SPRING 2021  PA5190

DESIGNING CHANGE—
PUBLIC SECTOR PROBLEM SOLVING

Saturdays  9:00am-1:00pm
Feb 13, Feb 20, Mar 6, Mar 20, Apr 24
Instructor: Sandy Wolfe Wood

Course Overview
We’ve all watched Covid-19 dramatically alter our lives in the last year—it has more than earned its title of “game changer”. One of the more troubling aspects of the pandemic is how human behavior has worked against efforts to stem its spread. This is the perfect human-centered design problem, and one that this class will address using the principles of design thinking. This course is an intensive deep dive into the intersection of human-centered design and the need for innovative, sustainable solutions.

This class will teach you to question and think deeply, to produce novel ideas and synergies between existing ones, and make those ideas tangible and visible to others. This interpretive approach stands in stark contrast to more traditional methods that are often driven solely by numbers, analysis, and rationality. As someone who is interested in advancing the common good, you need to learn how to use both methods in tandem.

“If you want to ensure true impact, take PA 5190. It provides a blueprint for approaching problems that seem too ‘wicked’, recognizing stakeholders that are otherwise ignored, overcoming fears of failure, and finding solutions through the power of collective thought and action.

The skills and tools I learned in this class will be useful to me for the rest of my life – they have helped me take better notes, conduct better interviews, tell better stories. Regardless of where you are in your graduate studies, and even your area of research, you’ll benefit from PA 5190.”

—M. Buchanan, 3rd year PhD student, Second Language Education, CI, CEHD:

Who Should Take This Course?
This class is designed primarily for graduate students who: hope to expand their ability to innovate; work in government or the public sector and are looking for ways to create change; are interested in cross-sector problem-solving and interdisciplinary work; and embrace new ways of thinking about their research.

Questions about the course?
Email Sandy Wolfe Wood at wood0704@umn.edu or Stacey Grimes at grime004@umn.edu.