



## **PST 315: Methods of Policy Analysis and Presentation SPRING 2026**

**Instructor:** Prof. Jack Reilly, [jlireilly@syr.edu](mailto:jlireilly@syr.edu)

**Time and Location:** Wednesday, 9:30 AM – 12:15 PM, School of Management 003

**Office:** Eggers 225F (in the Policy Studies suite)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday, 11 AM - Noon, Wednesday, 1:30-2:30, by appointment

**Prerequisites:** PST 101, MAX 201 and admittance to the Policy Studies major

### **Undergraduate Course Assistants:**

Ellie Allen ([ecallen02@syr.edu](mailto:ecallen02@syr.edu)) – Lead

Bridget Will ([bkwill@syr.edu](mailto:bkwill@syr.edu)) – Lead

Hannah Sojewicz ([hsojewi@syr.edu](mailto:hsojewi@syr.edu))

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this experiential-learning methods course is to teach you how to write a professional report, characteristic of a non-profit, academic, or government agency. This course will help improve your research sophistication and understanding of social science research and will further your skills in the Microsoft Office suite. The instructor will lecture, hold discussions, and administer trainings in class, and students will be responsible for completing assignments by applying taught skills.

During the second week of class, you will be assigned a client based on your interests. You will be acting as a research consultant to your assigned client, the Teaching Assistants will act as your supervisor, and the professor will act as the CEO. Students will spend approximately 90 hours developing surveys, collecting and analyzing data, giving and receiving feedback, and creating a report for your client. The student's goal is to satisfy the client and meet the standards of conduct and performance set by the supervisors and CEO. Any questions on expectations should be first directed to your supervisor and then will be elevated accordingly.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Frame a research question and define a research scope
2. Gather information and data from a variety of sources
3. Judge sources' credibility, authority, relevance, bias, and accuracy
4. Calculate results, support arguments, and draw conclusions
5. Demonstrate software and technology proficiency
6. Present conclusions or data visually, clearly, and succinctly

## EVALUATION

| Points | Evaluation                                                         | Due to                        |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5      | Finalized Contract/ Timeline                                       | Blackboard and Client         |
| 10     | Organizational Assessment                                          | Blackboard                    |
| 5      | Weekly Task Planner                                                | Blackboard                    |
| 10     | Practice Report                                                    | Blackboard                    |
| 5      | Formatted Report Shell: Executive Summary / Codebook / Spreadsheet | Blackboard                    |
| 50     | Final Report                                                       | Blackboard and Client         |
| 5      | Final Presentation                                                 | In Class (optionally, Client) |
| 5      | Professional Materials                                             | Blackboard                    |
| 5      | Final Reflection                                                   | Blackboard                    |
| +/- 0  | Professionalism                                                    | Ongoing                       |

### **Finalized Contract/ Timeline: 5 points**

An agreed upon contract between the student and client about the work to be done.

### **Organizational Assessment: 10 points**

An assignment to help each student learn about their agency and project.

### **Weekly Task Planner: 5 points**

An assignment to help each student plan their work for the project and semester.

### **Draft Executive Summary, Codebook and Spreadsheet: 5 points**

Drafts of an executive summary, a codebook for all items (questions) collected in the survey or in the data and a spreadsheet that demonstrates how the coded items will be inputted into excel.

### **Practice Report: 10 points**

This assignment gives students the opportunity to practice and receive performance feedback on the skills necessary for the final Client Report, including calculations, scaling numbers, qualitative coding, making graphs, and more.

### **Final Report: 50 points**

A report created for each students' client that has a breakdown of the data collected (through a survey or data files) by the student or organization. The report includes an introduction, methods section, findings, and appendices. *Completing all requirements of the Rough Draft on time is worth 5 points towards your Final Report grade.*

### **Professional Materials: 5 points**

Professional Materials are a Cover Letter, Resume, LinkedIn Profile, and draft Reference Letter intended for students to be prepared to apply for jobs. Students are required to meet with an A&S advisor for review of professional materials.

**Student Presentation: 5 points**

A 5-minute PowerPoint presentation on your study and findings. Students will be required to present in class and may also be asked by their client for an additional presentation.

**Final Reflection: 5 points**

A reflection that ties together the various components of the course and experiential learning experience. You will take findings from your Final Report and consider how it could potentially inform policy-making and organizational change for your client.

**Professionalism +/- points:** There is a cap of +5 points and -10 points towards your Final Grade. Professionalism points can be earned throughout the semester for demonstrating exceptional professionalism to your client, TA, or Professor Reilly. **Taking initiative to go above and beyond basic course requirements is strongly encouraged and will be rewarded.** Professionalism points may also be subtracted for actions that are unprofessional (ie, failure to send client emails on time, absence from class, etc.)

**How to Gain/Lose Professionalism Points:**

| Requirements             | Grade Considerations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attendance               | To be considered excused, you must email your UCA before class. Upon approval, you may be excused. Students may have one unexcused absence without penalty. Additional unexcused absences will result in the loss of a professionalism point per absence. Missing any individual meeting will result in a lost professionalism point. Repeated lateness will incur point loss. |
| Exit Tickets             | Class is primarily a period for work time on your projects. You may not leave class early unless you have completed work on all assignments for the week AND there is no more work you could feasibly do on your project. If you have done so, you may ask for your exit ticket early.                                                                                         |
| Emails to Client         | <b>CC your UCA on ALL emails with your client</b> , or you will lose one professionalism point per email. Only CC Professor Reilly if your UCA has instructed you to do so. UCAs reserve the right to deduct points for slapdash language or intent in emails to clients.                                                                                                      |
| Emails to UCAs/Professor | Exercise professionalism when emailing UCAs and Professor Reilly. UCAs reserve the right to deduct points for slapdash language or intent in emails to Professor Reilly and/or UCAs.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Deadlines/Meetings       | Failure to attend any scheduled meeting (including meetings with your client, your TA, or Professor Reilly, or an A&S Advisor) will result in a loss of 3 points per meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Client Evaluation        | If a client reaches with a valid and reasonable complaint about your performance or professionalism, this will result in a loss of up to 10 points (at the discretion of your TA/Prof. Reilly)                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Other                    | Other exceptional or unprofessional conduct not listed here can result in a gain or loss of professionalism points accordingly, at Professor Reilly and the UCAs' discretion.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## **LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

All assignments must be turned in on time in class unless otherwise noted or approved. Each day late, including weekends, will be subject to a per-day penalty unless a prior arrangement for an extension is given. **Assignments more than 7 days late will not be accepted.** UCAs will notify you of points lost when an assignment is submitted late. Extensions may be **only** be granted by Professor Reilly.

## **MICROSOFT OFFICE**

As a current student, you can use your SEmail student email account to download and install Office 365 applications (including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) on up to five computers (PC and Mac) and five mobile devices (iPhone, iPad, Android). Students should download Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in the first week of class.

While you can technically use Office on mobile devices, you should use a full computer (Mac or PC) for data analysis in the class. The mobile versions of the applications are not feature complete.

## **RESOURCES**

Students are responsible for ensuring they have the technology and skills needed to attend online sessions and complete course assignments. SU Information Technology Services has a variety of resources available for students, faculty, and staff to facilitate proper use of technology for successful online learning. You can access SU's knowledge base of technical, self-help information [here](#). You can also request IT help by calling the Help Desk at 315.443.2677 or emailing [help@syr.edu](mailto:help@syr.edu). See also [Academic Continuity Resources](#) a toolkit compiled and continuously updated by ITS to support students, faculty, and staff transition to online learning. You can also follow ITS on Instagram (@su\_its).

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting [class.syr.edu](http://class.syr.edu), selecting, "Academic Integrity," and "Expectations and Policy."

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

All generative-AI tools are prohibited in this course because their use inhibits achievement of the course learning objectives. This policy applies to all stages of project and writing processes including researching, brainstorming, outlining, organizing, and polishing. Do not use Generative-AI tools to create any content (i.e., images and video, audio, text, code, etc.). If you have any questions about a feature and whether it is considered Generative-AI, ask your instructor.

### **DISABILITY AND INCLUSION**

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit [Center for Disability Resources](#). Please call (315) 443-4498 or email [disabilityresources@syr.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@syr.edu) for more detailed information.

The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

### **DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT**

The University does not discriminate and prohibits harassment or discrimination related to any protected category including creed, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, gender, pregnancy, disability, marital status, age, race, color, veteran status, military status, religion, sexual orientation, domestic violence status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender.

Any complaint of discrimination or harassment related to any of these protected bases should be reported to Sheila Johnson-Willis, the University's Chief Equal Opportunity & Title IX Officer. She is responsible for coordinating compliance efforts under various laws including Titles VI, VII, IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. She can be contacted at Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolution Services, 005 Steele Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1120; by email: [titleix@syr.edu](mailto:titleix@syr.edu); or by telephone: 315-443-0211.

## **FAITH TRADITION OBSERVANCES AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

[Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy](#) recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS CONSIDERATIONS**

Mental health and overall well-being are significant predictors of academic success. As such it is essential that during your college experience you develop the skills and resources effectively to navigate stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. Please familiarize yourself with the range of resources the Barnes Center provides (<https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/>) and seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315-443-8000.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

*(Subject to change. Report due date will not change.)*

| W  | Main Topic                       | Assignments/Responsibilities<br>(Due Friday)                                   |
|----|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Course Intro                     | Client Survey                                                                  |
| 2  | Working With Clients             | Client Email                                                                   |
| 3  | Client Meeting <i>(No Class)</i> | First Client Meeting                                                           |
| 4  | Individual Meetings              | Finalized Contract/ Timeline,<br>Second Client Meeting                         |
| 5  | Data & Surveys                   | Organizational Assessment,<br>Weekly Task Planner                              |
| 6  | Excel & Coding                   | Executive Summary                                                              |
| 7  | Graphing & Methods               |                                                                                |
| 8  | Work Time                        | Practice Report                                                                |
| 9  | Individual Meetings              | Formatted Report Shell; Revised<br>Executive Summary;<br>Spreadsheet; Codebook |
| 10 | Work Time                        |                                                                                |
| 11 | Professional Materials           | Rough Draft Due                                                                |
| 12 | Individual Meetings              |                                                                                |
| 13 | Presenting Your Work             | Final Report Due                                                               |
| 14 | Student Presentations            | Presentations                                                                  |
| 15 | Wrap-Up                          | Professional Materials; Final<br>Reflection                                    |