

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

School of Public Affairs

PUAD 617-001
Project Management
Spring 2014 Syllabus
As of 1/11/2014, Subject to Change

Instructor	Office Hours	Class Time and Venue
Prof. Karen Baehler Ward 339 baehler@american.edu (202) 885-6072 (office) Email is better than phone.	Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:15 – 9:15 pm (or other times by appointment)	Tuesdays 5:30 – 8:00 pm Ward 205

Course Description and Learning Objectives

“Performance” and “results” are two of the words used to describe what we expect from public management, and successful project completion makes an important contribution to both. A set of disciplines known as the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) aims to improve rates of successful project completion, but its success is unproven.

This course draws on academic and professional literature as well as case studies to critically examine the disciplines of project management and their potential contribution to performance, particularly in public-sector and non-profit settings. Good practice norms in project management will be identified through readings and tested against the realities of actual projects, many of which failed. Various standards for judging success and failure will be scrutinized and methods for explaining project outcomes considered. Students are encouraged not only to challenge existing theories and approaches, but also to build their own distinctive understandings of project management based on lessons learned from class cases and your own professional and volunteer experiences.

Learning Methods

Student-led learning is the goal, with the instructor playing a facilitating role. Class sessions will incorporate a blend of lectures, on-the-spot analysis of projects, student presentations, discussion of readings, and summarization of lessons learned. Pattern-finding across cases is a key methodology used in this course and a skill that we will all be working on in class throughout the course. Therefore, attendance is vital.

Readings are carefully chosen. It is essential to keep up with the readings, and students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all of the day’s assigned readings. Take notes while you read – this will help you find key points and notice connections between readings.

Books, Articles, and Software

- Erik W. Larson Clifford F. Gray (2014). *Project Management: The Managerial Process*, 6th edition (New York: McGraw Hill). OTHER EDITIONS ARE FINE, TOO. You do NOT need the software that comes with the book – some used copies will not include the software.
- Michael Crichton (2008). *The Great Train Robbery*. Harper. (Used copies of this book are available on-line for pennies, literally.)

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. Articles and/or book excerpts selected by the professor can be found under the section labeled “Readings.” The course Blackboard (BB) site is also the place to find lecture notes, announcements, running grade tallies, and electronic copies of the syllabus and other material.

Finally, we will be using a free, open-source version of Microsoft’s project management software. Instructions will be provided on Blackboard for downloading it.

Academic integrity

By registering in this class, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code and your obligation to know your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Please familiarize yourself with all of American University’s policies regarding academic integrity – log in to www.myamerican.edu, click on “Academics,” then click on “Academic Integrity” under “General Links” to read the Academic Integrity Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course. Failure to comply with the requirements of the Academic Integrity Code can result in failure in the course, as well as more serious academic sanctions.

Please note that the Code applies equally to the content of oral presentations, presentation aids such as PowerPoint slides, and written assignments. Some students seem to be more relaxed about cutting and pasting (from an internet site, for example) into a PowerPoint presentation than they would be about doing so in an essay, but this is NOT acceptable. Cutting and pasting or otherwise copying someone else’s words into an assignment is NEVER ok, unless you enclose the copied material in quotation marks and cite the source. A good rule of thumb is to use quotation marks whenever you are copying more than 3 words in a row from another source, whatever that source. Likewise for charts, tables, or graphs that you copy into a presentation or paper – the sources for these must be identified in a caption. Even if you are not quoting a source directly, you should include a reference/citation for any IDEA or INSIGHT that is borrowed from another source and not original to you.

The most common types of code violations seem to arise due to carelessness and deadline pressure; most are not premeditated. But penalties for violating the Code are steep either way, and therefore, students must be scrupulous about avoiding both impulsive lapses and deliberate violations. The best way to avoid the temptations of last-minute cutting and pasting is to start assignments early and give yourself enough time to put everything into your own words, mark quotations appropriately, and organize references. Thorough referencing is the best way to prevent inadvertent plagiarism.

In addition, please note the Academic Integrity Code’s strictures against inappropriate collaboration with other students, submission of work already submitted in a previous course, and use of material obtained from “essay mills”.

Grading Criteria

- The in-class test grade will be based on number of correct answers.
- The essay and written case analysis will be judged on:
 - Engagement with course themes, including how astutely you understand the concepts being discussed
 - Do not write off the top of your head.
 - Both assignments should be grounded in the course/case material and show that you have read widely and deeply.
 - The essay must be grounded in the class readings.
 - The written case analysis must be grounded in source material about your case and class readings.

- Depth of thinking
 - This means connecting different themes, spotting overlapping and contrasting ideas, exposing weak logic, and showing insight.
 - Do not merely summarize the materials that you are using. Interpret and critique them.
- Density of analysis
 - Do not be afraid to pack a lot of content into every paragraph.
 - Reserve longer explanations for more complex ideas. Avoid long explanations of simple points – this constitutes unnecessary padding.
- Clarity of your thesis, logical organization and coherence of arguments, strategic selection of details, and the overall persuasiveness of your points
 - Write directly and concisely. Use active verbs wherever possible.
 - Go straight to the point. Make every word count.
 - Don't meander. Make it easy for the reader to follow your train of thought by organizing the arguments logically and using headings where useful.
 - Support your arguments with facts, evidence, and examples from cases, etc.
 - Use first paragraph to introduce the topic and state your main conclusion / thesis. (The Intro might be a bit longer in the written case analysis.)
- Grammar, syntax, and punctuation
 - The FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD WRITING are highly valued in this course.
 - Several rounds of pruning and rewriting are the keys to a polished finished product.
 - Written products that do not meet minimal graduate-school writing standards may be returned to their authors for a redo.

Grading Scale

I start with a benchmark of 85 in mind – that is a solid “B.” Any assignment that does everything that was asked, and does so at a reasonable standard of quality, achieves an 85. I then look for additional strengths that might push that grade higher. Any assignment that does not meet all requirements at a reasonable standard will be marked lower than 85 based on degree of weaknesses.

93 +	A	Superb	Reaches well beyond basic requirements; demonstrates excellence in both form and content; depth of insights is notable
90 - 92	A-	Excellent	
87 - 89	B+	Very Good	All requirements of the assignment (both form and content) are met at the standard expected of graduate school work
83 - 86	B	Good	
80 - 82	B-	Satisfactory	
77 - 79	C+	Below expectations	
73 - 76	C		
70-72	C-		

Assignments / Assessment of Performance

Please submit all assignments in two places: Blackboard and the website called Turnitin. Also, grading is done anonymously – so, please put only your student ID number on submitted assignments. Your name should not appear anywhere, including the file names.

If you already have a Turnitin account, please log in and add this course using the codes below. If you do not have a Turnitin account, please register ASAP (for free, of course) as follows:

*Go to www.turnitin.com

*Click on "Create an Account"

*Choose "Student" from drop-down menu

*Input class ID and enrollment password:

CLASS ID	7495276
PASSWORD	eaglewonk

*Input your email address and create a password for your individual account

*Choose a secret security question and answer

*Enter your name and agree to the user agreement

*View the "Completed" screen and log in

*On the student welcome screen, click on the course to see the assignments

*To submit an assignment, just click on the assignment's "Submit" button and follow instructions

Assignment	Learning Outcomes	Due Dates	Maxima	Graded?	Weight
In-class test	Display competency with basic vocabulary, concepts, and tools of project management	Feb. 11 in class	N/A	Yes	25%
2 Team presentations: (1) Narrative (2) Analysis	Learn how to apply project management analytical concepts; acquire deep knowledge of one project and the reasons for its failures and successes; build teamwork skills; build presentation skills	Narrative - Feb. 18 or 25 Analysis - April 15 or 22	Narrative - 10 mins Analysis -15 mins	No, but feedback will be provided	N/A
1 Essay: X OR Y See prompts below	Develop understanding of selected course themes; cultivate creative and critical thinking; sharpen logical faculties and argument-building skills	X - March 17 (11:59 pm) OR Y - March 24 (11:59 pm)	2000 words	Yes	25%
OPTIONAL Rewrite of essay X OR Y	Raise critical thinking, argumentation, and writing skills to the next level	April 25 (11:59 pm)	2000 words	Yes, but rewrite is optional	New grade replaces old if new is higher
Written case analysis	Integrate course themes around a single case; compare themes across cases; display deep knowledge of subject; display excellent written communication skills	May 6 (11:59 pm)		Yes	50%
Class participation	Build habits of engagement; hone communication & listening skills	Every week		Only if final grade is on margin	Tie-breaker

Please note that **ALL GRADED AND UNGRADED ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED** to pass the course. Late assignments will incur penalties.

Specific descriptions of each assignment follow:

In-Class Test – Feb. 11

The test will cover vocabulary, key concepts, and methods covered in weeks 1-4. Format will include multiple choice, short answers, and problems.

Case presentations (in teams)

Teams of 3 or 4 students will be assigned to a project case (see list of case topics below). Each team will prepare two presentations that answer the following questions:

- Presentation 1 – Project Narrative (10 minutes max) – Feb. 18 or 25
 - Why was the project undertaken? (Purpose)
 - What was supposed to happen? (Plan)
 - What actually happened? (Action / Plot)
- Presentation 2 – Project Management Analysis (15 minutes max) – April 15 or 22
 - Was the project a success, failure, or combination of both? Note any ambiguities about evaluating the project's results. (Outcomes)
 - What factors led to the successes and/or failures? (Explanation)
 - What could have been done differently to improve the project's results? (Lessons learned)

Every member of the group does NOT have to present on the day, but EVERYONE SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE FINAL PRODUCT EQUALLY. In addition:

- Time limits are firm.
- Visual aids are required. These may include props, illustrations, diagrams or drawings on the chalkboard, and/or slides made with presentation software.
- Both presentations should include a bibliography of sources.
- There will be time for questions and discussion of each case, so the formal presentations do NOT need to be comprehensive. Focus on hitting the main points and offering enough detail to keep the audience engaged. Other points can come out in the Q & A.
- *Good presentations will demonstrate:*
 - Clear articulation of main plot (Presentation 1),
 - Trenchant analysis of success and failure (Presentation 2),
 - Visuals that add value to story/argument,
 - Good audience engagement without excessive “song and dance,”
 - Smooth transitions between speakers,
 - Command of material demonstrated during Q & A.

CASES: The team selection process will be explained in class. Here are the six cases:

A. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*This team will select a single development project in a particular country.

B. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION – INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

*Conversion to the Euro – this team will study the planning and practical operations behind the roll-out of the euro and the decommissioning of country currencies 1999-2002.

*This team can focus on a single country's implementation or look at the EU as a whole.

C. TECHNOLOGY / RESEARCH and DEVELOPMENT

*ARPANET – this early project (1969-72) laid the foundation for the internet by demonstrating how separate computers could be networked together.

*See reading titled “Rescuing Prometheus” on course Blackboard site.

D. ENVIRONMENT / INFRASTRUCTURE

*Plans to build a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada were in play for more than 20 years before the project was cancelled in 2011.

E. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS / HEALTH

*Every few years, public health officials are faced with the challenge of preparing for a possible flu pandemic. This team will pick one episode to study, or compare two.

*Examples include the 2009 H1N1 outbreak (project mostly successful), 1976-77 swine flu outbreak (project heavily criticized), or the 1918 H1N1 outbreak (disaster).

F. POLITICS

*This team will choose a single political campaign to analyze.

*For example, Bill Clinton's first campaign has been widely studied and written about. So has Obama's first, and likewise, John McCain's failed bid in 2008.

Essay – max 2,000 words – plus optional rewrite opportunity

Choose **ONE** essay prompt from below. Cite all sources. Use quotation marks appropriately when you quote directly. Whatever referencing style you prefer is fine, but please use it correctly and consistently.

REWRITING: Each student can opt to rewrite the essay for regrading. If you choose to do this, the new grade will replace the original grade if and only if the new grade is higher. (Rewrite is due April 25, 11:59 pm.)

- **ESSAY X** – due March 17 (11:59 pm)
 - PROMPT: Principles of management associated with HROs are usually applied to whole organizations, and particularly to organizations in which failure means death and/or catastrophe (like hospitals and nuclear plants). Discuss whether and how the high-reliability concepts described in the Week 9 readings could be applied to **projects** operating in less extreme risk environments. Is the concept of an HRP (high-reliability project) viable and useful? What are its limitations? Use examples to illustrate and support your answer.
- **ESSAY Y** – due March 24 (11:59 pm)
 - PROMPT: Use the Week 10 readings to describe and analyze the culture and structure of a team or group that you have experienced in your role as an employee, student, volunteer, etc. How did the culture and structure of this group or team influence its work? Was it a “great group”? Do you see any ideas or approaches to project structure/culture in Chapters 3 and 11 of Larson/Gray or the other Week 10 readings that would have improved this group's effectiveness?

Written case analysis – due May 6 (11:59 pm)

This is the written version of your presentations, and should answer the same questions, but with two important differences:

1. Each member of the team needs to submit his or her own unique paper. This is an individual assignment, not a team assignment. Please work independently on this paper.
2. In addition to the case-specific sources that you have gathered, course material from across the whole semester should be used to support your analysis of success and failure. This should include:
 - a. Class readings,
 - b. Lecture and discussion notes,
 - c. Other teams' cases.

The purpose of this assignment is to build the following skills and knowledge:

- Integrating course themes,
- Applying those themes to a single case,
- Comparing across cases,
- Developing deep knowledge of case facts and relevant project management concepts,
- Expressing complex ideas clearly and engagingly.

Class attendance, attention, and contribution to discussions

Contributions to class discussion should demonstrate three kinds of thinking:

1. *Critical scrutiny* of readings, lectures, fellow students' comments, etc., which includes asking hard questions about both the internal consistency of the ideas and their external correspondence to reality;
2. *Joined-up or integrative thinking*, which looks for connections and contrasts between different components of project management theory and practice as well as concepts drawn from other disciplines and fields; and
3. *Pattern-finding insights* about how the cases used in class relate to each other and point to general lessons about project management.

Please remember that class participation is about quality rather than quantity. Some of us need to work on developing what Prof. David Sadker calls our "public voice" – i.e., our willingness and ability to express ideas and contribute to moving a discussion forward. Others need to work on developing what Prof. Sadker calls our "public ear" – i.e., our willingness and ability to listen and think carefully about what others are saying before responding. Listening and speaking up are vital skills for public policy and public administration professionals.

Additional Readings (courtesy of Prof. Howard McCurdy)

- Use the AU Library's on-line journal databases to search for journals dedicated to project management and to search for particular subjects/topics.
- Bennet P. Lientz and Kathryn P. Rea, *Project Management for the 21st Century*, 3rd ed. (San Diego: Academic Press, 2002). This relatively short textbook, written by a professor of management at UCLA and a consultant, covers all of the basic concepts in the field. It tends to be somewhat superficial, but provides a good overview for persons with no previous experience in the area.
- Jack R. Meredith and Samuel J. Mantel, *Project Management: A Managerial Approach*, 6th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2006). A basic text that emphasizes management control, primarily from a business sector point of view.
- Robert K. Wysocki, Robert Beck, and David B. Crane, *Effective Project Management*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley, 2000). This is a practical guide prepared by consultants who train people in project management. It contains more substance than Lientz and Rea but is less conceptual and less suited for academic study of the subject.
- Harold Kerzner, *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling*, 9th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: J. Wiley, 2006). A huge 900 page text in many editions, this book is frequently used by people preparing for the Project Manager Professional certification exam. It is comprehensive to the point of tedium and probably should be used only by people with prior project management experience.
- Howard Eisner, *Essentials of Project and Systems Engineering Management* (New York: John Wiley, 1997). A practical introduction to systems management, with lessons and illustrations from government agencies that use the technique, including NASA. In some respects, the first edition is better than the second.
- Benjamin S. Blanchard, *Systems Engineering Management*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1998). Chapter 7 provides a good explanation of the manner in which projects requiring systems management are organized.
- Walter R. Beam, *Systems Engineering: Architecture and Design* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1990). For those wanting to read more about the management of interactive failures, this text offers a detailed discussion of system interfaces and provides a good summary of the framework used to characterize the systems life cycle.
- Charles S. ReVelle, E. Earl Whitlatch, and Jeff R. Wright, *Civil and Environmental Systems Engineering*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004). For those people who want to delve into the mathematics of project scheduling and methods for calculating the optimal critical path, see the

chapter on scheduling models contained in this book.

- Henry Petroski, *To Engineer is Human: the Role of Failure in Successful Design* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985). This widely-read book can help students understand the nature of risk and the mentality of project engineers.
- William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed., (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000). A timeless source on editing one's own work, originally issued in 1935.
- Cristina Stuart, *How to be an Effective Speaker* (Lincolnwood, Ill: NTC Publishing, 1995). An excellent primer on effective communication through the spoken work.
- Carl S. Chatfield and Timothy D. Johnson, *Microsoft Office Project 2003: Step by Step* (Redmond, WA: Microsoft Press, 2004). Prepared as a user's guide, this handbook explains how to use Microsoft's tool for scheduling project tasks and assigning resources. It explains a more powerful version of the software package used in the course.