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Note: Section assignments for PED-250 will be given to you after the first plenary meeting of the semester on September 5th, 2013.

1. Course Descriptions
The PED-250 "Second Year Policy Analysis," the capstone product of the MPA/ID program, is a process designed to help you further develop professional skills.

The main output is the SYPA report itself, which calls for the application of the theoretical and empirical techniques acquired in other courses to an actual development problem. The report is written for a specific client (a government, agency, NGO, etc.) and involves the diagnosis of a problem, the formulation of a policy proposal, and the development of a feasible implementation plan. This requires that you identify an issue, develop the conceptual and empirical basis for recommended action, and then present your analysis and recommendations in a written document.

However, the process of analysis itself, as well as the effective communication of the analysis to others, is also an important part of the skill-building process (and your
Thus, in addition to the final product, you will be required to:

- Submit intermediate products throughout the process designed to further the analysis and gain feedback from others
- Effectively communicate your results through oral presentations and a policy brief that is written and presented after the main report is submitted

**Clients:** While the report must be written for a real client, you are not required to have an actual relationship with them. This is for two reasons: (1) not all clients on truly interesting development questions will be available and interested and (2) clients’ interests may not be aligned with the primary purpose of the SYPA, which is to define a problem and use techniques from the overall MPA/ID Program. Having a real relationship with your client is fine provided that this does not lead to a product that is inconsistent with the SYPA goals.

**Resources:** Several resources are available to help you develop your SYPA report:

- The *PED-250Y seminar* will allow you to interact with section leaders and other MPA/ID students with similar interests. You will be assigned to one of three sections based on your likely SYPA topic, which you will provide at the end of this first class meeting. Subsequent sessions are designed to coach you through the steps of preparing the SYPA and to develop your professional skills as a policy adviser. Section leaders are available to deal with questions about writing SYPA and to advise individual students about both substance and process. Support and insights from fellow MPA/ID classmates is especially important, and this is formally incorporated into the process.

- Second, each student will have a faculty adviser, drawn from the HKS faculty, who has specialized expertise in at least some of the issues associated with his or her SYPA.¹ Your faculty adviser will be an important source on substantive and methodological issues. The most helpful advisers are those with enough interest in you and/or your project to actively assist you in developing a valuable SYPA, and therefore, we strongly encourage you to discuss your topic with faculty members who might be interested in serving as adviser as soon as possible. If you are still considering several possibilities, consult potential advisers about ways to define a topic. By Tuesday, September 24th, every student must have found an adviser. Those who have not done so will be assigned one, but note that it is far better to find a good fit on your own than to be assigned.

Students should note that it is their responsibility to meet regularly with their section leader and adviser. In the fall semester, the key product is the SYPA outline. Adviser signatures (or other confirmation to the section leaders) are required on

¹ In rare circumstances, faculty members from other schools can be recruited to be advisers, but permission to use non-HKS-affiliated faculty is required: it is given only if the faculty member indicates a sufficient interest in the SYPA topic to volunteer their services.
these outlines, as they constitute a contract between the student, the adviser and section leader. A first full SYPA draft is due at the beginning of spring semester. The rest of the semester is devoted to revisions, making oral presentations, submitting a final SYPA and preparing a policy brief.

2. Objectives of the SYPA Experience

The SYPA experience provides an environment for building and expanding a number of critical, professional competencies, including:

- Identifying and conceptualizing an important development problem;
- Interpreting how a problem is related to the potential processes of change;
- Applying technical approaches to analyze these challenges, using tools from economics, political analysis and diagnostic approaches to implementation;
- Using effective empirical techniques—quantitative or qualitative;
- Developing practical recommendations for action by key decision-makers;
- Effective written work and oral presentations;
- Providing constructive feedback to colleagues on all of the above.

The combination of seminars, relationships with adviser and section leader, and interaction with other students form the crux of the SYPA experience and present you with an opportunity to build these competencies.

For most, the SYPA will be an unfamiliar experience. Please note that the SYPA is:

- **Not a slightly longer term paper.** Students who try to do it during a few intense weeks in February always find that they have misjudged the amount of work involved. They produce an inferior product and have a high risk of failing.
- **Not a research report.** Students who have modeled their SYPA on research articles have also been disappointed in their final grade. While strong research is a necessary input, the SYPA is primarily concerned with using the research findings for practical policy recommendations rather than for advancing theory.
- **Not primarily a methodological exercise.** Students who carry out elaborate technical analyses are sometimes surprised to find that they need to deal with the practical implications of messy policy situations involving stakeholders with diverse and conflicting interests.

What, then, is the SYPA? The SYPA is an analysis in which you frame a development problem conceptually, use analytic tools to generate a better understanding of the problem and of the options available for dealing with it, and provide recommendations and implementation advice tailored to the needs of decision-makers. Good SYPAs provide conceptual, analytic, and empirical support for the recommended actions, as well as clear analysis on how the problem (and your recommendations) relate to drivers of change and interact with political processes. Importantly, good SYPAs provide an assessment of implementation capacity and give a realistic framework for the implementation of the recommendations.
Usually, this is an individual process. But, note that some students choose to work in pairs on a joint SYPA. This is fine. However, you will have slightly different requirements and you will both receive the same grade. More than two on a team is not allowed under any circumstance.

3. Enrollment
All second-year students in the MPA/ID Program must enroll in PED-250. The course is worth 1.5 credits. Successful completion of the SYPA is a prerequisite for graduation from the MPA/ID Program. This course is restricted to MPA/ID students.

4. Course Design
There will be three sections of PED-250. We will try to group students with similar interests as well as to balance the size of the sections.

The course is structured to take students through a sequence of the components of policy analysis work, including (but not limited to):
- defining a policy question
- alternative empirical strategies
- political analysis
- analysis of implementation
- literature review
- making effective presentations
- targeting policy briefs to alternative stakeholder narratives

The meetings of PED-250 will take several forms:

- **Plenary class meetings.** These classes will bring together the entire MPA/ID second year class to introduce and discuss a topic. **All full class meetings will be held in L140.**

- **Section meetings.** Section meetings will be used to take you through the various phases of the work, from initial problem definition to the policy brief, using a mixture of group work, presentations, discussions and feedback. You will play an important part in small groups of 3-5 students.

- **Individual meetings with section leaders and advisers.** You are encouraged to work with your section leaders and your advisers to clarify your topic, develop strategies for collecting and analyzing data, and examine the implications of your analyses and recommendations. You bear responsibility for arranging to meet with section leaders and advisers.

The course is designed with a lot of structure, to take students through the various components of preparing and delivering a professional policy paper. However, there may also be somewhat more fluidity that a standard course in order to
accommodate periods of intensive presentation, group work, and faculty travel.

Within each section, students will often be organized into smaller groups—typically 3-5 people—working on closely related themes. There will be considerable emphasis on interactions within these groups, including informal presentations and feedback. For some intermediate products students will be required to give written feedback to others. Learning how to give critical, constructive feedback (in a safe environment) is a valuable professional skill.

5. Deadlines
The SYPA is organized around six deadlines. We will not accept late submissions, so do allow enough time to complete all assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DELIVERABLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 5th, 2013</td>
<td>Initial topic selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 24th, 2013</td>
<td>Adviser selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 25th, 2013</td>
<td>SYPA outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 2nd, 2014</td>
<td>First draft of SYPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, March 17th, 2014</td>
<td>Final draft of SYPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday April 17th, 2014</td>
<td>Policy brief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Topic selection**: an initial description of your topic that you will provide today. Your assignment to a PED-250 section will be based on this. While few students have a fully specified topic at this point, the overwhelming majority of past students have written SYPAs on some aspect of the identified topic.

- **Adviser selection**: is the date when all advisers are assigned. This is a school-wide process that goes beyond MPA/IDs—one of the reasons we strongly encourage you to meet with advisers early is that you are competing for good advisers with students from other programs.

- **SYPA outline**: is essentially a contract between you, your adviser and your section leader, covering the substance of your SYPA. It should include the conceptualization of the policy or institutional reform problem, your initial literature review, your methodology and planned analysis of your SYPA. It may be necessary to redraft the outline before all parties concur in its design, but it is vital that this agreement be completed before the end of the semester so that you can work on an agreed plan during the winter break. Advisers must sign off on the outline, either literally or by email by the submission date.

- **First SYPA draft**: this is the basis for (a) making a presentation to the members of your section and (b) getting feedback from your adviser and section leader. The better developed your first draft, the higher the quality of feedback you will get from both those sources. We strongly recommend that you prepare a first draft that is a complete product.
• **Final SYPA:** due March 17th, 2013, immediately after the start of the Spring Break (you are free to turn it in earlier). This date is intended to keep your Spring Break free for other activities while offering you the first weekend of the break to apply last minute finishing touches to your work if needed.

The way to get the most from this process is to take these deadlines seriously, in substance and timing, so you do not have to play “catch up” just to survive. **Getting behind is the most common problem for students working on SYPAs.** It is easier to work on immediate course demands than to define a topic and carry out work that is not due until the next semester. Therefore, it is critically important to define a feasible topic as soon as possible so you can make realistic plans.

In addition to these deadlines that relate to the substance of your SYPA, you will need to submit a Human Subjects Review Form, backed by certificate of training in human subjects issues, by October 16, 2013, that will specify if your work involves any information about individuals. (This is a provisional date; it may be adjusted based on school-wide review processes) This must be submitted for review by all students, even if you are only working with secondary data. The Harvard-wide committee on human subjects will review and advise on the status.

Major assignments must always be turned in electronically by 4PM on the due date. Intermediate assignment submission will be determined by session leaders. Late submissions will not be accepted. Note that the final SYPA must also be submitted in paper form (see below).

6. **Grading.**
PED-250 is worth 1.5 credits and will be graded on the usual HKS grade distribution. **Writing an acceptable SYPA (B- or better) is a pre-requisite for graduation.**

PED-250 grades will be based on the quality of your final SYPA, as jointly assessed by your adviser and section leader, and on your submissions and presentations in the preparation of the SYPA, participation in classes and section meetings, and the policy brief. The grading breakdown is as follows:

- **Final SYPA:** 50%
- **SYPA Outline:** 15%
- **Draft SYPA:** 15%
- **Policy brief:** 10%
- **Class Participation/Assignments:** 10%

The grade for the final SYPA will be based exclusively on the written product (and jointly agreed on by the adviser and section leader). Grades for the SYPA outline, the draft SYPA and the policy brief, will be based both on the written product and class presentations.

The class participation element will be based on the quality of your contribution to
class discussions, and completion of intermediate assignments.

**Late SYPAs** (those turned in after the March 17th deadline) will be automatically penalized two grades (e.g., from B+ to B-).

Final papers that your adviser and section leader consider unacceptable (below B-) will be returned for further revision and such revised SYPAs cannot receive a final grade higher than B.

**7. Joint degree students**
The requirements, timing and grading for joint degree students will be the same as for other students, with two qualifications

- Students undertaking a joint HKS/HBS degree will have a HBS adviser as well as an HKS one.
- Students at other schools may not be able to join class sessions in the Spring Semester, depending on their location. All deadlines for written assignments remain the same. Efforts will be made to have you make presentations by video conference. We encourage you to make special efforts to stay in touch with section leaders and advisers in this semester.
## DETAILED CLASS SCHEDULE

### Fall Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Deliverable Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/5/13</td>
<td>Plenary in L140</td>
<td><em>Class Introduction, the Elements of the SYPA process and schedule</em> (Ishac Diwan, Rema Hanna and Michael Walton): We will provide a discussion of the class and deliverables, and then move straight into a discussion of what makes a good SYPA! The session will also include an introduction to Harvard library resources by HKS librarian Valerie Weis, including books, journal articles, databases, data sources, government publications, think tanks etc. This constitutes important inputs to your work, even for those used to conducting library searches.</td>
<td>SYPA Topic Form Due at End of Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td><em>Identifying Useful Analysis and Initial Problem Selection:</em> We will deconstruct a previous SYPA as group in relation to the actual grading criteria that are used. Each student will have an opportunity to present their initial ideas.</td>
<td>Come to class having read SYPA and filled out your grading sheet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/19/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td><em>Defining a scope of work:</em> Each student will bring a 3-4 slide presentation written for their client that outlines the TOR. Students will be expected to both present on their topic and provide feedback.</td>
<td>Bring your presentation and get ready to discuss!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24/13 (note this is a Tuesday)</td>
<td><strong>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ADVISOR PREFERENCES</strong></td>
<td>This is to be submitted through HKS-wide system (preferably with a mutually agreed deal).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/26/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td><em>Conceptualization and literature review:</em> Students will work in their small thematic groups (3-5 students), on two tasks (a) literature review—that may be partly collective to the extent issues overlap and (b) presentations in small groups on the conceptualization of their SYPA, based on the components of question definition, empirical strategy, political analysis and</td>
<td>Bring your presentation and get ready to discuss!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/3/13</td>
<td>Plenary in L140</td>
<td>What is evidence? (Rema Hanna): This session will discuss how to think about empirical investigation of your policy question, not least where complete and decisive evidence is unavailable. This will include quantitative as well as qualitative evidence. Students will also be directed to other HKS resources for more in-depth treatment of qualitative techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/10/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td>Empirical Strategy for your SYPA: Students will present 2-4 slides discussing the type of data that they expect to use (both quantitative and qualitative) and empirical strategy for the data. Bring your presentation and get ready to discuss!</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/15/13</td>
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<td><strong>DEADLINE FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS FORMS (provisional)</strong> All students must submit a proposal to the human subjects committee, with a formal research question, explanation of methodology, ideas about data resource, etc., as well as the Human Subjects Forms. Submission will be online</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17/13</td>
<td>Plenary in L140</td>
<td>Analyzing the political economy of policies (Ishac Diwan): This session will introduce approaches to practical political analysis, from broad political economy questions to specific stakeholder interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/24/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td>Bringing political analysis into your SYPA: Students will bring to class 2-4 slides to present their initial assessment of political issues (large or local) and how they propose to tackle these, for presentation and constructive discussion. Bring your presentation and get ready to discuss!</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/31/13</td>
<td>Plenary in L140</td>
<td>Presentation on making effective presentations: led by Michael Walton</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/7/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td>Presentation in section of issues and hypotheses This would be a higher stakes presentation, with each student presenting the case for their policy question, initial Bring your presentation to present + each</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
hypotheses and approach to their client. This will be in full section, with powerpoint or equivalent, and role play, and will be over up to three weeks, to allow space for all to present. student will be required to provide written feedback to one assigned process partner.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/14/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td>Presentation in section of issues and hypotheses, cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td>Presentation in section of issues and hypotheses, cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting</td>
<td><strong>DEADLINE - SYPA OUTLINE DUE</strong> The SYPA must be agreed on with your advisor and section leader. In addition to sending to your section leader for comments, you must send to an assigned process partner to get their feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5/13</td>
<td>Section Meeting (or extended office hours)</td>
<td><strong>Finalizing plans for the winter break:</strong> Students will lay out their strategy for empirical work and writing to get from the outline to the first draft.</td>
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### Spring Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Deliverable Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/30/14</td>
<td>NO MEETING</td>
<td>Extra time to work on draft!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2/2014</td>
<td><strong>DEADLINE FOR DRAFT SYPA</strong></td>
<td>A full draft of the SYPA to be submitted to the Section Leader, Adviser, and your assigned process partner.</td>
<td>Presentation of Draft SYPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First weeks of February</td>
<td>Session Meetings</td>
<td>Individual Section Arrangements for the Oral Presentations Using Class and Extra Time: In order to give students time to present their SYPA recommendations and incorporate feedback, the section leaders will make arrangements for several sessions, using both the normally scheduled Thursday classes and additional class times. The goal is to allow us to</td>
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</table>
complete all presentations by the third week of February, giving you a minimum of three weeks, and generally significantly more, to prepare your final SYPA. Presentations will be to the whole section, with other students have assigned roles as stakeholders or to give feedback.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event/Task</th>
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| 3/17/14    | **FINAL SYPA DUE BY 4PM!**  
You must hand in ONE hard copy to your section leader; ONE hard copy to your adviser; and ONE hard copy (as well as electronic copy) and one hard copy for the HKS library, to Carol Finney in the MPA/ID office. Of course you may turn in your final SYPA earlier than the deadline and take full advantage of the spring break. |
| 4/3/14     | Plenary in L140  
**Preparing policy briefs aligned to prevailing interests and ideas:** This session will introduce an approach to designing a policy brief: this is not a summary of the SYPA, but a product of an explicit analysis of the various stakeholders, key points of resistance and leverage, the prevailing narratives, and how to engage with these with a short (4-page) brief. |
| April sessions | Section meetings  
Arrangements will be made for a final presentation of policy briefs in each Section.  
Deadlines for policy brief submission to be set in Section |
| 5/1/14     | Plenary in L140  
Each section will vote on the best SYPA presentation in their section, and these three will be presented to the whole class. After any final discussion on the process, the session will transit seamlessly into a party. |