

PAI 996 Executive Master's Project Course

Fall 2025

Fridays 9:30am-12:15pm

Hinds Hall 021

John McPeak 333 Eggers Hall

Office Phone: (315) 443-6146

e-mail: jomcpeak@syr.edu

Class: (some) Fridays 9:30 – 12:15, Hinds 021

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-12 or email jomcpeak@syr.edu for an appointment

Prerequisites

EMPA: Successful completion of PAI895 Managerial Leadership and PAI897 Fundamentals of Policy Analysis

EMIR: Successful completion of PAI895 Managerial Leadership

Course Description

In this course, students will have an opportunity to complete an analytical project of their own selection. This project serves as an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from participation in the Maxwell School Executive MPA or MAIR program to each student's professional setting. The capstone project students will be completing reflects students' ability to effectively integrate ideas, concepts, and skills presented in the MPA or MAIR curriculum with their professional experience. Generally, the idea is that the selected project is designed to help each student transition from the academic experience of the EMPA / EMIR program to the next step in the student's professional career.

Most students complete the master's paper project as an individual. If you would like to work in a group, please talk to the instructor about that option. The instructor will purposely create opportunities for student interaction to facilitate experience sharing across the students enrolled in this course and create opportunities to learn from others.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Integrate concepts and skills learned from the EMPA / EMIR curriculum to a real-world policy or organizational issue.
2. Design an evidence-based master's paper project that brings new perspectives about their project of study; and,
3. Effectively communicate learning from the project to academic and professional colleagues.

Course Materials

Optional:

Bardach, Eugene and Erik M. Patashnik. 2024. *Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 7th Edition. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. (Earlier editions are acceptable.)

Late Assignments

The late submission of an assignment will result in a lower grade. A late assignment submission may be negotiated between the student and the instructor on an as-needed basis in response to students' professional or personal circumstances. Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if s/he anticipates a late assignment submission.

Capstone Project Assignments

The major task for this course is the completion of a capstone project. Students will have several deliverables relating to their project, which will be submitted throughout the semester. Each of these deliverables is listed below. Due dates for each of these deliverables are listed in the course schedule.

Deliverable	Description	Points	Due
Project Topic Ideation	In the initial project planning phase, students will provide a short paragraph(s) on 1 or 2 topics that they are considering for their capstone project.	5 pts.	9/5
Agency Mission	Students should describe the mission and who is served by the agency they will focus on in their capstone project	10 pts.	9/12
Problems and Solutions Statement	What is / are the problems that this agency is designed to solve? What are the solutions they provide for these problems?	10 pts.	9/19
Project Proposal	Students will submit a detailed project proposal, including the following types of information: problem statement, evaluative criteria, alternatives that will be considered, and audience for analysis.	10 pts.	10/17
Project Proposal Presentation	Students will present their project proposals to the instructor and fellow students summarizing the main components of the proposals. Presentations should be 10-12 minutes in length and conducted using some type of visual presentation platform (ex. Power point, pdf, Prezi, etc.)	10 pts.	10/17
Project Progress Report	Students will provide a one-page written progress report to the instructor indicating progress toward project completion and obstacles encountered.	10 pts.	10/31
Final Report Presentation	Students will give a formal presentation to the instructor and fellow students summarizing major components of their final report. Presentations should be between 15-20 minutes in length and conducted using some type of visual presentation platform (ex. Power Point, Prezi, etc.)	10 pts.	12/5
Final Report	Students will submit a comprehensive project report detailing their project scope, approach, and findings.	35 pts.	12/12

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, 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.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Based on the assignments in this course and our specified learning outcomes, the full use of artificial intelligence as a tool, with disclosure and citation, is permitted in this course. Students do not need to ask permission to use these tools before starting an assignment or exam, but they must explicitly and fully indicate which tools were used and describe how they were used.

Blackboard

This class will use the Blackboard Learning Management to house the syllabus, course content, feedback, and grades. Note when submitting materials that the University’s Blackboard Learning Management System is on Eastern Time.

Information about Blackboard is available on [Answers Blackboard](#); alternatively, you can contact Information Technology Services by sending an email to help@syr.edu, calling 315.443.2677, or in-person at the ITS Service Center, located at 1-227 CST in the Life Sciences Complex. Business hours for the Service Center can be found on the ITS Website at http://its.syr.edu/its_service_center/

Turnitin

This class will use the plagiarism detection and prevention system Turnitin. You will have the option to submit your papers to Turnitin to check that all sources you use have been properly acknowledged and cited before you submit the paper to me. I will also submit all papers you write for this class to Turnitin, which compares submitted documents against documents on the Internet and against student papers submitted to Turnitin at Syracuse University and at other colleges and universities. I will take your knowledge of the subject matter of this course and your writing level and style into account in interpreting the originality report. Keep in mind that all papers you submit for this class will become part of the [Turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Disability Accommodations

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 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.

Religious Observance

[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.

Course Schedule

August 29: Class: Course Introduction and Topic Identification

Week ending September 5: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment*
Assignment Due: Project Topics Ideation

Week ending September 12: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment.*
Assignment Due: Agency Mission

September 19: Class: Topic Selection and Evidence
Assignment Due: Problem Statement

Week ending September 26: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment.*

October 3: Class: Project Updates (Discuss Identifying Alternatives)

Week ending October 10: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment*

October 17: Class: Project Proposals Presentations
 Assignment Due: Project Proposal and Presentation Due

Week ending October 24: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment.*

October 31: Class: Project Updates
 Assignment Due: Project Progress Update Due

Week ending November 7: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment*

November 14: Class: Discuss Limitations/Barriers to Success/Communication
 Project Updates

Week ending November 21: *Individual Meetings with the Instructor arranged by appointment*

December 5: Class: Class Presentations
 Assignment: Final Report Presentations

December 12 **Assignment Due:** Final Report