POLITICAL SCIENCE 300
URBAN POLITICS

CHICAGO FIELD PROJECT: URBAN PROBLEMS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Given the diversity of Chicago’s population and patterns of neighborhood residence, numerous innovative and vibrant community organizations can be found within the city limits. The purpose of this assignment is to describe, examine, and analyze an important urban problem within the City of Chicago. After identifying a problem, students will each select a Chicago community organization which addresses the selected problem. Students will research the history and status of the chosen community organization while evaluating its structure, focus, programs/projects, funding, effectiveness, and other characteristics. Students must choose a non-profit community organization located within the City of Chicago, which primarily serves residents of Chicago. Students must visit the offices of the community organization and conduct an interview with an official representative of the organization. All problems and community organizations must be approved by the course instructor prior to beginning this assignment!

REQUIRED SECTIONS

Description of the Urban Problem: In this section you should discuss the history of the problem, why the issue you have chosen is a problem, and how it became a problem. You should provide data related to the extent and impact of the problem (i.e. number of people affected, impact on local economy). Is this problem unique to Chicago? If yes, explain why. If no, explain how it impacts other cities and provide examples. Students should include governmental public policy solutions aimed at the problem in this section of the paper. Be sure to incorporate secondary sources into this section of your report.

Organization Overview: What is the name of the non-profit organization you selected? Where is the organization located? What kind of organization is this? Indicate whether this is a neighborhood group, a foundation, a citizens advisory board, or something else. How does this organization address the urban problem you selected? What other local, state, or national organizations also address this problem? Why is this organization unique? Why did you choose this particular organization? What is the history of this organization? Who does the organization serve? What geographical areas of Chicago are served by this organization (i.e. the entire city, specific neighborhoods)? What are the socioeconomic demographics of the area and population served? Describe the community served in terms of its needs, strengths, and assets.

Organization Programs/Projects: Summarize the broad scope of the organization’s programming/projects, and then focus on specific programs or projects for a fuller discussion. Include information related to the organization’s mission statement, goals, and objectives. How many people are served by the organization? How many by each specific
program/project? Who are these people? How do they qualify for assistance and support from this community organization?

**Organization Budget:** What is the overall budget of this organization? Where does the money go? How much goes to each program/project? How much of the budget goes to administration/overhead (i.e. salaries, rent, utilities, office equipment, supplies, etc…).

**Organization Funding:** Identify the organization’s funding and revenue sources. Is the organization supported by tax dollars? Does it receive grants? If yes, identify from whom, for what, and how much. What types of fundraising does the organization engage in? How much is raised from fundraising efforts/events?

**Organization Structure:** What is the organization’s decision-making structure? How does this organization make authoritative and policy decisions? Is there a Board of Directors or Trustees? If so, how are they selected? Are they elected by the membership? Appointed by someone? How many Board members serve the organization? Who are the officers? How long are the terms of the Board? What responsibilities (financial, time, expertise, etc…) do Board members have to the organization?

**Organization Staff:** Identify all organization staff members. Are they full or part time? The inclusion of an organizational chart in the appendix is highly recommended. If available, include the salaries of each staff member. In this section, students may choose to describe the physical office space and conditions of the working environment.

**Organization Volunteers/Supporters:** How do people become involved in this organization? Does it recruit members? How? Can one just join, or must one be appointed or selected in some way? How much time and/or money does the average volunteer/supporter give to the community organization? What kind of things do volunteers/supporters do for and with the organization?

**Impact of the Organization:** Address how effectively or ineffectively the organization impacts the urban problem it addresses. Provide specific examples with data to support effectiveness or ineffectiveness. You should include a discussion of organizational advocacy efforts in this section. What efforts are undertaken to alleviate and/or eliminate the urban problem? Does the organization attempt to influence public policy through a legislative agenda? Does it engage in political outreach or lobbying? Does it contribute time or money to electoral campaigns? Does the organization provide or participate in any sort of public awareness efforts?

**Political/Economic Environment of the Organization:** How do current political and/or economic conditions impact the ability of the organization to operate? Are any governmental regulations or laws affecting this organization? What impact has globalization had on the organization and the community served?
Challenges faced by Organization: What are the challenges the organization is currently facing? What obstacles must be overcome?

Future of the Organization: Based on your research and knowledge of the organization, discuss the future of this organization. Are there any new opportunities on the horizon for this organization?

THE RESEARCH

Your final report must include secondary sources and primary research. "Secondary sources" are materials that other people have written detailing the results of their research on a subject. These include books, scholarly articles in journals, reports by government agencies and research organizations, and articles in magazines and newspapers.

Your report must rely upon at least two secondary print sources related to the type of urban problem, opportunity, or challenge your organization addresses. For example, if you are writing about an organization that works on homelessness, you must cite at least two articles, books or newspapers that discuss the problem of homelessness (preferably in Chicago); if you are writing about an organization that works on gentrification and redevelopment, you must cite two secondary sources that examine challenges facing downtowns, downtown comebacks, gentrification, or various strategies for downtown redevelopment. Print materials assigned for class may be used as one of the required secondary sources, but at least one secondary source on the type of urban problem addressed in your report must be an article or book that is not assigned for the class.

You may cite as many secondary sources as you deem necessary to prepare your report adequately, including material from websites. Scholarly research beyond the minimum requirement is strongly encouraged.

"Primary" research means your own original research into the subject matter, information that you gather and analyze yourself. Primary sources include documents such as grant applications, organization charts, annual reports, communications (i.e. news releases, newsletters, internal and external correspondence) prepared by an organization's leadership, websites, and census data. People are an important source of primary material. For example, you will meet with someone involved with or served by the community organization and ask them questions about the organization - this is an interview. You can also gain primary material through observation, for example, by attending a meeting of the community organization you are studying. Information that the community organization makes available about itself on the Internet may also be primary material.

I encourage you to look at as many primary sources as necessary to complete this assignment. Your primary research must include at least one interview with an official representative of the community organization (i.e. Staff, Board Member) you are studying. Your final report must include the individual's name, position within the community organization, and the date of the interview.
organization, and contact information (phone number, email, address). You are encouraged to interview others who are associated with the community organization like volunteers and individuals served. We will discuss how to request and conduct an interview in class. Please **do not schedule your interview before we discuss how to go about it or before your problem and organization have been approved by the course instructor.** After your interview, please be sure to send a thank you letter, note, or email to the person you interviewed. Include a copy your thank you note in the appendix of your final report.

THE WRITING

The final report must be well-written, including correct mechanics and good structure at the paragraph and sentence levels. No matter how much research has been done, a paper has to be well-written to earn an "A." Keep in mind that paragraphs are important. Every paragraph should have a clear subject and a clear role in your paper; it should fit with what comes before and after.

Please call upon other people to help you. You may ask a classmate, mentor, spouse, friend or parent to read your drafts and provide comments. I am more than willing to read drafts of your report. Please schedule an appointment to meet with me to review your draft. The Elmhurst College Writing Center also provides writing support for all students. Students are strongly encouraged to visit the Writing Center. Please take advantage of this service.

**Format:** Prepare your report with one-inch margins in a 12 point font with double line spacing. Pages should be numbered and the final report should be stapled in the upper left hand corner. Your report should include a cover page identifying the title of the report, your name, the course, and date submitted. Your report should be **6-8 pages in length**, not including the appendix. We will discuss the types of things to include in the appendix in class. You paper must also include a bibliography or reference page. The required sections detailed in this description should be in every report. Additional sections may be added and are encouraged!

Your paper must be properly referenced with in-text citations and a reference page or endnotes and bibliography. You may use APA style (American Psychological Association) or Chicago Manual style (also called "Turabian"). Shortened style guides for each are available on the internet and at the Elmhurst College Library. You will find an excellent overview of citing sources at: [http://library.duke.edu/research/citing](http://library.duke.edu/research/citing)

Interviews should be included in your bibliography or reference page. Examples of how to cite an interview for this report are shown below:

Smith, Jason. [Executive Director, ABC Community Organization] Personal Interview. 20 April 2009.

Jones, Eddie. [Board Member, ABC Community Organization] Telephone Interview. 2 May 2008.
CHOOSING YOUR URBAN PROBLEM

Students are encouraged to choose an urban problem which is interesting and relevant to this course. Although the list below is far from exhaustive, it should give you some ideas.

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<th>Elderly</th>
<th>HIV/AIDS</th>
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<td>Elections and Campaigns</td>
<td>Homelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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CHOOSING YOUR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Students may select an organization with which they are familiar or have existing relationships. Alternatively, students may search the internet and consult the course instructor for assistance and guidance identifying a community organization.

DEADLINES

It is critical that students plan ahead for this project. It can often take several weeks for a representative from your chosen organization to respond and to schedule your interview. Students are encouraged to start working on this project ASAP!

3/1/2017: Urban Problem and Community Organization Overview Due
Students must submit a 1-2 page statement which details the urban problem under consideration (be as specific as possible) and the Chicago non-profit organization to be studied. The name of the Chicago non-profit organization, address, contact information, and website address must be included in this overview. Students should not visit the community organization or interview official representatives until the urban problem and community organization have been approved by the course instructor.

4/21/2017: Final Chicago Field Project Report Due