

## **Introduction to Policy Writing**

**521.003**

Fall 2014

Classroom: Steelcase Seminar Room (2215 Weill)

Dates and Time: Tuesdays from 1:00 – 2:30pm. We'll meet each Tuesday through October 7

Instructor: Beth Chimera or David Morse or Alex Ralph

Office:

Email:

Office phone:

Home phone:

### **Course Goals**

This module's goal is to familiarize you with the norms and types of policy writing. While policy writing draws upon principles familiar to academic writing, it has its own conventions, which are rooted in the needs and practices of policy professionals.

Through these five intensive classes, we believe you will acquire greater confidence to excel in the policy writing expected of you at the Ford School and in your future career.

### **Course Requirements**

For these modules to be successful, they will require active student participation. By electing to take this five-week module, you are expected to take all requirements seriously and to give us your best writing—and your best criticism.

*Requirements for passing the course include*

- Completion of three writing assignments: stakeholder memo, strategy memo, op-ed.
- Active participation, which includes a) critiquing your peers' written work; b) attendance and punctuality; c) volunteering your ideas.

Failure to meet these requirements will result in an “unsatisfactory” course grade.

## **Students with disabilities**

*The following paragraph comes from the Ford School Administration:*

“If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to help us determine appropriate accommodations. We will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.”

## **Workshop, Critiques, and Instructor Feedback**

### *Workshop*

Each of you will be workshopped by the class one time. When it is your turn to be workshopped, you will email your assignment to the class in advance. On the day of the workshop, your peers will have read, critiqued, and come prepared to discuss your work.

### *Critiques*

A critique should consist of roughly three typed paragraphs at the end of the document. It should include the following:

- a few sentences explaining what, specifically, you admired about the work.
- “big picture” questions or comments: what didn’t you understand? what felt poorly supported? what was organizationally ineffective?
- specific suggestions for addressing your concerns.

Any style or sentence-level issue can be indicated directly in the document or by using Track Changes. It should go without saying that the aim of these workshops and critiques is to encourage rather than discourage. That doesn’t mean you should check your honest appraisal. As opposed to generic praise, you should give thoughtful, constructive criticism that actively engages with the author’s ideas and words.

### *Instructor Feedback*

You will receive written feedback on the document that you submit to be workshopped. For the other two documents, you will set up individual appointments with the instructor to discuss the work further; we recommend doing this the week you turn in each document. Appointments can be made through the Ford School Writing Center scheduler: <http://fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/>

## **Course Content**

These modules will introduce you to three distinct genres of policy writing: the stakeholder memo, the strategy memo, and the op-ed. Before we write and critique these

three genres ourselves, we will examine different approaches and strategies students and professionals have adopted.

Each act of writing involves informed choices that you, the writer, must negotiate. What makes for an effective opening? When and where and how can we amplify our voice to persuade or educate our readers? How can arguments work more successfully? How might we develop greater stylistic precision? Through this course, it is our belief that you will develop a greater awareness and confidence in your policy writing skills.

## SCHEDULE

### Class #1 – September 9

#### Stakeholder Memos

- Policy Writing Norms
- Stakeholder Memo Discussion
- Solicit Volunteer #1 to submit Stakeholder Memo for Class #2 workshop.

### Class #2 – September 16

#### Strategy Memos

- Workshop #1: Stakeholder Memo
- Strategy Memo Discussion
- Solicit Volunteer #2 for Stakeholder Memo for Class #3 workshop

### **DUE: Stakeholder Analysis Memo (Assignment #1)**

### Class #3 – September 23

#### Strategy Memos Cont.

- Workshop #2: Stakeholder Memo
- Workshop #3: Strategy Memo

### **DUE: Strategy Memo (Assignment #2)**

### Class #4 – September 30

#### Op-eds

- Workshop #4: Strategy Memo
- Op-Ed Discussion

Class #5 – October 7

Op-Eds Cont.

- Workshop #5: Op-ed
- Workshop #6: Op-ed
- Course Wrap-up

**DUE: The Op-Ed (Assignment #3)**