MLD 102 B Syllabus
2023-2024

Draft August 1, 2023

Instructor: Matt Andrews
Matt_andrews@hks.harvard.edu

Monday and Wednesday 10:30 – 11:45 am
Rubenstein 304

Description

Public policy work is prominent across the world, in all countries and sectors. It is difficult work, especially in developing and emerging countries where many issues are relatively new on agendas and the capabilities needed to do policy work are still being developed. These countries need policies to work quickly, however, given human, economic, political, and other challenges. It is hard to get things done in policy work in such contexts, however. This course offers intends to help policy workers prepare for and manage through the difficulties of this work. It does not offer a one-best-way approach but suggests essential questions policy workers should think about and strategies to adopt given different answers to these questions.

Expectations

This course is 25 classes long, running from end August to end November. Classes include cases, lectures, discussion, team reflection sessions, and activities. Students need to prepare for every class, where the professor will regularly make use of cold calling and students will be graded on their responses and engagement. Key aspects of engagement include attendance, attentiveness, listening activity, and participation in discussion and team-work.

For most classes, preparation involves reading required materials and preparing to answer questions raised in respect of these readings. Every reading requirement is shorter than 5,000 words and is thus less than the average in other classes. In three classes, students will prepare their own responses to assignments and discuss these in facilitated team reflection sessions.

Students' own cases

All students will have to nominate a case that they will reflect on at various stages in this course. This will be their own personal learning vehicle and is what we will focus assignments on.

Assessment

Students will be assessed based on class engagement (including preparation for and responsiveness to three cold call questions), the effort demonstrated in three case reflection exercises, participation in three team reflection exercises, and final assignment performance.

Classes

Date	Class	Topic	Class type
8/30	1	Introduction	Case
9/1 (Fri)	2	Essential policy questions: an organizing checklist	Lecture
9/6	3	You, biases, a case to consider, and team reflection	Discussion
9/11	4	Essential 1: 'Why' the policy, and what is success?	Case
9/13	5	Essential 1, continued	Lecture
9/18	6	Essential 2: 'What' will the policy do?	Case
9/20	7	Essential 2, continued	Lecture
9/25	8	Essentials 1 and 2 in your cases	Team reflection
9/27	9	Essential 3: 'What' decisions will be needed?	Case
10/2	10	Essential 3, continued	Lecture
10/4	11	Essential 4: 'Who' is needed?	Case/Lecture
10/11	12	Essentials 3 and 4 in your cases	Team reflection
10/16	13	Essential 5: 'How' do we get it all done?	Case
10/18	14	Essential 5, continued	Lecture
10/23	15	Plan and control as the dominant 'how' to get things done	Case
10/25	16	Doing plan and control well, 1	Exercise/Lecture
10/30	17	Successful failure in plan and control	Lecture
11/1	18	Agile as an emergent 'how' to get things done	Case
11/6	19	Doing agile well	Exercise/Lecture
11/8	20	PDIA as an emergent 'how' to get things done	Case
11/13	21	Doing PDIA well	Exercise/Lecture
11/15	22	The difficulties of agile and PDIA	Lecture
11/20	23	Essential 5 ('How') in your cases	Team reflection
11/27	24	Bringing the course together	Lecture/Discussion
11/29	25	You, getting things done beyond the course	Lecture/Discussion

All materials will be in Canvas.