# MSPP-GP 3101 Policy and Data Studio Summer 2024 Syllabus

## Last updated 6-10-2024. This syllabus is subject to change. We will notify students of any major changes.

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**Location**: 40 W 4th St (Tisch Hall), Room LC15

**Class Session**: June 10-July 29, 5:30-8:30 pm

### Class Schedule

**The first four classes consist of core lectures and all students will meet together two times per week:**

**WEEK 1**

Class 1: Lecture 1, Monday June 10

Due before class:

* [Assignment 1](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mq44xEc6CbqZ8bt4ya_hZGsFSLTNz5MuO_GkXCGO4P4/edit#heading=h.b9uhbahzbqjq)
* Watch [Tutorials 1-4](https://pspauster.github.io/learning_R/1.installing_r.html)

Topics:

* Introductions
* Course overview, objectives, structure
* Defining project purpose and data storytelling
* Data cleaning and manipulation
* Getting started with R: intro to data analysis and project setup

Class 2: Lecture 2, Thursday June 13

Due before class:

* Watch [Tutorials 5-9](https://pspauster.github.io/learning_R/5.datacleaning_pipe.html)

Topics:

* Project organization
* Documentation & reproducibility
  + Minimum requirements
  + Open source
* Exploratory data analysis
* R: cleaning, aggregation

**WEEK 2**

Class 3: Lecture 3, Monday June 17

Due before class:

* Watch [Tutorials 10-12](https://pspauster.github.io/learning_R/10.joins.html)

Topics:

* Working with bias in data
* Intro to data visualization
* R: joins, pivoting, ggplot

Class 4: Lecture 4, Thursday June 20

Due before class:

* Watch [Tutorials 13-16](https://pspauster.github.io/learning_R/13.stringr.html)

Topics:

* Census data (tidycensus)
* API calls
* R: working with strings and dates
* Github
* Flex topics

**Beginning Week 3, students will meet once per week in their assigned section, with two “gap weeks” before final projects are due.**

**WEEK 3**

Class 5: Project Development

Due before your section meets:

* [Assignment 2](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EkRlgsPkOBGN9wcZiau8_uOCGyY_l4Vgm295M2A7t0Y/edit)

Section A: Monday June 24

Section B: Thursday June 27

**WEEK 4: NO CLASS (July 4)**

* Work on projects and watch [advanced R and GIS video tutorials](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zQQKW08poUiQ1zwUeON6vKiTpvUiUY4bGch_Xb0UiWQ/edit#heading=h.i6ps4h7elvi4) as needed to support your project

**WEEK 5**

Class 6: Project Development

Section A: Monday July 8

Section B: Thursday July 11

**WEEK 6**

Class 7: Project Development

Due before your section meets:

* [Assignment 3](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vi-3g6Nar2sJGnZGrDPFe2G2XzL_ZWisjn7Ti0EYdUs/edit)

Section A: Monday July 15

Section B: Thursday July 18

**WEEK 7:** **NO CLASS**

* Prepare final projects and presentations

**All students will submit their final projects and present on Monday, July 29.**

**WEEK 8**

Class 8: Final Presentations, Monday July 29 (both sections)

Due:

* Final blog submissions
* Final presentations in class

### Course Description

Policy and Data Studio builds on the core courses, your advanced coursework, and is specifically meant to deepen your data analysis. visualization, and communication skills in the context of a policy issue. Studio is a unique end event where you will use data to shed light on a policy question of your choice using the technical skills and specialized knowledge gained from the program. Guided by the Studio instructors, you will identify data sources, perform data cleaning and analyses, create a policy paper, and present draft iterations of your project for feedback and revisions. At the end of the Studio experience, you will present your findings to a panel of faculty and experts.

### Learning Objectives

1. Learn how to find and access data and understand sources, metadata, and limitations
2. Increase familiarity with a variety of types of data for policy analysis
3. Increase proficiency in open source data analysis software R
4. Deepen ability to conduct robust and appropriate data analysis
5. Effectively communicate analysis methods and results via visualization and narrative
6. Practice critical evaluation of data analyses

### Class Format

This course is built around self-directed data analysis projects on a policy topic. Students will select a topic that interests them, develop questions to investigate, find data sources, write reproducible code to clean and analyze the data, create compelling data visualizations, and clearly communicate their findings in a final blog post and presentation.

The class is split into two segments: the first will consist of four lectures over two weeks, and the entire class will meet together with both instructors. Lectures will include presentations on general topics related to data analysis. After the first two weeks, the class will split into two sections and meet once per week with one instructor, focusing on project development. Instructors will work closely with their section and conduct regular check-ins to support students with project development.

Students are expected to attend class in person by default. If you are not feeling well on the day of class, let your instructor know and **stay home**. If you have extenuating circumstances and need to attend class remotely for another reason, let your professor know as early as possible.

Recorded video tutorials - Students will be expected to watch assigned demo videos prior to each lecture to learn the technical content of this course. Technical demos will build on each other and become more advanced as the course progresses.

Slack - Slack will be our primary communication tool for the course. The instructors will create a Slack workspace, organized into channels, and will share code snippets, examples, links, and other resources. Important class announcements will be made in the #general channel. Students are encouraged to ask all technical questions on Slack and help each other whenever possible, so that everyone can benefit from the exchange. Students are also encouraged to share their work and any helpful resources in Slack.

Brightspace - Brightspace will be used only for grading.

Google Drive - There will be a shared Google Drive folder where all resources will be organized, including lecture slides, class notes, etc.

Class Notes - The instructors will use a Google Doc during each session to keep track of notes, links, code snippets and other resources for students to reference.

Software - All software used in this class will be free and open source. Students will be required to install software on their personal computers.

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### Evaluation and Grading

### Participation

The participation grade will be based on the student’s engagement on the course Slack workspace, as well as active engagement during lectures, lab and project development sessions with fellow students. As we are moving quickly and learning a variety of new tools and skills, there are many opportunities to ask for help, to help others, or to share tips, tricks, and best practices. Students are also encouraged to share articles, visualizations, maps, tools, and anything else relevant to the course material to facilitate discourse.

### Assignments

The three assignments represent key milestones in the development of the final project, which may consist of project outlines, draft iterations, and code samples. Assignment deliverables will require students to show a certain level of progress on their project, and they will be used for peer feedback with fellow students as well as 1-on-1 check-ins with instructors during project development days. There will also be opportunities to practice technical skills learned during lecture periods but there will not be assigned work beyond these final project-related submissions.

Note that the [first assignment](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XjGuWQcRKuKUeL9_Q2tgALXNfnuKGroK-NxnqowcO0I/edit#heading=h.ory5stvnfcwp) is due on the first day of class. Subsequent assignments are due during the project development period of the course. Assignments will be graded on a 10 point scale and account for 30% of the student’s final grade.

### Final Project

The [final project](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XjGuWQcRKuKUeL9_Q2tgALXNfnuKGroK-NxnqowcO0I/edit#heading=h.ory5stvnfcwp) will be a written policy paper that presents a data analysis on a topic of your choosing, making use of the tools and techniques learned in class. The final project is expected to include thorough documentation of methods used in conducting the analysis. In addition to the written and technical components, students will prepare a short presentation that frames their policy issue, shows visualizations, and draws some conclusions.

### Grading Breakdown

* Participation: 20%
* 3 assignments: 30%
* Final Project: 50%
  + 10% - In-class presentation
  + 40% - Policy paper, supporting code, and documentation

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### Additional Notes

#### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. Each student is required to sign and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated since you have all signed an Academic Oath and are bound by the academic code of the school. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me. If you are unsure about what is expected of you should *ask*.

#### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students [with Disabilities (CSD) website at www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

#### Religious Holidays

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify your lab instructor in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.