Analytical Techniques for Public Service (ATPS) I
Fall 2018

Lecture meets in Sem II D1105
Seminar rooms: D2015, D2017, D2109
See Canvas for up-to-date schedule and assignment information

Faculty	Email	Office Hours
Lucky Anguelov	anguelol@evergreen.edu	By Appointment
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TESC MPA MISSION STATEMENT

"Be the Change"

Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We **think** critically and creatively; **communicate** effectively; **work** collaboratively; **embrace** diversity; we **value** fairness and equity; **advocate** powerfully on behalf of the public; and **imagine** new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Analytical Techniques for Public Service is a two-quarter long Core program for second-year MPA students. While we will focus each quarter on specific approaches to applied public service research, the intent is that the learning objectives of the program are achieved across both quarters. The learning objectives include:
- Understand research methodology; understand **why** we do research in public service;
- Understand how various approaches can be used to maintain the status quo and/or as instruments of positive social/economic/political change.
- Be able to situate analytic techniques in management/public policy (the context); understand the importance of these techniques;

- Understand analytic techniques in practice (public policy; budgeting and finance; performance measurement and management; evaluation research; etc);
- Become competent in quantitative and quantitative data collection and analysis;
- Develop skills in communicating about data (displaying data; presentations) and writing research reports; and
- Become a savvy and sophisticated consumer of research.

In the Fall quarter, we focus specifically on questions of research design and deployment and the application of analytical techniques in public service.

EXPECTATIONS

Review Assignment Requirements Thoroughly Before Drafting Submissions:
This may sound obvious, but it is vitally important that you read and understand assignments before you begin to write. The pressure to just start writing can be irresistible at times. Don't! Canvas is used for course documents specifically because it enables changes as the course evolves during the quarter. Some assignments have very specific requirements. Some are intentionally a bit more open to interpretation and creative responses. Clear understanding of your goals is important to avoiding frustration – yours and the faculty's.

Format of Assignment Submissions: All papers will be submitted as requested by your seminar faculty member. All papers must meet assignment parameters and cite works using the [American Psychological Association citation style](#). All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. If you require it, please contact the Graduate Writing Assistant. Sometimes your faculty will ask you to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant; if so, you are required to do so to the satisfaction of your faculty member.

Late assignments: Are not accepted without prior (to deadline) approval by your seminar faculty member. Multiple late assignments put you at risk for no credit.

Participation & Attendance: Students are required to attend each class meeting. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, **faculty must be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence. After one absence per quarter, make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, case-by-case.** Make-up work must be completed by the end of the quarter for course credit. Multiple absences put you at risk for no credit.

Use of Electronic Devices: The class is participatory and the learning community is dependent upon people being present to what is happening in class. [Research shows](#) that using electronic devices can be distracting and deleterious to the learning

experience and to the learning community. Further, research suggests that typing notes on a keyboard rather than writing out longhand results in shallower processing of the concepts. Yet we acknowledge the limited, key situations where these devices are necessary. These situations include: accessing the Canvas site when course materials are being explained; workshops where laptops help teams track requirements and output; practical exercises in class where spreadsheets or other templates are needed; and individual situations where accommodation must be made through technology. In short, put away your devices (laptops, phones, tablets) except when otherwise instructed (we recognize that some may be accessing readings electronically and will use a device in seminar). If an emergency requires you to track activity on your phone, please inform a faculty member.

Teamwork: The expectations of students as individuals applies to expectations of individuals in project teams as well. Each team member is expected to behave as part of a learning community. The division of labor in teams should respect differences among members while ensuring maximum participation of all team members. Conflicts with the team should be resolved by team members to the greatest extent possible. It is not the role of faculty to adjudicate conflicts within teams unless they involve violations of college policies.

Throughout both quarters, you will write and receive regular peer feedback team evaluations via ITP Metrics (The Individual and Team Performance (ITP) Lab at University of Calgary). These are research-backed evaluations designed to help you understand your personal strengths and challenges and assess team health to help manage conflicts throughout the 2 quarters you are working on your group project. **You are expected to complete all peer and team evaluations** that are sent via email and use them with your group.

Credit: This MPA Core course is taught a bit differently than other Cores: students will receive 12 graduate credits at the completion of the Winter quarter if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed to meet course objectives. No partial credit will be awarded. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism (i.e., using other people's' work as your own, see MPA Handbook for more), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing more than one assignment late, or multiple absences may constitute denial of credit and/or dismissal from the MPA program. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress toward the learning goals, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the term.

Evaluation: As noted above, ATPS is a two quarter course. Successful completion occurs at the end of the second quarter of the course, for 12 credits. Faculty advisors will meet with research groups as groups during the evaluation period, but will not will not submit written evaluations. Faculty advisors will hold brief evaluation conversations with individual team members at that time to share thoughts on individual student progress. Written self-evaluations are required at the end of each quarter. Evaluations

are considered "submitted" only when posted through the College portal.

Accommodations: are provided for any student who desires them through Access Services, the Graduate Writing Assistant, and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition is regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy here.

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the social contract, the student conduct code and the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC.

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

Guest Policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with approval from course faculty in advance of each requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Prospective students may visit one class meeting of second year Core without advance faculty approval, but must notify faculty that they are present prior to the beginning of class. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus. Per faculty discretion, guests may be asked to leave and not permitted to return to class if these guidelines are violated in any way including behavior that disrupts the learning community. All guests are expected to minimize their participation in class and seminar discussions.

Inclement Weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel class even if campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-class email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies here.

Communicating with Each Other: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

READINGS

Bullard, Robert D. 2000. **Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality**. 3rd Edition. Westview Press.

Campbell, Donald T. & Julian C. Stanley. 1963. **Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research**. Houghton Mifflin. PDF.

Kovach, Margaret. 2010. **Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts**. University of Toronto Press.

Levitin, Daniel J. 2017. **Weaponized Lies: How to Think Critically in the Post-Truth Era**. Dutton.

Morgan, Daryl. 1996. **Focus Groups as Qualitative Research**, 2nd Edition. Sage Publications.

Rubin, Herbert J., & Irene Rubin. 2011. **Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data**, 3rd Edition. Sage Publications.

Singleton Jr., Royce A & Bruce Straits. 2018. **Approaches to Social Research**, 6th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Other readings posted to Canvas, TBA

ASSIGNMENTS

The primary goal for both quarters of ATPS is to give you direct experience with applied primary research. You will, soup to nuts, design and deploy a research project that informs a public, policy, organizational or social/cultural question or challenge. In other words, **it's real**.

We will work on defining and narrowing research questions, designing instruments to collect qualitative and quantitative data, ensuring the privacy and safety of research participants, collecting and analyzing data and reporting your findings. These projects will be done **in groups of three people**; only under exceptional circumstances will we approve a larger group. You must include a survey as part of your data collection methods, as well as one qualitative method of collecting data (focus groups, interviews, ethnographic methods, etc.).

For this quarter, some assignments are project-based (done in project teams); other assignments are individual assignments (done individually).

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due by 6:00 PM on class day, in the weeks noted on the schedule (posted separately). All assignments are to be submitted via Canvas. **Due dates for all individual assignments after Week 1 will be posted with the schedule in September.**

(Week 1) Reflective Memo on the Research Process and Expectations (Individual): The group research project involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The latter, especially, necessarily involves a process of self-reflection on you as a researcher. Reflecting on the readings for week 1, take notes for yourself as you progress through the research process about what it means to you, personally. For this assignment, reflect on your own approach to research as part of the 2nd year of your MPA program. What are you interested in as the topic for your group project? Why is this important to you? What do you think you will learn? What has surprised you so far? What kind of researcher do you think you are? This is an exercise in self-reflection that we will revisit in the Winter Quarter as you begin collecting data. **2 pages, double spaced. This paper will not be graded, it is for your self-reflection as a researcher only.**

(Week 2) Paragraph on Research (Project): Week one you formed teams and began discussing your work together. This work product will help you frame your question, inform your classmates, and help instructors begin thinking about how to support your effort. Here are questions to address in your overview: What is the topic, debate in the field, or issue that you want to explore? How will you learn what you hope to know? Look ahead to week 4 assignment to see how the level of detail will be increasing over the quarter.

Papers Reviewing Research Examples (Individual): These papers will be part of both quarters of this class, and are a place to provide evidence of your growth as a consumer of research. First answer, "What are the author's main theses and arguments?" Then you will turn to a review of the research itself: What are the methods and key conclusions of the research? Does the evidence support the conclusion? If you were to pursue this research topic, what would you do differently? See **RESOURCES** on Canvas for Week 2 for guidance on how to effectively read a research article. **Maximum of 2 pages, doubled spaced.**

Memos (Individual): "Memoing" is an important administrative skill. Memos are letters written to a specific decision-maker that define an administrative problem within the organization, analyze that problem, and recommend a course of action.

Policy Memos The ability to write a strong and concise policy memo is one of the most important skills for policy practitioners in all fields. Select one issue and write a targeted policy memo to a specific policymaker identifying the problem and providing potential feasible solutions. For guidance on policy memo writing, see the posted reading from Behen (2012) and the USC Libraries Research Guides on Canvas in **Resources: Preparation for ATPS**. **1 page, single spaced, including an executive summary**.

Decision memos (sometimes called action memos) are based on the readings, but have a very different purpose than a seminar paper. Instead of describing and analyzing the readings, you are using the readings to make a recommendation to a decision maker.

Decision memos can differ from policy memos in purpose (always with a recommended course of action) and length (policy memos can be several pages). Policy memos often have a recommendation for a particular action, but sometimes provide straight analysis of a situation or problem with a recommendation.

For this assignment, based upon the reading for the week, write your memo to a decision maker in your organization or an organization with which you are familiar.

These papers should be no more than **two pages, single-spaced in 12-point font**. Use a memo style heading and begin with a summary paragraph that briefly defines the problem, provides a summary of three recommended actions (of which one is "do nothing"), the basis for the recommendations, and your preferred option. Yes, you give your conclusions first, and then the body of the memo develops the arguments to support your recommended actions (directly related to the readings for the week). Make the introductory summary paragraph the **last** thing you write.

(Week 4) Overview/Abstract Idea for Research (Project): The overview is a much more specific explication of your research project. Include: research topic, brief review of the literature, research question(s), and a brief description of proposed data collection methods. Papers are **two to three pages in length**.

Critical Book Review (Individual): This is more than just a summary of the book, it is a careful analysis of the content of the book, providing academic readers of the review additional information to supplement the author's point of view. Approach the book as a scholarly text and provide an assessment of the author's arguments in the context of your knowledge to date of research strategies and challenges. See the USC research guide posted to Canvas for guidance, or better yet, read a few academic book reviews in peer-reviewed journals. **750 – 1000 words**.

(Week 6) Proposal outline (Project): This assignment is the first time you will share the full picture of your proposed research. Your proposal outline needs to include and overview of all the expected sections of the proposal: introduction, literature review, research questions, data collection (qualitative and quantitative), and key aspects of your data dictionary.You will have time to adapt your proposal to lessons from the nuts-and-bolts lectures that are happening around the time of this assignment. But you should be prepared to provide a basic overview of your project by week 6. 2-4 pages, single spaced.

(Week 9) Draft Human Subjects Review (Project): As you will learn in class, the HSR process is a key ethical and practical threshold for original research. Your HSR documentation includes detailed accounts of your survey instrument and essential aspects of your qualitative approach. The scale of your HSR depends upon the specifics of your proposal.

(Week 10) Full Research Proposal and HSR Application (Project): Your Research Proposal should contain:

1) **Problem Statement**.
   A. Identify and define the problem you are going to research. Why is this a problem?
   B. Craft a research question that will drive your research.
   C. So What Statement: why does the research matter, who should care, who is the audience?
   D. What approach(es) will you draw from and why?

2) **Annotated bibliography** of about 20 resources (journals, gov reports, newspapers, etc.). If it's helpful, provide a relevance/usefulness scale. (This is early in the list of work to do, but can be an appendix to your proposal).

3) Craft a **literature review**, using selected resources from your annotated bibliography. This will summarize the background of your research problem and narrow down to your particular research question. **Define all key terms** used in your guiding research question. **Define your sample** (potential subjects/respondents) and **sampling approach**.

4) **Methods**. Identify and discuss the approach(es) your team selected. Select one or more appropriate methods (survey, plus qualitative data: interviews, focus group, or combination). What is your research going to measure? List and define your **potential measures/variables**.

5) **Survey**. Provide a research plan (limitations, assumptions, how you will physically collect the data, access, contact lists, tentative schedule, location, delivery method, feasibility: who, when, what, how). **Prepare a data dictionary** and/or coding scheme to accompany data collection instruments. The final version of your proposal should include **a draft of the survey instrument** that you will pilot test over winter break.

6) **Focus Groups/Interviews**. Describe the details of your qualitative data collection process. Who you will talk with, tentatively when and where, and a draft of the questions you will ask.

7) **HSR application**.

8) **Team work plan**. This project will be a team effort, but clarify who will be responsible for which sections and develop team due dates for drafts of the various sections, and who will pull them together.

NOTE: Do not launch your research project when this is done! **You must have HSR approval** and we will be talking about how to pilot your research efforts over break.