals/cityscpe/vol7num1/ch1.html](http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/cityscpe/vol7num1/ch1.html)


Students are expected to conduct reading and research independently. We will also establish a web site for the class project. Please share readings among your classmates.

Some key websites:
1. University of Pittsburgh COPC, [www.pitt.edu/~copc](http://www.pitt.edu/~copc)
2. Office of University Partnerships, [www.oup.org](http://www.oup.org)
3. Campus Compact, [www.compact.org](http://www.compact.org)

**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

**January 9:** Introduction, no readings. Begin discussion of students’ areas of interests.

We will schedule a training session for the Pittsburgh Community and Neighborhood Information System (www.pghnis.pitt.edu). It will be on a Tuesday, from 4:30 – 6:00, when the computer lab is available.

We will also schedule a tour of the COPC neighborhoods. Please check your availability on Tuesday afternoons, also.

**January 16:** We will discuss what you read and learned about COPC during the week and your first thoughts on the evaluation. Please complete the following assignments:

**Readings:**
1. Sabina Deitrick and Tracy Soska, “The University and Oakland Community,” handed out in class.
3. Visit the Office of University Partnerships web site and spend some time with the articles: [www.oup.org](http://www.oup.org)
4. Visit the University of Pittsburgh COPC web site and spend some time with the articles: [www.pitt.edu/~copc](http://www.pitt.edu/~copc)
5. Begin reading Bingham and Felbinger, part 1.

**January 23:** We will discuss evaluation of small nonprofit organizations and program evaluation. Think about and be prepared to discuss what sorts of evaluations you are interested in and the types of methods you would like to employ.

**Readings:**
3. Continue Bingham and Felbinger, part 1.

**Due this week:** First 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.

**Guest speaker:** Russell Schuh, School of Education
January 30: Continue discussion of readings above.

Readings:
1. Bingham and Felbinger, discussion of experimental designs

Guest speakers: Tracy Soska, School of Social Work and John Wilds, Community and Governmental Relations

February 6: Continue discussion of COPC and research ideas.

Readings:

Due this week:
Second 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.

February 13: Continue discussion. Where is COPC? Discuss budget priorities.

Readings:

Continue discussion of previous readings.

February 20: Continue discussion from previous week. Discuss each group’s final workplan and progress.

Readings:
1. To be announced.
**February 27:** Continue discussion from previous week. Additional readings to be assigned as interests and needs warrant.

*Readings*  Continue from above.

*Due this week: Second progress report.* Include workplan for next four weeks.

**Spring Break – March 5-9 – no class this week.**

**March 13:** Discuss organization of final project report. Review second progress report. Review web site development.

**March 20:** Classroom working session on each team’s project and writeup. Finalize web site.

*Due this week: Third progress report.* This may include final write ups – side bars, partial chapter drafts, etc.

**March 27:** Discuss and begin revisions of final draft.

*Due this week: Draft of final project due today.*

**April 3:** Classroom working sessions: Revise final report. Discuss organization of report and final presentation.

**April 10:** Plan final presentation and finalize written report.

**April 17:** Final report completed and ready for printing this week. Dress rehearsal of final presentation.

**April 24:** Final presentation and final report distribution:

*Place and time to be determined*

Web site to be developed:

[www.pitt.edu/~copceval](http://www.pitt.edu/~copceval)
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Agenda for first class, January 8, 2007:

A. Students’ interests in planning, economic development, and community revitalization Program
   Background
   Strengths -- area, analysis, methodology (e.g, institutional analysis, legislation, GIS, regression, etc.)

B. Review course requirements, syllabus, readings, student responsibilities.

C. Interest/knowledge of COPCs – background on COPCs, Pitt COPC, the web site, Office of University Partnerships

D. Discuss interests in university-community partnerships.