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# THE INTERSECTION OF OPERATIONS AND POLICY: *A MULTIMEDIA LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW YORK CITY FAMILY HOMELESS SHELTER SYSTEM*

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## COURSE INFORMATION

7 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street – Room 125  
9:30am-12:50pm, Eight Fridays

## INSTRUCTORS

Instructor	Email	Office Hours	Location
Natalie Privett	<a href="mailto:Natalie.privett@nyu.edu">Natalie.privett@nyu.edu</a>	Email for	Puck 3058
Gordon Campbell	<a href="mailto:Gordon.campbell@nyu.edu">Gordon.campbell@nyu.edu</a>	Appointment	Puck 3063
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Policy and operations are inextricably linked. This course aims to expose students to policy formation in a highly political environment, operations management of systems shaped by state and local policy, and their intersection, while building a toolbox of specific skills that support analysis and decision making in a wide variety of contexts. A unifying Multimedia Interactive Case Study (MICS) focused on the NYC family homeless shelter system will be the backdrop of this course. This course is an intensive engagement that incorporates perspectives from academic theory, City, State and Federal government, service providers, advocacy organizations, and public interest law.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course learning objectives fall into three broad skill-building areas: stakeholder analysis, decision modeling, and forecasting. This course also builds skills in communication, presentation, and negotiation.

### Decision Modeling

- Utilize the tool of decision tree modeling to inform policy decision making and operations planning in the face of incomplete data and uncertainty

### Stakeholder Analysis

- Analyze the roles, influence and position of different stakeholders in the various facets of the policy process

### Forecasting

- Apply forecasting methods to the family homeless shelter census and the resulting capacity management implications considering different temporal and family-specific facets of homeless demand

## MULTIMEDIA INTERACTIVE CASE STUDY PLATFORM

<https://wp.nyu.edu/mics/>

The Multimedia Interactive Case Study (MICS) is an online platform where students engage with both case study resources and interactive tools. While the case study resources are specific to the NYC Homeless Family Shelter System, the skills gained are highly transferable to a large variety of disciplines, including public service management and policy, business, social work, health, and urban planning. The key components of the platform are as follows:

### CASE STUDY RESOURCES

- **Video Documentaries** (10-15 minutes) have been created for this course, each featuring stakeholder interviews, including New York City and New York State officials, advocates, providers, public interest lawyers, families, and academicians. These six documentaries are as follows:
  - *Family Homelessness Landscape* introduces the various stakeholders working in homelessness in NYC.
  - *Family Homelessness in New York City* reviews the problem of family homelessness.
  - *Advantage: Incarnation & Evolution* describes Advantage, its formation and implementation.
  - *Advantage: Family Experience* presents the experiences of families.
  - *Advantage: Termination* explains the end of Advantage and the subsequent impact.
  - *Where do we go from here?* provides various perspectives on how to move forward in family homelessness.
- **Data Visualizations** give students a visual introduction to the City's family homeless shelter system.
- **News Sources** including articles and video clips pertinent to New York City's homeless shelter system and Advantage over the relevant time period will build students' understanding of the different stakeholder perspectives, tension around the issues, and public information.
- **Research**, including journal articles and reports, relevant to homelessness trends and policies will be available to provide students a broad understanding of research and theoretical perspectives.
- **Documents** include a variety of original source documents.
- **Data Sets** will be available to the students for use in their analyses and exploration of family homelessness. Specifically, New York City Department of Homeless Services monthly homeless shelter system data from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2013, which spans time under the Advantage policy, the phasing out of Advantage, and more than one full year post-Advantage

### INTERACTIVE TOOLS

- **Decision Tree Builder** is used to construct and analyze a decision tree.
- **Stakeholder Analysis Tool** is used to create a stakeholder analysis table identifying key stakeholders, their policy priorities, influence, resources, and alliances as well as where stakeholders are positioned in terms of their relative importance. It is designed to help you develop strategies to garner support for your preferred policy option.
- **Forecasting in Excel** is methods to use the data analysis and visualization tools in MS Excel that enable experimentation with different time-series forecasting approaches and associated parameters.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING COMPONENTS

Final grades are determined by the following course components. Completed assignments should be uploaded to *NYU Classes*.

- **Individual Class Participation (15%)**

Participation includes presence, promptness, preparation, and engagement. If you have thoroughly prepared, you should have no problem following and contributing to the discussions. Keep in mind that much of a leader's communication is verbal, especially in policy and operations settings. Therefore, developing your abilities to verbally state and support your positions is an important part of this class, in addition to listening and reflecting on the discourse. Students are expected to attend all classes. Use of devices for purposes other than taking notes is not appropriate and can limit one's learning.

- **Individual Assignments (15%)**

There will be three individual assignments (each 5%), associated with a key learning module (i.e., decision analysis, stakeholder analysis, and forecasting modules). These individual assignments are important as they lay a foundation for the more sophisticated analysis revolving around the main case of the course.

- **Team Presentations (15%)**

There will be three team in-class presentations (each 5%). Each team will prepare and present their analysis and supported recommendations for each learning module. Following each presentation, there will be a critique and discussion with professors and colleagues.

- **Individual Technical Memo (10%)**

Each student will prepare and submit a technical memo addressed to the Assistant Commissioner of Policy, Planning and Evaluation at the NYC Department of Homeless Services (3-5 pages, double-spaced, not including appendices). This memo will incorporate their work to date around the modules. All supporting analyses should be attached in the appendices.

- **Team Final Presentation (20%)**

Each team will prepare and present a presentation for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services outlining the current state of the NYC homeless family shelter system, alternatives considered and the team's recommendation going forward along with supporting arguments.

- **Team Mayoral Policy Memo (20%)**

Accompanying the Team Final Presentation to the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, teams will submit a memo outlining their recommendations and supporting analysis (10-page, double-spaced, not including appendices).

- **Individual Negotiation Strategy Document (5%)**

Students will be assigned in groups to represent different stakeholders in the NYC Family Homeless Shelter System (e.g., providers, advocates, the City). Traditionally, the different stakeholders have not worked well together. Nevertheless the Mayor has called a forum where the stakeholders are charged to attempt to develop a series of recommendations around family homelessness in NYC. In preparation for the forum, students will individually prepare a negotiation strategy document (2-3 pages, double-spaced), which will consist of the desired outcomes, expected outcomes, negotiation strategies, and talking points.

## PREREQUISITES

- **CORE-GP.1020** Managing Public Service Organizations (MPSO)
- **CORE-GP.1022** Introduction to Public Policy
- **Recommended:** Excel Knowledge (e.g., NONCR-GP.0932 Excel Computer Module)

## COURSE READINGS

The readings for the class will come from the following sources:

1. **MICS Platform**  
The MICS Platform will contain case study resources and interactive tools.
2. **Course Packet\***  
Available in digital format. Inquire at the bookstore or at [www.XanEdu.com](http://www.XanEdu.com).
3. **NYU Classes**  
NYU Classes will be used to post readings and assignments throughout the semester. Students are encouraged to check it frequently. Many of the readings listed in this syllabus can be found online. In such cases, URLs are specified here and links can also be found on NYU Classes.
4. **Book\***  
Bardach, Eugene. *Practical guide for policy analysis: the eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. CQ press, 2011.
5. **E-Book\*\***  
Lawrence, Kenneth D., Ronald K. Klimberg, and Sheila M. Lawrence. *Fundamentals of forecasting using excel*. Industrial Press Inc., 2009.
6. **E-Book\*\***  
Hollins, Bill, and Sadie Shinkins. *Managing service operations: Design and implementation*. Sage, 2006.
7. **Book\***  
Fisher, Roger, William L. Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Penguin, 2011.

\* Indicates student responsible for purchase. Available at NYU Bookstore.

\*\* E-Books can be accessed for free through the NYU Library (<http://library.nyu.edu/>) using your NYU Login. Search for the book and follow the Online Access links. All links to E-Books are also available on NYU Classes.

## COURSE CALENDAR

#	Date	Topics	Assignments Due
1	9/5	A. Introduction B. New York City Family Homelessness Discussion C. Decision Modeling Lecture	
2	9/19	Site Visit	Decision Analysis Individual Assignment
3	10/3	A. Site Visit Debrief B. Decision Modeling MICS Presentations C. Advantage Discussion D. Stakeholder Analysis Lecture	Decision Analysis MICS Team Presentation
	10/10		Stakeholder Analysis Individual Assignment
4	10/17	A. Stakeholder Analysis MICS Presentations B. Forecasting Lecture	Stakeholder Analysis MICS Team Presentation
	10/24		Forecasting Individual Assignment
5	10/31	A. Forecasting MICS Presentations B. Capacity Management Lecture	Forecasting MICS Team Presentation
	11/12		Individual Technical Memo
6	11/14	A. Decision Modeling and Forecasting Revisited B. Policy Making in a Political Context Discussion	
7	11/21	A. Final Team Presentations B. Negotiations Discussion	Final Team Presentation
	12/2		Individual Negotiation Strategy Document
8	12/5	A. Mayoral Forum: Negotiation around NYC Family Homeless Policy B. Guest Speaker	
	12/12		Team Mayoral Policy Memo

*Note that class generally meets every other Friday and consists of two portions; however, some assignments are due on weeks where class doesn't meet.*

## DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

### SESSION 1

SEPTEMBER 5

#### A. INTRODUCTION

This class will enable students and the professors to share their expectations and goals for the class. The syllabus will be distributed and reviewed.

#### B. NEW YORK CITY FAMILY HOMELESSNESS DISCUSSION

There will be a lecture and discussion about Family Homelessness, particularly in New York City, which will center on the first two video documentaries of the series.

##### PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Homelessness Stakeholders - *Family Homelessness Landscape* video
- MICS Platform: Family Homelessness - *Family Homelessness in New York City* video
- MICS Platform: Homelessness Stakeholders - Institute of Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. *A Portrait of Family Homelessness*.
- MICS Platform: Homelessness Stakeholders - *The State of Homelessness in America 2013*. Washington, DC: National Alliance to End Homelessness, April, 2013. *Executive Summary Required; Full Report Optional*.

#### C. DECISION MODELING LECTURE

Most decisions involve uncertainty of some kind. In this class, we will learn how to create and use decision trees, graphic decision models that systematically incorporate uncertainty and evaluate alternatives.

##### PREPARATION

- Course Packet – Wu, G. (1997). *Decision Analysis*. Harvard Business School #9-894-004, 1-14.
- NYU Classes – Kirkwood, Craig W. "Chapter 1: Decision Trees." *Decision Tree Primer*. Department of Supply Chain Management, Arizona State University Tempe, AZ (2002): 85287-4706.
- NYU Classes – E-Course: Alemi, Farrokh. "Decision Trees." *Decision Analysis in Healthcare*. Ed. Wojtusiak, Janusz. Fairfax: George Mason University, 29 Sept 2008. Web Course. *Reading required; audio and video optional*.
- [Optional] NYU Classes – "Decision Trees: Choosing by Projecting 'Expected Outcomes.'" *Mind Tools*, Mind Tools Ltd, n.d. Web.
- [Optional] NYU Classes – Kirkwood, Craig W. "Chapter 2 Risk Aversion: 2.2 Utility Functions." *Decision Tree Primer*. Department of Supply Chain Management, Arizona State University Tempe, AZ (2002): 85287-4706.
- [Optional] NYU Classes – Davis, Jeff. "Decision Trees." (Length: 10:39). Online Video. *YouTube*. 9 Sept 2011. Web. *This is a worked example*.

**SESSION 2**

**SEPTEMBER 19**

**SITE VISIT**

Students will spend the morning visiting the PATH (Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing), which is the New York City Department of Homeless Services intake center for homeless families. In addition, we will visit a homeless family shelter and have an opportunity to tour it and talk with staff and residents.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Advantage Evolution – *Advantage: Incarnation & Evolution* video
- MICS Platform: Family Experience - *Advantage: Family Experience* video
- MICS Platform: Family Experience - Elliot, Andrea. “Invisible Child: Dasani’s Homeless Life.” *The New York Times*. December 9, 2013.
- MICS Platform: Family Experience - Wolfson, Howard, “Bloomberg’s Real Antipoverty Record; Under the Mayor’s 12-Year Tenure, More Than 900,000 New Yorkers Have Moved from Welfare to Work.” *Wall Street Journal*. December 17, 2013.
- MICS Platform: Family Homelessness – “A Theory of Poverty Destabilization: Why Low-income Families Become Homeless in New York City.” Institute for Children, Poverty, & Homelessness. June 2013.
- MICS Platform: Family Homelessness – Katenbaum, Steve. “NYC Hit with Huge Wave of Homelessness.” *CNN Radio*. January 28, 2013
- NYU Classes - N. Smith, L. Flores, J. Lin and J. Markovic. *Understanding Family Homelessness in New York City: An In-Depth Study of Families’ Experiences Before and After Shelter*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice. 2005.

**Due: Decision Modeling Individual Assignment**

**Due September 19 via NYU Classes**

**SESSION 3**

**OCTOBER 3**

**A. SITE VISIT DEBRIEF**

The class will share their reactions to the site visits and discuss how it informed their understanding of the issues.

**B. DECISION MODELING MICS PRESENTATIONS**

Teams will present the results of their decision modeling from the MICS case study along with a decision recommendation.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Advantage Evolution – *Advantage: Incarnation & Evolution* video
- MICS Platform: Advantage Termination – *Advantage: Termination* video
- Book - Bardach Step 3: Construct Alternatives. *Pages 16-31*

**Due: Decision Analysis MICS Team Presentation and Slides**

*Slides due October 1 by 5pm*

**C. ADVANTAGE DISCUSSION**

There will be a discussion about the incarnation, evolution and termination of the Advantage program, which will be informed by the Decision Modeling MICS presentations.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Advantage Evolution – Bosman, Julie. "Plan Would Require Homeless to Work to Qualify for Rent Subsidies." *New York Times*. April 14, 2011
- MICS Platform: Advantage Evolution – "To whose advantage is work advantage?" Institute of Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. September 1, 2011
- MICS Platform: Advantage Evolution – "Fact Sheet: Work Advantage." Department of Homeless Services
- MICS Platform: Advantage Termination – "As Rental Subsidies for Families End, Time in Shelter Grows." Independent Budget Office. February 23, 2012
- MICS Platform: Advantage Termination – Saul, Michael H. "Homeless Costs Shifted." *Wall Street Journal*. March 18, 2013

**D. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS LECTURE**

Stakeholder analysis enables decision makers to identify key influencers and their relative importance. From there, one can develop an appropriate strategy for each of them

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Interactive Tools – Familiarize yourself with PolicyMaker 4 Software
- NYU Classes – Glassman, Amanda, et al. "Political analysis of health reform in the Dominican Republic." *Health policy and planning* 14.2 (1999): 115-126.
- NYU Classes – Reich, Michael R. "Applied political analysis for health policy reform." *Current issues in Public health* 2 (1996): 186-191.
- NYU Classes – Varvasovszky, Zsuzsa, and Ruairí Brugha. "A stakeholder analysis." *Health policy and planning* 15.3 (2000): 338-345.

**Stakeholder Analysis Individual Assignment**

*Due October 10 via NYU Classes*



**SESSION 4**

**OCTOBER 17**

**A. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS MICS PRESENTATIONS**

In the first portion of this class session, teams will present the results of their stakeholder analysis from the MICS case study.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Family Homelessness – *An Election Primer on New York City’s Homeless Families: The Public Policies of Four Mayors, 1978-2013*. New York: Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, 2013. *Pages 1-30 only*
- MICS Platform – Frazier, I. Hidden City. *The New Yorker*. 28 Oct, 2013.

**Due: Stakeholder Analysis MICS Team Presentation and Slides**

*Slides due October 15 by 5pm*

**B. FORECASTING LECTURE**

Forecasting encompasses techniques for predicting the future. In this class, learn how and when to use different forecasting methods and incorporate temporal aspects of data into our forecast, such as trend and seasonality.

PREPARATION

- NYU Classes: E-Book – Lawrence, Kenneth D., Ronald K. Klimberg, and Sheila M. Lawrence. *Fundamentals of forecasting using excel*. Industrial Press Inc., 2009.
  - Chapter 1: Introduction to Forecasting, Pages 9-21
  - Sections 2.1-2.4: Summarizing and Displaying Data in Excel, Pages 9-21
  - Chapter 3: Basic Time Series Analysis, Pages 33-56
  - Section 5.25: Exponential Smoothing with a Seasonal ..., Pages 76-79
- NYU Classes: Hyndman, Rob J., and George Athanasopoulos. *Forecasting: principles and practice*. 2014.
  - [Optional] Chapter 1: Getting Started, Pages 9-24
  - Chapter 2/1: The forecaster’s toolbox, Pages 25-31
- [Optional] MICS Platform – Culhane, Dennis P., et al. "Testing a typology of family homelessness based on patterns of public shelter utilization in four US jurisdictions: Implications for policy and program planning." *Housing Policy Debate* 18.1 (2007): 1-28.

**Forecasting Individual Assignment**

*Due October 24 via NYU Classes*

**SESSION 5**

**OCTOBER 31**

**A. FORECASTING MICS PRESENTATIONS**

Teams will present the results of their decision modeling from the MICS case study along with a decision recommendation.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Advantage Evolution – “Rapidly Rehousing Homeless Families.” Institute of Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. April 1, 2013.
- MICS Platform: Advantage Termination – “Homeless Families Staying Longer in Shelter.” Independent Budget Organization. 2012. Data Visualization.

**Due: Forecasting MICS Team Presentation and Slides**

*Slides due October 29 by 5pm*

**B. CAPACITY MANAGEMENT LECTURE**

This class will build upon the Session 4 forecasting lecture as students will learn how to incorporate additional data characteristics into forecasting models, such as length of stay and family size.

PREPARATION

- NYU Classes – E-Book: Hollins, Bill, and Sadie Shinkins. *Managing service operations: Design and implementation*. Sage, 2006. – *Chapter 12 except Yield Management and Managing Queues sections*
- NYU Classes – Sasser, W. Earl. "Match supply and demand in service industries." *Harvard Business Review* 54.6 (1976): 133-140.
- MICS Platform: Family Homelessness – *Facts about Homelessness*. Coalition for the Homeless. Data Visualization. Web.
- MICS Platform: Family Homelessness – “Tier II Homeless Shelter Capacity.” *Keeping Track Online: The Status of New York City Children*. Citizens Committee for Children of New York. Data Visualization. Web.
- NYU Classes – Rodak, Sabrina. “5 Proven Strategies to Improve Hospital Capacity Management” *Becker’s Hospital Review*, June 5, 2012.
- MICS Platform – Colvin, Jill. “City Spending on Homeless Shelters to Soar to \$800 Million.” *DNAinfo New York*, March 7, 2013. Web.
- [Optional] NYU Classes – Haraden, C., R. Resar, and D. Henderson. Special Issue: “Capacity management breakthrough strategies for improving patient flow.” *Frontiers of Health Services Management* 20(4), 2004.

**Individual Technical Memo**

*Due November 12 via NYU Classes*

**SESSION 6**

**NOVEMBER 14**

**A. DECISION MODELING AND FORECASTING REVISITED**

Policy decisions affect the characteristics of demand, and, therefore, impact the choice and development of forecasting models. In this class, we will look at the interrelation of the policy decisions we make using decision modeling and their impact on demand and, consequently, forecasting.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Advantage Termination – Markee, Patrick. “A Better, More Cost-Effective Alternative to the Failed “Advantage” Program.” Coalition for the Homeless. March 14, 2011

**B. POLICY MAKING IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Policy making is rarely conducted in a vacuum. Rather, it is played out in the context of disparate stakeholders with competing demands, a finite set of resources, an ever changing landscape, a charged political environment, and a lack of certainty.

PREPARATION

- MICS Platform: Going Forward – *Where do we go from here?* Video
- Book – Bardach, Eugene. *Practical guide for policy analysis: the eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. CQ press, 2011. – *Pages 1-78*
- MICS Platform: Going Forward – Canavan, Debbie and Sharon McDonald. “Ending Family Homelessness: National Trends and Local System Responses.” National Alliance to End Homelessness. October 2012
- MICS Platform: Going Forward – Culhane, Dennis, Stephen Metraux, and Thomas Byrne. “A Prevention-Centered Approach to Homelessness Assistance: A Paradigm Shift?” *Housing Debate Policy*. May 2011
- MICS Platform: Homelessness Stakeholders – Shinn, M. B., Rog, D. R., & Culhane, D. P. (2005). Family homelessness: Background research findings and policy options. *Departmental Papers (SPP)*.
- [Optional] MICS Platform: Family Homelessness – O’Flaherty, Brendan. “Housing Subsidies and Homelessness: A Simple Idea.” *SPP Research Paper No. 12-2*. January 25, 2012

**SESSION 7**

**NOVEMBER 21**

**A. FINAL TEAM PRESENTATIONS**

Each team will prepare and present a presentation for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services outlining the current state of the NYC homeless family shelter system, alternatives considered and the team's recommendations along with supporting arguments.

**Due: Final Team Presentation and Slides**

*Slides due November 19 by 5pm*

**B. NEGOTIATIONS LECTURE**

This class will discuss the basics of negotiation around complex, multi-faceted issues with disparate stakeholders.

PREPARATION

- Book – Fisher, Roger, William L. Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Penguin, 2011. –*Chapters 1, 6, 7 and 8*
- Course Packet – Ware, James P. "Bargaining Strategies: Collaborative versus Competitive Approaches." HBS Product #480055-PDF-ENG. April 1, 1980.
- NYU Classes – Mehta, Kandarp. "Five Essential Strategies for Creative Negotiations" *IESE Insight*. Fourth Quarter, Issue 15. 2012.
- [Optional] Course Packet – Ertel, Danny. "Getting Past Yes: Negotiating As If Implementation Mattered." HBS Product # R0411C-PDF-ENG. 2004.
- [Optional] Book – Fisher, Roger, William L. Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Penguin, 2011. *Entire Book*

**Individual Negotiation Strategy Document**

*Due December 2 via NYU Classes*

**SESSION 8**

**DECEMBER 5**

**A. MAYORAL FORUM: NEGOTIATION AROUND NYC FAMILY HOMELESS POLICY**

Students will be assigned in groups to represent different stakeholders in the NYC Family Homeless Shelter System (e.g., providers, advocates, the City). Traditionally, the different stakeholders have not worked well together; nevertheless the Mayor has called a forum where the stakeholders are charged to attempt to develop a series of recommendations around family homelessness in NYC.

**B. GUEST SPEAKER: TBD**

**Team Mayoral Policy Memo**

*Due December 12 via NYU Classes*