This course examines the implementation of public policy and programs. Implementation is an integral, dynamic and often unpredictable component of the policy-making and systems change process. Policies are not only created by elected officials, who authorize and fund government activities, but also by state administrators, local managers, front-line staff, and citizens who interpret and interact with them.

Because of this complexity, this course introduces you to a multi-level implementation analysis. This analysis focuses on understanding how the core policy or program is understood at the policy field, organizational, and frontline levels. It also provides ways to better understand how a social process that involves power and culture often significantly shapes implementation processes and tasks. This is because public policy and program implementation occurs in a complex system, which introduces unexpected detours and creates outcomes unanticipated by policy makers.

Because implementation is inherently a social process, it requires skillful actors who can analyze situations and work effectively with others to direct resources, manage competing demands, and move toward desired outcomes. As such, students need to cultivate their abilities to be analytical, reflective and adaptive. This course is designed to help graduate students develop such skills.

In this course, we will work together to achieve these learning outcomes:

- Understand operations of a multi-level policy implementation system by apply appropriate theoretical and conceptual models. We will focus on three differentiated levels:
  - Policy fields shaped by policy design, government tools, available institutions, and networks.
  - Organizations, both authorizing agencies and service providing agencies shaped by program mandates and funding, cultural interpretations, and existing programs.
  - Frontline realities shaped by workloads, staff personal attributes and skills, and interactions with citizens.
- Conduct multi-level policy implementation analyses by conducting field-based inquiry;
- Explore how authority can by used by implementers with social skill to improve implementation results that deliver public value;
- Community effectively virtually and face-to-face to build skills for working with professionals who have distinct vantage points.
Means of Learning & Communicating With Each Other

To accomplish these outcomes, we will draw upon various learning materials: conceptual and theoretical readings; multi-media case analysis; in-depth field research; small learning groups to support your research.

The Fall 2015 offering is offered in a hybrid format that leverage both face-to-face and online course elements, using an array of technological tools to learn together even when we are not physically present with each other. We will have eight face-to-face meetings over the course of the semester, each 3 hours each. In addition, you will meet face-to-face or virtually with a small learning group during weeks we are not meeting as a whole class. Additionally, you will spend considerable time doing research and implementation analysis on a policy or program of your selection. Like all graduate courses, you should plan to spend about 15 -20 hours per week on course related activities and assignments.

We will utilize an array of technologies: face-to-face class sessions, small learning groups, tools from the U of M Google suite, and Moodle 2.8 (including on-line forums, audio-enhanced power points, and voice thread). Current practice and research suggests students are successful in these types of technology-enriched classes when they are:

- Open minded about sharing work, life, and educational experiences as part of the learning process;
- Able to communicate through writing;
- Willing to communicate with instructors if problems arise;
- Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process;
- Able to think ideas through before responding;
- Self-motivated and self-disciplined;
- Able to establish and maintain boundaries with on-line media (and manage your own expectations of you or me always being ‘wired’).

Success in the course is dependent on you mastering course content while simultaneously dealing with all of life’s other responsibilities.

Although this is a course that leverages technology, this does not mean that communication with me should be more limited. *If you have questions, concerns, recommendations, or emerging ideas about the course, let me know!* The sooner the better. And I welcome face-to-face or virtual video conversations about the course. You also can communicate with me through our Moodle site, via phone, email, or in person before or after class. To make an appointment during my set office hours (Wednesday 8:30 – 11:00) follow the link to my calendar on the course web-page. If you would like to meet another time, please send me an email directly to set something up.

Throughout the semester, you will work with a *small learning group* to deepen your multi-level implementation analysis and help you stay on track. I will establish those groups for our first face-to-face meeting on September 16th.
Disability Services and Support
The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, we encourage you to contact me early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

Mental Health
As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol or drug problems, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist students with addressing these and other concerns. Learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health web site at http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu.

Course Requirements
Students in this class will need to fulfill the following requirements (all assignments due by noon on the date noted). Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalize 5 points for each 24-hour period that they are late:

1) Complete all the reading and review module introduction videos, video briefs, and faculty-created audio-enhanced power points. These materials are grouped into modules within units. In this ‘flipped classroom’ it is important that you keep up with these lecture and other content-rich materials;

2) Complete an individual Multilevel implementation analysis brief about a policy or program of your choosing. Submit 2-page project statement (due on 9/25) and draft worksheets (from the textbook Appendices) through out the first half of the semester. Additionally, reflection posts will require you to ‘pause amidst the action’ to consider how you are proceeding in the analysis, what are the strengths and blind spots. This will enable Professor Sandfort and the small learning group to provide necessary support to the research process. The full brief is due on November 17th.

3) Contextual Analysis and Change Report. The second half of the semester will allow you to go deeper in two or three sites within the implementation system to better understand authority, culture, and leadership for improving results in these settings. The last month of the semester will focus on this research. The final paper is due on December 16th.
4) In-class presentations to the full class. A final presentation of your individual or group full implementation analysis will be given during 12/9 or 12/16.

**GRADING DISTRIBUTION & CRITERIA OF EVALUATION**

A student’s grade in the course will be determined using the following weights and criteria:

**Participation** 10%
In a hybrid course, participation involves engaging with course materials, asking questions (virtually and face-to-face), preparing cases for classroom discussions (including preparation of case materials) and engaging in your small learning group. It also involves being organized to conduct field-based research and asking for assistance when you encounter challenges. Members of small groups will be asked to evaluate each others’ engagement and participation in their learning experience at the end of the semester which will be taken into account for the calculation of this portion of the course grade.

**Multilevel Analysis**
- Project Statement 5%
- Policy Field Analysis (Worksheet 1 & 2) draft 5%
- Organizational Analysis (Worksheet 3 & 4) draft 5%
- Frontline Analysis (Worksheet 5 & 6) draft 5%
- Reflection Posts (3) 5%

These worksheets are designed to walk you step-by-step through the implementation analysis. The project statement will be assessed on its viability given the course objectives and rated between “excellent,” “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” The other draft documents will be due every two weeks and assessed on the same categorical scale.

**Multilevel Implementation Analysis Brief** 25%
This 8-10 single-spaced assignment will tie together all of the research you complete from the initial research about the policy field, organizational analysis (both authoring and service agency), and frontline conditions. It will include relevant visual schematic representations of the various levels of analysis from the draft worksheets and/or tables. Furthermore, the Brief will describe obvious biases in system operation and begin to consider potential ways to create the necessary change in system operation and/or target group conditions. The Brief will be assessed on a 100 point-scale according to these criteria: completeness of research; application of concepts from course materials, identification of key implementation issues; professionalism, writing style and mechanics (free of spelling and grammatical errors, visual appeal, consistent citation method, etc).

**Final Presentation** 15%
You will make a final presentation to the class; your colleagues and professor will assess your effectiveness in communicating your analysis and implementation redesign process.

**Contextual Analysis and Change Report** 25%
This final assignment builds off (and can reference) the Multilevel implementation Analysis Brief. Depending upon how the student situates their analysis (described in Project
Statement II submitted on November 20th, they will provide a concise 5-7 page report on the nature of their research in a particular implementation site(s), analysis of the cause of the implementation challenges, and recommendations for changes that could improve desired results. The Report will be assessed according to the following components: appropriateness of implementation analysis; thoroughness of research methodology; relevance of recommendations; use of course material; organization and professionalism (free of spelling, typographical, and grammatical errors, consistent citation method, etc).

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” for the course. Students are expected to be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism. If students are uncertain, please consult the instructor or University of Minnesota policies.

FULL CITATIONS TO READINGS & OTHER LEARNING OBJECTS

Throughout, we will be using my new book, Effective Implementation in Practice: Integrating Public Policy and Management co-authored with Stephanie Moulton (Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2015). Doctoral Students taking the course should consult the supplemental reading list provided at the end of this syllabus.

Introduction: Surveying the Landscape

Sandfort & Moulton, Preface, Chapter 1 & Chapter 2
Hubert Video Brief: Multi-level Implementation Analysis

Unit 1: Introduction to Multi-Level Analysis

Policy Fields
Sandfort & Moulton, Chapter 4 & Appendix 1 & 2
Hubert Video Brief: Policy Field Analysis
Hubert e-case: Safe Harbor – Minnesota’s Effort to End Child Sex Trafficking

Organizational Sites
Sandfort & Moulton, Chapter 5, Appendix 3 & 4

Hubert e-Study: Reliability and Autonomy in Nonprofit Revenue

Hubert e-case: Grant Community School Collaborative

**Module 3: Frontline Interactions**

Sandfort & Moulton, Chapter 6, Appendix 5 & 6


**Unit 2: Changing Implementation Systems**

**System’s Analysis**

Sandfort & Moulton, Chapter 3


Hubert Video Brief: Backwards Mapping

**Delving into Social Dynamics**

Sandfort & Mouton, Chapter 7


**Leading Improvements**

Sandfort & Moulton, Part III introduction, as well as Chapter 8


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**Doctoral Students Reading Supplement**

As a PhD interested in studying public policy implementation, it is important that you see a more comprehensive theoretical and empirical exploration of implementation analysis. The framework that shapes this course grows from an application of social theory that stresses the significance of both human agency and social structures; as a result, it is particularly useful to
inform the teaching of policy practitioners who can exert agency to improve implementation results.

However, as budding social scientists, it is also important that you have a foundation in additional theoretical and empirical perspectives. The following readings are highly recommended; we can plan to discuss these readings on a negotiated timeline in relation to the other requirements of the course.

**Distinct Traditions**


**Theoretical Foundations**


**Empirical Investigations within these Traditions**

