

Effectively Teaching Large Intro Courses in Policy Analysis

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APPAM 2011

November 3, 2011

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Who Am I?

Lecturer



Banker



Consultant



Student



Key Aspects of the Paper

- **Basis of Paper: National and International Policy Course**
 - One of three core introductory courses at SPEA
 - Every SPEA undergraduate student must take this course
 - The largest course at SPEA (500+ students, 9 sections per semester)
- **Topical Approach as an Introduction to Public Policy**
 - Spend minimal time on general theory and the policy process
 - Instead use pressing policy issues to keep students engaged and underscore the core principles of process and analysis
 - I choose a “Top Ten” each semester
- **Course by Outline**
 - The syllabus is no more than an outline of the topics to be covered
 - No specific dates are mentioned except for assignments and exams
 - All reading is assigned one week in advance
 - Choice and order can be re-arranged at any point



Key Aspects of the Paper

- **Lecture Slides as Textbook**

- This is what I did as a banker and consultant
- Creating slides quickly advances the instructor's knowledge of a topic
- If done well enough, they can adequately substitute a textbook

- **Assign All Readings with a Purpose**

- Assign with caution: All readings must carry significance and add value
- Build students' familiarity with trusted sources of information
- Avoid textbook chapters: Who will read a textbook after graduation?

- **Effective Use of Class Time**

- My commitment: Class will always start on time and never end early
- Use multiple teaching methods in each class

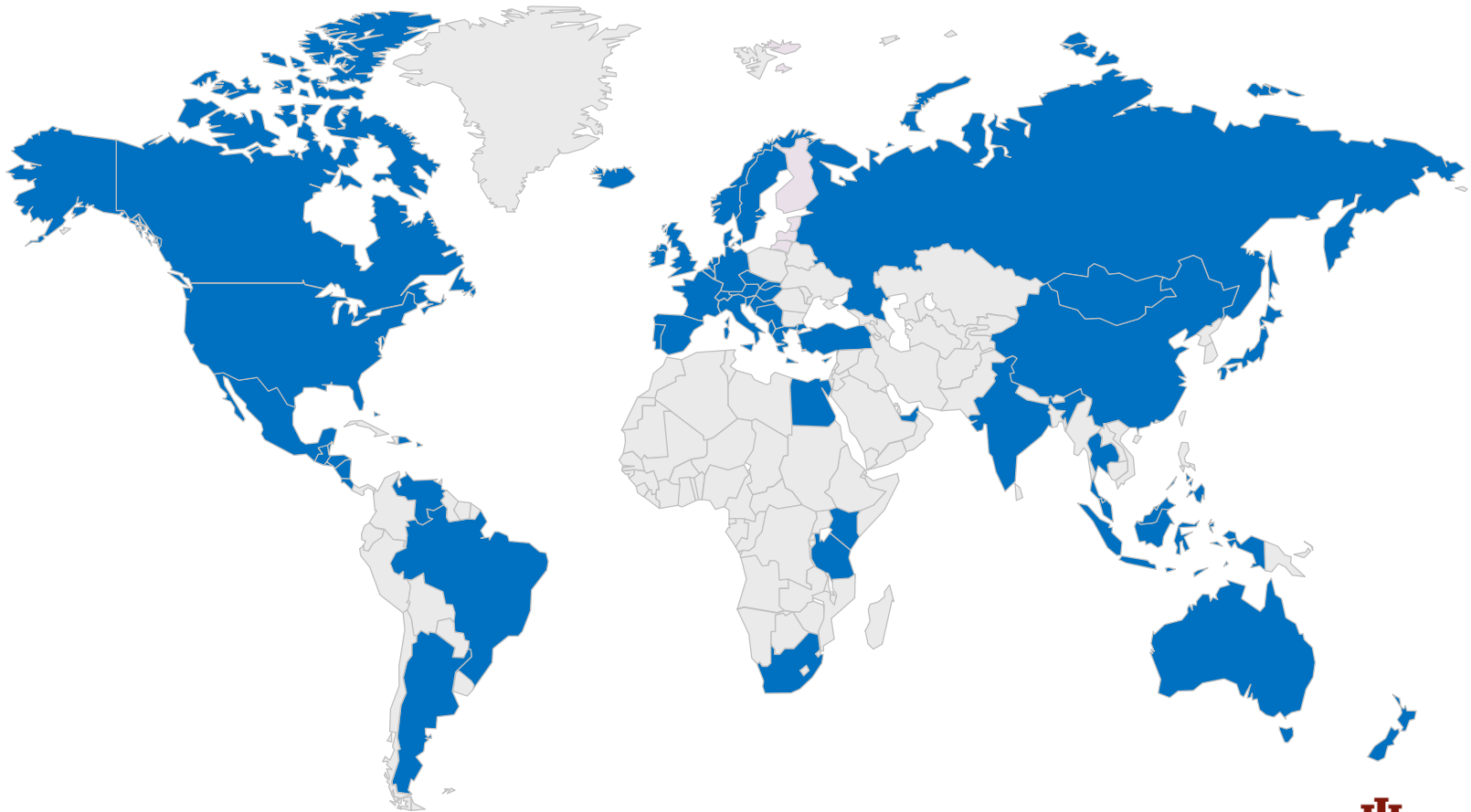
- **Remain Exceptionally Current**

- Students are more engaged if the policy being analyzed is pressing issue and data is up to date



Internationalize Content and the Instructor

International experience can bring valuable insights into the classroom. These are only the countries that I've physically been to; I've worked with many more.



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Evaluating Results

- **Student Evaluations (Since Fall 2009)**

- Some of the highest scores for this course and ranked highly amongst other undergraduate courses at SPEA, both large and small

- **Registration (For example, Fall 2011)**

- Of the 4 large format sections (100 students) available, my 2 sections are the only sections that are full and exceed 72 students
- Only 3 of the 9 sections available exceeded 75% enrollment

- **Feedback from Academic Advisors and Faculty**

- I've received positive feedback from the advising staff, other faculty and the Dean's Office based on their interactions with my former students

- **Influence of Grades**

- Average grades are not exceptionally high (2.9 GPA for the last academic year) to conclude that students' grades are disproportionately influencing the results

