Analytical Techniques for Public Service (ATPS) II
Winter 2021

Online: Canvas and Zoom
See Canvas for up-to-date schedule and assignment information
This syllabus is subject to revision as necessary.

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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 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 Winter quarter, students collect and analyze the data collected in the research proposal designed last quarter; create documents and other materials to convert data into information; and, present research results in various forms.

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: Unless otherwise stated, all papers should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Follow the Federal Plain Language Guidelines for writing that is clear, concise, and accessible. 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.

Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience: Please inform us in writing within the first two weeks of class if you will miss specific class sessions because of holidays of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted as part of a religious denomination, church, or organization. If you let us know within that time frame, we will
offer you reasonable accommodations, and the absence(s) will be excused. For more information, please refer to the Evergreen policy at: https://www.evergreen.edu/policy/religious-observance.

**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 quarter.

**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 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 and evaluations of faculty are required at the end of winter 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; giving everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; using high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handling all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respecting our differences; and, discussing 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:** If conducted in person, 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.
BOOKS


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 5:00 PM on the day of class. All assignments are to be submitted via Canvas.

Research Plan (Team Project)
(Week 1)
Now that you have the schedule for the rest of the year, it’s time to make a detailed plan for completing your project - as one would do in project management. Your research plan is the next level of detail from the proposal you completed in December and includes these specific deliverables: who, what, when, where, how. Define the roles of members in your group at each stage of the work. State the timing and approach for what you will do around data collection, analysis, and production related to your project. Include a complete data dictionary (that you started last quarter). This deliverable is intended to be useful to you. Use a format that works for your group but includes the elements described here. The product could be built in project management software, could just be a table of activities and dates, or some other approach.

Second Reflective Memo on the Research Process and Expectations (Individual)
(Week 1)
You are about to begin the process of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The latter, especially, necessarily involves a process of self-reflection on you as a researcher. Reflecting on what you learned in the Fall quarter, take notes for yourself about what research means to you, personally. Reflect on how your own approach to research as part of the 2nd year of your MPA program has evolved. What do you think about the topic your group is working on? Are you satisfied with how your
group developed your research question and strategies? What surprised you about the research process? What kind of researcher do you think you are now? How does this fit in with your overall experience in the MPA program? This is an exercise in self-reflection to compare to what you wrote at the beginning of ATPS. 2 pages, double spaced. This paper will not be graded, it is for your self-reflection as a researcher only.

In-Class Excel Exercises (Individual)  
(Weeks 2 & 4)  
In preparation for analyzing your project survey data, in Week 2 and Week 4 we will be working collaboratively in class to complete exercises about descriptive and inferential statistics in Excel. Assuming you have completed each week’s lecture videos before class time, the data for each assignment will be posted at the beginning of class and the assignments will be due at the end of class.

Policy Memo (Goldrick-Rab)  
(Week 3)  
1 page, single spaced, including an executive summary  
As you know by now, a policy memo is a document that provides analysis and/or recommendations for a particular audience regarding a particular situation or problem. A well-written policy memo reflects attention to purpose; it is well organized; and it has a clear, concise style. This is your last opportunity to practice this important writing format this year, and you should incorporate feedback from all of your earlier policy memo assignments.

Your assignment is to select an issue, based on the content of the assigned book, and write a targeted policy memo to a specific policymaker identifying the problem and providing potential feasible solutions.

Select one issue and write a targeted policy memo identifying the problem and providing a recommendation. As usual, use a memo style heading and include an executive summary of 3 sentences maximum. For guidance on policy memo writing, review the posted reading from Behn (2012) and the USC Libraries Research Guides.

Capstone Idea (Individual or Team)  
(Week 4)  
Capstone Projects can be completed by individuals or teams. Submit to the faculty team a short description of your Capstone project idea (think about using a one page memo format for this). If you are going to collect primary data or information from people, you'll need to indicate that you plan to do a Human Subjects Review at Evergreen and also at any participating organization (should it be required by that organization). The faculty team will review your outline, give you feedback, and faculty sponsors will be assigned.
You may, of course, approach an individual faculty member directly about sponsoring your project. We will take all preferences into consideration.

**Analysis Plan (Team Project)**
(Week 4)

Earlier, you provided your project plan. At this point you know a lot more about your specific qualitative and quantitative findings and the tools you will use to analyze your data. What is your plan for analyzing your data? What software will you use? What statistics will you calculate? How will you compile and analyze your qualitative data? Like the research plan from January, the format for this should be something that works for your group. Submit the format that your group has chosen to organize this plan, but, if the write up is a traditional report, 2-3 pages double spaced.

**Qualitative Data Codebook & Application (Team Project)**
(Week 5)

1. Based on the readings for this week, develop a codebook for your qualitative data from interviews or focus groups that your team will use with your transcribed qualitative data. As the MacQueen, McLellan, Kay and Milstein article states, “The codebook structure has evolved to include six basic components: the code, a brief definition, a full definition, guidelines for when to use the code, guidelines for when not to use the code, and examples.” Miles, Matthew, Huberman, and Saldaña provide a number of detailed coding protocols that you can utilize to meet your team's coding needs.

2. Demonstrate how the codes you developed are applied to one page of transcribed text from your interviews or focus groups.

**Team Process Check-In (Individual)**
(Weeks 5 & 9)

Teamwork is an integral component of ATPS I and II, and The Team Process Check-In assignment is intended to supplement your teamwork and learning from prior ITP Metrics Assessments, and provide an opportunity for you, individually, to communicate directly with your faculty project sponsor about your perceptions of team health and how your team is meeting the competencies laid out in your contract. One paragraph.

**Capstone Proposal (Individual or Team)**
(Week 6)

The proposal (maximum 3 - 4 double-spaced pages) is comprised of short responses to each the following bullets only:

- Background
- Objective(s)/Purpose/Intentions
- Methods or Techniques
- Deliverables/Outputs – outputs are the actual products of your work (meetings, reports, presentation to organizations, etc.)
- Expected Outcomes – outcomes are the anticipated or hoped for effects of your work
• How does your proposed project demonstrate the MPA Mission?
• How does your proposed project demonstrate KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) learned/gained as they relate to all or part of the mission?
• How will the work contribute to positive change?

Proposed project timeline.
Before the beginning of Spring term, teams/individuals will meet with the sponsoring faculty to revise and finalize proposals. Your proposal must be approved by your sponsoring faculty and approved with HSR, if applicable, before the first Thursday of class in Spring term.

Data Analysis (Team Project)
(Week 6)
Congratulations! Time to see what you’ve discovered. Share six key findings from your research (three key findings from qualitative data (focus groups and/or interviews) and three key findings from the quantitative data (survey). Your discussion can be quite brief. You may want to use a table, or graphics, to summarize your quantitative findings. The point is to have done a rigorous analysis of the data and to identify findings of interest. 3-5 pages, double spaced. Tables, graphics, etc. may require extra pages -- that's ok.

BYO (Bring Your Own) Awesome Data Visualization Analysis and Paper
(Individual)
(Week 7)
Search the web for a particularly interesting single visual presentation (beautiful visualization) of a complex idea. This could be a table, graphic, illustration, etc. from a research article (can be from previous work you have done for class). Your awesome single visual presentation should not be animated. You will do three things with this visualization: 1) Have it ready on your computer to share with the class, 2) post it to Canvas, and 3) provide a written response to the visualization. Your written submission should describe the findings, and share your perspective about why you find it interesting and effective. We will share as many of the BYO visualizations as we have time for in seminar, so be prepared for an oral presentation along the lines of your written submission. The review piece is 2 pages, double spaced.

Scholarly Peer Review (Individual)
(Week 8)
In Week 7, teams will submit the current draft of their group project, in whatever form it is at that time. Faculty will share the group drafts in order for individuals to complete this assignment.

We will be following a double-blind peer review process (but because the class is small, it will functionally be a single-blind review process): The draft paper will be anonymous to the reviewers, and the reviewers will be anonymous to the groups.

Based on your reading of the aims and scope of the journal Public Administration Review, please provide responses to the following questions:
- Is the topic appropriate for Public Administration Review?
- Is the topic timely?
- Does the manuscript make a contribution to current knowledge and/or extend knowledge?
- Is the research methodology appropriate (if applicable)?
- Is the writing style clear and appropriate for a professional article?
- Do you have any recommendations to improve the manuscript?
- Would you recommend (a) accept, (b) accept pending minor revisions, (c) revise and resubmit, or (d) reject (and why if d)

If you wish, you may make comments and/or tracked changes on the manuscript itself, but this is not necessary. You need not concern yourself with APA style issues for this review.

Final Products (Team Project)
Your research project has involved two different kinds of data (qualitative and quantitative). You have analyzed your quantitative data using basic statistics. You have turned your qualitative data from raw collected data into useable information. Now you are asked to produce three kinds of output:

1. A research report, which we are calling a research compendium, much like a journal article or a white paper, describing your research strategy, your methods, your findings, and your conclusions. Start with an edited version of the fall quarter final research proposal. The compendium is a collection of your work, an intellectual warehouse that you will have to demonstrate the extensive work you completed this year. The compendium includes these elements: abstract, introduction/problem statement, literature review, data collection methods (including instruments, in appendices), results, discussion, conclusions, reference list. **Maximum: 20 pages, double spaced (not including appendices).**

2. An audience-specific written piece that is a much briefer, more focused and directed, version of your research findings. Define the audience and draft written materials that speak directly to them. The product can be a brochure, editorial, press release, grant proposal, testimony, policy memo, etc.

3. An audience specific visual and oral presentation that very, very briefly describes your research strategy, methods, and findings. Again, you define the audience. We'll let you know how much time you have. You are encouraged to explore unique and creative ways to portray the findings of your project.

Draft of Audience-Specific Presentation (Team Project)
(Week 8)
This corresponds to item (3) above. Although your presentation is the last thing you will do in class, you have the information to begin developing it now. You will be fine tuning your presentation until the day of presentations, but this will be a first step. Describe your approach to visually and orally presenting your results. The outputs are your Powerpoint presentation (or other presentation technology) and a 2-4 page, double-spaced, written description that explains your presentation.
Draft of Compendium and Audience-Specific Written Piece (Team Project)  
(Week 9)  
This deliverable corresponds to items (1) and (2) in the final products list above.

Final Products (Team Project)  
(Week 10)  
The three final products described above, final versions.