

MPSA Advanced Project Assignment Applied Research or Practice-Oriented Special Project

The broad goals of the project are to:

- Identify peace and security practices in use;
- Understand their origins (traditions, colonial, bureaucracy) and how they are perpetuated;
- Determine whether such practices work or not using specific criteria;
- Cast a critical eye on them in relation to their intended objectives;
- Imagine ways in which those practices can be changed;
- Make recommendations and put together a plan on implementing them;
- Implement them, if you started early.

The design and realization of the project must demonstrate the following skills:

- Close observation for understanding or changing;
- Problem-solving;
- Critical analysis;
- Ability to integrate participant's professional trajectory or development into project.

Final Project Guidelines

The final project is a unique opportunity for participants to expand their knowledge of a particular area or aspect of institutional practices in peace and security. Its objective is to understand the underlying theoretical frameworks within which peace and security institutional practices occur, while applying and critically evaluating course concepts.

The participants who choose the final applied project **are required to present a 2-page proposal to the cohort during the last module in a maximum time of 20 minutes. However, discussions of the project must have taken place before with the facilitator.**

Applied projects may be done individually or in groups of a maximum of 2 participants. This project may focus on your job (researching your work in peace and security) and the practices in your work environment or on the practices of another peace and security institution, governmental, non-governmental or international. The following questions can serve as examples:

- What practices prevent the organization from achieving its stated goals?
- What practices enable the organization to achieve its stated goals?
- What mindset governs the policies that are made, how are the policies made or implemented, etc.)?
- What is the public perception of how the institutions in charge of peace and security? Are the institutions themselves aware of how they are viewed by the public and what are they doing about it?
- What are the people themselves doing in terms of peace and security in their communities, how and why?

However, participants cannot restrict themselves only to the list above. They should use class concepts, critically expand on class suggestions and recommendations in the specific context of their study reflecting on and evaluating the process itself.

Projects are subject to facilitator's approval; it is strongly recommended that you discuss your idea with the facilitator generally long before submitting the proposal in the last module to avoid last minute disapproval of the project you have worked on.

The applied project must be finally submitted **as a document (or set of documents)**. Whether the project is undertaken on an individual or group basis, each participant participating must submit an analysis and summary paper (2-3 pages in length) contextualizing the project in accordance with the contents of the modules, course concepts, and the existing scholarly and/or professional research.

Preparing the 2-Page Proposal

Your proposal is crucial. It will really get you going. Your facilitator will provide comments as you go, and when you present it to the class you will get additional feedback from your peers.

Proposals should be 2 pages in length, and include the following:

1. A brief **description of the project and its intended purpose. Be brief and concise.** The participant should explain how their project fills a gap or serves a need that has not yet been addressed in their workplace or in a peace and security institution; indicate clearly what you are interested in knowing and why. What peace and security process/theory is the source of your hypotheses or questions? Please mention if the final document will include pictures, maps, or other illustrations.
2. **Specific hypotheses or the research questions that you will test/answer.** At this stage, you must have at least three research hypotheses or questions.
3. **Discussion of your preliminary data.** You should have some at the time you submit your proposal during Module 5.
4. **Detailed work schedule** explaining how you will uniquely contribute to the project, including a calendar of execution for the project starting as early as the beginning or end Module 3;
5. **Provisional list of sources (at least 4)** from the scholarly and/or professional literature, giving examples of similar projects (if any exist) or highlighting the existence of a need.

You will have more than 4 months to collect new data and write, **but you must make sure that your project can be completed on time, i.e. two months after the end of the last module.** We encourage you to talk with colleagues, professionals and your facilitator when looking for new research paths. You are expected to devote a minimum of 300 hours to the design, implementation and writing of the final project.