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.

Project client for the Winter 2009 Applied Policy Seminar will be the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, Government Relations Department. The Chamber’s point-person on the project will be the Department’s Senior Director, Melissa Roy. Depending on student interest expressed during the first class session, students will either work together on a single project dealing with US-Canada border issues, or in smaller groups on a range of issues including the border, transportation, energy and sustainability, and the state’s corrections budget. It is therefore imperative that all participants attend the first class meeting. Details of the project, including specific research questions, scope, and deliverables, will be developed over the next several weeks in consultation and collaboration with the client.

Scope: up to 20 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/face-to-face interviews, analysis of census data, budget modeling and SWOT analysis.

Timeframe: the project timeframe will coincide with the University of Michigan’s Winter Semester, beginning roughly Friday January 9 and ending roughly Friday April 17, 2009.

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.