

# MAX 401: Civic Engagement Action Plan Workshop

Fall 2017

Fridays 9:30-11:30, Maxwell 105

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## Office Hours and Locations:

Bill Coplin, 102 Maxwell, Mon: 9:00-11:20 and 3:45-4:45; Wed: 9:00-11:20; Fri: 4:00-5:00 by appointment only scheduled through email.

Pete Wilcoxon, 426 Eggers, Mon & Wed: 10:00-11:30 or by appointment

## Course Description:

This is a project-oriented course in which you will: (1) select and analyze a real-world problem, (2) develop an idea that would address it, and (3) engage one or more decision makers from a government, nonprofit or business organization to take action. Together, those three components will comprise your Action Plan: a pragmatic, real-world example of civic engagement based on social-science research.

As you'll see over the course of the semester, an Action Plan will involve multiple kinds of problems and multiple actions by multiple parties. To avoid confusion, we'll use the following terms in class: the **problem** is the socio-economic condition that you think needs to be improved (i.e., the world's problem); your **organization** is a nonprofit or government agency you would like to enlist to address the problem; **action** is what you would like the *organization* to do (which may include collaboration with you); **stakeholders** are people or organizations that will be impacted by the action but have little direct influence on whether the organization takes the action; **players** are people within or outside the organization who have influence on the action that will be taken by the organization; **obstacle** is something that you'll need to overcome (i.e., it's a problem for you rather than the world's problem); **strategy** is the set of activities taken by *you* to overcome obstacles, including gaining support from those needed to get the organization to agree to the action; and **project** is the overall set of activities comprising your Action Plan, including any negotiations you carry out with players and stakeholders.

The coursework consists of a series of assignments that will help you build your Action Plan and, in some cases, help you implement it during the semester. The assignments consist of:

1. Project Proposal
2. List of Players and Experts
3. Weekly Reports With Prince Analysis
4. Research Review
5. Opinion Essay Outline
6. Opinion Essay Draft
7. Draft Presentation
8. Peer Review of Opinion Essay
9. Final Presentation
10. Final Report

We'll ask you to follow specific templates for each assignment. The course will be interactive and we'll work with you closely in and out of class to help you produce the products that make your case in a clear, professional and convincing manner. Professional time management will be required, which means never missing a deadline.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

You must be in the CCE major and have completed MAX 301: Ethics, Justice, and Citizenship and MAX 302: Research Seminar on Civic Engagement and MAX 310: Community Placement in Ethics, Justice and Citizenship.

### **Learning Objectives:**

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Apply a problem-solving approach to ameliorating societal problems;
- Interview players and stakeholders on the nature of societal problems and ways in which those problems can be ameliorated;
- Employ concepts and tools from the various social science disciplines to research the steps necessary to come up with appropriate and effective actions;
- Develop and begin to implement a strategy to improve societal conditions;
- Present to a variety of audiences on the importance of the problem and the appropriateness of your actions;
- Write succinctly, precisely, and convincingly to different audiences to explain your ideas on improving society.
- Fulfill your promised commitments.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy, found at the URL below, reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation 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 as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. SU students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

More information: <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

### **Religious Observances:**

SU religious observances notification and policy, found at the URL below, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided 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 before the

end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibly formatted classes.

More information: <http://hendricks.syr.edu/spiritual-life/index.html>

### **Disability-Related Accommodations:**

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), visit the ODS website below, or visit the ODS office in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 or TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

More information: <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>

### **Use of Student Work:**

Presentations you make in this course may be recorded and they or written work you produce may be used as examples for future students, or for community outreach. The standard Syracuse University policy on student work states: “In compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, works in all media produced by students as part of their course participation at Syracuse University may be used for educational purposes, provided that the course syllabus makes clear that such use may occur. It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in a course where such use of student works is announced constitute permission by the student.”

It goes on to say: “After such a course has been completed, any further use of student works will meet one of the following conditions: (1) the work will be rendered anonymous through the removal of all personal identification of the work's creator or originator(s); or (2) the creator or originator(s) written permission will be secured.” For presentations, the second clause above would usually apply (we’d ask for permission before using them) because it would be hard to remove all personal information.

### **Attendance:**

Attendance is required throughout the semester. If you cannot attend a class, please contact us in advance. As explained in the section on grading below, points will be deducted for unexcused absences and tardiness.

### **Project Management Website:**

You’ll use an web-based project management tool to help keep your project on track. The tool is set up at [zoho.com](http://zoho.com), a firm that provides various web services, so we’ll refer to it as “Zoho” below. The first week of class you’ll receive an email from [zohoprojects.com](http://zohoprojects.com) with a subject line like “[Maxwell School] [...your project name here...] You have been added to project”. There will be some instructions about how to set up a Zoho account and log in. After that, you’ll be able to get back to your project by going to the URL below:

Zoho site: <https://projects.zoho.com/portal/maxsyr/>

### **Role of the Teaching Assistant:**

Kathleen Dempsey will be the TA for the course. She will answer questions about the format of assignments; will assist the instructors with administrative tasks; and will keep records on attendance, timeliness and the completeness of assignments. She will not grade any assignments, but the records she keeps will be used by the instructors in deducting points for failing to meet deadlines and requirements.

### **Assignments and Grading:**

#### *Templates:*

Each assignment should follow the corresponding template provided on the course Blackboard site. Please download each template and fill it in.

#### *Submitting Assignments:*

All assignments, including project management updates on Zoho, should be submitted **24 hours before class**. That is, they are **due by 9:30 am on Thursday**. Assignments other than updates to Zoho should be submitted via Blackboard.

#### *Grading:*

Grades will be based on evaluations of the required assignments. The maximum total score on the assignments is 100 points. Your semester point total will be the sum of what you earn on the assignments less any penalties as described below.

#### *Penalties for not Meeting Commitments:*

Failing to attend class and submit assignments on time will result in a loss of points as follows.

**Late assignments:** 1 point lost per day late. **Being late to class:** 1 point lost each time it occurs.

**Missing class** without being excused in advance: 2 points lost each time it occurs.

#### *Class Schedule:*

Every Friday, the whole class will meet together in 105 Maxwell starting at 9:30 AM and will end no later than 11:30. You must attend all classes unless you have been excused in advance.

Excused absences are arranged by emailing both professors and the TA. Individual meetings will be held during class time to discuss progress made the previous week and goals for the next week. When you're not in a meeting on those days, you are expected to remain in 105 Maxwell to work on your project or help other students with theirs. Students in previous semesters have mentioned that they found collaborative class time very helpful.

### Schedule of Classes and Due Dates

*All assignments must be submitted via Zoho or on Blackboard (BB), as appropriate, at least **24 hours** before class: that is, by **9:30 am on Thursday**.*

Week	Assignment (#)	Thu Due Date	Class activities	Fri Class Date
1	Project proposal (#1)	8/31	Introduction; discussion of proposals; the Prince system	9/1
2	Players and experts (#2) Weekly report 1 (#3)	9/7	Individual meetings	9/8
3	Weekly report 2 (#3)	9/14	Individual meetings	9/15
4	Weekly report 3 (#3)	9/21	Individual meetings	9/22
5	Research review (#4) Weekly report 4 (#3)	9/28	Individual meetings	9/29
6	Weekly report 5 (#3)	10/5	Individual meetings	10/6
7	Weekly report 6 (#3)	10/12	Individual meetings	10/13
8	Weekly report 7 (#3)	10/19	Individual meetings	10/20
9	Opinion outline (#5) Weekly report 8 (#3)	10/26	Individual meetings	10/27
10	Weekly report 9 (#3)	11/2	Individual meetings	11/3
11	Opinion essay (#6) Draft presentation (#7)	11/9	Practice presentations	11/10
12	No assignment	11/16	Optional individual meetings	11/17
	Thanksgiving break	11/23	Thanksgiving break	11/24
13	Peer review of essay (#8) Final presentation (#9)	11/30	Public presentations.	12/1
14	Final report (#10)	12/7	Group debriefing and lessons learned	12/8

## **Instructions for Assignments**

### **Assignment 1: Project Proposal, Due Thu 8/31 at 9:30**

**Points possible: 5**

Download the template from BB, fill it out, and submit it on BB.

### **Assignment 2: Players and Experts, Due Thu 9/7 at 9:30**

**Points possible: 5**

Download the template from BB, fill it out, and submit it on BB.

### **Assignment 3: Weekly Reports, Due Thursdays at 9:30 on the dates indicated in the table above.**

**Points possible: 4 per report (36 total)**

Each report will have two parts: (1) an updated Prince chart; and (2) a set of updates on the project management website Zoho.

#### **(1) The Prince chart:**

Download the template from BB, fill it out, and submit it on BB. After the first week it's OK to submit an updated version of your chart from the previous week.

#### **(2) Zoho:**

Do the following in your list of tasks:

1. **Add comments to any existing tasks** noting any new progress you've made or obstacles you've run into.
2. For tasks that you finished during the week, **add a concluding comment** indicating the outcome and then **mark the task closed**.
3. **Add at least 3 new tasks** for the next week.

### **Assignment 4: Research Review, Due Thu 9/28 at 9:30**

**Points possible: 10**

Download the template from BB, fill it out, and submit it on BB.

If you have an annotated bibliography from MAX 302 that covers the topics in the template and has enough sources, you can reformat it for this assignment: you don't need to collect additional references.

### **Assignment 5: Opinion Essay Outline, Due Thu 10/26 at 9:30**

#### **Points possible: 5**

Download the template from BB, fill it out, and submit it on BB.

This assignment and the next one focus on building broader community support for addressing the problem you've identified. This assignment asks you to choose a target outlet (newspaper or widely-read website such as Politico or Slate) and write out a topic-sentence outline for an essay that could run in that publication's op-ed section. In the next assignment you'll write the actual essay.

The target should be a publication that the players whom you want to act and their stakeholders are likely to read. Be sure to read the information your target outlet provides on unsolicited op-eds and follow its style guides. Also, read several previous op-eds published by the outlet to get a feel for what appeals to the editors, both in terms of content and style. Among other things, you'll usually find that op-eds use much shorter paragraphs than academic paper. In the New York Times, for example, each paragraph is usually 50 to 70 words split into 3 to 7 sentences per paragraph.

In general the op-ed should clearly state the problem and provide a clear, compelling argument for a specific, concrete action that should be taken. In constructing your argument, you may want to draw on work you have done in MAX 301 and 302 as well as other coursework and research you have done. Also, be sure to avoid writing an op-ed that only goes as far as hand-wringing: that is, asking the reader to care about the problem but not asking for support for a particular solution. A good op-ed should be a call to action.

### **Assignment 6: Opinion Essay, Due Thu 11/9 at 9:30**

#### **Points possible: 5**

Download the template from BB, fill it out, and submit it on BB.

For general instructions about the essay, please see the instructions for Assignment 5. Be sure to state the problem clearly and make a compelling case for the action, including intellectual, ethical and social justifications. Be sure not to "bury the lede" by waiting to mention the key point of the essay until the middle or end. The first paragraph has to grab attention with an example or a statistic and must make clear what needs to be done. Finally, be sure to take into account feedback you received on your outline during class.

Please include the word count. The essay should be no more than 750 words.

### **Assignment 7: Draft Presentation, Due Thu 11/9 at 9:30**

#### **Points possible: 5**

No template. Please submit your presentation on BB, preferably as a PDF.

Please prepare a professional grade PowerPoint presentation for a public audience. The presentation should make a reasoned and empirically-supported case. You'll make the presentation twice: once for practice the day after it's due, and then a second time the following week in a public forum.

The contents of the presentation will be discussed later in the semester but roughly speaking it should have about 6 slides and will need to cover the following topics: statement of the problem; evidence on the severity and scope of the problem; description of the action; evidence that the action would help; how the action would be evaluated. The first slide **must** be a title slide with the following information: Title of the project, your name, the name of the program (i.e., “Maxwell Program on Citizenship and Civic Engagement”), and the university.

#### **Assignment 8: Peer Review of Opinion Essay, Due Thu 11/30 at 9:30**

##### **Points possible: 4**

No template. Please submit it on BB and email it to the original author and TA as well.

The TA will send you another student’s essay for peer editing. Both the author and the reviewer will be copied on each email. Please edit the document using the “Review” tab on Word to track your changes and to allow you to add comments. Your comments will help the author polish up the essay for publication and the polished version will be included in the person’s final report.

##### **After you receive edits for your own essay:**

Please use the feedback you received from your peer editor and the instructors to revise your essay. You will turn in the polished version as part of your final report and **must also submit it to an appropriate outlet** by the end of the semester. You will need to provide a copy of the email indicating you sent it (see the section below on the final report). When submitting to the outlet, do not include that you wrote it for a course or your majors; however, you can include your Maxwell School and/or College of Arts and Sciences affiliations.

#### **Assignment 9: Final Presentation, Due Thu 11/30 at 9:30**

##### **Points possible: 10**

No template. Please submit your presentation on BB, preferably as a PDF.

Update your draft presentation based on the feedback you received. The forum will be held in Maxwell Auditorium and will be open to the public. We’ll invite all of the students and faculty in the CCE program as well as other interested people from around campus and elsewhere. You’re very welcome to invite your friends and anyone that you worked with throughout the semester. The audience will be invited to ask questions at the end of each presentation.

#### **Assignment 10: Final Report, Due Thu 12/7 at 9:30**

##### **Points possible: 15**

Please submit a final report on your project following the structure below. Please begin each section a new page. There is no downloadable template because you will be merging existing documents together.

##### **Title Page with Abstract**

The first page should consist of a descriptive title, your name, the date, the name of the CCE program, and a one-paragraph single-spaced abstract that briefly describes the project including



the problem, the organization, and the action you proposed. The abstract can be very concise but it should be clear enough that it would be comprehensible to a person reading through a list of abstracts.

### **Section 1: Research Review**

Please include your earlier research review.

### **Section 2: Description of Action**

Provide a detailed description of your action. It should be specific enough that someone else could execute (or could have executed, if you carried it out) your plan without input from you. Be clear about who needs to do what, when each item needs to be done, and how the project would be evaluated to determine whether it was a success.

### **Section 3: Opinion Essay**

This should consist of a polished version of essay. Following the essay, please include a copy of the email you sent to submit it (or a screen capture if you submitted it over the web).

### **Section 4: Analysis of Activities**

Reflecting on your weekly updates to the project management site, write a week by week narrative describing your progress in getting the organization you worked with to implement your action. Be clear about where your expectations were or were not met, and explain what drove you to make changes in your project along the way. End with a paragraph on how you would do things differently knowing what you know now.

### **Section 5: Final List of Experts and Players, and Final Prince Chart**

Please update the information to reflect the situation at the end of the semester and include it here.

### **Section 6: Reflection on Engaged Citizenship**

In two pages or less, discuss how the CCE major shaped your view of the role of citizens in today's society.

### **Section 7: Public presentation**

Please include your finished public presentation. If possible, put 6 slides to a page and merge it in into a single PDF with the other sections.