

**Reducing Firearm Violence Within Urban Communities
Problem Solving Initiative (PSI) Class
Winter Semester 2019**

INSTRUCTORS:

- **Professor Patrick Carter**
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- **Professor Saul Green**
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- **Professor Barbara McQuade**
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Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment

CLASS SCHEDULE/LOCATION:

- **Lab:** Wednesdays 3:15-4:15 pm (1025 Jeffries Hall, Law School, 701 S. State Street)
- **Seminar:** Wednesday 4:30-6:30 pm (1025 Jeffries Hall, Law School, 701 S. State Street)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course, *Reducing Firearm Violence Within Urban Communities*, is being offered as part of the Law School's Problem Solving Initiative (PSI). Since 2017, the Law School's PSI program has allowed students to apply their subject matter expertise in practical ways in the service of solving emerging and complex problems, while also promoting the opportunity for students to develop problem solving skills and learn to operate in collaborative spaces with an appreciation for the language, norms, perspectives, and practices of other disciplines. For this class, students will work in groups to design a comprehensive plan to address the public health problem of interpersonal youth firearm violence in urban communities. The course is non-traditional in that course instructors will be team leaders rather than traditional professors delivering pre-established lecture content each week. Classes will primarily operate as discovery sessions with academic, governmental, and non-governmental organization/practitioner experts. PSI courses such as this one emphasize student leadership in advancing the course's objectives. Helping students master a skill-set to solve society's most pressing problems is a primary goal of the initiative. Students will develop cross-disciplinary competence through exposure to the perspectives and practices of other disciplines, learn how to work collaboratively with other team members to reach a common goal, and have opportunities to apply their specific disciplinary expertise as the group works together to create an innovative solution to the public health problem of firearm violence. The course culminates with students creating, and presenting to a team of experts and/or stakeholders, an operational plan proposing their solution. The graduate students in this course are drawn from multiple disciplines, including but not limited to law, business, public

policy, social work, public health, education, information, philosophy, and architecture/urban planning.

PROBLEM SOLVING INITIATIVE (PSI) COURSE PHILOSOPHY:

We are deliberately *not* structuring this course as a conventional graduate course involving linear delivery of prepared content. The goal is for *you, the students*, to come up with solutions to big problems in the world, working on a multidisciplinary team. *We*, the instructors, aren't sitting back hiding the answers. We don't have them. Really. We see ourselves as facilitators, conveners, and project leaders, but *you* are ultimately running the show.

Further, we haven't mapped out how this class will go from beginning to end. We've spent a lot of time researching the background questions, interviewing academic and practitioner experts, and lining up potential discovery resources, but we have not yet sketched out the entire agenda because we need to steer the ship in response to the questions you ask, the ideas you have, and the information that materializes during our shared discovery process. Consequently, this will occasionally get a bit chaotic. Many experts who we want to make available to the class are busy people with shifting schedules. It may turn out that some of the people we most want to talk with are only available by phone at times other than our class sessions, and that some of the discovery may be led by sub-teams meeting at odd hours and reporting back to the class the findings of their outside class research. Important interviewees may cancel at the last minute or tell us that the questions we most want answered are proprietary. That's OK. It may turn out that we pursue solutions that ultimately turn out to be unworkable. That's OK, too. Learning by failing is part of the process of problem solving.

Some outside speakers may choose to make formal presentations. Many will simply show up and be available to answer our questions about what their organization is doing on a particular aspect of the problem of firearm violence prevention. Students will be expected to take the lead in pursuing questions or discussions that help our groups and class as a whole discover the information necessary to solve the problems we've undertaken. Therefore, please enter this course with a spirit of flexibility, creativity, and ingenuity. Remember that our goal is to mimic the best kind of problem solving in the real world: teams made up of people with different expertise, viewpoints, strengths, and backgrounds pooling their ideas, time, sweat, and muscle to get things done.

CLASS CHALLENGE AND GROUP PRESENTATIONS:

The overarching class challenge for this course is to develop a comprehensive and innovative approach to addressing the problem of interpersonal firearm violence among youth in urban settings. Interpersonal firearm violence is the second leading cause of death among all youth, and the leading cause of death for African-American youth living within urban centers (e.g., Detroit, Flint, Chicago). By its nature, the problem of interpersonal firearm violence is complex and multi-faceted, requiring solutions drawn from a variety of different disciplines and different approaches. Thus, we expect that the proposed solutions will be multi-disciplinary, involving components of law, business, public policy, social work, public health, education, information, philosophy, and architecture/urban planning, among others. We have deliberately not chosen to address the population as a whole (i.e., adults and/or younger children), and/or the problems of suicide and/or unintentional firearm injury in an effort to keep the class focused on one aspect of firearm injury prevention. Despite this, many of the solutions proposed or developed may have utility or a spillover effect on addressing these other aspects of the problem and/or students may discover effective interventions that have worked for these problems that they believe may apply to the problem of interpersonal violence.

In the first two weeks of class, students will be divided into teams. Teams will be constructed by the faculty leads and organization will be based on several factors, including the disciplines from which the student is drawn and the information that they provide on their personal resume (first class team exercise). The central goal of team formation is to create teams that are multi-disciplinary and with a diversity of experience within this topic area. Each team will spend the first several weeks of the class researching the problem of firearm violence and identifying the topic area on which they will focus. Teams will be asked to select this topic from one cell of the Haddon Matrix (introduced within the first class). It is important to note that while the topic areas from which students may select are limited, the solutions that they can propose within these areas are limitless and subject to their own research, discovery, and imagination. The prescribed nature of the topic areas is meant to provide a framework for moving forward so that teams don't get stuck trying to identify which aspect of the problem they will focus on as a group. After learning more about the nature of interpersonal firearm violence in the first several class sessions and conducting independent research on their topic area, each team will provide the instructors with a list of three potential aspects or features of their Haddon Matrix topic that they would like to address as a group. Instructors and student teams will then come to an agreement about which aspect each team will focus on. From this point until the date of the midterm, each student team will work on developing solutions to its designated aspect of the problem. Class instruction will provide a framework for thinking about how to approach such a problem as a team, although the solutions will be up to each individual team to develop. There will be several student presentations during this time from the groups on their research progress. These are meant to stimulate cross-team discussion and help provide input on additional research to consider as they move forward towards the midterm. Outside research will include library-based reading, but also contact with academic researchers, injury prevention practitioners, legal scholars, etc. to gather more first-hand information on current effective programs and practices.

Following the midterm presentation, the entire class will begin working toward putting together a single, unified capstone presentation. This presentation will include elements of the solutions put forth by each of the individual workgroups. **All students will collaborate on the final capstone presentation and may be re-assigned to new teams (or asked to form new teams) in order to further develop the class solution and prepare for the capstone presentation.** Feedback from the midterm presentation; additional class discussions; further group research and work; and consultations with the instructors, Andy Burnett, and Patrick Barry will help prepare you for the capstone presentation. At the capstone presentation, which will be held on the final day of class, you will formally present and share your solution(s) with a panel assembled by a hypothetical foundation that would fund initiatives to address the problem of firearm violence. These initiatives can be anything that the class conceptualizes as potentially needing funding, from small-scale neighborhood projects in a community with high-levels of violence, to NIH-style research projects to test the efficacy of large-scale individual or community interventions, to a public information and political campaign to advance public opinion on an important policy initiative or to advocate broadly for legislative policy change. Panelists will include distinguished experts from government, academia, the nonprofit world, and the audience will include other relevant stakeholders, including community members or advocates.

In addition, toward the end of the semester, the class will create a single master report of 20-30 pages containing the elements of their capstone presentation, which may consist of proposed legislative or regulatory text (addressed to any or all of the federal, state, or local levels) with accompanying justification; a proposal to interested philanthropists for a privately funded effort to address the problem; a business plan for a for-profit entity that might address the problem; or another document of similar scope and ambition. We plan to make the work product publicly available on the law school's website. We hope that the class's work product will attract attention

of government officials, activists, philanthropists, academics, journalists, and other interested parties as a creative and informed intervention into the crucial debate surrounding interpersonal firearm violence in urban communities.

CLASS POLICIES:

Class attendance: We expect you will be here for every class. If you absolutely must miss a class, you should email us (your professors) and your team beforehand, and establish a plan for making up work. Because much of the actual work of this class takes place during class time, multiple absences are likely to affect your grade. Also, an important logistical and cultural note: We are aware that in many units, classes tend to begin five or ten minutes after the appointed start time. Not so in the law school! We expect to begin on time and will make every effort not to hold you over after 6:30. Assigned readings should be completed before each class.

Canvas: Check our class Canvas site regularly for updates about the class.

Communication: If you need to get in touch with your professors, please include **all** of us on any email correspondence.

GRADING AND GRADE ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

This course will be graded. We recognize that grading a non-traditional course largely based on collaborative work and team presentations is challenging. However, it is not unprecedented, and we have worked with the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) to develop grading metrics that we believe are workable and fair. This course is not bound by the Law School's forced grading curve. However, we intend to assign grades that comply with the Law School's target mean of around 3.75 for seminars, clinics, and practice simulations.

Your course grade will be based on your performance on the following:

1. **Short In-Class Presentations (20% of Final Grade):** After the first week of class, we will have weekly slots for each team to make a short presentation on a reading or other material relevant to the problem we are trying to solve. Each student will be expected to present at least once during the semester, and his/her entire team will be evaluated on each of the team's presentations. The ideal presentation will: (1) summarize the key point or points of the reading or research conducted; (2) explain its relevance to the aspect of the problem that they are trying to solve; and (3) suggest any follow-up steps for the presenter, a group, or the class. It is up to each presenter to select the appropriate topic for presentation. It could be any relevant material that the group has worked on during the prior week's research period. Presentations are intended to generate discussion and conversations that involve the entire class.

Examples of topics for the presentations include, but are not limited to:

- *Article in popular media.*
- *Technical report about a new technology.*
- *Article in a professional or technical journal or publication.*
- *Judicial decision, statute, or regulation.*
- *Government report.*
- *Analyst report.*
- *Chapter of a book.*
- *Conference or webinar presentation.*
- *Interview with a subject matter expert.*

Assessment of student presentations will be based on relevance of the material presented and clarity and effectiveness of presentation.

- 2. Reflection Memos (10% of Final Grade):** One of our primary goals in this course is to develop your skills in problem solving in multidisciplinary environments. To that end, each student must write four reflection memos, of 1-2 pages each, during the course of the semester that explore the gun violence problem and how the multidisciplinary classroom environment affects learning and the problem-solving process. Topics for the memos will be assigned.

The memos are due on **Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 26, and Apr. 12.**

- 3. Student Memo on Work Conducted Outside Class (10% of Final Grade):** Each student will write a 3-5 page memo describing the work they completed on the class challenge outside of class, including library research, interviews with stakeholders, work preparing the final presentation, team meetings, etc. over the course of the semester. Although students will need to turn this memo in by **Apr. 16,** they should document their work throughout the semester so that they are able to write an accurate, complete, and thoughtful report. Assessment of student reports will be based on the amount of work completed outside of class, the clarity and coherence of the writing, and evidence of skill acquisition over the course of the term.
- 4. Attendance and In-class Participation (10% of Final Grade):** As this is an interdisciplinary class, where the entire class is expected to work together as a team, attendance at every class session and at the meetings that you will schedule outside of class in preparation for the capstone event is mandatory. Final student grades will reflect class attendance and class participation. Students are expected to engage with guest speakers, classmates, and faculty members regularly. Students are expected to complete readings and other tasks assigned by faculty members. Assessment of student in-class participation will be based on whether the student participated regularly and in a manner that fostered learning and added to class discussions and improved the final presentation, including posing questions to guest speakers, presenting relevant information to the class, and otherwise furthering the process of problem solving, team-based learning, and interaction across disciplines.
- 5. Team Participation (10% of Final Grade):** Students should plan to work with members of their team inside and outside of class to refine potential solutions and, toward the second half of the term, put together the capstone presentation and final report. To assess team participation, instructors will consider how effectively students applied problem solving concepts. Instructors also will take into consideration peer assessment forms (i.e., assessments of your performance by other members of your assigned team; example on Canvas under Files) that students fill out at the midpoint and at the end of the term. However, professors will have the ultimate responsibility for assessing each student. Peer assessment forms are due on **Feb. 26** and **Apr. 16.** In any course in which group work is an integral component of the course, students may have concerns about workload distribution within the group. We are hopeful that “free riding” will not be an issue in this class. To that end, each team will define at the outset the roles and responsibilities of team members within the group (i.e., their team contract) and it will be the responsibility of group members to adhere to those guidelines throughout the semester.
- 6. Final Report and Capstone Presentation (40% of Final Grade):** Students will present the class solution to an outside panel of experts at a capstone held during the last class of the

semester. Following brief introductions, the class will present for roughly 30-45 minutes. You then will have approximately 30 minutes to engage with panelist questions and comments and 20 minutes to respond to general audience Q&A. In addition, students will submit their final report at this last class. Below are the criteria by which student proposals will be evaluated by panelists, so you should keep these factors in mind as you work toward your final presentation and report:

- **Impact:** Does the proposal solve a real problem or address a need?
- **Creativity and Innovation:** Does the proposal offer creative and innovative way to address the challenge?
- **Conceptual Development:** Does the proposal address the need and propose change in a thorough manner? Have the students thought through the issue and vision for change in detail?
- **Coherence:** Does the proposal have a clear and coherent form and is it clearly and coherently expressed?
- **Feasibility:** Is the proposal feasible? (Note: We want you to be creative and not limited by what is currently feasible, but you should be able to articulate a path, even if tentative, toward feasibility under certain specified conditions.)
- **Interdisciplinarity:** Does the proposal explicitly include components from the different fields or disciplines represented by the students' home units, including law?

The following is a rough guide describing the level of work that corresponds to student grades. The descriptions are necessarily general, but we hope it helps you understand our grading.

A	Consistently excellent work in all areas, with at least one outstanding piece of significant work. A student who earns an "A" will be organized and attentive to details, will always allocate sufficient time and effort to carry out tasks responsibly, and will recognize, consider, and appropriately resolve ethical issues. The student will show initiative and creativity in planning and developing solutions, rather than merely carrying out plans outlined by the professor, and will be reflective, professional, and respectful. S/he will have shown considerable progress in mastering the various skills necessary to be an effective problem solver and multidisciplinary collaborator, and will actively prepare, participate, and take initiative in all class sessions and team sessions.
A-	Mostly excellent work in all areas and some very good work.
B+	Consistently very good work or a mix of generally very good work, occasional excellent work, and some competent work.
B	Competent and adequate work with some very good work, but with some weaknesses.
B-	On the whole, competent work but with some significant lapses or shortcomings.
C	On the whole, marginally competent work with frequent lapses or shortcomings.
C- or below	Serious difficulties with performance; failing to meet responsibilities.

Students enrolled in and registered through schools or colleges that permit pass/fail grading may be able to opt for pass/fail grading in this course. Students must verify that option with their home schools or colleges. Students who choose the pass/fail option will receive a grade of "pass" if they meet the conditions set forth by their schools or colleges for such a grade.

CLASS SESSIONS:

Boot Camp – Jan 18, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., 0225 Jeffries Hall

Week 1 – Jan 23

Readings for Class: See Class Reading Assignments/Class 1 under Files on Canvas

Speakers: Patrick Carter, Saul Green, Barbara McQuade

Topics of Presentation:

1. Overview of Course, PSI Philosophy, Capstone Project, and Syllabus
2. Overview of Firearm Violence among Youth in Urban Communities
3. The Public Health Approach/SARA and the Haddon Matrix

Lab Session:

1. Introductions
2. Skills Resume
3. Plan for Team Formation

Before Week 2

Professors meet to assign teams.

Week 2 – Jan 30

Readings for Class: See Class Reading Assignments/Class 2 under Files on Canvas

Speaker: John Eck, Patrick Carter

Topics of Presentation:

1. SARA method: John Eck
2. Overview of approaches to reducing gun violence: Patrick Carter

Lab Session

1. Team meeting
2. Discuss styles, roles
3. Draft and sign contract
4. Discuss Haddon matrix vectors

Week 3 – Feb 6

Readings for Class: See Class Reading Assignments/Class 3 under Files on Canvas

Speakers: Community members and victims of gun violence

Topics of Presentation:

1. Panel presentation
2. Debrief panel

Lab Session: Teams work on SCAN phase

Week 4 – Feb 13

Readings for Class: See Class Reading Assignments/Class 4 under Files on Canvas

Speaker: Marc Zimmerman

Topics of Presentation:

1. Community-Based Participatory Research
2. Built-environment Interventions (e.g., Greening) for Violence

Lab Session:

1. Student Presentations on SCAN work (1-2 members of each team)
2. Students to discuss ANALYZE phase of SARA Process

Week 5 – Feb 20

Readings for Class: See Class Reading Assignments/Class 5 under Files on Canvas

Speakers: Saul Green, Barbara McQuade

Topics of Presentation:

1. Community-Based Strategies for Reducing Firearm Violence
2. Student presentations on research work

Lab Session: Students Discuss Haddon Matrix Choices Narrowing to One Focus Area

Week 6 – Feb 27

Readings for Class: See Class Reading Assignments/Class 6 under Files on Canvas

Speaker: Patrick Carter

Topics of Presentation: Emergency Department & Hospital-based Violence Interventions

Lab Session:

1. Student Presentations on ANALYZE work (1-2 members of each team)
2. Students Teams to Narrow Solutions to Three Facets

SPRING BREAK

Week 7 – March 13

Students present on one narrowed proposed solution.

Week 8 – March 20

Patrick Barry lectures on presentation skills

Week 9 – March 27

Group work

Week 10 – April 3

Group work

Week 11 – April 10

Group work

Week 12 – April 17

Practice Capstones and receive feedback

Week 13 – April 24

Capstone Presentation