January 20, 2016

RPAD 508
Professional Applications II

Instructor: Stephen Weinberg
Tuesdays, 5:45-7:05
Husted 106A
Office: Milne 213B
Office Hours: TBD
Teaching Assistants:

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to help prepare students to succeed in internships and your future careers by developing specific skills important to the public and nonprofit work environment. Over the semester we devote attention to three skill sets: 1) writing (and rewriting!) for different audiences, 2) group deliberation, and 4) working with diverse populations. Students will demonstrate mastery of these skills through in-class exercises, homework assignments, peer feedback, and case studies. At the conclusion of the course students should be able to communicate key ideas, in writing and orally, in a well-organized, concise, and persuasive manner. Students will be able to recognize the role of implicit and egocentric biases in management and policy, and to take steps to reduce the role of such biases in their workplace. Students will be able to elicit information from group members in deliberation.

Readings

You are expected to acquire the following books on your own. Note Well: everyone will get Bohnet and Sunstein & Hastie; you will then be assigned one of Coates, Hochschild, or Tuan


Everyone: Sunstein and Hastie, 2014, Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter, isbn 978-1422122990

Only Some Students: Coates, 2015, Between the World and Me, isbn 978-0812993547

Grading

30% Quizzes
15% Response Papers
25% Team Project
12% Memo
12% Website Policy Statement
6% Participation

Each assignment will receive a letter grade from A to E. I translate these grades into a 4pt scale, with A = 4.0, A- = 3.66, B+ = 3.33, B = 3.0, B- = 2.66, and so on. At the end of the semester, I take a weighted average of all your grades to get your final score. This score is then translated into your semester grade as follows:

- 3.70-4.00: A
- 3.51-3.69: A-
- 3.21-3.50: B+
- 3.00-3.20: B
- 2.66-2.99: B-
- 2.33-2.65: C+
- 1.95-2.32: C
- <1.95: E

Attendance

Attendance is required and necessary for your success in the course. Three or four unexcused absences will result in a student’s semester grade being reduced by a third of a letter grade per absence (from a B to a B-, for example). Five unexcused absences will result in failing the course. Absences will be excused only under certain circumstances, such as health or family emergencies, religious observations, or work-related travel.
Office Hours

While I prefer for you to come to my regular office hours, I am happy to schedule appointments if you cannot come at that time. Let me rephrase: I expect and encourage you to schedule appointments if you cannot come at that time. You must e-mail me (sweinberg@albany.edu) to schedule an appointment.

Assignments

There will be 3 main writing projects over the course of the term, including 1 group memo. Part of your grade on group memos depends on your team members’ assessments of your participation.

Memo: summarize distributional consequences of an ACA proposal (1 page, plus exhibits)

Group project: group memo proposing an ACA reform (6-8 pages, plus exhibits)

Website Discussion: public discussion of your group’s proposal, suitable for posting to a senator’s website (1 page, including exhibits)

There will also be 9 smaller assignments and reading quizzes.

Late Assignments. An assignment is considered late if the paper copy is not submitted at the beginning of class, if the electronic file is not submitted before class, and/or if the electronic file is not readable. Assignments (electronic or hard copy) submitted 10 minutes after the beginning of class will be considered late and will be automatically reduced by 20%. Homework submitted one day after the due date will be automatically reduced by 30%; assignments submitted two days after the assigned date will be reduced by 40%, etc. Exceptions will be made for extreme health and family emergencies. It is better to submit homework early rather than late, so please plan ahead if you know you will be missing a class session in which an assignment is due. Given the sheer size of this course, I have much less flexibility with late assignments than I have in my other courses.

Collaboration

I strongly encourage you to discuss the individual assignments with your peers, provided that
a) you attempt every assignment on your own before discussing them with colleagues;

b) you write up your own individual assignments from scratch, without looking at your colleagues’ work while you do it; and

c) that you explicitly acknowledge whom you worked with on the first page of the assignment. *Copying a colleague’s work directly is cheating.*

Homework is due at the BEGINNING of class. Extensions may be granted by Prof. Weinberg in the case of severe medical or family emergency.

### Plagiarism and Citations

I assume you are familiar with American standards regarding plagiarism. You must familiarize yourself with the information at [http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html](http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html). Plagiarism is a major offense and can receive severe punishments, from automatically failing the course to being expelled from the program. If in doubt about acceptable use of sources, ask.

Correct citations are one of the more important elements in avoiding plagiarism. When you use a source in a memo, make sure to cite it using any standard academic citational method. (I personally prefer the author-date parenthetical citation method used in economics, but I see no reason to force you to adopt economic norms.) Two things I do care about, no matter which standard you adopt: a) the titles of sources do not belong in the main text of your paper, but rather in the Works Cited page or a footnote, and b) article titles go in quotes; book and journal titles go in italics.

The key to a citation is that the reader must be able easily to track down the source.

Web Citations: It is helpful to the reader to include URLs on the Works Cited page for material located on the internet, assuming that the URL is permanent and that the website is universally accessible. You would NOT provide URLs for published journal articles you have accessed through the library, but you would provide a URL for a government report or for a working paper downloaded from an author’s website. Some conventions call for including the date you accessed internet materials; these conventions are necessary in increasingly rare circumstances. There is a distinction between material that exists in a final, dated form that happens to be located on the internet and material from fluid web sites. If something is fixed, such as a journal article, dated working paper, or government report, then you do NOT need to report the date you accessed the information; simply report the date of the document itself. If something could be changed at any moment, then you must report the date you accessed the website.
Academic honesty is something your professor takes very seriously. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and submitting the same assignment for multiple classes. Students are required to be familiar with the university’s academic honesty policies; ignorance is not an excuse for dishonest behavior. In all cases of cheating, a Violation of Academic Integrity Report will be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies to be placed in your university file, with copies provided to you, the department head, and the Dean of Rockefeller College. Additional penalties may include some combination of the following: revision and re-submission of the assignment, reduction of the grade or failure of the assignment, reduction of the course grade or failure of the course. In particularly serious instances of cheating, the matter may be referred to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility, and students may be recommended for suspension or expulsion.

Grammar Help

For the individual assignments, you should feel free to seek help in proof-reading your drafts, provided that a) you make all changes yourself, and b) you acknowledge any such help explicitly on the first page of your assignment.

Incidentally, I find the Grammar Girl blog to be a useful resource: http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/ .
Jan 24: introduction

Section I: Professional Communication

Jan 31: Writing Strategies

a. Williams, ch2-3 (posted to Blackboard)
b. Reading Quiz 1

Feb 7: Technical Writing

a. Watch videos on Affordable Care Act
b. “Reading” Quiz 2
c. Survey to assign books for March 28

Feb 14: Writing for Persuasion

a. Individual readings on Affordable Care Act

Feb 21: Deliberation

a. Sunstein and Hastie, introduction and chapter 1
b. Memo due

Feb 28: Deliberation

a. Sunstein and Hastie, chapters 2-4
b. Reading Quiz 3 (covers Sunstein and Hastie intro and ch1-4)
Section II: Serving Diverse Populations

Mar 7: Implicit Biases

   a. Take IAT (link provided on blackboard)
   b. Bohnet, intro and chapters 1-2
   c. Reading Quiz 4

   BREAK: Mar 14

March 21: Challenging Egocentrism

   a. Selected readings from Coates, Hochschild, and Tuan (posted to Blackboard)
   b. Reading Quiz 5

March 28: Challenging Egocentrism

   a. Selected readings from Coates, Hochschild, and Tuan (different students do different readings; you will need to buy the appropriate book)
   b. Response Paper 1

April 4: Policy from Diverse Viewpoints

   a. Team Project due

   BREAK: April 11

April 18: the Gendered Workplace

   a. Bohnet, chapters 3-5
   b. Reading Quiz 6

April 25: Designing for Diversity

   a. Assigned chapters of Bohnet
   b. Response Paper 2

May 2: Writing to the Public

   a. Website Policy Statement due

May 9: Wrap Up

   a. Response Paper 3