

La Follette School of Public Affairs

Course: PA 873 Policy Analysis

Professor: Pam Herd

Course Time: Thursday 1.20-3.15

Course Location: Education L177

Office Hours (3454 Social Science): Mondays 10-12 and by Appointment.

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: 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.

Required Text: Weimer and Vining. Policy Analysis.

Readings on E-Reserve

Components of Course Grade:

- Two memorandum exercises (20 percent). **Problem Statement Due: 3/8 Goal Matrix Due: 3/29**
- Policy Analysis project (40 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 10
(Comments to Colleague DUE MAY 14)
FINAL DRAFT IS DUE MAY 15
- Midterm examination on **March 15-17** (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) (10 percent)

*******ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE EMAILED TO ME AT pherd@lafollette.wisc.edu*******

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. Divide your memorandum into two distinct parts. In the first part provide a sketch of the context for your problem. What is the problem you're addressing? 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. This should be no longer than 3 double spaced pages. **DUE: March 8**

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). The assignment consists of two parts. Part one involves putting together a chart that includes your goals and impact categories for each goal. For part two describe one policy alternative (not the status quo). Then, evaluate this alternative using ONE goal (and its respective impact categories). Part two should be no more than 3 double spaced pages. **DUE: March 29**

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. Email both me and your colleague the memorandum. This will not be graded, but of course I and the other students will read it! **First Draft of Paper Due: May 10 Evaluation Due: May 14**

*****FINAL PAPER IS DUE MAY 15*****

SCHEDULE

Day 1—1/26

Class Projects and Overview

Day 2—2/2

What Role for the Policy Analyst?

- Weimer and Vining, Chapter 1, 2, and 3

Rationales for Public Policy Intervention

Day 3—2/9—ENRON-Contrasting the Market Model with the Polis

- Giant Pool of Money—This American Life.
http://www.thislife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?sched=1242 (you can read the transcript if you prefer or listen to the segment).

Day 4—2/16

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

Day 5—2/23

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

Day 6—3/1

- Citizenship Framework—Political, Civil, and Social Rights
 - Four Freedoms—FDR—find online.
 - Desmond King and Jeremy Waldron. 1988. “Citizenship, Social Citizenship, and the Defense of Welfare Provision.” *British Journal of Political Science* 18(4):415-443.
 - Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson. 2010. “Winner Take All Politics.” *Politics & Society* 38:152.
 - Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss. 2004. The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship. *Perspectives on Politics*.

Day 7—3/8 Problem Statement Due Today

- Paternalism, Punishment, and Morality
 - 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.
 - Allard, Scott. 2007. “The Changing Face of Welfare during the Bush Administration.” *Publius* 37(3):304-332.
 - Sanford Schram, Joe Soss, Richard Fording, Linda Houser. 2009. “Deciding to Discipline: Race, Choice, and Punishment at the Frontlines of Welfare Reform.” *American Sociological Review* 74(3):398-422.

Day 8—3/15

- Midterm—This will be emailed to you on 3/21 in the morning and should be returned by email March 23 by 11.59pm.

Day 9—3/22

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 10—3/29

Implementation (Goal Matrix Due)

- 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 11 (Spring Break)

Day 12—4/12

Evidence, Policy Problems, and Policy Analysis

- Cherlin, Andrew. 1999. “Going to Extremes: Family Structure, Children’s Well-Being, and Social Science. *Demography* 36(4):421-428.
- Stacey, Judith and Timothy Biblarz. 2001. “(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?” *American Sociological Review* 66(2):159-183.
- This American Life Episode—The Watchmen—2nd half of the episode; how bonds are rated, the role of the analyst. We’ll listen to this in class.

Day 13--4/19

Policy Analysis Case Studies

- Readings TBA

Day 14—4/26

When Policies Create Problems

Video: How to Get Fat Without Really Trying (ABC News Peter Jennings Special)

- 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*.

Day 15—5/3

Class Presentations

Day 16—5/10 (First Draft of Paper Due)

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, executive summary, references and appendix). This should be Times New Roman 12 point font with 1 inch margins.
 - a. Table of Contents
 - b. Executive Summary
 - c. Problem Statement. This should also describe the rationale for intervention (the rationale for intervention should be no more than a paragraph—be brief).
 - d. Goals and Impact Categories
 - e. Description of Status Quo and analysis
 - f. Description of Alternative 1 and analysis
 - g. Description of Alternative 2 and analysis
 - h. Recommendation
 - i. Appendix (include your problem matrix)
2. Executive Summary
 - a. No more than 2 double spaced pages (remember this is not included in the 15 page total limit for the analysis)
 - b. The goal is to provide a brief summary of the entire analysis, including your recommendation.
3. 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.
4. Goal Matrix
 - a. This is the hardest part of the analysis. DO NOT try to come up with this 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. 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 your alternatives are, what I care about is how you analyze them.
6. 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.
7. Recommendation
- a. **DO NOT** make a recommendation based on the political viability of an alternative. You should include political viability in your analysis, but should not use it as a basis for a recommendation.
8. 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.
9. Presentation
- a. Use powerpoint!
 - b. Simple slides—too much writing distracts.