Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration

PPPA 6006 Policy Analysis Fall 2014

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 3:30-5:30
Location: Duques Room 361
Professor: Donna Lind Infeld
Office Address: 805 21st St., 601B
e-mail: dlind@gwu.edu
Telephone: 202/994-3960
Office Hours: Mondays 3:30-5 PM
Thursdays 1:30-3:20

Course Description and Objectives

This is an introductory course to the academic concept and professional skill of policy analysis. Policy analysts are responsible for defining and framing public problems, identifying and evaluating possible strategies for addressing problems, and recommending solutions that make the most sense. The goals of this course are to provide students with an understanding of the role that analysis plays in the policymaking process, to make students critical consumers of policy analysis, and to equip students with the basic skills necessary to write and present a professional policy analysis paper.

Student Learning Objectives:

The course relies primarily on case studies of important policy decisions as a learning strategy. By the end of the course, students will be proficient in:

- The Tools of Policy Analysis: Students will be able to identify and define public problems; identify and evaluate policy solutions; and make educated recommendations to policymakers.
- Information Gathering: Students will be able to cull, interpret, and evaluate policy-relevant information. This includes the ability to distinguish fact from fiction, assess the accuracy and completeness of information, and identify the values and perspectives inherent in such information.
- Policy Analysis in Context: Students will be able to explain the strengths and limitations of policy analysis; describe the relationship between policy analysis, politics, and the policy process in democracy; and define a range of economic, social, organizational and political factors influencing policy.

Blackboard
Blackboard will be used to post course materials so you should check it regularly. http://www.blackboard.gwu.edu

Required Readings

Weekly cases and other readings are available via hotlink within the Blackboard syllabus. Students do not need to master the specific policy details in case materials. Rather, the objective is to get a general idea of what was being done in the analysis, focusing on the topic relevant to the specific class topic.

Students should bring a copy of the case materials to class or can bring a laptop to pull up case materials for reference. Laptops can also be used to take notes but not for web surfing or checking email during class. (It is very distracting to students sitting behind you!)

Readings are required for the class in which they are listed.

**Additional Readings:**
A daily newspaper is required reading (e.g., NY Times, Wall Street Journal, or Washington Post), either paper copy or online, because we may be discussing current policy issues as they relate to policy analysis.

**Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer feedback form.doc (23.5 KB)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Definition Memo</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis paper part 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Policy Analysis paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Assignments**

Note on attached sample papers: Do not rely too heavily on these examples. There is no single, correct way to structure a policy memo or analysis. You should tailor your memo to your specific client's needs and the nature of the policy issue.

**Problem Definition Memo:** Write a memo (up to 4 pages) introducing a public policy problem that you are interested in using as the basis of your full policy analysis paper. Focus only on the problem you would like to address, not the solutions. Write your memo in the form of a convincing argument about why the problem needs to be addressed. Bear in mind that one-sided arguments and exaggerated rhetoric are rarely convincing. Be sure to identify your client – not necessarily by name, but by position or role (e.g., Mayor of Chicago, Assistant Secretary of Defense, US Senator, City Public Works Director, etc.)

Problem Definition memo samples:
Louisiana Wetlands PD 4 pg Louisiana wetlands.doc
Organ Policy pd 4 pg Organ Policy(1).doc
See also Problem Definition sections of full Policy Analysis papers (below)
Policy Analysis Paper Part 1
Problem Definition, Policy Alternatives, & Decision Criteria: Write up to 8 pages that includes a revised problem definition and set of alternatives and the decision criteria that you believe should drive the decision about which alternative to select. Some criteria may be important not because your client cares deeply about them, but because they reflect objections and concerns that other influential players may have. (See first sections of sample policy analysis papers attached below.)

Individual Policy Analysis paper: Complete the policy analysis that was framed in Part 1. In particular, instructor comments on Part 1 should be addressed and then, based on Bardach’s Eightfold Path, the remainder of the policy analysis should be completed. This means that the student will project the performance of alternatives, assess the trade-offs among alternatives, and make a recommendation. (maximum 15 pages plus references)

Policy Analysis Samples:
Crystal Methamphetamine in Hawaii Crystal Meth in Hawaii - PA 2012.docx
De-Nuclearizing North Korea PA North Korea (new sample 2012).docx

Group Presentation: Students will be formed into groups and provided with background papers that define a public policy problem and the client for whom an analysis is to be conducted. Groups will define criteria, select and analyze policy options, and make a recommendation during a 20-minute class presentation using PowerPoint slides. 1-150 minutes will also be available for class discussion lead by the group members. All members will all receive the same grade for overall group performance. Each student is to fill out the peer assessment form attached above.

Reference Materials
fullbigdoc.pdf Federal Plain Language Guidelines should be used as a reference.

Grading
Notes:
Staple papers; do not use plastic or other covers.
Late work will be penalized at a rate of 1 point per week day out of 100 point base for each assignment.

Grading is based on equal parts: style, logic, insight, analysis, documentation.

Style refers to correct grammar, spelling, and paper presentation (i.e. no typos). The goal is for professional-level writing style.
Logic is facilitated by using an introduction (stating the purpose and scope of the paper), section headings and subheadings, and a conclusion. It also involves logical connection of ideas throughout the paper.

Insight conveys your original thoughts and depth of understanding of the subject. This involves articulating the complexity of the issue in an understandable way without over-simplifying.

Analysis involves doing what the assignment asked for and making it clear that you understand the tools involved. This involves using correct terminology, providing a range of types of evidence to support your argument, and reaching a conclusion based on that evidence.

Documentation should include an appropriate number and range of sources. They should be presented in APA style of referencing. Class texts or other course readings should be referenced. Direct quotes should include page numbers.

Overall course grades reflect the following philosophy:

A Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

A- Very Good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of creativity and a strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches, is thorough and well reasoned, and meets professional standards.

B+ Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well reasoned and thorough, without serious analytical shortcomings. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of this graduate course.

B Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

B- Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues is incomplete. (A "B-") average in all courses is not sufficient to sustain graduate status in 'good standing'.)

C+/ C / C- Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

F Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations or course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements.
Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.

**Course Grades:**
Letter grading will be based on:

- 92.0+ A
- 90.0 - 91.9 A-
- 88.0 - 89.9 B+
- 86.0 - 87.9 B
- 84.0 - 85.9 B-
- 82.0 - 83.9 C+
- 80.0 - 81.9 C
- 78.0 - 79.9 C-
- Less than 78 F

**Supplementary Readings**


**Policies in Public Administration and Public Policy Courses**
1. Incompletes: A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the
student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit http://www.gwu.edu/~ccas/faculty/files/Incomplete_poli0.pdf for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

2. Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom: It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.

3. Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work: All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.

4. Academic Honesty: I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

5. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

6. The Syllabus: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, revise content and requirements during the semester.

7. Laptops: Laptops can be used in class for taking notes or referring to case materials, not for any other purpose.

8. Collaboration: Except on any assignment specified to be done in groups, all works should be individual effort.

9. University Policy on Religious Holidays:
   1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;
   2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations;
   3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

10. DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS): Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242,
to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

11. UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300 - The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

12. SECURITY - In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. 8/28 Introduction to the course and to policy analysis
2. 9/4 Perspectives on policy analysis
3. 9/11 Problem definition
4. 9/18 Specifying policy alternatives
   Problem Definition memo due
5. 9/25 Implementation and policy design
6. 10/2 Developing criteria to use in comparison of alternatives
7. 10/9 Projecting and comparing policy outcomes
   Policy Analysis Part 1 due
8. 10/16 Making policy recommendations and real world policy analysis
   (Guest: Brian Elderbroom, Urban Institute (tentative date))
9. 10/23 Introduction to program evaluation
   Group presentations described – Presentation Skills
10. 10/30 Program evaluation cases
    Individual Policy Analysis paper due
    Groups formed
11. 11/6 Alternative policy analysis paradigms (Guest: Peter Linquiti)
12. 11/13 Social science and think tanks in policy analysis
13. 11/20 Group Presentations
14. 12/4 Group Presentations and Course Wrap-up
**Session 1: Introduction to the Course**

Introduction to content and requirements of the course. Discuss the role of analysis in policy-making and the basic approach to policy analysis.

Bardach: Introduction, Steps One & Two: Define the Problem and Assemble Some Evidence

Weimer & Vining.pdf (2011). What is Policy Analysis


**Session 2: Perspectives on Policy Analysis**

Introduction to the models of policy analysis and the attributes of policy analysts.

Bardach, Part II: Assembling Evidence

Case Study: Sample student paper UnauthorizedStudentPA.pdf

Congressional Budget Office, Social Security Policy Options, read only pages ix-7, 2010. 07-01-SSOptions_forWeb.pdf

Visit and browse the web site for the National Center for Policy Analysis (http://www.ncpa.org). Explore the site to find out as much as you can about NCPA as an organization. Look at the various types of formats they use, examine one report and be prepared to discuss with the class whether you think it really was a policy analysis or not. See if they had addressed either of the topics of the cases above or the issue of Drug Control.

Think about the following questions when reviewing all cases in this course:

1. What is the problem? Has the author adequately justified why this is the appropriate focus? Is there adequate evidence to support the need for action at this time? Who is the audience for the analysis? Who is conducting it?

2. Criteria: Are the criteria appropriate and clearly defined? To they reflect the values of the client and/or the decision-maker? Are there other criteria that should have been included?

3. Alternatives: Are the alternatives clearly defined? Did the author justify why these were the appropriate alternatives to consider?

4. Analysis: Does the author use evidence (data, expert opinion, scenarios, etc.) as the basis for projecting the expected outcomes of each alternative?
5. Recommendation: Is there a recommendation or a conclusion? Whichever it is, is it justified by the analysis? Does the author address the weaknesses of any recommended action?

Session 3: Problem Definition
Identify the rationales for public intervention from the market perspective and the steps (as well as difficulties involved) in problem identification and verification. Discuss the role of stakeholder groups in problem identification and definition. Complete an in-class exercise.

Read sample Problem Definitions included in Syllabus and Assignments tab Problem Identification and Structuring (only need to read pp 32-48). Guess and Farnham.pdf


Office of National Drug Control Policy - Strategy (Read Introduction (p 1-3); Skim the rest) http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/2012_ndcs.pdf


View the video: Traffic (2000). First review this document: Viewing_Traffic(2).doc This is an "R" rated film. If you are uncomfortable watching violence, the alternative assignment is to go to the website of the Office of National Drug Control Policy and skim to identify how the administration defines the drug problem.

Session 4: Specifying Policy Alternatives
Identifying, creating, and/or modifying policy alternatives. Overview of how to describe and present alternatives.

Bardach - Part I Step 3 and Appendix B

Identifying Alternatives - patton and sawicki.pdf

Thaler, Sunstein, & Balz, Choice Architecture, pp 1-17, April 2010. Thaler_Sunstein_Balz_Choice_Architecture.pdf
National Drug Control Budget: FY 2013 Funding Highlights (skim just to get a feel for the range of programs supported by the federal budget)

Drug Decriminalization in Portugal. Cato Institute, 2009. Read pages 1-11 (Stop at Effects of Portuguese Decriminalization)

International Drug Control Policy, Congressional Research Service (CRS), (Skim report, especially Alternative Policy Approaches (starting p 26) CRSDrugPolicy.pdf

Publicagenda.org - Visit this site and explore their reports in the area of policy toward Illicit Drugs. Look also for the topic of your individual and/or group policy analysis. (This link takes you to their drug policy section).

**Session 5: Implementation and Policy Design**
Logic Models for Characterizing Programs; Top-Down and Bottom-up Perspectives on Implementation

Bardach - Part III


Fisher, Miller, and Sidney (eds.), Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods, pp. 89-107, 2007. (Skip Section 3.1, unless you have a specific interest in the EU.) handbook.pdf

Eggers and O’Leary. If We can Put a Man on the Moon: Getting Big Things Done in Government. p. vii-18. Man on the Moon.pdf

**Session 6: Establishing Evaluation Criteria**
The roles of values in development of goals and criteria. Examination of conflicts arising from alternative frameworks.

Bardach - Part I, Step 4

Never the twain shall meet: Why do economists and environmental scientists have such a hard time communicating? - Never the twain shall meet.doc

Evaluating Options for U.S. Greenhouse-Gas Mitigation using Multiple Criteria. RAND 2009. (Read Summary and Chapter 3 (Normative Criteria); skim rest of the report) RAND_OP252.pdf

Irwin - Multi-Attribute Analysis. Irwin.pdf

Session 7: Projecting and Comparing Policy Alternatives
Use of in-class case studies as examples of applying the policy analysis model.

Bardach Part I, Steps 5 and 6


Tackling Climate Change Cost-Effectively - Centre for European Policy Studies. CEPS study leaflet.pdf

Policy Options for Reducing CO2 Emissions - CBO (Read the Summary; just skim the rest). CBO-Carbon.pdf

Session 8: Making Recommendations
Telling the Story: Getting to conclusions and/or recommendations
Bardach - Part I, Steps 7-8

Robin Olsen, Senior Associate, Public Safety Performance Project, Pew Center on the States

Skim the following reports:
Arkansas Summary: Pew_Arkansas_brief.pdf
1 in 31: PSPP_1in31_report_FINAL_WEB_3-26-09.pdf

Session 9: Introduction to Program Evaluation
This class discusses the final phase of the policy analysis cycle: the evaluation phase.

Program Evaluation: Chapters 1-4. GAO Designing Evaluations.pdf

Session 10: Program Evaluation Cases
Drug Decriminalization in Portugal (Skim the rest of the report) greenwald_whitepaper.pdf
In addition: PICK TWO OF CASES LISTED AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS SECTION THAT MOST INTEREST TO YOU AND THINK ABOUT THE KIND OF RESEARCH DESIGN THAT WAS USED - WE WILL DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN SMALL GROUPS. Skim the other cases.

1) Describe the program
   • What were its goals and objectives?
   • Did they specify a logic model?
2) Did they specify evaluation questions?
3) What type of evaluation was conducted?
   • Input/Output/Outcome/Impact
   • Formative/Improvement/Summative
   • Ongoing/One-Shot/Other
   • Objective Observers/Participant
4) What type of research design was used?
   • Diagram it
   • Sample: Random/Convenience/Other
   • Comparisons: Random Allocation/Comparison Group/None
   • Data: Measures? Quantitative/Qualitative/Multi-method
5) What did they find?
6) Were there limitations due to the design?
7) How long did it take to complete the study?

Teach for America TeachforAmericaBrief.pdf


Hawaii’s HOPE Program PSPP_HOPE_Brief_web.pdf

Session 11 (November 6): Alternative Paradigms for Policy Analysis

- Key Topics
  - History of Policy Analysis as a Discipline
  - Incremental Decision Making vs. Synoptic Decision Making
- Readings (This session has more readings than usual but most are short. They offer a sample of divergent views of the practice of public policy analysis.)
  - Moran, Rein, and Goodin, (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy, Chapter 2, “The Historical Roots of the Field,” deLeon, pp 39-57, 2006. (A nice summary of the field; don’t worry about mastering all the theoretical constructs that deLeon lays out in Section 3.)
  - Fry & Raadschelders, Mastering Public Administration, “Charles Lindblom: Probing the Policy Process: Policymaking as Analytical and Interactive Process,” pp 271-
282, 2008. (Despite the date, most of the work described in this reading was done between 1955 and 1990.)


**Session 12: Think Tanks and Social Science in Policy Analysis**

Examination of who conducts policy analysis and policy research inside and outside of the government.

The role and financing of Think Tanks.


Class Exercise: *Unnatural Causes* - Marshall Islands Population Health. Review Case Details carefully as this case will be the basis for extensive class discussion. Note that this exercise involves watching three Video Clips; online, prior to class. Read case details Marshall (2).docx

Video Clips: (view all 3 on this page) There is some overlap, but they are short and each one emphasizes something slightly different.

**Session 13: Group Presentations**

Skim the rest of the Cato report on Portuguese Drug Policy (linked in Session 4 above).


**Session 14: Group Presentations and Wrap-up**

Gore, *The Assault on Reason* (Excerpt) 2007. Assault on Reason.docx

Building the Connection between Policy and Evidence: The Obama Evidence-Based Initiatives. Ron Haskins and Jon Baron. evidence based policy.pdf