

LaFollette School of Public Affairs
Course: PA 873 Policy Analysis
Professor: Pam Herd
Course Time: Monday 4.15-6.10
Course Location: Social Science 6116
Office Hours (3454 Social Science): Monday 9-11

This course provides an introduction to the study of public policy and the professional practice of policy analysis. We consider a number of fundamental questions: How are policy problems framed? What are the rationales for government intervention? What are the impacts, both positive and negative, of government intervention? What are the appropriate roles for policy analysts in democratic societies? We also seek to improve our basic skills in analytical thinking, information gathering, and writing as we attempt to answer these questions.

Components of Course Grade:

- Two memorandum exercises (20 percent).
- Policy Analysis project (35 percent):
A semester-long project on a randomly assigned topic (15 pages). The project provides an opportunity to apply the concepts and craft skills introduced in the course. The presentation at the end of the semester on the project will count towards 10 percent of your grade on your analysis.

FIRST DRAFT IS DUE MAY 2

FINAL DRAFT IS DUE MAY 9

- Midterm examination on **MARCH 24-26** (30 percent):
A 48 hour take home essay test to determine your mastery of the concepts and ideas presented in the first half of the semester. Your grade will be based on 1) The inclusion of ALL relevant readings in your paper 2) The quality of your comprehension of these readings 3) The strength of your argument—based in large part your ability to back up your claims with evidence from the readings 4) Writing quality will also affect your grade. You must be concise, clear, and avoid typos, grammatical errors, and spelling errors.
- Four pop quizzes on the readings (I will give 5, you can drop 1) (15 percent)

Grading Policies

- 94-100 A
- 88-93 AB
- 84-87 B
- 78-83 BC
- 74-77 C
- 69-73 CD
- 64-68 D
- 59-63 DF
- <59 F

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be familiar with University of Wisconsin rules surrounding academic honesty.
<http://www.wisc.edu/pubs/home/archives/gopher/special93/00000136.html>

Course Assignments

1. Problem Statement.

This assignment aims to help you define and articulate the policy problem on which your policy analysis is based. After writing an introductory paragraph, divide your memorandum into two distinct parts. In the first part provide a sketch of the context for your problem. The sketch may be in the form of a brief history, or it may simply describe the symptoms of the problem. Next, discuss why a public policy solution is necessary. Is there a market failure that the government needs to correct? Or is a policy solution necessary to ensure citizenship rights (political, civil or social)? Any given policy problem could be framed in either way. It's up to you to decide what frame is most persuasive to you. **DUE: FEBRUARY 25**

2. Goals Matrix.

A major part of the policy analysis project is developing your policy goals and the impact categories for each goal. The goal is what you want to achieve (i.e. improved equity) and the impact category measures how you will measure it (i.e. reduction in poverty). So, first, you need to put together a chart that includes your goals and impact categories for each goal. Second, detail a policy alternative to evaluate using this chart. Pick one goal, and using the goals matrix as guidance, evaluate the alternative you've chosen in two double spaced pages. **DUE: MARCH 31**

3. Evaluation.

Prepare a brief memorandum of two or three double-spaced pages that provides your colleagues with *constructive* criticism of his or her policy report. Submit two copies. This will not be graded, but of course, I and the other students will read it! **DUE: MAY 5**

SCHEDULE

Day 1—1/28

Course Overview

What Role for the Policy Analyst?

- Weimer and Vining, Chapter 2 and 3 and skim Chapter 14

Day 2—2/4—Guest Lecture—Marlia Moore, Policy Analyst, Legislative Audit Bureau GUEST LECTURE

Day 3—2/11

Rationales for Public Policy Intervention

- Market Failures—Efficiency
 - Weimer and Vining, Chapters 4, 5, and 7

Day 4—2/18 --

- Challenging the Market Failure Frame
 - Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Day 5—2/25--ENRON

Day 6—3/3

- Citizenship Framework—Political, Civil, and Social Rights
 - T.H. Marshall. 1950. *Citizenship and Social Class*.
 - Desmond King and Jeremy Waldron. 1988. “Citizenship, Social Citizenship, and the Defense of Welfare Provision.” *British Journal of Political Science* 18(4):415-443.
 - Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss. 2004. *The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship. Perspectives on Politics*

Day 7—3/10

- Paternalism and Morality
 - Frances Fox Piven. 1998. “Welfare and Work.” *Social Justice* 25(1).
 - Mead, Larry. 1989. “The Logic of Workfare: The Underclass and Work Policy.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 501(Jan):156-159.
 - Linda Kerber, “I am Just as Free and Just as Good as You Are”: The Obligation Not to be a Vagrant.” Chapter 2 in *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*, 1998, New York: Hill and Wang.

3/17---SPRING BREAK!!

Day 8—3/24

Midterm—This will be emailed to you on March 26 in the morning and should be returned by email March 28 by 5pm.

Day 9—3/30

Evidence, Policy Problems, and Policy Analysis

- Deborah Stone, “Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas,” *Political Science Quarterly* vol.104, no.2 (1989):281-300.
- Cherlin, Andrew. 1999. “Going to Extremes: Family Structure, Children’s Well-Being, and Social Science. *Demography* 36(4):421-428.

When Policies Create Problems

Day 10—4/7

Video: How to Get Fat Without Really Trying

- How policies affect efficiency and equity
 - Weimer and Vining, Chapter 8

- Harrington Meyer, Douglas A. Wolf, Christine L. Himes. Forthcoming. “Linking Benefits to Marital Status: Race and Diminishing Access to Social Security Spouse and Widow Benefits.” *Feminist Economics*.

Implementation

Day 11—4/14

- Overview
 - Winter, Soren C., 2003, “Introduction” to Section 3: Implementation, *Handbook of Public Administration*.
- Devolution
 - Milward, H. Brinton and Keith Provan. 1993. “The Hollow State: The Private Provision of Public Goods,” in H. Ingram and S. R. Smith, eds., *Public Policy for Democracy*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, pp. 222-237.
- Bottom Up?
 - Michael Lipsky. 1980. “The Critical Role of the Street Level Bureaucrat” in *Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Newark: Russell Sage Foundation.
- A Case Study
 - Quadagno, Jill. 2000. Promoting Civil Rights through the Welfare State. *Social Problems* 47(1).

Day 12—4/21

Political Feasibility

- Stakeholders
 - Jill Quadagno. 2004. One Nation Uninsured. Introduction and Chapter 8.
- Policy Feedback
 - Sven Steinmo and Jon Watts, “It’s the Institutions Stupid! Why Comprehensive National Health Insurance Always Fails in America,” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, Vol. 20, Summer 1995, pp. 329-72. <http://stripe.colorado.edu/~steinmo/stupid.htm>
- Targeting versus Universalism
 - Jill Quadagno. The Color of Welfare. Chapter 7, “Universal Principles in Social Security.”

Day 13+14—4/28 and 5/5

Class Presentations

TIPS FOR THE POLICY ANALYSIS

Your grade on the policy analysis (and the two short assignments) will reflect the extent to which you follow these guidelines. Writing quality will also affect your grade. You must be concise, clear, and avoid typos, grammatical errors, and spelling errors.

1. Format of the Analysis—15 double spaced pages (Not including table of contents, references and appendix). This should be Times New Roman 12 point font with 1 inch margins.
 - a. Table of Contents
 - b. Problem Statement. This should also describes the rationale for intervention (the rationale for intervention should be no more than a paragraph—be brief).
 - c. Goals and Impact Categories
 - d. Description of Status Quo and analysis
 - e. Description of Alternative 1 and analysis
 - f. Description of Alternative 2 and analysis
 - g. Recommendation
 - h. Appendix (include your problem matrix)
2. Problem Statement
 - a. In the problem statement be sure to present all sides of the problem. You are not making an argument, you are describing a problem.
 - b. You must produce evidence to support your claims in the problem statement. See below for pointers about good evidence.
 - c. The rationale for intervention need not mean that you will necessarily recommend an intervention. It's just the logic for potentially intervening.
3. Alternatives
 - a. You should have three alternatives. One is the status quo and then you should have two alternatives to the status quo.
 - b. If you have a question that reads, "Should we enact x law?," you are not just evaluating the status quo and one alternative. There are always multiple alternatives to get at the basic problem that underlies the question.
 - c. Don't get stuck on the policy alternatives. In a certain respect, I don't care what you're alternatives are, what I care about is how you analyze them.
4. Goal Matrix
 - a. This is the hardest part of the analysis. DO NOT try to come up with theses the night before the assignment is due!
 - b. A goal is something broad you want to achieve. For example, improving equity or efficiency is a goal.
 - c. Your impact categories are intended to measure how well you are achieving your goals. So if your goal is to improve equity, an impact category might be the effect of a certain policy on poverty.
 - d. You must include implementation issues in your goal matrix.
5. Analysis
 - a. Spend equivalent time on each alternative. Do not focus only on the one you recommend. You need to bring your reader to your conclusion. The only way you can do this is to fully present all the evidence on each alternative so they come to the same conclusion you did based on the evidence, not just because they trust you.
 - b. Evidence
 - i. Evidence is critical. You SHOULD NOT draw evidence from partisan groups. Cite original studies to back your claims. This will be a huge component of your

grade; it will make or break your analysis. If the evidence is bad, the policy analysis is bad.

- ii. Often times, it's not just the evidence that you include that's the problem, but the evidence that you don't include that can produce a poor policy analysis.
- iii. Generally, you will not be able to find a study that specifically examines the policy you propose. Instead you will have to use evidence to infer what the effect of the policy will be. See example analyses for ideas about how to do this.

6. Recommendation

- a. **DO NOT** make a recommendation based on the political viability of an alternative. You should include it in your analysis, but should not use it as a basis for a recommendation.

7. Appendix

- a. **USE YOUR APPENDIX.** You don't have a lot of space so use your appendix to provide more detailed evidence to support your claims in the paper.