POLC 6317 – PUBLIC POLICY CAPSTONE – SPRING 2021

INSTRUCTORS:	Gail Buttorff (gjbuttor@Central.UH.EDU)
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DAY AND TIME:	Thursdays, 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm
LOCATION:	Online via Zoom: Topic: POLC 6317: Capstone Class
	Meeting ID: 926 1915 3829
	Passcode: capstone
ZOOM LINK:	

https://uofh.zoom.us/j/92619153829?pwd=VnpaRFhMWE9TZ1hBQmtoaGpXQ0RHUT09

OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is intended to cultivate students' analytical skills and abilities to work as a team on a substantive research project. Students will be divided into several groups and each group will collaborate to complete an assigned semester-long research project. Under the guidance of instructors, students will learn how to collect data, conduct analysis, write a report and do a presentation for a research project. In addition to completing the assigned research project, students will receive training on tools for data and GIS analysis, survey sampling, and writing skills for policy reports.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
By the end of this course, students should be able to:
1. Think critically and develop oral communication, public speaking, and research skills
2. Develop leadership and team management skills.
3. Acquire knowledge of survey methods.
4. Develop knowledge of data visualization techniques.

III. READINGS AND TEXTBOOKS:
All readings for each class will be posted on Blackboard or distributed by email (no textbooks are required).

IV. STATISTICAL SOFTWARE:
Students will have access to raw data and datasets in different formats, and are encouraged to use statistical packages such as *STATA* and *R* to conduct the analysis for the assigned research project.

V. GRADING:
Students will be assessed on the basis of **presentations** (**50%**), **participation** (**10%**) and progress reports, draft and final writeup of the **final research project** (**40%**). Late submissions will not be accepted for a grade. Students are expected to work together with group members on the research project and present before class their preliminary findings on **March 11, 2021** and the results from their final report on **April 29, 2021**. The submission deadline for the final report *with revisions* is **5:30 PM** on **May 6, 2021**. All students are expected to actively participate in class including but not

limited to participation in lectures, attending group meetings, contributing to the design of research proposal and research plan, review of relevant literature, data collection and analysis, write-up of draft and final reports, presentation of the progress and final projects to the class, make the require revisions before final submission of the group projects, provide feedback on the presentations of other team projects, and engage in any and all class activities.

Final letter grades will be calculated using the following percentages:

93-100% = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+
90-92= A-	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D
	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-
			59 or less = F

VI. STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:
Disruptive behavior inside or outside class may result in disciplinary actions and academic failure. Students must refrain from disturbing the peace and good order of the university. For more details, please refer to the UH Student Conduct Policies:
http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=9951

VII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
All UH students, regardless of their chosen discipline, are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Cheating or any other suspected violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. Furthermore, plagiarism, copying and other anti-intellectual behavior are prohibited by the university regulations. Violators will face serious consequences. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the UH Academic Honesty Policy:
http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=1352

You are encouraged to work, study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lectures and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, either in electronic form or hard copy.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment (this applies to exams, quizzes, papers etc.). Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

VIII. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) STATEMENT
The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact UH's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at (713) 743-5400.

IX. EXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY
Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy and Graduate Excused Absence Policy for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a

student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to military service, religious holy days, pregnancy and related conditions, and disability.

X. RECORDING OF CLASS

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

XI. SYLLABUS CHANGES

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email.

XII. COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 21): INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
- Overview and course requirements
- Research design and stats refresher

WEEK 2 (JANUARY 28): MAPPING AND DATA VISUALIZATION WITH R
- Instructors: David McClendon and Jeff Reichman
    - Textbook: *R for Data Science* (https://r4ds.had.co.nz/)
    - Software: R (https://cran.rstudio.com/) and RStudio (https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/#download)

WEEK 3 (FEBRUARY 4): USING CENSUS DATA
- Instructors: John Antel and Maria Paula Perez
    - Background readings and materials will be distributed before the session

WEEK 4 (FEBRUARY 11): INDEPENDENT GROUP MEETINGS – PROJECT OUTLINES DUE
- Submit research proposal including research question(s), roadmap of project, and data analysis plan to Blackboard by 8.30pm (no formal class meeting)

WEEK 5 (FEBRUARY 18): SAMPLE SELECTION AND SAMPLING ERROR
- Instructor: Richard Murray
  - Background readings and materials will be distributed before the session

WEEK 6 (FEBRUARY 25): INDEPENDENT GROUP MEETINGS

WEEK 7 (MARCH 4): INDEPENDENT GROUP MEETINGS

WEEK 8 (MARCH 11): GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND FIRST DRAFTS DUE
- Each group will give a 20-minute presentation summarizing progress and results of project so far
- Submit first draft report to Blackboard by 5.30pm

WEEK 9 (MARCH 18): SPRING BREAK
- No Class

WEEK 10 (MARCH 25): MAPPING AND DATA VISUALIZATION WITH R
- Instructors: David McClendon and Jeff Reichman
  - Any additional readings and resources will be distributed before the session

WEEK 11 (APRIL 1): INDEPENDENT GROUP MEETINGS

WEEK 12 (APRIL 8): INDEPENDENT GROUP MEETINGS

WEEK 13 (APRIL 15): FINAL DRAFT REPORT DUE
- Submit final draft to Blackboard by 5.30pm (no formal class meeting)

WEEK 14 (APRIL 22): INDEPENDENT GROUP MEETINGS

WEEK 15 (APRIL 29): FINAL GROUP PRESENTATION
- Each group will give a 30-minute presentation summarizing the results of the project
- Submit presentation file to Blackboard

WEEK 16 (MAY 6): REVISIONS DUE
- Submit final revised report to Blackboard by 5.30pm

<p style="text-align:center">CAPSTONE TEAM ASSIGNMENTS</p>

TEAM 1

SOCIOECONOMIC DYNAMICS IN HARRIS COUNTY: Study a relevant socioeconomic issue in the Houston area such as social mobility, educational attainment, access to healthcare, housing, criminal justice, or any other relevant issues, characterize a problem in that and identify potential solutions. Visualize spatial distribution and conduct analysis

- KRISTEN CAMPBELL
- LIZA HURTUBISE
- JESSICA RULAND
- EDITH SANTAMARIA

TEAM 2 A & B

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19: Analyze one or more policy issues associated with COVID-19. Use Hobby School and Census Pulse surveys, demographic data, data analysis, mapping, and visualization.

- MATT FARMER
- SANTIAGO FRANCO
- JON GARCÍA
- REZA LAGZIAN
- KELLEY REECE
- REVANTH VADLAMUDI

TEAM 3

GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION (GBF) SURVEY: The Hobby School is working with the GBF to conduct a survey to investigate the impact of the Galveston Bay Report Card, analyzing the Galveston Bay's overall health on the community and their behaviors.

- PAOLA PINA
- BLAKE STROUD

TEAM 4

VOTER REGISTRATION AND TURNOUT: Analyze patterns of voter registration, political participation, and voting over time. Use data from Voting Authority and Dr. Murray's dataset. Identify subgroups with lower rates of registration and participation.

- MICHAEL DIES
- LAUREN DUHON
- OLIVIA VONG
- KELLY WATERMAN

TEAM 5

IMMIGRATION: Analyze patterns and impact of immigration.

- LAYLA MAYORGA
- CRISTAL ROMERO