

PMAP 4061 Introduction to Policy Analysis

Summer, 2015

Tuesday/Thursday, 4:45 pm – 7:15 pm

Langdale Hall 127



Instructor: Rahul Pathak (rpathak3@gsu.edu)
Office Hours: Monday, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm or by appointment
Office: 333F, Andrew Young School, 14 Marietta St., Atlanta
Prerequisites: Econ 2105 and Econ 2106 (Principles of Macroeconomics & Microeconomics)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public policy is a complex undertaking that attempts to balance considerations of fairness and justice with analytical reasoning about program design and financial sustainability. In this class, we will explore the rationale for public policy and develop a better understanding of the factors that we need to consider while designing policies. Specifically, we would attempt to find an answer to the following questions:

- Why do we need a government?
- What are the policy instruments through which the government can intervene?
- What are the criteria that we can use in our decision-making about competing policy choices?
- How do we approach, undertake and communicate a policy analysis?
- What are the key policy areas that require our attention?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will develop a better appreciation of the role of the government, and should be able to think analytically about policy problems. They will have an understanding of key public-policy concepts (like market failures, public goods, and externalities) and will have a better understanding of decision-making criteria (like efficiency, equity and fairness). We will also develop familiarity with some current policy issues (like health care, education, crime) and the tools that the government uses in different policy areas (like regulation, taxes, public information). Lastly, we will try to develop some expertise in conducting a real-world policy analysis (finding data, writing memos, analysis techniques, presenting the findings).

COURSE STRUCTURE

The class-exercises and your participation is critical to better learning outcomes. We will primarily use following four approaches:

- Class discussions on various topics that would be related to weekly readings.
- Class activities that would be related to the topics being discussed.
- Class presentations by students on assigned policy topics.
- Learning through analysis of policy case-studies, writing memos and essays.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, CQ Press, 4th edition ISBN: 1608718425 [I will upload the reading for first week on brightspace]

GRADE STRUCTURE

Class participation and Presentations (25.0%)

(1) Submitting short comments on readings	:	10%
(2) Participation in class activities and discussion	:	5%
(3) Presentation on a policy topic	:	10%

Writing and analysis (55.0%)

(4) Assignment 1	:	15%
(5) Assignment 2	:	15%
(6) Policy Analysis Project	:	25%

Written Exams (20%)

(7) Midterm	:	20%
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GRADING SCHEME

This course uses plus-minus grading. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A+	:	97.00 -100.00	A	:	93.00 -96.99	A-	:	90.00-92.99
B+	:	87.00-89.99	B	:	83.00-86.99	B-	:	80.00-82.99
C+	:	77.00-79.99	C	:	73.00-76.99	C-	:	70.00-72.99
D+	:	67.00-69.99	D	:	60.00-66.99	F	:	<60.00

SUGGESTED TEXTS

(The readings from these books will be available on brightspace, however if you plan to pursue studies in public policy or policy analysis, these are extremely useful texts)

Weimer D.L. & Vining A.R. (2010) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 5th edition, Pearson

Gupta D.K. (2011) *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts. Tools and Techniques*, 2nd edition, CQ Press

ONLINE RESOURCES

(These are the resources that will be useful if you are interested in exploring these issues in more detail. You are not required to read them, but I advise you to skim through them.)

Lawrence S. and Mears D.P. (2004) *Benefit-Cost Analysis of Supermax Prisons: Critical Steps and Considerations*, The Urban Institute, [available at:
http://webarchive.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411047_Supermax.pdf]

FEMA (2011) *NFIP Reform: Phase III Report*, Federal Emergency Management [available at:
http://www.fema.gov/pdf/business/nfip/nfip_reform_phase_III_report.pdf]

Rand Corporation (2010) *Altered State? Assessing How Marijuana Legalization in California Could Influence Marijuana Consumption and Public Budgets* [available at:
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2010/RAND_OP315.pdf]

World Bank (2007) *The Tools for Institutional, Political and Social Analysis of Policy Reform: A Sourcebook for Development Practitioners* [available at:
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/6652>]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(The required readings from this list will be made available on brightspace)

Thomas A. Birkland. *An Introduction to Policy Analysis: Theories, Concepts and Models of Public Policy*, M.E. Sharpe.

Barry Bozeman. "Public Value Failure: When Efficient Markets May Not Do". *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 62 No.2

Lester M. Salamon. *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*, 1st edition, Oxford University Press

Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, Wiley

Bluhm W.T. & Heineman R.A., *Ethics and Public Policy: Methods and Cases*, Pearson.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

(Readings might be modified as we go along. All the readings (except Bardach), will be available on brightspace)

No.	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	June 9	Course Overview	
2	June 11	Problem Definition and the Policy Process <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bardach pp.1-16○ Chapter 2, Birkland	
3	June 16	The Rationale for Government Action <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chapter 3, Gupta○ Bozeman, 2002 (Optional)	
4	June 18	Goals, Alternatives and Criterion <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bardach 16-47	
5	June 23	Organizing the Policy Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Weimer & Vining, Chapter 15○ Memo Writing	Policy Project Topic Due
6	June 25	The Policy Analysis Workbook <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bardach 47-78○ Review the workbook	
7	June 30	The Tools of Government <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Salamon, pp.19-41○ Appendix B. Bardach pp.141-149	Assignment 1 Due
8	July 2	The Role of a Policy Analyst (Guest Speaker) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Appendix C and D	
9	July 7	Assembling Evidence for Policy Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bardach 79-123	Midterm Exam Due
10	July 9	Collecting your own data (Interviews & Surveys) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Babbie pp.253-278	
11	July 14	Cost Benefit Analysis and Other Approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ CBA reading	Assignment 2 Due
12	July 16	Projecting the outcomes and trends <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ William Dunn, Introduction to Forecasting	
13	July 21	Communicating Policy Analysis and Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chapter 3, Bluhm & Heineman (Optional)	
14	July 23	Policy Analysis Capstone	
15	July 28	Project Presentations	
16	July 30	Project Presentations	
	July 31		Final Project Due

IMPORTANT THINGS:

- **Late Submission:** Course assignments are expected to be submitted to the instructor *at the beginning of class* on the day the assignment is due. Any work submitted after the assigned due date will be subject to a penalty of 10 percentage points per day.
- **Grammarly:** All the students in the university can register on www.grammarly.com. It is advisable that you conduct a preliminary check of your assignments for any possible grammatical mistakes.
- **Academic Honesty:** Students are reminded of the University Policy on Academic Honesty, found in section 409 of the *Faculty Handbook*: [<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhh/fhb.html>]. Use of uncited material copied directly from any source, including the Internet, will result in a significant grade reduction, most likely a failing grade on the assignment
- **No cell phones and texting in class!!!** If you are caught texting, the instructor has the right to confiscate the phone and allow the class to compose a response. If your cell phone rings, the instructor has the right to answer it. Laptops are not permitted during presentations except by instructor consent.
- **Attendance:** Attendance at every class session is expected. Unexcused absences may be reflected in the final grade. The same policy applies to arriving late or leaving early. Active participation in class discussions includes coming to class prepared to discuss the week's reading assignment. It also includes respect for other students in the class in all interactions.
- **Withdrawal:** Students wishing to withdraw from the course must officially withdraw prior to the mid-point date of the semester as established by the University in order to avoid being given a grade of WF.
- **Syllabus Modifications:** The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.
- **Evaluation of Instructor:** Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation.
- **Disability Accommodation:** Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought.