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 supervised consulting project for a real-world policy organization. Each year, topics for student projects are jointly developed by the course’s faculty director and staff at the client organizations. 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.

Students enrolled in the Applied Policy Seminar for the fall semester 2010 will work on one of four projects:

1. Amnesty International USA has asked the Ford School class to identify and categorize US based stakeholders with the potential to influence human rights policies in South Africa and India. Students will then recommend which stakeholders would be most likely to have the optimal combination of interest in the issue and influence over relevant policymakers, what approaches should be used to engage these stakeholders and how AIUSA can most effectively engage them.

2. The Government Accountability Office has proposed a project in which students will consider the transition to higher education for students with disabilities and determine what factors facilitate and impede this transition. The project will involve interviews with students, university personnel and advocates, identification of best practices, and drafting of guidelines and recommendations.

3. The City of Warren, Michigan, has requested assistance from the Ford School class in developing a regional strategy and implementation plan for economic development related to the burgeoning defense and homeland security sectors.

4. One Lenawee, a group of business and civic leaders from Lenawee County, Michigan, is interested in identifying opportunities for cost savings and efficiency gains through shared/combined municipal service provision. Students are asked to conduct surveys of local governments, catalog public facilities, and forecast cost savings under various scenarios.

Scope: up to 25 students can participate. 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 client, 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/faceto-face interviews, analysis of census data, budget modeling and SWOT analysis.

**Timeframe:** the project timeframe will coincide with the University of Michigan’s Fall Semester, beginning Wednesday, September 8 and ending Monday, December 13, 2010.

**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. Preliminary reports may also be requested as appropriate. Students will also make at least one final oral presentation to client, and perhaps additional presentations to relevant parties and stakeholders.