PAD 882/884: SEMINAR ON PHD RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SPRING 2016

Instructor: Erika Martin, PhD MPH
Office: Milne 300E, Thursdays, 9:00—11:00 am
Contact: 518.442.5243; emartin@albany.edu
*The best way to contact me is via email. To ensure that I see your email, write “PAD 882” or “PAD 884” in the subject line.*

PREREQUISITES

Enrollment in the Public Administration and Policy PhD program. PAD 882 is the second term and PAD 884 is the fourth term of a two-year sequence for first- and second-year PhD students.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND REGISTRATION DETAILS

The PAD 881-884 seminar series seeks to prepare students to complete the program, meet candidacy milestones, and participate in their chosen stream of intellectual endeavor. To help meet these goals, the course aims to: (1) socialize PhD students to the practices of the academy in the United States, (2) familiarize students with the major streams of research within the department, and (3) develop presentation skills for professional conferences and the academic job market. PAD 881/883 are offered in the fall, and PAD 882/884 are offered in the spring. First-year students register for PAD 881 (fall) and PAD 882 (spring), and second-year students register for PAD 883 (fall) and PAD 884 (spring).

CLASS MEETING DATES, TIME, AND LOCATION

Most meetings are 9:00–10:30 am, in Husted 310. Class will meet nearly biweekly:
- Friday, January 22
- Friday, February 5
- Friday, February 19 [NOTE: at Rockefeller Institute of Government, 411 State St.]
- Friday, March 4
- Friday, March 25
- Friday, April 8
- Friday, April 22 [NOTE: class will be 2.5 hours, 8:30-11:00 am]

READINGS


Additional readings will be posted to the Blackboard occasionally.
CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Most class meetings will consist of a workshop on a professional development topic, or else a presentation by a faculty member on his/her research and advice for doctoral students. There will be a visit to an affiliated research center at least once per academic year.

BLACKBOARD

All presentations, assignments, and other materials will be posted to the Blackboard course website. All announcements will be posted to the Blackboard course website. You are responsible for checking the website regularly.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

This course is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. To receive a Satisfactory grade, you must:

- Regularly attend and actively participate in the seminar;
- Complete two seminar report worksheets;
- Complete academic research self-assessment worksheet.

If you are a first-year student, you must also:

- Complete a 3-4 page proposal for a literature review, which should also be shared with your academic adviser.

If you are a second-year student, you must also:

- Present an empirical project on April 22, and ensure that your academic adviser will be present to provide feedback. (If she/he has a scheduling conflict, you may substitute another member of your candidacy committee.)

Regular attendance and participation

You should attend the class sessions, and arrive on time. You are allowed ONE absence per semester, which is your insurance policy in case you get sick or have an unavoidable professional obligation. You should also be actively engaged, such as asking questions to speakers, offering comments during the professional development workshops, and providing feedback to student presenters. You will not receive a Satisfactory grade if you are regularly late or miss more than one session.

Seminar report worksheets

During the semester, attend two research seminars of approximately 45 to 90 minutes in length that are outside of your scheduled classes. The sessions must be about a research project, and can be about any stage of research, from research-in-progress to polished conference presentations or job talks. Presenters could be graduate students, faculty members, or researchers from other institutions. Appendix 1 contains a list of seminars that you may wish to consider. If you have questions about whether something will count, send me an email.

After attending the seminar, complete the seminar report worksheet in Appendix 2. The template is available in Blackboard. You must use the format uploaded to Blackboard; note this is a different format than the PAD 704 template. There is no set page limit, but be concise. Submit a hard copy. All reports are due on the last day of class, although you are welcome to submit them earlier.
This assignment is designed to help you become acquainted with different types of research, consider what makes a good versus bad research presentation, and cultivate a habit of becoming an engaged scholar and citizen in the department.

**Academic research self-assessment worksheet**

The first class session will be a workshop to help you transition from being a student to being a researcher. For first-year students, this is intended to help you start goal-setting and motivate you to join a research project. For second-year students, this is intended to help you be on target to have your second-year presentation ready by April. After the workshop, finish reading, *How to Write a Lot* and complete the worksheet in Appendix 3. The template is available in Blackboard. You must use the format uploaded to Blackboard. There is not set page limit, but be concise. Submit a hard copy. This is due the second class session.

In addition to submitting a copy to me, schedule a meeting with your academic adviser to discuss it. For first-year students, your advising meeting should focus on strategies to get involved with a research project, and how to narrow down some ideas for your candidacy papers. For second-year students, your advising meeting should focus on strategies to ensure you have your project ready to present on April 22. Also be sure to invite your adviser to the presentation, or else secure someone else on your candidacy committee to attend. You do not need to give me proof that you met with your adviser—this is your own responsibility.

**First-year student literature review proposals**

Students should strive to complete all candidacy requirements by the end of their third year. To keep you on track, you will prepare a proposal for your literature review topic and how you will accomplish it. This assignment is designed to help you select a topic, and provide an early opportunity for you to meet with your adviser for feedback.

**Deliverables**

You will submit a 4-page proposal (double-spaced, Arial 12-point font, 1" margins). This should include: (a) a clearly articulated topic and set of research questions that you will answer in the review, (b) the motivation for this literature review (e.g. why this is an important topic, the gap you are trying to fill, etc.), (c) how you will conduct this review (e.g. search terms, bibliographic databases, the inclusion/exclusion criteria for the studies you will include in the review, how you will synthesize the findings), and (d) your plan to keep yourself organized and on track (e.g. timeline, strategies to organize all of the documents and keep track of your progress, ways you can check in with your adviser and other candidacy committee members, and strategies to stay motivated with reading, synthesizing, and writing). Use headings to differentiate these sections.

If you are concurrently taking PAD 704 and you want to pursue the topic you selected for the course, you are welcome to expand on the literature review concept sheet assignment. If you are concurrently taking PAD 704 and realize that you do **not** like your topic, then pick a different topic for this assignment. This proposal should be for the literature review that you plan to complete for your candidacy requirement.

This will be due in class on April 22. In addition, schedule a meeting with your academic adviser to discuss your proposal, including how to adjust the research question and literature review methodology, how the literature review paper should be structured, timelines, and strategies to stay in contact with your adviser as you make progress. You do **not** need to give me proof that you met with your adviser—this is your own responsibility.
Requirements for a Satisfactory grade
To receive a Satisfactory grade, you must meet the following requirements:

- Have a document that contains all items above: (a) clearly articulated topic and set of research questions, (b) motivation, (c) proposed methods to conduct the review, and (d) a plan to keep yourself organized and on track
- Document must be well-organized, cleanly written, and understandable to a general audience (i.e. any faculty member should be able to understand it)
- Bring a hard copy to class and email a PDF to me
- Share the PDF with your academic adviser and schedule a meeting to discuss it

Second-year student presentations
One pre-candidacy milestone is that all second-year students must successfully completion a 10-12 minute conference-style research presentation in the PAD 883-884 series. The presentation must be on a current research project that you are leading. Hopefully this will be preliminary findings from your candidacy empirical paper. In addition, you will be asked to invite your faculty advisers to attend and provide feedback on both the content and your presentation style. This requires you to make significant progress on an independent research project, and will keep you on track to meet your candidacy milestones. It is also an opportunity to receive constructive feedback to improve the quality of your work. All presentations will be on Friday April 22. To accommodate six students, we will have a longer class session.

Presentation Topic
The topic will be a research paper on which you are the sole or lead author. Ideally this will be the empirical paper you are preparing for your candidacy requirement. You do not need a fully complete set of results, but you should have a very clearly defined research question, study rationale and purpose, hypotheses (for quantitative research), a fully formed research design (e.g. data sources, data analysis plan), and preliminary findings to share. It is also acceptable (but not preferred) to present the literature review you are preparing for candidacy. If you choose this option, you must have a very well-articulated research question (i.e. this is not a general topic but rather using literature to answer a pre-determined set of questions about the state of knowledge on XYZ), a clearly defined methodology to systematically review and synthesize the literature (e.g. literature sources, inclusion/exclusion criteria, strategy to synthesize the literature that will be included), and findings to share. In this case, the “findings” need to include your own synthesis (e.g. themes, areas where findings diverge, important gaps, issues with study quality), and not just a description about what studies exist.

Presentation Format
Your presentation will follow a similar style for academic conferences. See the Blackboard site for sample presentations including how to structure an academic presentation. Key components include: study motivation, research question/hypotheses, methods, results, and discussion. Your presentation should be 10-12 minutes- rehearse this as the time limit will be strictly enforced. Use the UAlbany slide template, which is also available in Blackboard. Your presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the faculty. Be prepared for detailed questions about your research design, data, methodological choices, and interpretation of preliminary results. You do not need to know all of the answers, but you should be engaged in the conversation and demonstrate that you understand the material.

Deliverables
Send me a draft paper (saved as a PDF) at least one week in advance. I will distribute this to the class and faculty to review beforehand. In addition, create a set of PowerPoint slides. Bring
an electronic copy to class on a USB thumb drive, and print 20 copies of your slides (6 slides per page) for distribution in class.

Feedback
The goals of this presentation are to: (a) keep you on track to achieve candidacy milestones, (b) provide you with feedback on the quality of your research and strategies to improve it, and (c) allow you an opportunity to practice an academic presentation. You must invite your academic adviser to your presentation; if s/he cannot attend, then arrange for another member of your candidacy committee to attend. (Note: faculty do not need to stay the entire time, just for your presentation.) You will also receive feedback from me and the PhD Director. Your classmates will complete peer feedback sheets to provide additional comments on the presentation style.

Requirements for a Satisfactory Grade
To receive a Satisfactory grade, you must meet the following requirements:
• Have a project that meets the criteria above; i.e., you have made sufficient progress on a solo or first-authored research paper to be able to present the research question, study design, and preliminary results;
• Ensure that your academic adviser or another member of your candidacy committee can attend your presentation;
• Submit a PDF of the draft paper via email at least one week in advance;
• Prepare a 10-12 minute PowerPoint presentation with the UAlbany template that adheres to the guidelines provided in Blackboard;
• Bring the PowerPoint slides on a USB drive to class;
• Bring 20 hard copies of your handouts (printed 6 slides per page) to class;
• Demonstrate that you understand the material and have rehearsed the presentation. This includes fitting within the 10-12 minute time limit, having clear and well-organized materials, and being able to respond to faculty questions;
• Wear professional attire appropriate for a conference presentation or job talk, which consists of a business suit and tie (for men) or a pant/skirt suit (for women).

OTHER CLASS POLICIES

Tardiness
Class starts at 9:00 am, not 9:05 or 9:15 am. Being tardy is disrespectful to speakers and your classmates, and consistent tardiness may result in an Unsatisfactory grade. Speak with me at the beginning of the semester if you anticipate time conflicts related to professional obligations.

Electronics
Please turn off all cell phones, iPads, tablets, laptops, and anything else that beeps, jingles, rings, types, plays music, or starts with an "i-" so that you can give full attention to speakers.

Disability statement
Please see me if you have a disability documented by the Office of Disabled Student Services (in the Department of Student Life) to request accommodations.

Incompletes
I will not grant an incomplete except in the case of truly extenuating circumstances with written documentation. If you need to request an incomplete, speak with me as soon as possible. Do not assume that I will grant an incomplete.
Letters of recommendation
I believe it is a conflict of interest for me to write letters of recommendation during the semester, before I have assigned a final course grade. I will not write a letter of recommendation during the semester except in the case of special circumstances, such as students who have previously worked with me as a research assistant. If you anticipate that you would like a letter of recommendation after the semester, make an appointment with me sooner rather than later so that you can tell me about your professional interests.

Course feedback
I genuinely want to make this the best educational experience it can be for you and future students. I am receptive to and grateful for all suggestions about the course. If you are not comfortable providing me feedback in person, then you can put anonymous suggestions in my faculty mailbox on the first floor of Milne.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>What’s Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Workshop: “Transitioning from Student to Researcher”</td>
<td>Everyone: Start reading <em>How to Write a Lot</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| February 5 | Workshop: “Developing Your Literature Review Paper”                    | Everyone: Based on *How to Write a Lot* and the 1/22 class discussion, complete the academic research self-assessment report  
First-year students: Meet with your academic adviser. Discuss your self-assessment report, strategies to get involved with a research project, narrow down some ideas for your candidacy papers, and formulate a plan to prepare your literature review proposal.  
Second-year students: Meet with your academic adviser. Invite them to your April 22 presentation and arrange for him/her or someone else on your candidacy committee to attend your presentation. Discuss your self-assessment report and develop a plan to ensure that you will have something to present on April 22. |
| February 19| Field trip to Rockefeller Institute of Government, 411 State Street    |                                                                                                      |
| March 4    | Workshop: “Preparing an Academic Curriculum Vitae,” with Jen MacLaughlin | Everyone: Bring a hard copy of your current CV to class for in-class activity                        |
| March 25   | David Matkin’s research and dissertation advice                         |                                                                                                      |
| April 8    | Mitch Abolafia’s research and dissertation advice                       |                                                                                                      |
| April 22   | Second-year student presentations                                      | Everyone: Two seminar reports  
First-year students: Prepare a 4-page proposal for your literature review paper. Bring a hard copy to class and also share it with your academic adviser.  
Second-year students: Prepare presentation, and make sure that your academic adviser (or another member of your candidacy committee) will attend your presentation to provide comments. |
TENTATIVE FALL 2016/SPRING 2017 COURSE SCHEDULE

The tentative schedule for the 2016-2017 academic year includes the following topics and assignments. As topics rotate on an every-other-year basis, if you need to skip a semester in the PAD 881-884 sequence, you may need to wait two years to take that module.

- Ashley Fox’s research and dissertation advice
- Ramon Gil-García’s research and dissertation advice
- Yvonne Harrison’s research and dissertation advice
- Brian Nussbaum’s research and dissertation advice
- Karl Rethemeyer’s research and dissertation advice
- Ellen Rubin’s research and dissertation advice
- Elizabeth Searing’s research and dissertation advice
- Ed Stazyk’s research and dissertation advice
- Stephen Weinberg’s research and dissertation advice
- Workshop, “Navigating the Academic Job Market”
- Visit the Center for Technology in Government
- Research at the Center for Health and Human Rights
- Second-year student presentations
- Assignments: job market worksheet (fall semester), academic journal worksheet (spring semester), seminar report worksheets (both semesters)
APPENDIX 1: IDEAS FOR RESEARCH SEMINARS

Below are ideas for in-person and web-based seminars. This is not an exhaustive list, so feel free to find other outlets that interest you, and email me with questions about whether something would count. If you attend a conference-style panel of 3-4 short presentations (~15 minutes length each), then your report should be about the full panel – provide a shorter description of each presentation. During the fall, at least one seminar must be a job talk.

University at Albany events:

- Rockefeller College Thursday Policy Lunch ([http://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/conversations_tpol.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/conversations_tpol.shtml))
- Rockefeller College Speaker Series ([http://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/speaker_series.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/speaker_series.shtml))
- Center for Social and Demographic Analysis (CSDA) Colloquium ([http://csda.albany.edu/colloquiums.asp](http://csda.albany.edu/colloquiums.asp))
- School of Public Health Annual GIS Day ([http://www.albany.edu/sph/cphce/gis_2013.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/sph/cphce/gis_2013.shtml))
- Research talks sponsored by a research center such as the Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities ([http://www.albany.edu/cemhd/events-and-activities.php](http://www.albany.edu/cemhd/events-and-activities.php))
- Weekly seminars from the Economics department ([http://www.albany.edu/economics/research/seminar/](http://www.albany.edu/economics/research/seminar/))
- A panel of presentations at a university-wide graduate research conference, such as the annual New Trends in Computing and Informatics Research conference ([http://www.albany.edu/cci/ntcir-past-conferences.php](http://www.albany.edu/cci/ntcir-past-conferences.php)) or the Graduate Conference on Institutions and Societies ([https://sites.google.com/site/institutionsandsocieties/upcoming-conference](https://sites.google.com/site/institutionsandsocieties/upcoming-conference))
  - A student dissertation or prospectus defense
  - A faculty job talk

Other events in the capitol region:

- Forums at the Rockefeller Institute of Government – check with me first as not all events are research-oriented ([http://www.rockinst.org/forumsandevents/](http://www.rockinst.org/forumsandevents/))
- Seminars at other universities in the region, such as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Union College, or Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- Research talks sponsored by state agencies or professional societies, such as the New York State Association of County Health Officials SPEED Rounds ([http://www.nysacho.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3377](http://www.nysacho.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3377))

Events outside Albany:

- A panel of presentations at a professional conference
- Veterans Administration Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) cyber seminars – a mixture of presentations about research projects and explanations of specific methodological tools ([http://www.herc.research.va.gov/training/training_seminar.asp](http://www.herc.research.va.gov/training/training_seminar.asp))
- GovManagement curates a list of upcoming webinars, some of which focus on research topics ([http://govmanagement.com/events.html](http://govmanagement.com/events.html))
- iDASH (integrating Data for Analysis, Anonymization, and Sharing) medical informatics research webinars ([http://idash.ucsd.edu/events/webinars](http://idash.ucsd.edu/events/webinars))
- Research symposiums sponsored by non-profit research firms, such as the United Hospital Fund’s annual symposium ([http://www.uhfnyc.org/events/880898](http://www.uhfnyc.org/events/880898))
### APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH SEMINAR REPORT WORKSHEET

You can download this template as a Word document from the Blackboard website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Items</th>
<th>Your Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the following presentation details: presentation title, speaker, location, date, URL if webinar, name of seminar series.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the research question(s) in your own words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize the research methods(s). What data did the presenter collect, and how were these data analyzed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything in the presentation that did not make sense (e.g. the explanation of the research methods)? If so, what can you do to learn more?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on the presentation style (e.g. slides, tone, demeanor, professional appearance). What did you like about the presenter’s style – what did the speaker do well?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on the presentation style (e.g. slides, tone, demeanor, appearance). What parts of the presentation style could be improved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX 3: ACADEMIC RESEARCH SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

You can download this template as a Word document from the Blackboard website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Items</th>
<th>Your Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What are your current research projects? For each project, explain its stage of development (e.g., early planning stage, data collection underway, data analysis in progress, manuscript being drafted) | Projects I am leading:  
•  
•  
Projects where I am a research assistant/collaborator:  
•  
•  |
| What is the status of your candidacy papers?                                       | Empirical paper status:                                                        |
|                                                                                  | Literature review paper status:                                                |
| What are your research goals for this semester? *(Be realistic!)* First-year students might have a goal to learn research skills XYZ and get involved with a faculty project; second-year students might have a goal to complete the statistical analysis for their empirical paper and refine their literature review research question.) | My research goals:  
•  
•  
•  |
| What are your obstacles to meeting your research goals?                           | Potential obstacles to meeting my research goals:  
•  
•  
•  |
| What are some strategies that you can use to overcome these obstacles?            | Strategies I can use to meet my research goals:  
•  
•  
•  |
| What are three interesting tips you learned from the *How to Write a Lot* book that you can try this semester? | Tip #1:  
Tip #2:  
Tip #3:  |