



THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST



SYLLABUS PROJECT PLANNING AND PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT EDUC 623 – Spring 2012

Day/time/room: Wednesdays 9-12, 275 Hills South

Instructor: Cristine Smith

Office Hours: 264 Hills House South, Wednesdays 12:30-2:30 pm

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Introduction to the course

The goal of this course is to help you develop a proposal for an educational or development project for which you could seek funding. This is one course in a three-course series about managing projects. The three courses are:

1. Project Planning and Proposal Development
2. Project Management and Implementation
3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Together, these three courses are designed to help you develop knowledge and skills in planning, designing, implementing, managing and evaluating projects in an area of your interest.

Central to this course (ED 623) is applying these knowledge and skills to the development of a project proposal. The logic here is that a project proposal must include the design of a project, based on a needs assessment and problem identification; a budget and management plan; specific activities and timeline for implementation; and a monitoring and evaluation plan. Each of these elements will be covered in the course.

Course Organization

There are two main goals of this course:

- Become competent in reactive proposal writing.
- Become competent in proactive proposal writing.

A **reactive proposal** is one that you will usually write in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Application (RFA) that is put out by government-funded or international agencies or foundations. These types of proposals are usually written as a team with others from your organization. In the course, we will be examining an RFP



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and “unpacking” it, so that you can see how to read an RFP and pull out the most relevant information.

A **proactive proposal** is one that you write on your own (with, in this class, input and feedback from two other class members) in order to seek funding for a project that you would like to implement. Therefore, throughout the semester, you will work in small groups of three (“planning trios”) to give each other feedback and ideas about the proposal that you will be writing, based on a project idea of your own.

We will be covering the following steps in project planning and proposal development:

1. **Problem identification and statement**
2. **Needs assessment** (including tools such as PRA and other participatory tools for determining what people’s needs and problems are)
3. **Rationale for the project** (including a literature review citing research that the project is building on what has been learned in the past)
4. **Goals and objectives** (including tools such as the logic model, results-oriented planning, and outcomes mapping, as well as SMART objectives; the goals will also include how the project can be sustainable beyond the initial project funding)
5. **Project activities** (including tools such as log frames)
6. **Project workplan and timeframe** (including GANTT charts)
7. **Budget development**
8. **Monitoring and evaluation plan**
9. **Management Plan and Institutional Capability**
10. **Appendices** (resumes, samples of previous work, charts/graphs, etc.)

Most likely, a typical class will be broken into three segments:

1. Time for “planning trios” to discuss and give each other help in thinking how to use the theory, approach or tool for their individual project proposals.
2. Overview of specific planning theory, approach or tool; discussion of readings
3. Application of said theory, approach or tool to your own or a sample proposal

Course Materials and Requirements

- The readings for this course will all be available on the SPARK course website. There are no books to buy.
- Participate actively during class discussions and activities.
- Attend all classes and complete the required readings before class. However, the focus on this class is on writing, rather than reading, so I try to keep reading assignments to a minimum.



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- Do all writing assignments. The writing assignments are designed cumulatively; in other words, you will have 8 short pieces to write, corresponding to the various components or sections of a proposal (problem statement, rationale, goals and objectives, activities and workplan, budget, etc.).
- **ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLY ON SPARK (THROUGH “ASSIGNMENTS” LINK: NO E-MAILS) AND SINGLE-SPACED ONLY!!!**
- Come prepared to share your writing assignments with others, for feedback. Almost every week or every other week, you will bring a draft of one of these parts to class to share with the members of your “planning trio”, get their feedback, and give them feedback on their parts. Your final product will be a complete project proposal for a project of your choice, which incorporates all of the various revisions of components/ sections you wrote throughout the semester. **If you stay up to speed with the short assignments, then your final proposal will not be too difficult to put together.** However, if you let these short assignments slip, you will have a pretty big job of pulling it all together at the end, and you will not have gotten feedback from your “planning trio” to help you, either.
- I encourage you to use my office hours as a time for us to discuss your paper, the readings or questions you have about the course. All assignments are due when indicated.
- You will be graded on a pass-fail basis, UNLESS you wish to have a grade. If you want a grade for this course, you must **let me know via SPARK course website (NO E-MAILS!) by February 6, 2012.** Go to the course website, click on “Assignments” on the left-hand menu, and then click on the “Grade or Pass-Fail?” assignment. After this date, no changes will be made in your grading status (i.e., you can’t ask me for a grade, rather than pass-fail, 3 weeks before the end of the class.)

The specific course requirements/assignments, along with the grading calculation for each, are presented below.

Requirement	Description	Grade Calculation
	ALL ASSIGNMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED ONLY ON SPARK (THROUGH “ASSIGNMENTS” LINK: NO E-MAILS) AND SINGLE-SPACED ONLY!!!	
1. Quality and quantity of classroom participation	Be fully prepared to participate in class by coming to <u>all</u> class sessions, reading the assignments for each session, and being ready to discuss them critically.	20%
2. Trio brainstorming and feedback	Participate fully as a member of your small group, giving others feedback on their project design, and coming to class with your own writing tasks completed	20%



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	so that others can give you feedback.	
3. Short drafts of proposal components (to share with your “planning trio” and get written feedback from instructor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Plain language” description of your project (2 paragraphs, maximum): DUE February 1• Problem statement (1 page, max): DUE February 8• Needs assessment (1 page, max): DUE February 15• Rationale (1 page, max) and logic model (1 page): DUE February 22• Project goals and objectives (1 page, max): DUE February 29• Project activities (3 pages, max): DUE March 14• Workplan/timeframe (chart): DUE April 4• Budget (table and 1 page narrative): DUE April 11	30%
4. Final paper	Your final proposal, including <u>all of the sections</u> mentioned above, plus management plan/key personnel and institutional capability (no more than 10 SINGLE-SPACED pages). You <u>may</u> include an appendix with your logic model and resumes/job descriptions of key project personnel (in no more than 5 page appendix). DUE April 25.	30%

Incompletes

Students who are unable to complete course requirements within the allotted time because of severe medical or personal problems may request a grade of Incomplete from me **by April 13, 2012**. Normally, incomplete grades are warranted only if a student is passing the course at the time of the request and if the course requirements can be completed by the end of the following semester (December, 2012). If I grant you an incomplete, I will require, by April 13, a one-page write-up from you including

1. a description of the work that remains to be completed,
2. a description of how you intend to complete the unfinished work, and
3. the date by which the work is to be completed.

Accommodation Statement

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a



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documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair.

Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent.



LIST OF TOPICS AND READINGS FOR 623 – Fall 2010

Session 1, January 25: Course Overview and Expectations: No Readings

Session 2, February 1: *Problem identification and statement*

“Plain language” description of your project (2 paragraphs)

BRING 3 COPIES TO CLASS; UPLOAD TO ME ON SPARK BEFORE MIDNIGHT

- *Learning Lab: Proposal Writing Short Course*, pp. 1-11 (**website**)
 - *Project Design: The Problem Statement*, pp. 1-6 (**website**)
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Session 3, February 8 *Needs assessment*

Problem statement (1 page)

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- *Overview of PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal)*, pp.1-7 (**website**)
 - *Different Approaches to Participation*, pp. 1-3 (**website**)
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Session 4, February 15: *Rationale for the project*

Needs assessment or plan for needs assessment (1 page)

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- *Logic Model Development Guide, Chapter 1 & 2*: pp. 1-25
-

Session 5, February 22: *Goals and objectives*

Rationale (1 page) and logic model (1 page)

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- *Coley and Sheinberg: Writing Goals, Objectives and Implementation Activities* (**on website**), pp. 39-54
 - *Outcome Mapping*, pp. 7-16 and pp. 23-47
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Session 6, February 29: *Project activities*



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Project goals and objectives (1 page)

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- *Appendix I – Methods and Tools, World Bank Participatory Sourcebook*, pp. 181-204
 - *BOND Logical Framework Analysis*, pp 1-8
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Session 7, March 7: *Project activities*

- *Mind Tools: Project Planning* – pp. 3-28 (**on website**)
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Session 8, March 14: *Project workplan and timeframe*

Project activities (3 pages)

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- *SWOT Analysis Worksheet* (**on website**)
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March 21: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Session 9, March 28 *Preparing a Budget*

- *CEDPA/Project Design, Definition & Purpose of Budget* (**on website**), pp. 82-88
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Session 10, April 4: *Monitoring and evaluation plan*

Workplan/timeframe (chart)

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- *CEDPA/Project Design, Monitoring and Evaluation* (**on website**), pp. 57-64, pp. 69-72, pp. 77-78
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Session 11, April 11: *Management Plan, Sustainability, Institutional Capability and Appendices (resumes)*

Budget (table)

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- *CEDPA/Project Design, Sustainability (on website)*, pp. 92-93
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Session 12, April 18:

READINGS, IF ANY, TO BE ASSIGNED

Session 13, April 25: *Finding Funding; Meeting with Funders*

NO READINGS

People may volunteer to provide a 5-10 minute overview of their proposed project and receive feedback from “funders”.

FINAL PROPOSALS ARE DUE BY April 25.