

POL SCI 4043: PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

Washington University in St Louis
Washington University in St. Louis
Spring 2018
MW 10-11:30AM
Classroom: Seigle 301

Instructor: Keith E. Schnakenberg
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Office: Seigle 241

This course teaches students how to provide good advice to decision-makers about matters of public importance. To that end, our focus will be on identifying policy problems, identifying potential solutions, navigating trade-offs between different policy goals, and evaluating the effectiveness of existing policies. The course will cover two main components:

1. Analytical tools of public policy analysis: microeconomic theory, cost-benefit analysis, causal inference
2. Applications: Health policy, environmental policy, etc.

Though we will discuss several applied policy areas, mastery of those areas is not a primary objective of the course. Instead, applications will be taught with an eye toward understanding how the general principles and methods of policy analysis apply in the real world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

TEXTBOOK AND READINGS

The textbook for this course is “Democratic Policymaking: An Analytical Approach” by Charles Barrilleaux, Christopher Reenock, Mark Souva.

ASSIGNMENTS

The major graded components of the course are listed below, with percent contributions to your final course grade in parentheses:

- Participation (10%): This class relies very heavily on in-class activities and it is important that all students arrive prepared and contribute to class. Students will be evaluated on how they apply the class material to the problems presented for discussion or in-class activities. In some cases I have listed activities for students to complete before class and bring to class. These will count toward the participation grade as well. These assignments should be regarded as informal note-taking exercises and will not be graded as formal writing assignments.
- Homework assignments (5%). There will be two homework assignments, each in the first half of class. These are meant as opportunities to apply and practice skills in preparation for the midterm exam.

- Policy show and tell (5%). On a designated date, we will have a “policy show and tell.” Each student will bring a new article to class describing a policy issue of interest to them. Each student will have two minutes to describe why this problem is interesting and relate it to one of the course concepts from the first three chapters of the book. The idea is to implement Bardach’s taxi driver test (elsewhere, the Grandma Bessie test) in which you must explain your policy work in one or two minutes to an impatient listener. Practice this once or twice before coming to class: the two-minute time limit is difficult if you are unprepared.
- Midterm exam (20%): The midterm exam will require students to apply concepts from the first half of class and will contain short answer questions and problem-solving questions in approximately equal parts.
- Final exam (20%): The final exam will be a one question essay asking students to analyze a policy issue and make a recommendation.
- Policy memo (40%): The students will write a short (8-10 page) policy memo using a prompt distributed by me, along with further instructions, at the beginning of class.

GRADING SCALE

The course will follow a standard grading scale:

97-100	A+	77-79	C+
93-96	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-

EXPECTATIONS/PROCEDURES

Respect. Students are expected to treat one another with respect. This is essential to creating a good classroom environment. Incidentally, it is also essential to being a good policy analyst – a good policy analyst is charitable to the arguments of those who disagree with his or her conclusions.

Inclusive Learning Environment Statement. The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students

to speak directly with their instructor or TA about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System.

Office Hours. Come! You will get a lot more out of this course if you come to office hours with questions related to the course material.

Late Assignments. Assignments not completed by class time they day they are listed on the syllabus are late. The two homework assignments and the final policy memo may be accepted late subject to a 5% per day (including weekends) late penalty. Other assignments are given as preparation for that day's in-class activities and therefore will not be accepted late.

Ethics/Violations of Academic Integrity Ethical behavior is an essential component of learning and scholarship. Students are expected to understand, and adhere to, the University's academic integrity policy: wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Academic Integrity Policy Committee. Penalties for violating the policy will be determined by the Academic Integrity Policy committee, and can include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension or expulsion from the University. If you have any doubts about what constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy, or any other issue related to academic integrity, please ask your instructor.

Feedback on Policy Memo. I will provide feedback on early drafts of the policy memo **provided the draft is given to me by April 16**. I may provide feedback for drafts submitted later than April 16 subject to constraints on my time.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Disability Resources. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please speak with instructor and consult the Disability Resource Center at Cornerstone (cornerstone.wustl.edu/). Cornerstone staff will determine appropriate accommodations and will work with your instructor to make sure these are available to you.

Writing Assistance. For additional help on your writing, consult the expert staff of The Writing Center (writingcenter.wustl.edu) in Olin Library (first floor). It can be enormously helpful to ask someone outside a course to read your essays and to provide feedback on strength of argument, clarity, organization, etc.

Sexual Assault The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services

and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.

If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with the Title IX Coordinator directly, Ms. Kennedy can be reached at (314) 935-3118, jwkennedy@wustl.edu, or by visiting her office in the Women's Building. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to Tamara King, Associate Dean for Students and Director of Student Conduct, or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency. You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling (314) 935-8761 or visiting the 4th floor of Seigle Hall.

Bias Reporting. The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: brss.wustl.edu.

Mental Health Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth.

DISCLAIMER

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this information throughout the semester.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

January 17 Introduction: What is policy analysis?

Reading: BRS Chapter 1

January 22 Doing policy analysis

Reading: Bardach's Eightfold Path [Provided]

January 24 Doing policy analysis part II

Reading: Canadian salmon fishery report [Provided]

Before class: List the steps to Bardach's eightfold path and identify each step as it is

presented in the salmon fishery report (one or two sentences for each step). Turn this in at the end of class.

January 29 Social problems and game theoretic foundations
Reading: BRS Chapter 2

January 31 Game theoretic foundations: Part 2
Reading: Gibbons [Provided]
Activity: Collective action experiment

February 5 Example: Missouri's "Right to Work" Laws
Reading: Right to work article [Provided]
Before class: In less than one page, briefly describe the concerns of advocates and opponents of Right to Work. Do any policy alternatives address both sides' concerns?

February 7 Markets
Reading: BRS, first part of Chapter 3 (Introduction, 3.1, 3.2)

February 12 Public policy as a solution to market failure
Reading: BRS, rest of Chapter 3

February 14 Example: Uber/Lyft Congestion Pricing
Reading: Congestion pricing article [Provided]
Before class: Describe the problem that congestion pricing is meant to solve. Does it create any new problems? Are better alternatives available? Use less than one page to answer these questions.

February 19 POLICY SHOW AND TELL + First Homework Assignment Due

February 21 Evidence in Public Policy Analysis Part I: Uncertainty
Reading: BRS Chapter 4

February 26 Evidence in Public Policy Analysis Part II: Causal Inference
"Reading": Causal Inference Bootcamp (Mod-U YouTube Playlist) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNpcwiOme1g&list=PL1M5TsfDV6Vuufqfs_h5fDR3pBhIj4QOW7

February 28 Example: Police Body Cameras
Reading: Report on body cameras <http://bwc.thelab.dc.gov/>
Before class: Briefly (in less than a page) describe what you learned from this study. Do you find that information credible? Why or why not?

March 5 Exam review + **Second Homework Assignment is due**

March 7 MIDTERM EXAM

SPRING BREAK

March 19 Economic and Social Policy
Reading: BRS Chapter 5

March 21 Example: Minimum Wage

Reading: Gopalan, Hamilton, Kalda and Sovich [Provided]

Briefly (in less than one page) describe what you learned about minimum wage policies from this article. Did you change your mind about anything?

March 26 Environment policy

Reading: BRS Chapter 6

March 28 Example: Regulating compact fluorescent lamps

Reading: CFL handout [Provided]

Before class: Bring a short (2-3 paragraph) page of notes describing the policy problem and laying out potential policy choices

April 2 Health policy

Reading: BRS Chapter 7

April 4 Example: The Individual Mandate Repeal

Reading: Vox on individual mandate repeal <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/14/16651698/obamacare-individual-mandate-republican-tax-bill> and National Review on the same topic <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/454119/obamacare-individual-mandate-repeal-gop-tax-reform-plan-smart>

Before class: Write up a brief explanation of the effects of individual mandate repeal, and sketch out a few alternatives for addressing those effects

April 9 Immigration policy

Reading: BRS Chapter 12

April 11 Example: DACA and the Dreamers

Reading: This policy area is likely to change substantially over the course of this semester so I will assign the reading closer to the date.

April 16 Foreign policy

Reading: BRS Chapter 13

April 18 Climate Change Negotiation Simulation Day 1

April 23 Climate Change Negotiation Simulation Day 2

April 25 Review Session. **Final Policy Memo Due**

May 7 **FINAL EXAM**