

MPA 802:
School of Policy Studies
Queen's University
Winter 2022

Instructor: **Eugene Lang**, Adjunct Professor, School of Policy Studies
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Office hours: **Thursdays 12:00-2:00 p.m.**
Office: **Rm 317, Robert Sutherland Hall (RSH)**
Class Location: **RSHB34**

Course Objectives

The basic aim of the course is to learn policy analysis by doing policy analysis. Students will be organized in groups of five-six. Each group will be tasked to work on a particular policy problem of their choosing (approved in consultation with the instructor). This project will take the form of a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC), the main instrument required for policy, program and legislative approval in the federal government. The course will build off the foundational elements of policy analysis taught in MPA 810 (Policy Challenges).

Central to the course is the iterative process of developing and refining the analysis and arguments through briefings, class discussion and critique (i.e. the process is itself core to the analysis). Students will therefore be making brief presentations each week on the various dimensions of policy analysis required in a Memorandum to Cabinet and receive constructive feedback from both the instructor and their colleagues.

Students will gain experience in:

- Researching, writing and presenting a Memorandum to Cabinet and its various component parts

- Identifying a key problem/issue which needs resolution through policy

- Using fact/evidence based research

- Developing a policy proposal

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Preparing a Strategic Communications Plan

Preparing an Implementation plan with stages of delivery and expected results

Ninety five percent of your grade is based on assessment of your individual performance as a member of the group. 5% based on

Memoranda to Cabinet (Templates):

Students will use the model outlined in the federal Government Templates and Drafters Guide for MCs

<https://www.canada.ca/en/privycouncil/services/publications/memoranda-cabinet/draftersguide-documents.html>

These templates provide the directives for the preparation of

1) The Ministerial Recommendations /MR (maximum six single spaced legal size pages) to which will be attached a cover page (1 page)

2

Plans, 2 pages each)

Preparing the MC requires extensive policy research and analysis, cost estimation, sensitivity to political dynamics, implications for the government and policy/legislative agenda. The MC needs to be written in a clear, concise and persuasive manner, free of jargon, such that non-experts (i.e. Ministers) can grasp its analysis and recommendations

Students who wish to present a MC in an area of provincial or territorial jurisdiction can do so and will use, for the purpose of this exercise, the Federal Government Templates.

Course Format

Students, in consultation with the instructor, will be required to select one policy problem/issue of relevance to a particular Ministry (or a combination of Ministries). The course format is a mix of foundational lectures from the instructor on various aspects of policy analysis, supplemented by required and optional readings, regular the project, and constructive feedback from the class and the instructor on those presentations. The goal with this approach is to simulate to some degree the iterative process of policy work that occurs inside government

Communication with the instructor

January 6

Lecture: *Problem Definition and Research*

Lecture: *The Memorandum to Cabinet Instrument*

January 23

Lecture *Theory and the Role of Ideas in Policy Analysis*

Lecture *Policy and Money*

January 30

Group Presentations begin on Problem/Definition brief

Groups 1-4 present a 15 minute Powerpoint on their Problem/Definition and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues.

February 6

Groups 5-8 present a 15 minute Powerpoint on the Problem/Definition and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues

February 13

Lecture: *Instrument Choice*

Lecture: *Policy Implementation*

February 18-21--Reading Week—no class

February 27

Group Presentations begin on Ministerial Recommendations assignment.

Groups 5-8 present 15 minute Powerpoint on draft Ministerial Recommendations and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues.

March 5

Groups 1-4 present 15 minute Powerpoint on draft Ministerial Recommendations and

Lecture *Policy Communications*

Lecture *Stakeholder Engagement*

March 19

Groups 14 present 15 minute Powerpoint on draft Communications, Parliamentary and Implementation Plans and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues

March 26

Groups 5-8 present 15 minute Powerpoint on draft Communications, Parliamentary and Implementation Plans and receive feedback from instructor and colleagues.

April 2

Guest speaker