

**PA 8430 Public Policy Analysis  
Fall 2009**

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Day/Time/Location: Wednesdays, 3-5:30pm in 207 Middlebush

**Course Description**

This course is a basic introduction to public policy analysis, and is designed to teach you how to use a set of analytical tools often employed in policy analysis. The course is applied in focus, and is intended to complement the other courses in the MPA program. We will not focus on a specific policy area, although we will use case studies from a variety of areas as examples. The course also will not focus on the politics of the policy process, although we will certainly discuss how policy analysis fits into the overall policy process and explore strategies for making policy analysis relevant to policy decision-making.

**Prerequisites**

You should have a solid foundation in introductory statistics (such as PA 8181 - Research Methods and Inquiry in Public Affairs II), microeconomics (such as PA 8190 - Economic Analysis for Public Policy), and politics and public policy (such as PA 8170 - Public Policy Processes and Strategies) to take the course, or my permission. Please see me if you have questions about your preparation.

The course is an applied data course. Three class sessions will be meeting in the computer lab in Middlebush 7, and you will be using STATA and EXCEL to do in-class exercises and to complete homework.

**Required Texts**

Eugene Bardach. 2005. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysts: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Second Edition. CQ Press.  
Robert M. Groves, Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. 2004. *Survey Methodology*. Wiley-Interscience.  
George M. Guess and Paul G. Farnham. 2000. *Cases in Public Policy Analysis*. Second Edition. Georgetown University Press.

**Course Blackboard Website**

I will use the course website at <http://blackboard.missouri.edu> to distribute additional required readings and further information about course assignments. Grades will also be posted on the website. If you experience any problems finding or accessing information, please let me know.

## **Course Requirements/Grading**

### *Assignments (70%)*

Each student will be responsible for completing five assignments over the course of the semester. I generally do not grant extensions so please plan to finish these assignments on time. I will accept late assignments, but the grade will reflect its tardiness (one grade-level penalty for each day late). More information on these assignments will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

- Problem Definition Assignment (10%)
- Survey Project (15%)
- Forecasting Problem Set (10%)
- Cost-Benefit Analysis Problem Set (15%)
- 48-Hour Policy Analysis Assignment (15%)

### *Final Exam (25%)*

There will be a comprehensive final exam given on the last day of class. The final exam will cover lectures, readings, and assignments from the entire course.

### *Class Participation (10%)*

Participation includes attendance, participation, and completion of all in-class exercises. In-class exercise will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Students who miss a class will need to explain their absence. If you know that you are going to be absent ahead of time, please let me know. More than one missed class will jeopardize your grade. Participation in class is a vital part of this course. In order to fully participate in class, assigned readings need to be completed before class.

## **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort was successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. Cheating of any kind will jeopardize your credit for the entire course. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, or collaboration, please consult the course instructor.

## **Electronic Devices**

Please turn off all electronic devices before class. I also discourage the use of laptops during class. While some people prefer them for note-taking, most of the note-taking you will do in this class is better-suited to traditional pen and paper. Besides, having a laptop open will tempt you to use the web, email, and text messaging all of which are inappropriate during class and distracting to you, your classmates, and me.

## **Students With Disabilities**

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office.

To request academic accommodations (for example, a notetaker), students must also register with the Office of Disability Services, S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696. It is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

### **Class Schedule**

The schedule for the course is subject to change. I will announce any changes during class, and I will post changes to the syllabus on the class Blackboard site.

#### **8/26 Introduction: What is Public Policy Analysis?**

Guess and Farnham, Chapter 1.

Andrews, Clinton J. 2007. "Rationality in Policy Decision Making," in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*, ed. F. Fischer, G.J. Miller, and M.S. Sidney, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

#### **9/2 Problem Definition and Evaluative Criteria**

Guess and Farnham, Chapter 2.

Cobb, Roger W. and Joseph F. Coughlin. 1998. Are Elderly Drivers a Road Hazard?: Problem Definition and Political Impact. *Journal of Aging Studies* 12(4): 411-427 (Blackboard).

Patton Carl V. and David S. Sawicki. 1986. *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis & Planning*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Chapter 5 (Blackboard).

#### **9/9 Survey I: Sampling and Administration**

Mitchell, Jerry. 2007. "The Use (and Misuse) of Surveys in Policy Analysis," in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*, ed. F. Fischer, G.J. Miller, and M.S. Sidney, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Groves, et al., Chapters 1-4.

Recommended: Dillman, Don A., 2007, *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, Second Edition, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Chapters 1, 4 and 5 (Blackboard).

Problem Definition Assignment due at 3pm.

#### **9/16 Survey II: Modes, Questions and Answers, and Measurement**

Groves, et al., Chapters 5-8.

#### **9/23 Survey III: Data Analysis**

Groves, et al. Chapter 10.

Recommended: Nardi, Peter M. 2006. *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods*, Second Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Chapters 6-9 (Blackboard).

**9/30 Survey IV: Data Analysis (Exercises)**

Class will meet in Middlebush 7.

**10/7 Policy Forecasting I**

Guess and Farnham, Chapter 4.

Gupta, Dipak K. 2001. *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, Chapter 9 (Blackboard).

Feder, Stanley. 2002. Forecasting for Policy Making in the Post-Cold War Period. *Annual Review of Political Science* 5: 111-125.

Amstrup, Steven C., Hal Caswell, Eric DeWeaver, Ian Stirling, David C. Douglas, Bruce G. Marcot, and Christine M. Hunter. 2009. Rebuttal of "Polar Bear Population Forecasts: A Public-Policy Forecasting Audit." *Interfaces, Articles in Advance*, 1-17.

Survey Project due at 3pm.

**10/14 Policy Forecasting II (Exercises)**

Class will meet in Middlebush 7.

Gupta, Dipak K. 2001. *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, Chapters 10-11 (Blackboard).

**10/21 Cost Benefit Analysis I**

Levin, Henry M. and Patrick J. McEwan. 2001. *Cost-Effectiveness Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., Chapters 6-7 (Blackboard)

Guess and Farnham, Chapter 6.

Wang, et al. 2003. A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Electronic Medical Records in Primary Care. *The American Journal of Medicine* 114: 397-403.

Recommended: Miller, Gerald J. and Donijo Robbins. 2007. "Cost-Benefit Analysis," in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*, ed. F. Fischer, G.J. Miller, and M.S. Sidney, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Forecasting Problem Set due at 3pm.

**10/28 Cost-Benefit Analysis II**

Guess and Farnham, Chapter 7.

Carson, Richard T. 2000. "Contingent Valuation: A User's Guide." *Environmental Science & Technology* 34(8): 1413-1418.

Robinson, Lisa A. 2007. How US Government Agencies Value Mortality Risk Reductions. *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy* 1(2): 283-299.

**11/4 No Class.**

**11/11 Cost Benefit Analysis III (Exercises)**

Class will meet in Middlebush 7.

**11/18 "Quick" Policy Analysis**

Bardach (2005), entire.

Cost Benefit Analysis Problem Set due at 3pm.

**11/25 Thanksgiving Break**

**12/2 Policy Memo Presentations**

48-Hour Policy Analysis Due at 3pm.

**12/9 Final Exam**

### **Assignments**

1. Problem Definition. Choose a policy problem in an area of interest, and identify two competing ways this problem has been defined by stakeholders and other policy actors. How have these different problem definition shaped the politics of this problem, and what have been the implications for the solutions proposed to address this problem? Please utilize the theoretical perspectives we discussed in class and in your readings to guide your analysis. Last, step back into the role of a nonpartisan policy analyst, and develop and objective problem definition. Explain your rationale. This essay should be primarily analytical (not descriptive).

Your essay should be no longer than 5 pages (double-spaced, 12pt font, 1 inch margins).

Your grade depends both on the substance of your essay and the clarity of your presentation.

**Due: September 9 at 3pm.**

2. Survey Project. In this assignment, you will analyze public preferences or behavior related to a policy issue of interest (you are encouraged to continue with the same problem as in the problem definition assignment, but this is not required). Specifically, you are required to find and download data from an existing survey, analyze the data using statistical software, and present the results of your analysis. As part of your presentation, be sure to describe and critique the sampling method used to collect the data and the wording of the questions you analyze.

This assignment requires working with actual data, and I encourage you to get an early start. You are free to choose data from any survey. Possibilities include: the Cooperative

Congressional Election Survey, American National Election Studies, the General Social Survey, or the Roper Social and Political Trends Data. I will provide information in class on how to obtain these data.

**Due: October 7 at 3pm.**

3. Forecasting Problem Set. I will distribute a forecasting problem set in class on October 14.

**Due October 21 at 3pm.**

4. Cost-Benefit Analysis Problem Set. I will distribute a cost-benefit analysis problem set in class on November 4.

**Due November 18 at 3pm.**

5. 48-Hour Policy Analysis Assignment. Each student will conduct a policy analysis and write a memo recommending a course of public action, all within 48 hours. Students will select from a short list of questions provided by the instructor via Blackboard on November 30, and the memo will be due two days later on December 2. The policy memo should be no more than 7-typed pages (double-spacing, 12pt font, 1-inch margins), including a one-paragraph executive summary. The policy memo should make an argument, and be written in a clear and concise way such that a busy decision-maker can understand your argument and your policy recommendation quickly.

**Due December 2 at 3pm**