

**PPOL 2701.2: Public Policy Analysis:  
Career/Professional Skills for Public Policy through Client-Driven Case Study  
(Winter 2026 Client-driven case study: Exploratory Scenario Planning)**

**Winter 2026**

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**Class meetings:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00 to 1:50pm. Monday, 01/05/2026 –  
Wednesday, 03/11/2026

**Class location:** Sie Complex 2115

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**About your professor:** <https://stefannorgaard.com/>

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Image above appeared in Bernstein, 2020, and conveys an Exploratory Scenario Planning (XSP) exercise about population growth and resilient communities and watersheds in Arizona.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Photograph:** Jeremy Stapleton facilitates action planning with a team from the City of Avondale, Arizona, at the Arizona Growing Water Smart Workshop in Phoenix, February 2020. Credit: Diego Lomelli Trejo. Appeared in the following article: Bernstein, Allison Ehrich. 2020. “How to Use Exploratory Scenario Planning Teaches Would-Be Practitioners How to Apply This Emergent Approach to Local, Regional, and Organizational Plans for the Future.” *The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Land Lines*. 15 September. Accessed 4 August 2025. Available at:

## Course description

This course helps student develop essential skills in public policy—professional writing and communication, oral presentation, and ‘soft’ skills of building and maintaining professional networks—through extended, client-driven projects related to an issue of contemporary concern. For the Winter 2026 quarter, our course partner will be the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (LILP) and their Consortium for Scenario Planning. Students will participate in experiential learning opportunities related to the Lincoln Institute’s Scenario Planning work, and students’ final projects will be practically used by the Lincoln Institute internally and externally to inform work and best practices on Exploratory Scenario Planning (XSP).

Exploratory Scenario Planning (XSP) – a growing arena of public policy planning and practice – refers to a suite of decision-making tools that help affects communities anticipate and prepare for a wide array of possible futures. Public policymaking in our contemporary world is marked by tremendous, rapid uncertainty and cascading decision effects that depend on assumptions made under uncertainty. Scenario planning, as we will explore in this course, offers a tool of public policy analysis that can aide policymakers in making decisions. In particular, our work with the Lincoln Institute will emphasize the use of *driving forces* and *scenario development* to support adaptive policymaking and resilient strategies in the face of uncertainty. The course will employ an in-depth, community-engaged learning (CEL) approach to explore these and related topics. We will focus in particular on planning issues facing the Denver Metropolitan Region, including “actually occurring” nascent policy experiments. Throughout, we will attend to three conceptual through lines: the need for contextual sensitivity, challenges inherent to implementation, and public-private arrangements. Client-based team capstone projects employing XSP, for which there are scaffolded sub-assignments, are a key part of the course.

## Learning outcomes

PPOL 2701.2 combines learning outcomes grounded in Career/Professional Skills for Public Policy (as a methods course) and policy analysis *applications* (as a public policy analysis course focused on a particular social issue, in this case exploratory scenario planning or XSP). As such, learning outcomes relate to both skills-based and substantive course goals:

*Learning Outcomes related to methods and skills.* By the end of this course, students will have:

- Developed and honed professional writing and policy communication skills;
- Developed and practiced oral presentation skills; and
- Formed and advanced soft skills in building/maintaining professional networks.

*Learning Outcomes related to a policy issue.* By the end of the course, students will have:

- Acquired competence about dynamic, applied arenas of public policy and policymaking that are of contemporary concern;
- Gained the ability to compare and contrast the different models of scenario planning and criteria for selecting suitable models to achieve community goals;

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<https://www.lincolnst.edu/es/publications/articles/2020-09-new-publication-how-to-use-exploratory-scenario-planning/>.

- Explored how different models of scenario planning have been used to prepare communities for uncertainties in the future;
- Develop a scenario planning process for guiding communities to develop scenarios and responsive strategies and policies for different scenarios;
- Gained skills in identifying and analyzing data on *indicators* for monitoring how driving forces change over time;
- Developed performance metrics for measuring the impact of different policy options.
- Developed skills in working collaboratively – through inter- and intra-personal learning including through team-based collaborations; and
- Analyzed public policy issues and approaches comprehensively through mixed methods.

## Course materials

**All course materials will be available on Canvas.** Students are expected to read all materials *in advance* of the relevant class session. Students should read with considerable attention to detail, for example by printing readings and annotating materials, reading actively and taking hand-written or typed reading notes, or by annotating readings with a tablet or laptop. This course engages written work including books, journal articles, and popular press materials, as well as audio-visual materials including short films and podcasts. All required materials will be made available on Canvas by the instructor and students will not be expected to purchase any specific works. Because of the applied nature of this course, many assigned materials will include popular-press journal articles, policy reports, and policy briefs. Some of these documents may be quite lengthy; please adhere to the syllabus for advice on selective reading. The course will include both substantive reading on issues of scenario planning, and methods and skills-based primers on policy analysis topics including professional writing and communication, oral presentations and briefings, and building and maintaining professional networks.

## Requirements and Evaluation

- **Attendance and in-class participation (10%):** Students should plan to attend all class sessions on-time and be ready to discuss course material, with relevant readings and/or reading notes in-hand. Students may miss no more than two class sessions, outlined below in greater depth in the attendance policy. This course is discussion-based, rather than solely lecture-based. Students should be prepared to ask questions, discuss readings, prepare for exercises and/or simulations, and make an effort to engage the opinions, perspectives, and arguments of other students, faculty, and guest speakers. Attendance and participation are expended for client-driven meetings, group-project work sessions, and substantive and skills-based discussions. **Graded throughout the term.**
- **Policy brief synthesis (20%):** In this assignment, students will synthesize either an academic paper or a longer policy report about exploratory scenario planning in the form of a one-page policy-brief format for a political decision maker working in the scenario planning field. Students may be creative with their use of fonts, colors, and other layout decisions, but the document may not exceed **1 page**. Rather than use professional jargon or academic language, students should address the intended audience using accessible language and assume the policymaker is a smart non-expert. Included with students'

submission of this one-page policy brief is a short (informal) presentation (2-3 minutes per student). **Due January 14.**

- **Scenario planning community or region of interest assignment (10%):** In this assignment, students will provide a contextual overview of 250–400 words describing a community or region of interest to them. Students will provide some basic context about the community or region (size, location, and recent demographic, economic, and/or social trends to-date) and then outline 3–5 key potential ‘drivers’ of uncertainty that this community will likely face. **Due January 21.**

**Client-driven policy project and associated policy deliverables (60% in total, with seven scaffolded sub-assignments):** In groups of 5, students will craft a client-driven policy analysis report that involves designing and developing a draft process for exploratory scenario planning in a specific community or region. Group selection will be at the sole discretion of the professor, based on students’ topics in their “community or region of interest” assignments. Your goal is to design a scenario planning process that could help that community prepare for future uncertainties in a thoughtful, inclusive, and strategic way. Students will submit final short policy memoranda about their work to our partners at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (LILP), and give short (8-10 minute) final presentations about their work, leveraging oral presentation skills discussed in the class. Lincoln Institute clients will also provide feedback on students’ submissions, and students will be given the opportunity to revise and improve their final memo assignments based on feedback from professional clients. **Additional information about the final, client-driven project will be provided in dedicated assignment sheets for each of the scaffolded sub-assignments noted below.**

**This assignment includes seven (7) sub-assignments, outlined as follows:**

- **Policy report proposal (5%):** In groups, students will craft a professional single-page document with the names and contact information of all group members, a delineation of group roles including information for a communicative ‘point person,’ and a 250-word abstract about the proposed final report topic and project strategy. Crucially, in this assignment, student groups will note their community or region of interest and outline some of the major issues of uncertainty facing it. **Due February 2.**
- **Policy project stakeholders list, timeline, and plan of research action for designing a future scenario planning meeting (10%):** After further elaborating on their community or region of choice, students in this assignment will identify the relevant stakeholders who should be involved in the planning process. These might include residents, community organizations, government departments (municipal, county, state), or regional partnerships. Then, students will research opportunities where these stakeholders might naturally come together, such as public meetings, local events, or workshops, and use this as a basis to design a stakeholder meeting. In your meeting design, outline its purpose and create a *timeline of activities* that would guide participants through a scenario planning process. To support your process, include a written explanation of your proposed process alongside the timeline. Finally, using the two most significant forces, construct a 2x2 scenario matrix, placing one force on the horizontal axis and the other on the vertical axis. Then, write a brief description of what the future could

look like in each of the four resulting quadrants. In this assignment, include the scenario matrix that would result from your meeting, along with a short paragraph describing each of the four scenario narratives. This assignment is intended as a *draft* planning process, so focus on clearly communicating your logic, creativity, and understanding of scenario planning principles. You are welcome to make assumptions where needed, as long as they are explained. **Additional information will be provided in a separate assignment sheet. Due February 11.**

- **Policy client briefing presentation (10%):** On **February 18 and/or February 23**, students will present their in-progress scenario planning projects to our client partners at the Lincoln Institute in succinct, 8-10 minute oral briefings. All group members are expected to present for around 2 minutes. At this time, clients will also take ~5 minutes per group presentation to provide substantive reactions and feedback. **Due February 18, and for some groups, February 23.** Based on this feedback, students will then prepare and present final presentations to course colleagues on **March 9**.
- **Client feedback and student-team responses (5%):** Our colleagues from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy will offer feedback about each of the group's oral presentations and briefings. Lincoln Institute colleagues will comment on students' approaches to the proposed scenario planning processes, and share their thoughts on group professionalism and communication, policy analysis accuracy and rigor, and other comments. Clients' comments on students' work will *not* be graded; rather, student teams will each craft a 300–500 word reflection about the experience and address client feedback in a short post on Canvas. **Due March 2.**
- **Final report (15%):** Students will craft a professional written policy-report deliverable drawing on the previous policy project stakeholders list, timeline, and plan of research action assignment. driving forces and created future scenarios for a selected community or region. *Important note:* in addition to revising previous work on driving forces and chosen scenarios, this assignment asks you to design the second phase of a scenario planning process. This phase will focus on helping your community prepare for long-term uncertainty by identifying strategies for monitoring change, developing flexible policy responses, and establishing performance metrics to track and communicate the impacts of those policies over time. This report will be based on comprehensive, mixed-methods policy analysis related to the community or region of interest, and should incorporate feedback from our Lincoln Institute partners. After client presentations, some groups may want or need to revise or finalize their scenario planning processes based on client feedback. There will be an opportunity to do so, and final revisions will be graded, with attention paid to how students receive and enact feedback from clients. **Due March 4 (with revisions to the client, as needed, due March 11).**
- **Final policy memorandum (10%):** After having completed their final policy reports, students will craft *brief* policy memoranda distilling report findings in a succinct manner. Policy memoranda should be no more than two (2) pages. They should be addressed to a non-expert community member, *not* a policymaker, and outline top-line findings and policy next-steps. Memos should incorporate feedback from clients and from the professor from earlier in the course. Final

memos will be graded, with attention paid to how students receive and enact feedback from clients, and these memos will be submitted to and actually used by our clients to inform policy. **Due March 11.**

- **Groupmate peer evaluation form (5%):** A confidential peer assessment form will open on **March 4** and be due on **March 11**, giving students the opportunity to evaluate one another and reflect on their group report professional dynamics. **Due March 11.**

### Assignment Due Dates

Please take note of the following assignment due dates:

- **Attendance and in-class participation (10%): Throughout the term.**
- **Policy brief synthesis (20%): Due January 14.**
- **Scenario planning community or region of interest assignment (10%): Due January 21.**
- **Client-driven policy project, policy report proposal (5%): Due February 2.**
- **Client-driven policy project, stakeholders list, timeline, and plan of research action (5%): Due February 11.**
- **Policy briefing presentation (10%): Conducted in class on February 18 and February 23.**
- **Client feedback and student-team responses (5%):** Clients’ comments on students’ work will *not* be graded; rather, student teams will each craft a 300–500 word reflection about the experience and address client feedback in a short post on Canvas, **Due March 2.**
- **Final report (20%): Due March 4 (with revisions to the client, as needed, due March 11).**
- **Final policy memorandum (20%):** After having completed their final policy reports, students will craft *brief* policy memoranda distilling report findings in a succinct manner to non-expert community members. **Due March 11.**
- **Groupmate peer evaluation form (5%): Due March 11.**

### Grading Rubric and Scale

A common grading rubric will be applied to writing assignments: the one-page policy synthesis, the final report, and the final policy memorandum. This grading rubric aligns with DU’s Academic Requirements, Policies and Procedures, and standards for the PPOL major and MPP degree program. Please refer to the university’s academic requirements [here](#), which provides comprehensive guidance on academic standards. The grading rubric below will be used to evaluate written assignments.

	Description	% of grade
Policy analysis and findings / recommendations	Does the synthesis, policy report, or memo comprehensively outline findings and/or recommendations in the report body, and in a concise, clear executive summary? Does the writing product justify those findings and/or	40%

	recommendations through written and data-driven reasoning, and through tables/charts/figures or visuals?	
Evidence and data <i>(including from assignment readings, students' topical primary and secondary research, or contemporary issues of concern to Exploratory Scenario Planning)</i>	Do students correctly interpret or analyze data for the synthesis, policy report, or memo (from contemporary policy documents, client networks, databases, think tanks, newspapers, or public institutions)? Does evidence align appropriately with the assignment? Do they employ and analyze data using multiple methods (i.e. literature reviews, case studies, quantitative data, qualitative data, systematic engagement with legislation or newspaper articles, or interviews/conversations with practitioners)?	30%
Organization and structure	Is the synthesis, policy report, or memo clearly organized, using headings, sub-headings, paragraphs, and/or sections to structure ideas? Do specific points and sub-points support the report's overall findings and recommendations?	20%
Style, usage, and professionalism	Is the product free of spelling, grammar, usage, and/or formatting errors? Does it adhere to the genre and stylistic conventions of a professional policy report?	10%
Total		100%

*Note: If policy-driven writing is a challenge for you, please be in touch with the professor, who can recommend university resources and support for you, including the university writing center.*

A separate but related grading rubric will be applied to the in-progress oral briefing and the final presentation. It also aligns with the standards for the PPOL major and MPP degree program. Please refer to the university's academic requirements [here](#), which provides guidance on academic standards. The grading rubric below will be used to evaluate oral assignments.

	Description	% of grade
Clarity of briefing's substantive analysis and findings / recommendations	Does the oral briefing clearly and concisely convey top-line findings from the research to the audience? Are the findings and/or recommendations presented in a way that is credible, persuadable, and professional?	40%
Evidence and data <i>(from assignment readings, applied-experiential event, or contemporary urban policy and planning issues)</i>	Do the oral briefings effectively present – using figures, charts, tables, interview quotes, and/or graphs – evidence and data underpinning their findings and recommendations? Are visual communication and rhetorical techniques employed alongside oral explanations of these materials?	30%

Organization and structure	Is the oral briefing clearly organized, using vocal pauses, transitions, changing of speakers, slides, and/or verbal cues to structure ideas? Do specific points and sub-points support the briefing's overall findings and recommendations?	20%
Style, usage, and professionalism	Is the report presentation material free of spelling, grammar, usage, and/or formatting errors? Is the briefing free of vocal pauses, unprofessional lulls, or other moments of confusion?	10%
Total		100%

*Note: If you find that oral presentations are challenging for you, you may consider being in touch with DU's Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), who can provide pedagogical support and practice experiences. If you would like an accommodation related to synchronous oral presentation, please be in touch with the professor well in advance of the presentation deadline.*

### **Policy on laptops and smart phones**

The use of cell phones is prohibited in class except for emergencies. Social media use (Twitter/ "X", Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) is strictly prohibited, as is texting. Although students may use their laptops or tablets to take notes in class or to refer to the readings, they may not surf the web or check email. Doing so will negatively affect students' attendance and participation grades. Since this class often involves active client-driven and team-based "working sessions," there may be specific sessions or portions of class sessions when students will be encouraged to use laptops. In these instances, however, it is expected that students work only on course material.

### **Late Submissions Policy**

**Assignments are always to be submitted through Canvas** and an on-time submission is expected. In public-policy settings, the prompt submission of relevant tasks and documents is essential for busy principals, even if/when work is not "perfect." Any assignment submitted after the deadline, without an approved request for an extension, will be marked down by 10% (i.e., 1 point out of 10, or 10 points out of 100). Any assignment more than 3 hours late will be marked down a further 10%. A further 10% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. If students are experiencing personal emergency, they should be in contact with the professor *before* the assignment is due. Alternative arrangements and accommodations may be possible in challenging circumstances when the student communicates professionally with the instructor. Only one final policy report and final memo will be submitted per group, and on-time submission is highly encouraged for these assignment in particular.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students may miss **two class sessions** with no penalty to their grade, for any personal or professional reason. Beyond two class sessions, each absence will result in a 10% reduction in the course's attendance and participation grade (i.e., 2-points out of 20). If students experience a personal health or family emergency such that their absences exceed two, they should be in touch with the professor, where possible, *before* the class for which they must be absent. In the event of

extenuating personal or family circumstances beyond two class sessions, make-up assignments or reading engagement assignments may substitute for a missed course session. If for any reason students are more than 10 minutes late to class, this will count as half a class absence.

## **Academic Integrity**

As per DU's [academic misconduct policy](#), "Students are expected to engage honestly and demonstrate responsibility in research and academic assignments. Therefore, all work and grades should result from the Student's own understanding of the materials and their effort. When evidence/information indicates that a Student may have violated an Academic Integrity Policy, Academic Actions, Educational Outcomes, and Status Outcomes are possibilities. Academic Actions include, but are not limited to required re-do of an assignment, grade reduction, failure of an assignment, failure of a course, and/or termination from a graduate program. Status Outcomes include written warning, probation, elevated probation, suspension, or dismissal. Students may appeal these decisions." As noted in DU's [honor code](#), there are specific procedures by which faculty notify students of academic honesty, and students have the right for academic integrity appeals.

*A note on the use AI programs such as ChatGPT:* students may use ChatGPT or other AI tools (like Microsoft CoPilot) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that using ChatGPT may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you do choose to include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). This includes the use of programs such as Grammarly or other AI writing tools, for which I require a statement acknowledging the use of such tools by students.

## **Office Hours**

I encourage students to attend my **office hours** to discuss any questions related to the course. Office hours are held between **2:00pm and 4:00pm** on **Mondays and Wednesdays**. On **Mondays**, office hours are by reservation only. On **Wednesdays**, I will hold an "open" group office hour starting at 3:00pm for which no advanced sign-up is required. For a private appointment between 2:00pm and 4:00pm on Mondays, and between 2:00pm and 3:00pm on Wednesdays, students can sign up for a timeslot at [this office hours sign-up link](#): <https://calendly.com/stefan-chavez-norgaard-du/30min>. Please be sure to cancel your reserved time if you cannot come, so that the timeslot can be made available to other students. If these dates/times do not work for you, please email me and we can find another time to meet. Short questions can be answered after class. (If necessary, we can also communicate via phone or zoom). If times for office hours do not work with your schedule, you may contact me to set up in-person or virtual meetings at another time at [Stefan.Chavez-Norgaard@du.edu](mailto:Stefan.Chavez-Norgaard@du.edu).

## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Gender Based Violence**

Discrimination, harassment, and gender-based violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, class, age, appearance, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The University of Denver is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex (gender), including sexual misconduct, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking, and other protected classes, such as race, color, national origin, age, and disability.

The Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX (EOIX) is responsible for responding to and investigating reports and complaints of discrimination, harassment, and gender-based violence. In addition, all non-confidential University employees are considered “responsible employees” and required to report such incidents to EOIX. For more information, please visit the Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX (EOIX) website at <https://www.du.edu/equalopportunity/>.

## **Mental Health and Wellness**

As part of the University’s Culture of Care and Support, there are campus resources to create access for you to maintain your safety, health, and well-being. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug concerns, depression, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These stressful moments can impact academic performance or reduce your ability to engage in class. The University offers services to assist you with addressing these or *many* other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any challenges, you should reach out for support. You can seek confidential mental health services available on campus in the Health & Counseling Center (HCC). Another helpful campus office is Student Outreach & Support (SOS), where staff work with you to connect to all the appropriate campus resources (there are many!), develop a plan of action, and guide you in navigating challenging situations. If you are concerned about yourself and/or one of your peers, you can send a SOS referral.

More information about HCC and SOS can be found at:

- [DUHelp](#)
- [Health & Counseling Services](#)
- [Student Outreach & Support \(SOS\) and SOS Referrals](#)

## **Students with Disabilities or Medical Needs**

AccessibleDU: Student Disability Services (SDS) is committed to providing equitable opportunities to all students in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable laws. SDS helps to facilitate student participation by approving and providing accommodations at no extra cost for any student who has a documented disability. SDS support a range of potentially helpful accommodations; if you believe you would benefit from accommodations, please contact the SDS office to learn more and begin the process when you are ready. Learn how to apply for accommodations and how the approval process works on the SDS website. Reach out to SDS at 303-871-7432, [sds@du.edu](mailto:sds@du.edu), or by their office at Driscoll Center South, Garden Level, Suite 22 from Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm.

## Course schedule in brief

### Week 1:

- Course welcome; What is Exploratory Scenario Planning (XSP)?
- Exploratory Scenario Planning comprehensive case study: Mesa County, Colorado

### Week 2:

- Policy skills session: policy briefs
- What are the different types of scenario planning? Scenario planning and climate change

### Week 3:

- Scenario planning: trends and foresight; group formation and proposal development.

### Week 4:

- Policy skills session: outlining and setting a feasible research agenda
- First client meeting. Policy skills session: proposal writing and professional networking.

### Week 5:

- Scenario planning: examples from practice (shared ‘jigsaw’ insights from classmates)
- Small group meetings, workshoping with professor, and preparations for mid-class presentations. Policy skills session: crafting a professional presentation / oral briefing

### Week 6:

- Scenario planning and regional growth management, planning, and development
- Scenario planning regional development case study: the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

### Week 7:

- Policy skills session: crafting a professional final policy report
- *Oral briefing presentations I*

### Week 8:

- *Oral briefing presentations II*
- Developing a scenario planning process; stakeholder engagement and scenario planning; scenario planning and affordable housing.

### Week 9:

- Tools and technology for scenario planning
- Final presentations

### Week 10:

- Small group meetings; course wrap-up: drafting a scenario planning manifesto.
- Small group working sessions [no formal class held] toward final reports and memoranda

## Detailed Course schedule

### Pre-Course Work:

- Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. (2020). Scenario planning 101. <https://lincolninst.catalog.instructure.com/browse/non-credit-courses/courses/scenario-planning-101>.
  - Requires making an account (with email/username and password) through the Lincoln Institute website.
  - Complete *only* Module 1, Part I: Scenario Planning 101 (takes appx. 20 minutes).

### Week 1

**Monday, January 5:** Course welcome; What is Exploratory Scenario Planning (XSP)?

- Stapleton, Jeremy. (2020). “How To Use Exploratory Scenario Planning (XSP): Navigating An Uncertain Future.” New York: Columbia University Press. **Read the executive summary and ch. 1, “Exploring Scenario Planning.” Pp. 3–13.** Available at: <https://www.lincolninst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/pubfiles/how-use-exploratory-scenario-planning-full.pdf>.
- FFFat MIT. (2011, December 15). Introduction to scenario planning video [Video]. YouTube. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVgxZnRT54E>.
- Shell. (2017, December 10). Navigating an uncertain future [Video]. *YouTube*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwub4Bhr-aM>

**Wednesday, January 7:** Exploratory Scenario Planning comprehensive case study: Mesa County, Colorado

- “Sowing Seeds: How Scenario Planning Can Help Agricultural Communities Plan for a Resilient Future.” 2023. *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*. July. Available at: <https://www.lincolninst.edu/video/sowing-seeds-how-scenario-planning-can-help-agricultural-communities-plan-for-a-resilient-future/>.
- “Mesa County, Colorado Exploratory Scenario Planning Exercise.” 2023. *Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy*. Available at: [https://www.lincolninst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/ag\\_xsp\\_video\\_companion\\_doc\\_1.pdf](https://www.lincolninst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/ag_xsp_video_companion_doc_1.pdf).
- “Exploratory Scenario Planning.” 2025. *State of Colorado Planning for Hazards*. Available at: <https://planningforhazards.colorado.gov/exploratory-scenario-planning>.
  - **Peruse the State of Colorado Planning for Hazards Website and expand the nine-step dropdown menus to read the full page.**
- **Guest speaker: Meryl Corbin of the Sonoran Institute and Growing Water Smart.**

**By the end of the week, craft a 200–300 word discussion post on Canvas due with reflections on the nine-step process, Mesa County, and/or Lark Bunting, CO.**

### Week 2

**Monday, January 12: *Policy skills session: professional policy briefs.***

- Young, Eóin and Lisa Quin. 2017. “An Essential Guide to Policy Brief Writing.” *International Centre for Policy Advocacy*. Policy Brief Resources. Berlin, Germany: ICPA. Available at: <https://icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/icpa-policy-briefs-essential-guide.pdf>.
- Bérubé, Damien, Mark Fagan, Lior Sirkis, William Stevenson, Jamey Tesler. 2024. “It is Time to Change the Autonomous Vehicles Regulatory Approach: Policy Lessons from the Cruise Incident October 2, 2023.” *Harvard Kennedy School Taubman Center for State and Local Government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School. Available at: <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/It%20is%20Time%20to%20Change%20the%20Autonomous%20Vehicles%20Regulatory%20Approach%2010.15.24%20w.o%20Borders.pdf>
- “Innovation for Sustainable Productivity Growth Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation 2024.” 2024. *The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)*. 6 November. Accessed 26 November 2024. Available at: [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/innovation-for-sustainable-productivity-growth\\_b84d2572-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/innovation-for-sustainable-productivity-growth_b84d2572-en.html).
- Stapleton, Jeremy. 2020. “Exploratory Scenario Planning: How to Navigate an Uncertain Future (Policy Brief).” Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. August. Available at: <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/policy-briefs/exploratory-scenario-planning/>.

**Wednesday, January 14:** What are the different types of scenario planning? Scenario planning and climate change

- Cordova-Pozo, Kathya, and Rouwette, Etienne. 2023. “Types of Scenario Planning and their Effectiveness: A Review of Reviews.” *Futures*. 149 (2023). 1–19. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328723000575>.
- Oliver, Hannah. 2014. “Exploratory Scenario Planning.” *The Commissioner*. December. Vol. 20, no. 6. American Planning Association. Available at: <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/Scenario-Planning-TC-2014-12.pdf>.
- Mow, Jeff. 2015. “TEDx Talks: The Mark of Climate Change on America’s National Parks.” TEDxWhitefish [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lky5MAIsXI>
- Sonoran Institute. 2019. “What is Exploratory Scenario Planning?” [Video]. *Vimeo*. <https://vimeo.com/371935801>.
- **Guest speaker: Kristen Keener Busby, Babbitt Center for Integrated Land and Water Policy.**

**Assignment #1, One-Page Policy Synthesis, is due.**

**Week 3**

**Monday, January 19:** *No class; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

**Wednesday, January 21:** Scenario planning: trends and foresight; group formation and proposal development.

- Hurtado, Petra. 2021. “The Future of Planning is Agile, People-Centric, and Technologically Advanced.” *The American Planning Association*. February.

<https://planning.org/blog/9211711/the-future-of-planning-is-agile-people-centric-and-technologically-advanced/>

- Ryan, Rebecca. 2020. “Scenario Planning for Anxious Times” and “Developing a Futurist’s Mindset: Signals and Sensemaking.” March and September. Rebecca Ryan’s Blog. <https://rebeccaryan.com/blog/scenario-planning-for-anxious-times> and <https://rebeccaryan.com/blog/developing-a-futurists-mindset-signals-and-sensemaking>
- American Planning Association. 2025. “APA Foresight Trend Report for Planners.” **SKIM and Read “The Trends we Need to Act on Now,” pp. 11–30.** Available at: [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/2025-Trend-Report-for-Planners-r1.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/2025-Trend-Report-for-Planners-r1.pdf).
- Salvatico, Yvette Montero. 2018. “Four Ways to Overcome Blind Spots using Strategic Foresight.” *GreenBook*. January. <https://www.greenbook.org/mr/market-research-methodology/4-ways-to-overcome-blind-spots-using-strategic-foresight/>.
- Salvatico, Yvette Montero and The Futures School. 2020. “The Futures School Introduction to Strategic Foresight [Video].” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTUv5c6w07s&t=3s>.
- **Guest speaker: Jonathan Moyer, about modeling, trends, and forecasting**

**Scenario planning community or region of interest assignment, is due [at the *START of class*]**

#### **Week 4**

**Monday, January 26: *Policy skills session: outlining and setting a feasible research agenda.***

- Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. “Planning and Organizing Proposals and Technical Reports”. Purdue University and the Indiana Department of Transportation (IDOT). Available as a PDF on Canvas.
- Meyer, Joanna L., Clare Waterman, George A. Coleman, and Michael J. Strambler. 2023. “Whose Agenda is It? Navigating the Politics of Setting the Research Agenda in Education Research-Practice Partnerships Educational Policy.” 37(1): 122 –146. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048221131567>.

**Wednesday, January 28: First client meeting. *Policy skills session: proposal writing, and professional networking.***

- “Email Etiquette Quick Tips Cheat Sheet.” N.D. *McGill University*. Accessed 12 November 2024. Available at: [https://www.mcgill.ca/onboardingcentral/files/onboardingcentral/student\\_email\\_etiquette\\_tips.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/onboardingcentral/files/onboardingcentral/student_email_etiquette_tips.pdf).
- Knight, Rebecca. “How to Maintain Your Professional Network Over the Years”. Harvard Business Review. 2016. September. Accessed 22 November 2024. Available at: <hbr.org/2016/09/how-to-maintain-your-professional-network-over-the-years>.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory C. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. “Chapter 3: From Topics to Questions.” In *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Available as a handout on Canvas.

- Maxim, Robert, and Mark Muro. 2021. “Supporting Distressed Communities by Strengthening Regional Public Universities: A Federal Policy Proposal.” *Brookings*. July. Accessed 26 November 2024. Available at: [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/20210729\\_BrookingsMetro\\_SupportingDistressedCommunitiesRPU\\_Report\\_Maxim\\_Muro.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/20210729_BrookingsMetro_SupportingDistressedCommunitiesRPU_Report_Maxim_Muro.pdf).
- **Guest speaker and course clients: Madeline Hiller and Heather Hannon of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (date subject to confirmation).**

## Week 5

**Monday, February 2:** Scenario planning: examples from practice (shared ‘jigsaw’ insights from classmates)

- Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. 2020. “MSOP Phoenix: Superstition Vistas [Video].” October. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/J1y4wzmi9vw>.
  - **[Students choosing this case should also conduct contextual research on the corridor between Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona, with a focus on state-owned land in the Superstition Mountains].**
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Australia (FES AU). 2020. “The APSA We Want: Four Scenarios for 2040 [Video].” African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) of the African Union (AU). October. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ti7uOnxwoo0>.
  - **[Students choosing this case should also conduct contextual research on the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) of the African Union (AU)].**
- National Center for Smart Growth. 2018. “Engaging the future: Baltimore-Washington 2040.” April. PRESTO (Prospects for Regional Sustainability Tomorrow). <https://www.umdsmartgrowth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/39317-UMD-Printing-Presto-Long-report-FINAL-1.pdf>.
  - **[Students choosing this case should also conduct contextual research on growth and development in the Baltimore-Washington corridor region].**
- Envision Utah. 2013. “Envision Utah history – 2007 [Video].” December. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1hhmKHxRbc&list=PLjD0Mnwna3y2EE8PcYXUnH7oHO1OoE4y&index=16>
  - *Also watch:* Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. 2021. “Developments in South Salt Lake, UT.” January. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx8EW08-W18>
  - *Also watch:* Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. 2021. “Transportation in Little Cottonwood Canyon, UT.” January. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbZIRDiHfkA>.
  - **[Students choosing this case should also conduct contextual research on Envision Utah and growth in the Salt Lake Metro Area].**
- “Agriculture & Water in the West: A Community Takes Charge.” 2024. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. April. <https://www.lincolninst.edu/multimedia/videos/agriculture-water-in-the-west-a-community-takes-charge/>. **[Students choosing this case should also conduct contextual research on Cochise County, Arizona].**

**Proposal and abstract due, to both instructor and client.**

**Wednesday, February 4:** Small group report meetings, workshopping with professor, and preparations for mid-class presentations. *Policy skills session: crafting a professional presentation / oral briefing*

- Graham, Andrew. N.D. “5.2 Tips for Making a Quick Oral Briefing.” School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada. Accessed 27 November 2024. Available at:  
[https://www.queensu.ca/sps/sites/spswww/files/uploaded\\_files/GovTalk/5\\_2%20PT\\_%20ORAL\\_BRIEFINGS.pdf](https://www.queensu.ca/sps/sites/spswww/files/uploaded_files/GovTalk/5_2%20PT_%20ORAL_BRIEFINGS.pdf).
- *Sample annotated oral presentation / briefing:* Emanuel, Kerry and Dennis Whyte. 2017. “The Climate Problem: Solutions and Opportunities.” Massachusetts Institute of Technology. May 17. Accessed 27 November 2024. Available at:  
<https://mitcommmlab.mit.edu/broad/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/Policy-Presentation-AAE1-Emanuel.pdf>
- **In-class mock oral presentation exercises**

## Week 6

**Monday, February 9:** Scenario planning and regional growth management, planning, and development

- Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (Metropolitan Albuquerque). 2019. “The Target Scenario.” *YouTube*. September. Available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt4oQUXKfg0>.
- “Case Study: Mile High Connects Center for Community Health and Evaluation.” 2023. SPARCC. September. Available at: <https://www.sparcchub.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SPARCC-Case-Study-Denver-4.4.23-compressed.pdf>.
- Nelson, Arthur C., and Terry Moore. 1993. “Assessing Urban Growth Management: The Case of Portland, Oregon, The USA’s Largest Urban Growth Boundary.” *Land Use Policy*. Vol. 10, no. 4: 293–302. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-8377\(93\)90039-D](https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-8377(93)90039-D).
- Daggett, Susan, Chavez-Norgaard, Stefan, Sah, Vivek, Teater, Luke, Dehnow, Arian, and Alexander Casey. 2025. “Examining Relationships Between Eliminating Parking Minimums and New Housing Construction Using a Turner Housing Simulator Tool.” *Sturm College of Law and the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute*. July. Available at: <https://www.law.du.edu/sites/default/files/2025-07/Examining%20Relationships%20between%20Eliminating%20Parking%20Minimums%20and%20New%20Housing%20Construction%20Using%20a%20Turner%20Housing%20Simulator%20Tool%20-%20August%202025%20r2.pdf>.
- **Today: guest speaker from Colorado State Department of Local Affairs (DOLA): Victor Chen, talking about planning, budgeting, and service delivery (capital projects for sewer and water).**

**Wednesday, February 11:** Scenario planning regional development case study: the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. 2020. “Connections 2050: We Can’t Always Predict the Future, But We Can Prepare for it.” [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hQ82GnEX2Q>

- Fusco, Brett, and Davis, Jaclyn, Eds. 2020. “Dispatches From Alternative Futures: Exploratory Scenarios for Greater Philadelphia.” Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. July. Available at: <https://www.dvrpc.org/Reports/20012.pdf>
- Lundberg, Kristen. 2024. “To Plan, First Imagine: Exploratory Scenario Planning in Greater Philadelphia [Case Study].” Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/case-studies/to-plan-first-imagine-exploratory-scenario-planning-greater-philadelphia/>.
- **Guest speakers: Peter Pollock from City of Boulder Planning - Confirmed.**

**Client-driven policy project, stakeholders list, timeline, and plan of research action, is due to both instructor and client.**

## Week 7

**Monday, February 16:** *No class; President’s Day*

**Wednesday, February 18:** *Policy skills session: crafting a professional final policy report.*

- Herman, Lucia. 2018. “Tips for Writing Policy Papers A Policy Lab Communications Workshop.” *Stanford Law School*. April. Accessed 27 November 2024. Available at: <https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/White-Papers-Guidelines.pdf>
- Read one (1) of the following policy briefs / reports from the OECD, World Bank, Harvard Kennedy School, and Western States Center, and craft a 300-word discussion post on Canvas answering the following questions: (1) What were the strengths of the report you read? (2) Was it easy to understand the report’s major and minor recommendations, and if you had to summarize them in your own words what are they? (3) What weaknesses or concerns do you have with the report?
  - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2024. “How do Governments Direct Support for Innovation?: Lessons from Recent OECD Measurement and Impact Analysis (MABIS) Work.” *OECD Policy Briefs*, No. 4. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c1d93d1c-en>.
  - Fukuzawa, Daisuke, Ergys Islamaj, and Franz Ulrich Ruch. 2023. *How Do Rising US Interest Rates Affect Developing East Asian Economies? The World Bank, Research & Policy Briefs*, no. 62 Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099628505232337817/IDU0083e64030dce7044420b3050d250d847ee00>
  - Glaeser, Edward L., Steve Pofatak, and Kristina Tobio. 2014. “Greater Boston's Economy and the Entrepreneurial Age.” *The Harvard Kennedy School Taubman Center for State and Local Government*. February. Accessed 27 November 2024. Available at: [https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/taubman/files/entrepreneurship\\_final.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/taubman/files/entrepreneurship_final.pdf).
  - Norgaard, Stefan and Brady Roberts. 2019. “If Everything is to Stay the Same, Everything has to Change: Building Local Government Capacity to Resist White Nationalism in Eugene, Oregon: An abbreviated practitioner guide.” *Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government*. Client: Western States Center.

April 2. Accessed 27 November 2024. Available at: [https://ash.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/pae\\_five-pager\\_4.4.19.pdf](https://ash.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/pae_five-pager_4.4.19.pdf).

## Week 8

### Monday, February 23: *Oral briefing presentations*

- *Students will present in groups for 8–10 minutes to our client colleagues at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and be given feedback. Students will have until **March 2** to respond to feedback through a 300–500 word reflective Canvas post, and in turn should integrate feedback into final policy reports and memoranda.*
- No readings

**Wednesday, February 25:** Developing a scenario planning process; stakeholder engagement and scenario planning; scenario planning and affordable housing.

- National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP). N.D. “Guidance for Scenario Planning.” Available at: [http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP08-36Task145/NCHRP\\_08\\_36\\_145\\_FINAL\\_Abstract.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP08-36Task145/NCHRP_08_36_145_FINAL_Abstract.pdf)
- Cuellar, Adrianna, Kalin Cannady, Tyler Hanson, and Marcel Sánchez-Prieto. 2024. “Pathways For Affordable Housing Initiatives: A Community-Led Scenario Planning Toolkit (1-Day Workshop).” Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. August. Available at: <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/pathways-affordable-housing-initiatives-community-led-scenario-planning-toolkit/>.
- Cascadia Partners LLC. 2024. “Housing Choices Game: A Scenario Planning Activity Toolkit.” Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/housing-choices-game-scenario-planning-activity-toolkit/>
- **Housing Choices Game/Activity.**

## Week 9

**Monday, March 2:** Tools and technology for scenario planning

- Gomez, Alexandra. 2021. “Urban Air Mobility.” *PAS QuickNotes 91*. American Planning Association. <https://planning.org/pas/quicknotes/91/urban-air-mobility/>
- Taylor, John, and Mohammadi, Neda. 2020. “Smart City Digital Twins.” *PAS QuickNotes 89*. American Planning Association. <https://planning.org/publications/document/9209455/>.
- ArcGIS. 2020. “ArcGIS Urban – Transforming Urban Planning and Design.” *YouTube*. July. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScuSibogDpA>
- Avin, Uri. 2016. “Sketch Tools For Regional Sustainability Scenario Planning (**ONLY read Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 25–46**). National Cooperative Highway Research Program. Available at: [https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP08-36\(117\)\\_FR.pdf](https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP08-36(117)_FR.pdf)
- City Explained, Inc. 2013. “Overview.” *YouTube*. November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BHjF5xfi00&t=197s>

**Client feedback Canvas posts due today.**

**Wednesday, March 4:** *Final briefing presentations to clients that have incorporated prior feedback.*

- No readings
- **Clients (to be confirmed whether joining in-person or virtually): Madeline Hiller and Heather Hannon of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.**

**Final Policy Report assignment due.**

**Week 10**

**Monday, March 9:** Small group working sessions; substantive course wrap-up: drafting a scenario planning manifesto.

- No readings

**Wednesday, March 11:** Small group working sessions toward final reports and memoranda [no formal class held]

In lieu of a class session, **the following will be due to the professor and the client organization by the end of the day on Wednesday, March 11:**

- **Revised final report** from the March 4 class if/as needed
- **Final policy memo**
- **Groupmate confidential peer evaluation**