SEAS MASTER’S PROJECT PLANNING
EAS 701/888

January 10 – February 21  |  Tuesday, 4-6:30pm  |  1040 Dana
1 credit (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading)
701/888 will officially end April 21 with completion of a final project proposal, budget, and work plan.

INSTRUCTORS
Avik Basu  abasu@umich.edu  734-262-5800  4556 Dana
Office Hours:  By appointment

(GSI)

OVERVIEW
A Master’s Project is an interdisciplinary group project in which students work closely with a faculty advisor to analyze and propose solutions to a real-world environmental problem. Typically projects involve a 12-to-16 month process of problem definition, research, analysis, writing, and presentation aimed at solving a problem or satisfying a need faced by a client. Each project requires individual and group analysis and reporting. Hence, projects develop abilities around content knowledge and analysis, as well as mechanisms to work effectively in teams through a group problem-solving process. Projects typically produce:

- Content learning (renewable energy, sustainable growth, biodiversity conservation, etc.)
- Analytical skills (statistical and spatial analysis, design, surveys, financial modeling, etc.)
- Professional skills (writing, professional communications, evaluation, etc.)
- Process knowledge (team-building, facilitation, negotiation, etc.)
- Client contacts and networks

OBJECTIVES
Project topics are developed and selected during this planning course required of all master’s project students. 701/888 provides one of the six credits that students will receive for their master’s project. The master’s project planning course:

- Provides a structure by which project ideas and student teams are developed
- Provides foundational-level knowledge of project management, research design, proposal writing, and group process that is further developed throughout the project
- Produces for each project, by “spring” break, an interim research proposal describing:
  - team members; advisor; client
  - client need/problem to be addressed
  - research questions; research methods; analytic approaches; data needs
  - deliverables and rough timeframe

EVALUATION
Students will receive either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade depending on meeting course expectations and timely submissions of deliverables as described in the schedule below.
EXPECTATIONS

Full class engagement regardless of project status. To be effective as a mechanism to develop projects and research proposals, it is necessary for all students to be engaged in the process. While some projects will develop faster than others, students in these teams are expected to contribute to full-class discussions and provide cross-project feedback and sharing of lessons about group process. All student teams are required to submit course deliverables according to the schedule below, no matter how fast-tracked a project may be. However, interim or final proposals can be submitted earlier than required.

Flexibility about topic scope. Project topics and scope are negotiable among team members, clients and advisors. We ask that you keep an open mind about project topics and seek to accommodate your personal goals in projects that initially may not seem a logical fit for you. Projects involving a diversity of student backgrounds/skills often provide some of the richest learning experiences.

Naming conventions on work submitted. When submitting prospectuses, proposals and other deliverables, include the project number (2 digits) and assignment in the file name so that we can easily identify which files go with different projects.

Name the prospectus paper file: PXX_Assignment.doc
For example: P23_Prospectus.doc

Communicating with instructors. Beyond office hours and talking to instructors in class, we encourage email exchanges. Please put the course number (701/888) in the subject line to ensure that your message rises above background noise. Recognize that responses may take a day or more.

SCHEDULE

Key: □ Special Events
○ Deadlines

January-February 2018

Jan 10 (Tu) CLASS: Course introduction
Jan 12 (Th) □ Client fair
Held in the Ford Commons from 4-6:30pm.
Jan 13 (F) ○ Student information survey
Complete this survey by the end of the day (link available on Canvas).
Jan 16 (M) ○ Review a past masters project
Complete this assignment by the end of the day (instructions on Canvas).
Jan 17 (Tu) CLASS: Envisioning your Master’s Project; Funding
Jan 20 (F)  ⚪ Project preference survey
Complete this survey by the end of the day (link available on Canvas).

Jan 23 (M)  —  Project teams formed

Jan 24 (Tu)  CLASS: Research design; IRB

Jan 30 (M)  ⚪ 1-page topic prospectus and presentation PowerPoint slides
By the end of Monday, each team submits, via Canvas, a 1-page prospectus and PowerPoint slides with names of authors.

Jan 31 (Tu)  CLASS: Presentation and review of topic prospectuses
3 minute presentation of prospectus; Develop feedback for two other project prospectuses.

Feb 3 (F)  ⚪ Feedback on prospectuses and presentations
By the end of the day, submit via Canvas, feedback on two project prospectuses and presentations.

Feb 7 (Tu)  CLASS: Writing research proposals; Project scoping; Client communication

Feb 14 (Tu)  CLASS: Group process

Feb 20 (M)  ⚪ Team Charter
Each team submits a team charter by the end of the day.

Feb 21 (Tu)  CLASS: Project management

Feb 24 (F)  ⚪ Interim proposal
Due by 5pm. Submit your interim proposal via Canvas using the proposal guidelines and including names of group members and advisors.
March-April 2018

Mar-Apr  Detailed work on proposals with faculty advisors; Consultation with GSI as requested

Mar 14  ⭑ Budget working session with OAP staff

Mar 24 (F)  ⭑ Verbal face-to-face project status updates provided to GSI  
*Sign up for a group time with the GSI for a 30-minute update and review. Complete this before the end of the day.*

Apr 3  ⭑ Final budget paperwork

Apr 6-7  ⭘ Capstone Presentations (last cohort’s final project presentations)

Apr 21 (F)  ⭑ Full proposal  
*Due to OAP by 5pm. Must include signatures of team members and approval by faculty advisor. Final grade in 701-888 given at this time.*

⋯ SEAS Master’s Project funding proposals  
*Can be the same as the full proposal as but must use SEAS budget template.*

And beyond*

Summer 2017  Initiate research (Plan around summer internships!)

Oct 2017  ⭘ Assist new students in Master’s Project 101 event *(optional)*

Nov 2017  ⭘ Meetings with communications consultant to improve presentations  
**Interim presentations (tentative)**

Jan-Feb 2018  ⭘ Assist new students by serving on EAS 701 panel discussions *(optional)*

Mid Apr 2018  ⭑ Capstone presentations

Late Apr 2018  ⭑ Final reports

May 2018  ⭘ Graduate!

*Note that the deadlines listed after April 2018 are for informational purposes and are not requirements for EAS 701/888.*
RESOURCES
SEAS Careers seas-careers@umich.edu [Client Liaison, Career, and Networking]
SEAS Financial Aid seas-financial-aid@umich.edu [Funding]

701/888 course information will be available on Canvas:

Masters project handbook (contains guidelines, forms, and funding information)

SEAS archives of past projects:

UM Deep Blue (contains copies of former masters projects)

University of Michigan Institutional Review Board (IRB):

UM statistical analysis assistance, 3550 Rackham Building

UM writing assistance, Sweetland Center for Writing, 1310 North Quad

SEAS Funding

RESEARCH METHODS COURSES (more can be found on Wolverine Access)

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<td>EAS 501/056</td>
<td>Methods &amp; Tools for Studying People</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>9-12:00p</td>
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