The Ford School of Public Policy’s Applied Policy Seminar (APS) is a semester-long course offered to students in the Ford School’s Master’s of Public Policy Program. The course provides an opportunity for students to conduct a public sector consulting project for state and local governments and community development organizations in Ann Arbor, Detroit, and other areas of Michigan. Each year, topics for student projects are jointly developed by the course’s faculty director and staff at the client organization. Projects range widely in policy area, methodology, size, and complexity. All projects culminate in the production of a final report and an oral presentation to the client.

Student participants in the Fall 2006 Applied Policy Seminar will work on a single project, under the direction of Professor Elisabeth Gerber. Clients for the project will be the Wayne County Department of Economic Development and the Greater Wayne County Economic Development Corporation. The project will analyze the various options, opportunities and challenges to regional governance of the proposed Aerotropolis development project. Details of the proposal, including specific research questions, scope, and deliverables, will be developed over the next several months in consultation and collaboration with the clients. Some preliminary ideas follow below.

**Goals:** the project will provide clients with information and resources about regional governance in Michigan and the unique governance issues confronting the Aerotropolis project. Specific research topics and questions will be developed jointly with the project clients. These may include: review of academic and applied research on regional governance; basic information about the legal options available to Aerotropolis partner governments for forming regional governance institutions; analysis of existing uses of various regional governance institutions in Michigan and elsewhere; analysis of governance arrangements at existing Aerotropolis-type developments in other regions; assessment of the perceived opportunities and challenges to regional governance facing Aerotropolis partner governments; and evaluation of the various options available.

**Scope:** the project will build upon existing studies, particularly the concept work by John Kasarda of the Kenan Institute, UNC, and the recent design charrette conducted by the University of Michigan’s Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. Approximately 12-18 students will participate, under the direction of Professor Elisabeth Gerber. Each student should register for a 3-credit course (PP578) and should plan to devote approximately 10 hours per week to the project, on average, over the course of the semester. Decisions about specific research questions, to be made jointly between Professor Gerber, the students, and the clients, will determine the scope of the overall project.
Methodology: methodologies will depend on the specific questions studied. They may include literature reviews, archival research, legal analysis, case studies, email/telephone/face-to-face interviews, analysis of census data, and SWOT analysis.

Timeframe: the project timeframe will coincide with the University of Michigan’s Fall Semester, beginning roughly Tuesday September 5 and ending roughly Wednesday December 13, 2006.

Products: the students will produce a written report that documents their research methods and findings. Length and complexity will be largely determined by the specific research questions asked. Students will also make a final oral presentation to clients.