

POL 215 Capstone Seminar

SYLLABUS - Spring, 2009

Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration, GWU

CRN: 42083, 42700, 43556

Instructors:

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Class meeting:

Tuesdays, 7:10pm – 9:00 pm

2020 K St., NW 22, Phillips Hall 217, and Monroe Hall B38

1. Course Description and Objective

Students will work in teams to design and analyze a substantive policy issue and present findings in response to a project scope of work developed by one of the clients.

This course is a capstone of your professional education and an introduction into the professional practice of public policy analysis. During this semester, you will draw on the tools and expertise garnered from prior coursework to analyze one or more important public policy problems. On the basis of that analysis, you will then develop recommendations for dealing with those problems to a client official or agency. All projects available for this semester are for real clients, addressing real policy and/or administration issues. You will be expected to complete the project on time, demonstrating high professional standards.

You can expect to apply skills in problem definition, issue framing, collection of data and information, interviewing, selection and analyses of alternatives, presentation of findings and recommendations, design of implementation tools and administrative procedures and organizations, report writing and oral presentation to policymakers, and appreciation of practical and ethical issues in the content of policy and the process of making and implementing it.

If you are **not** in your final semester of course work towards a Master's Degree, contact the instructor immediately to discuss whether you have had enough classes and experience to benefit fully from the class and to succeed in it. Your advisor will have to agree to your enrollment in the course.

2. Grading and Class Assignments

Your grade in the course will be based on three assignments.

A. Completion of On-Line Test on Protocols for Treatment of Human Subjects (10 percent)

Over the past several decades, there has been growing interest and pressures to ensure that researchers treat human subjects in an appropriate and ethical manner. Though much of this concern was originally directed toward medical research, a number of highly-publicized cases in the 1970s and 1980s have led to the development of both guidelines for ethical treatment of human subjects in social science research and a now-mandatory process that universities, think-tanks, and other associations engaged in social science research must follow to ensure that such guidelines are followed. Many of you will encounter what is now commonly referred to as the “IRB process” (where IRB stands for Institutional Review Board) in your professional work, and even when not subject to the IRB process, will still be called upon to act ethically when working with human subjects. To familiarize yourselves with what this is all about, you will each be required to take and pass an on-line test on ethical treatment of human subjects in the social and behavioral sciences, and to meet and discuss issues discovered in the process of taking that test in a class session. Details of how to take and complete the test are posted on the Blackboard website.

B. Review and “Mini-Critique” of Past Capstone Projects (10 percent)

In order to give you an idea of what other students have accomplished in the capstone, and to exercise your own critical and analytical faculties, each of you will choose one of several past capstone projects that will be posted on the Blackboard website. Read the report as a policy professional who is about to embark on a similar project for another client. Prepare a short review of the study, no more than 3 pages, single-spaced in length.

1. Summarize the issues and/or problems addressed in the report (no more than half a page).
2. Is there enough background to orient you to the issue? What else should it have covered?
3. Does the text establish why the issue is important and why the research is important? Is it clear how the research was intended to help the client to address the issue?
4. What other strengths and weaknesses struck you as you read it? Describe some key characteristics, rather than attempting to present a comprehensive assessment of the study.

C. Capstone Project (80 Percent)

The major assignment will be to work on one of several capstone projects for a client who has requested our expertise. Study teams, each consisting of approximately five students, will each undertake a project for a client that has been selected by the instructor. Details of the projects are provided below. The project grade will be based on (a) the overall strength and quality of the report (75 percent of project grade, equivalent to 60 percent of class grade); and your individual contribution to the team effort (25 percent of the project grade, equivalent to 20 percent of class grade). The latter grade will be based both on the faculty advisor’s assessment and on the evaluation of your contribution to the project from your fellow team members.

3. Assignment to a Project

At the first class meeting, students will have the opportunity to request assignment to a specific project. All project assignments will be made by the instructor. Project assignments will be made considering individual students' interests and expertise, as well as the needs of the project. Teams are likely to consist of members with varied backgrounds. Each member will be expected to bring his or her own perspective to the project. Each team will work with a faculty advisor.

Specific subject matter expertise is not required for assignment to any project. In previous semesters, some students have specifically requested projects outside of their area of expertise. Policy and management professionals are expected to be generalists, able to apply their analytical competencies to a wide range of policy, administration, and political problems.

When making your project request, consider not only the subject matter but also the tasks that are involved in the project. Notice that some projects will require more initial work with the client to better define the scope of work; some students appreciate the flexibility that this allows, while other students prefer more detailed work plans.

4. Project Process: Design and Execution

Each study team should contact their clients immediately following project assignment to set up a kick-off meeting. Aim to meet with the client during the second or third week of the semester.

Meet as a group prior to the meeting in order to develop a common understanding of the project, and to get a feel for the range of skills and expertise among team members. Use this opportunity to plan for the kick-off meeting. Identify a single team member who will serve as the contact with the client during the semester. In previous capstones, some groups have found it helpful to read and discuss some readings related to the project prior to meeting with the client. Contact your faculty advisor if you need help identifying appropriate materials.

At the kick-off meeting, you should ask the client to elaborate on the policy "problem," provide any needed background on the organization or program, and discuss available data or resources. During this meeting, you should also find out how much the client wishes to participate in project development, and how he/she prefers to be contacted.

Following the initial meeting, you should refine the scope of work, identify the tasks involved, a timetable for their completion, and allocate responsibilities among team members.

The team will collect information, frame and analyze issues, prepare a report, including examples or drafts of any legislative instructions or administrative instruments necessary to implement recommendations, and develop strategy for moving the policy proposal through the appropriate policy making and implementation bodies. At the end of the semester, each team will present its work in written, graphic, and oral forms.

The faculty advisors will be available for consultation throughout the study period. Having to explain and defend decisions to the advisor is a valuable exercise that forces team members to think clearly and thoroughly. The advisor can also help study teams to navigate complex details, identify viable analytical strategies, understand and manage the client's needs, and organize work to make maximum use of study team members' time.

The work will be organized into the following (somewhat overlapping) phases:

- Problem definition, issue framing, fact-finding on problem and its causes
- Study design and adjustment to scope of work, if needed
- Collection and analysis of data and information and identification of policy options.
- Analysis of data and information to assess alternative policy options or approaches
- Development of findings and recommendations.
- Design of implementation strategy.
- Drafting of the report, including appropriate graphics
- Review and revision for the final report.
- “Mock” presentation to the class and a panel of additional instructors
- Formal presentation to clients

Presentation of the report will be made in a PowerPoint presentation to the client and other experts, sitting as a “jury,” to critique both the substance of the work and its presentation. Unless the client requests otherwise, plan for a 15-minute presentation, followed by 45 minutes of question and answer. This presentation should be structured so that each member of the team has a role. Note that this does not mean that every member of the team should participate in the initial, 15-minute presentation. On the contrary, switching speakers frequently during a short presentation can be distracting.

5. Team Member Evaluation

Near the end of the semester, the instructor will distribute an evaluation form. Every student will be asked to evaluate the other members of his or her team on the basis of the following criteria:

Attendance at team meetings	Fairness
Timely written work	Consideration of others' views
Quality of contributions	Creativity
Leadership	Decisiveness
Problem solving	

6. Class Schedule

Tuesday, Jan 13	Meet as a class on Tuesday, January 13. Introduction and class overview. Students submit project requests. After groups have been assigned, members should contact each other and make plans to meet with the client and faculty advisor.
Tuesday, Jan 20	HOLIDAY
Tuesday, Jan 27	Meet as a class on Tuesday, January 27 to discuss ethics in social science research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit certification of successful completion of On-Line Test on Protocols for Treatment of Human Subjects. • Read NYU IRB Guidelines for Capstone Students; the link is posted on Blackboard. <p>During the week, continue project work.</p>
Tuesday, Feb 3	During the week, meet as a group and meet with the client, subject to the client's availability. Commence project design, background research, and refinement of scope of work. Meet with faculty advisor as needed.
Tuesday, Feb 10	During the week, continue project work, and meet with faculty advisor as needed. Submit mini-critique of past capstone project on February 10.
Tuesday, Feb 17, 24	Execute project design. Meet with the faculty advisor as needed. Draft a working outline and make revisions as necessary. Submit a working outline of the project report for review by your faculty advisor by Friday, February 27.
Tuesday, Mar 3	Schedule a meeting this week with the faculty advisor to receive comments on the working outline and discuss progress.
Tuesday, Mar 10	Continue project work. If you have not been in contact with your client since the kickoff meeting, touch base with him or her and discuss project progress. Ask for potential final presentation days and times at the beginning of May.
Mar 16 – 20	SPRING BREAK
Mar 24 and 31, Apr 7, 14, 21, 28	Develop draft report and start planning for the oral presentation for the client. Meet with faculty advisor as needed to finalize the report and prepare the oral presentation. MOCK PRESENTATIONS: Each group will do a dry run of the final client presentation for an audience of peers and other faculty members. Some mock presentations will be scheduled on Tuesday, April 28; one or more additional dates will be scheduled as final client presentations are scheduled. Schedule a final presentation with the client, coordinating the date with the faculty advisor. The final presentation should occur no later than May 10.

7. School of Public Policy and Public Administration Policies

The following policies have been recommended by the faculty of the School of Public Policy and Public Administration. These policies are in addition to the expectations and standards laid out in this syllabus. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions.

1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director.

The grade of I (incomplete) must be changed by a date agreed on by instructor and the student but no later than the last day of the examination period for the fall or spring semester immediately following the semester or summer session in which the grade of I is assigned. An Incomplete that is not changed within this period automatically becomes an F. In cases of well-documented extenuating circumstances, an instructor and a student may jointly petition the director of the student's degree program for additional time in which to complete the work of the course. Such petitions should be submitted within the same period. The grade of I cannot be changed by reregistering for the course here or by taking its equivalent elsewhere, and remains on the student's permanent record even after the course has been successfully completed.

2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment.

3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: It is the policy of the School that all work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, barring any extenuating circumstances. This policy does not apply to in-class examinations, which must be taken at the assigned time unless permission is received in advance from the instructor.

4. Attendance: Attendance is required. Should exceptional circumstances arise, students must contact the instructor prior to the class meeting to obtain an excused absence.

5. Academic Honesty: Please consult the "policies" section of the GW student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: "intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information." All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

6. Changing Grades after Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester.

7. Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her discretion, change content and requirements at any time during the semester.

8. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Marvin Center 436, 994-8250. Accommodations will be made based upon the recommendations of the DSS Office. Class sessions may be taped only in cases of documented necessity.

8. Projects

Students should view descriptions as a starting point for each project. Research teams should expect to refine the scope of work in consultation with the client and the faculty advisor.

A. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Ron Edwards, ronald.edwards@eeoc.gov, 202.663.4934

Bliss Cartwright, bliss.cartwright@eeoc.gov, 202.663.4949

1801 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20507

www.eeoc.gov

Setting Enforcement Priorities

Policy makers, concerned about the reduction or prevention of employment discrimination, need to evaluate carefully the relative costs and benefits of investigations focused on smaller outlying industries (eliminating “the worst of the worst”) and investigations focused on larger industries with the greatest impact on overall discrimination. Thus, focuses on producing greater compliance among industries that already have low levels of employment discrimination (making “the good better”) might be more effective in reducing overall occupational discrimination than focuses on those industries with high levels of discrimination.

Faced with the prospect of a “bad industry,” enforcement agencies might want to consider what could be called the search for “good firms in a bad industry” that is, the search for firms with jobs similar to A and B (or stockers and cashiers) but a higher proportion of female managers than the firm under investigation or the industry as a whole. The purpose of the search would be to assess to what extent, if any, the industry has “positive” outliers; i.e., firms that might place a higher priority on diversity practices than other firms in the industry. The search could be conducted in various ways depending on the available data sources. For example, with respect to sex discrimination, EEO-1 data can be used, as an initial screening tool, to determine whether there is variation in the proportion of female managers within the industry. Investigators typically assume that gender distribution is uniform within an industry, but this may not be the case. Exemplary firms may exist, but they are easy to overlook, especially when the EEO-1 data is used to measure aggregate totals. The EEO-1 survey was not designed to collect information on internal labor markets, but if one assumes that most firms in the industry recruit managers internally, then information on a “good” firm might also be used to provide an alternative availability estimate for the subject firm. A sample based on one “good” firm is, of course, not a reliable estimate, but it does provide a rough upper bound on the highest availability figure that is likely to be observed in the industry. Put simply, it tells the investigator what might be expected under the best of circumstances.

Students participating in the EEOC project will be named “Fellows,” and would have the opportunity to work closely with staff on an applied policy research project. At least one or two students should know SAS (preferred, although SPSS is an option). Quantitative will only be a part of the project, and it is likely that the project will entail some level of legislative analysis, interview or case study research, literature review, and application of theory.

B. CHF International

John W. Chromy, Vice President, CHF International

JChromy@chfinternational.org; (301) 587 4700

8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 800, Silver Spring, MD 20910

<http://www.chfinternational.org/>

**Solar/Wind/Methane Generated Electrical Power as an
Economic Development/Income Generating Product:**

An Environmentally Friendly (Green) Economic Product That Can
Change the Economic Future of Communities throughout the Developing World

Organization: CHF International is one of the five largest NGOs implementing community-based development programs in 35 countries around the world. Its primary mission is to assist low-income communities develop their housing, infrastructure, economic base, health and education services. CHF also is very active in post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction (see www.chfinternational.org)

Premise: The technology now exists that makes it possible for communities to build, maintain and manage small to medium solar/wind/bio-gas electricity generating plants to meet both community energy consumption needs but more importantly, to produce a product (electrical power) for which there is great demand and which has the potential to generate significant revenue for the community. For many communities throughout the tropical zones of the world, the raw materials available in abundance are sunshine, wind and foliage. This creates an opportunity for those communities to create a new product that is in great demand in the major cities and by national power grids of their countries.

Proposal: Proposed that a Team research information on the availability, sources, production capacities, maintenance requirements and investment costs of the construction and launching of a small to medium sized solar/wind/bio-gas combination power generating plants in three levels of generating capacity. Then generate a business plan for a community to borrow the funds, invest in the construction of such a modest plant, manage and maintain it and sell 50% of the power to private or national grid consumers.

Pending Result: The expected result would be to determine if this is really feasible? At what investment cost? And at what level of power production/point in time would the plant begin to generate income for the community. The final product would be a core business plan that could be taken to hundreds of communities in countries like Indonesia, Ghana, Kenya and India to present for them and their financial funding sources to consider building such plants.

C. National Governors Association

Christopher Logan, Program Director, Homeland Security
clogan@nga.org; 202/624-5379

Erin Lee, Program Director, Technology
elee@nga.org; 202/624-5392

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Homeland Security and Technology Division
444 N. Capitol St., Ste. 267, Washington, D.C. 20001-1512
<http://www.nga.org>

Quantifying State Homeland Security and Public Safety Spending

Organization: Founded in 1908, the National Governors Association is the collective voice of the nation's governors and one of Washington, D.C.'s most respected public policy organizations. Tasked with developing innovative solutions to today's most pressing public policy challenges, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is the only policy research and development firm that directly serves the nation's governors and their key staff.

Governors rely on the NGA Center to provide tailored technical assistance for challenges facing their states, identify and share best practices from across the country, and serve as an information clearinghouse for an array of gubernatorial initiatives. Through research reports, policy analyses, cross-state learning labs, state grants and other unique services, the NGA Center quickly informs governors what works, what does not, and what lessons can be learned from others grappling with similar issues.

Project Background: Increasingly, the federal government is requiring states to provide direct financial "matches" as a condition of receiving grant funding to support homeland security- and public safety-related programs. In some cases, these match requirements can be as much as 25 percent of the grant award. In the current economic climate, states are struggling to find the money to meet those requirements, forcing difficult decisions about whether to cut other programs or to turn down the grant money—a course that could jeopardize the programs the grants are designed to support. In arguing against the match requirements, states point out that they spend significantly more, in real dollars, of their own revenue from taxes, fees, etc., than is provided by the grant programs and that requiring them to "match" the federal funding stream is both unnecessary and unfair.

The Challenge: What has been missing from this debate, however, is a defensible quantification of the amount of money states are spending on their own for homeland security and public safety activities - separate from the amount they receive from the federal government's various grant programs.

Past efforts to measure that spending have been hampered by differing definitions of what constitutes a homeland security-related activity, variations among states in the way state agencies are organized and structured for homeland security and public safety spending, and the absence in many state budgets of clearly identifiable "homeland security" categories or line items.

Project Description: The NGA Center's Homeland Security and Technology Division is interested in partnering with the George Washington University School of Public Policy and Public Administration on a project to quantify state homeland security and public safety spending. The NGA Center envisions a pilot project aimed at up to 10 states in a number of different regions and with varying populations, security challenges, and homeland security organizational structures. The project team will develop a methodology for identifying homeland security and public safety spending, analyze target state budgets to identify and measure associated spending, and develop a report quantifying individual and aggregate homeland security and public safety spending in and across the target states.

The data collected and analyzed through this project will serve several purposes. It will:

- Provide a proven methodology by which the NGA Center and other states can accurately measure homeland security and public safety spending at the national level;
- Provide a defensible estimate of state homeland security and public safety spending to bolster the case against federal financial match requirements;
- Directly assist governors struggling with economic/fiscal challenges to more fully understand their state's homeland security and public safety spending and to make more informed policy decisions about whether, how and where to scale back that spending.

The NGA Center has access to and will make available to the project team a number of data sources and groups of individuals, including:

- Analysis by the Department of Justice on state public safety spending;
- Analysis and expertise provided by the National Association of State Budget Officers; and
- Expertise from the Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council, an NGA Center-managed body comprising the top homeland security official from each state and territory.

D. VISTA / U.S. Department of the Interior

T. Allan Comp, Ph.D., U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining, Watershed Assistance and Director, Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team and Western Hardrock Watershed Team

tcomp@osmre.gov; 202-208-2836

Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team: www.accwt.org

Western Hardrock Watershed Team: www.hardrockteam.org

VISTA and the Environment: The Case for Making a Real Difference

Problem: America's most degraded communities/environments -- the Appalachian coal country, Western mining towns and our declining industrial neighborhoods -- are the damaged consequences of our own actions, dragging our economy and our people down, endangering those that still remain and challenging our nation to face the consequences of our own history. In Appalachia, more than 3 ½ million people live within a mile of an Abandoned Mine Land site. The EPA found Hardrock mining has polluted 40% of the headwaters of Western streams. As a result, both regions suffer health risks, loss of jobs, recreational and tourist opportunities, and an exodus to more economically viable communities. Even in the 2000 census, the national household income in mining communities East and West was 30% below the national average.

This legacy challenges our nation, trapping communities in poverty, but these communities share another legacy, one of hope and hard work that changed this nation, a self-help legacy too-often overlooked in our rush toward the future in some other place. East and West, new community volunteer organizations are breaking with a tradition of passive acceptance, determined to bring real change to their community and their economy. Bypassing barriers of age and class, these organizations are uniting communities and working with government to create a stronger future, but they can't do it alone. They need the skills and commitment that recent college graduates can bring to a year or two of full-time national service as a VISTA in these rural communities -- basic writing skills for grants; organizational skills to bring more community members and other partners to the table; education skills to help break the cycle of acceptance and poverty and change attitudes toward the degraded environment that surrounds them. These positions address not only immediate and pressing environmental problems, they support their local communities in the longer, more hard-fought struggles of sustainability, economic viability, and successful futures for citizens in rural America.

This can happen now. In fact, it's already happening in two places, thanks to a pioneering partnership among community volunteer organizations and two Federal agencies, VISTA and Interior/OSM. In more than 50 rural mining communities in Appalachia and in the Rocky Mountains, a single VISTA Volunteer works with their sponsoring community group to bring real change to the region they serve. In the last year alone, these VISTAs:

- Formed 247 new partnerships
- Logged 15,465 volunteer service hours from local citizens
- Raised \$23,000 in grants per community group
- And much more

These VISTAs are part of two teams, one Eastern and one Western, creating partnerships and building the capacity to heal the land and the people in these remarkable places -- making a real difference.

Challenge: Can these two teams serve as a model for a national team of VISTAS, perhaps thousands strong, dedicated to working with local groups to address the environmental devastation and consequent poverty of their communities?

Goal: The goal here is to create something that actually works. This is not likely to come from within the ranks of the Corporation for National Service, but could be a legislative initiative. In my mind, it will take two closely-tied streams of effort. One would do the research on the needs of these areas, the ways in which VISTAs can be most useful, the legislative framework within which VISTA operates, the best way to propose and develop this legislative initiative. The second would be a parallel effort to make sure the right people actually know about this effort, provide their input as needed, and see it within a framework that is sufficiently credible and significant that they are willing to step up and make it happen. We will also need to identify and work with those legislative offices most likely to be willing to put the proposal in play.

Tasks: I think there are best defined more fully by the Capstone class, but there are several areas of inquiry.

VISTA, its legislative background, its potential support in the Congress, its apparent capacity to initiate real, full-time committed college-trained change. We need to craft a legislative fix that will actually work in the VISTA offices.

ACCWT/WHWT, the two teams working now in mining communities, their specific accomplishments (they have been gathering data) and capacity to provide a model for a proposed national environmental team.

COMMUNITIES need to describe their social/economic/environmental conditions in ways that communicate clearly and accurately, and that guide the solution.

CONGRESS, specifically what are the right committees and who is on them that might be willing to be supportive, who (inside Congress and outside) stands to benefit most from such a team, who has a record of support for such efforts (and might assist in lobbying for the proposal), who can/will help make this happen.

OTHER ALLIES, like the National Citizen's Conservation Corps, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and others that could/would play a useful role in supporting and implementing the proposal.

INPUT AND OUTREACH FOR THE PROJECT, an equally-important effort to identify appropriate speakers for the class (so they know what is being done) identify opportunities to present the proposal (perhaps a Hill lunch?), work the interested press to create a drum-roll under the project, etc. VISTA, ARC, Citizen's Conservation Corps and other directors have agreed to work with the class in developing a real initiative. Senator Rockefeller, a former VISTA, and his national service staff may also participate.

E. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Ayan Addou, Dept of Community Planning & Services, MWCOG

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Ste. 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4239

aaddou@mwkog.org; (202) 962-3753

<http://www.mwkog.org/planning/housing/>

Sustainable Communities

Organization: The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is a regional organization of 21 local governments surrounding our nation's capital, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives. COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety, and transportation.

COG's Housing Programs cover a broad array of issues important to area local governments and their housing partners. COG works to provide current, accessible information that will help inform regional and local policies.

The Housing Directors Advisory Committee (HDAC) reports to the Human Services Policy Committee on regional housing and community development issues. The committee is responsible for developing and presenting all reports, policy statements, recommendations and proposals relevant to housing and community development in the region. The HDAC is composed of directors from Housing and Community Development departments across the region.

Members of HDAC have requested a research paper on sustainability in the context of housing and community development, with a special interest in concepts that could be implemented at the local level. Research should commence with a reasonably concise, operational definition of the concept of community sustainability. From here, the capstone team has a fair amount of latitude to design and implement a project that will be useful to HDAC.

1. Why should a community be interested in sustainability? Will the public sector save money? Will it improve the quality of life for residents? Will it make a community more or less attractive to economic development prospects?
2. What does sustainability have to do with strengthening the sense of community?
3. What criteria should a community use in choosing between different policies or programs? How can policymakers measure or weigh how "sustainable" a proposal is?
4. What aspects of sustainability can a locality control, and what is outside of its control? Is there a role for regional coordination, as through COG or through state governments?
5. In what ways can a locality reduce the carbon footprint of future development?
6. What would it take to reduce the carbon footprint of a city or county government?
7. Identify some of the policy tools in use in area jurisdictions, and propose a method for evaluating the effectiveness of those tools.
8. Does size of the community matter in thinking about what could be done? Age? Density? Urban / suburban / exurban?
9. In this area, many jurisdictions contain urban streams that have historically been used for storm runoff or worse. What is the role for restoration of these green corridors?

F. Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington

Chuck Bean, Executive Director

1201 15th Street NW Suite 420, Washington DC 20005

cbean@nonprofitroundtable.org; 202.955.6187

www.nonprofitroundtable.org/

NOTE: Students assigned to this project will also work with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments as a client.

Housing Foreclosures

Organization: The Nonprofit Roundtable works to build the strength, visibility, and influence of the nonprofit sector in order to create a more just and caring community in Greater Washington. The nonprofit membership organization includes advocacy organizations, direct service providers, grantmakers, and corporate partners all working together to solve regional problems. Nearly 200 member organizations throughout D.C., Maryland, and Virginia help the Roundtable promote a strong community of nonprofit leaders that understand and strengthen our communities in a uniquely powerful way. The Nonprofit Roundtable is a catalyst of research, collaboration between nonprofits and government, and coalition building.

Programs handled by the Roundtable's members include health care, financial literacy, youth development, voting rights, arts education, job training, legal services, and homelessness, among many others. Its members include key community institutions - large, small, and emerging nonprofits - that serve tens of thousands of individuals and families in the D.C. region.

Project Background: Greater Washington now has one of the fastest growing foreclosure rates in the country, with families losing homes six times more frequently during the first quarter of 2008 than in 2007, according to a study done by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University. By 2008, home prices had fallen 11 percent compared with April 2007, according to the report, *Foreclosures in the Washington DC Region*.

At least four major strategies exist to address the problem of home foreclosures. These include: 1) homeowner/renter counseling both as to education and rights, 2) lending laws' enforcement and amendment, 3) salvage of the mortgage without lender involvement, 4) and/or mortgage restructuring by the lender. Stakeholders to this process of homeownership preservation include homeowners, all levels of governments, financial institutions, the legal community, and nonprofits.

Project Description: This project will focus on the roles and responsibilities of three of the stakeholders – homeowners, local governments and nonprofits – in the Washington, D.C. region, in ameliorating the foreclosure trend. As such, strategies 1 and 3 more greatly engage these three stakeholder groups, while the other two strategies will entail significantly greater input from the legal and financial communities. The project will conduct research to uncover the local governments' processes of foreclosure and the entry points of nonprofits into that process; to learn of any coordinative efforts or structures among governments, among nonprofits, and between these two stakeholders; totally existing homeowner/renter counseling both as to education and rights; to locate efforts to salvage mortgages without lender involvement; and to learn about the effectiveness of the D.C. region's approach.

Project Purpose: The project will provide to its audience an inventory of the current process of home foreclosure county by county, and of the entry points for nonprofits in that process. It will discuss the county activity, nonprofit activity, and any regional coordination or structure both on programs for homeowner/renter counseling and on programs for salvage of householder mortgages without lender involvement (such as through access to funding pools or better household income management).

Renters are a focus in so much as they risk eviction because their landlords are foreclosed upon. It will describe this process, locate the entry points for nonprofits, seek information on the effectiveness, and make recommendations for improvement.

Methodology: Conduct a search for existing published research on the two strategies within the D.C. area, interview relevant stakeholders on the process and its strengths/weaknesses, provide findings, and make recommendations for improvements. Team members may decide on additional methodologies as their work progresses.

Challenges: The multi-state and federal political landscape will provide an extra challenge to the project. The topic itself is complicated and politically-charged. These factors will require an exceptional measure of neutrality and perseverance. These challenges add depth and intrigue to the investigation.

G. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission - Montgomery County (MD)

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http://www.mcparkandplanning.org/research/growth_policy/growth_policy09/agp_growing_smarter.shtm

MNCPPC – Carbon-trading at the Local Level

Organization: Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1927 to protect open space and control development in parts of the Maryland suburbs next to the District of Columbia. The Montgomery County Planning Department is the regional district under the Commission responsible for planning, zoning, and subdivision control in Montgomery County. Under the direction of Rollin Stanley, the Planning Department is responsible for the preparation of master plans for review by the Planning Board and approval by the County Council. Planning Department staff also review proposed development to see that it conforms with laws, plans and policies, and reports their findings to the Planning Board for action. The Department gathers and analyzes various types of information to help public officials plan for Montgomery County's future.

Project: The biennial Growth Policy is a resolution adopted every odd-numbered year by the Montgomery County Council that contains “the guidelines for the administration of the adequate public facilities ordinance (APFO)” for transportation and schools. The APFO sets the rules for measuring adequacy, and for determining how much additional development can be approved at any particular time.

The goal of the 2009-2011 Growth Policy is to move beyond policy that simply paces development based on road and school crowding. One strategy to achieve this goal is through a local carbon-trading system. Currently, projects approved for development in the County must fulfill certain Master Plan, environmental and transportation requirements. In addition, the Growth Policy requires mitigation of vehicle trips for projects located in areas where the road adequacy is below an acceptable threshold. As an alternative to focusing on only vehicle impacts - if all requirements, or a significant subset of requirements were measured in terms of their carbon impact – then mitigation could be achieved through a variety of actions, not just reducing vehicle trips but by building a green roof, or reducing imperviousness, as an example.

The Montgomery County Planning Department requests a research paper on the feasibility of a carbon-trading system for commercial and residential development in Montgomery County, Maryland. Research should commence with a special interest in concepts that could be implemented at the local level. Research should include a review of other jurisdictions, nationally or internationally, that have created a carbon-trading system for development. A thorough investigation and report on the state of implementation of such programs is requested as well as detailed information on the drawbacks and rewards. Research should evaluate best practices and make recommendations for the implementation of a carbon-trading system for development in Montgomery County, Maryland.

H. Freedom House

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Assessing Democracy and Human Rights within the International Affairs Budget

Organization: Freedom House is a clear voice for democracy and freedom around the world. Since its founding in 1941 by prominent Americans concerned with the mounting threats to peace and democracy, Freedom House has been a vigorous proponent of democratic values and a steadfast opponent of dictatorships of the far left and the far right. Freedom House translates the intangible values of freedom into a strong tangible impact by combining analysis, advocacy and action.

Main Objectives:

- (1) Research and draft a comprehensive report that analyzes the FY10 international affairs budget request for democracy and human rights.
- (2) Provide recommendations for Congress as it determines appropriations levels for programs/countries.

Purpose: To ensure that the Administration and Congress allocate resources for democracy and human rights commensurate with the needs as determined in part by Freedom in the World, the flagship Freedom House publication which describes the state of political rights and civil liberties in every country around the world.

Background: The Administration will present its budget request to Congress in early February at which point members and Congress and staff will begin to determine appropriation levels for government. Part of that request is Function 150 which covers the State Department, USAID and foreign operations. The budget request is organized in several categories, including a country by country allocation. While there are several analytical reports on the budget from government and non-governmental sources as well as partisan and non-partisan think tanks, the Freedom House report is the only comprehensive analysis on funding for human rights and democracy funding.

The FY10 analysis of the Administration's request for democracy and human rights funding will be the third such report produced by Freedom House. It serves as our main tool throughout the year in advocating to Congress for enhanced democracy and human rights policies and funding. While Freedom House conducts programs assisting human rights defenders and civil society activists in several countries, this report does not only focus on areas where FH has programming and seeks to provide a comprehensive and comparative analysis of all countries that receive such funding.

According to the Bush Administration, democracy promotion has been the cornerstone of its foreign policy. These reports helped to specifically and clearly indicate what this has meant in terms of funding and has helped to focus Congressional attention on shortcomings. The forthcoming report will be important as it will be the first analysis of the Obama Administration's policies and budgetary priorities regarding democracy and human rights.

Tasks for the Research Team:

1. Assist Freedom House advocacy team in compiling this year's report. This includes learning how to read the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ) which will be released in mid-February and pulling the relevant budget figures related to democracy/human rights.
2. Assist in the design and presentation of report.
3. Assist in developing and implementing a Congressional advocacy strategy to raise awareness about the report and its findings.

This experience will provide the research team with a rudimentary understanding of the budget process, an in-depth look at the democracy support debate, and the basic tools for issue advocacy.