



# Syllabus

## PPGA 504: Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 to 11:30PM

Instructor: Dr. Grace Jaramillo  
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Office hours: Mondays 1:00 to 3:00pm or by appointment

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### COURSE OVERVIEW

This course covers the fundamentals of policy analysis and program evaluation. We will focus on understanding the policymaking process and evaluating different policy options both quantitatively and qualitatively. We will cover the methods used for policy analysis and apply these tools to real-world cases. This is a hands-on class that is intended to prepare you for conducting policy analysis and program evaluation for government, NGOs, and international organizations. Part of these objectives include learning to communicate effectively and operate in a professional context.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define and explain a public policy problem in public policy terms
- Engage with clients and stakeholders, and present findings in a professional context
- Use the standard tools of policy analysis to design policy interventions
- Conduct policy analysis and risk assessment
- Design and implement systems for monitoring and evaluating policy
- Assess trade-offs and identify winners and losers associated with policy changes

**Prerequisites:** PPGA 503 or equivalent

### COURSE FORMAT

The new environment makes us all adjust to an online-only environment, at least for the upcoming term. We will make the best of this experience. PPGA 504 will combine a seminar format on Tuesdays and a Workshop and hands-on learning on Thursdays. All the materials will be available on Canvas and CLAS, additional reading materials could be accessed through the library portal.

On Tuesdays, the seminar will start with a 40-45 minutes lecture followed by a Q&A period and then open discussion. Only the lecture part will be recorded and uploaded to students who have asynchronous time schedules. Everybody else is expected to attend these meetings.

On Thursdays, the class will start with a lecture of just 20 minutes and the rest will be dedicated to in-class activities, group discussions and presentations discussing and applying the readings and learnings of the week. The weekly assignment will be based on the weekly learnings and the workshop. Students who follow the course asynchronously will have access to all discussions in a separate workshop with the TAs in a time schedule previously agreed upon with them. We will apply skills learned in 503 as much as possible using STATA.

In order to successfully achieve the learning objectives of this course, students should complete the readings and be adequately prepared to participate in class lectures, class assignments and group activities. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval and justified motivation. Moreover, on time preparation will be essential to professionally interact with clients towards the final project which will be an experimental learning activity of interacting with actual clients addressing pressing policy design/policy evaluation issues.

**About the client-centered final project:** The instructor will provide specific client-organizations where students will have the opportunity to present policy designs/evaluation alternatives to clients' pressing policy problems that will have direct impact in specific target population. The exercise is to address and define the problem, gather background information, comparative case examples and data that inform policy decisions and build possible alternatives that can be use by them. By the end of the term, students have to present a report with their policy recommendations/policy evaluation designs to those clients and the class. An important component of your learning experience is to engage with your clients professionally and efficiently.

## **GRADING**

- Class participation, in-class workshops: 10%
- Assignments (30%): For the 8 in-class and take-home assignments during the term
- Midterm Exam (15%): In-class (March 9<sup>th</sup>)
- Final Exam (15%): April 8<sup>th</sup>
- Final Project (30%): Group project

**Class participation:** Workshops and in-class assignments will be marked as passed/failed and the total cumulative number will be weighed in at the end to account the 10%

**Assignments:** Each Thursday you will be send an assignment consistent in writing policy briefs/policy memos -or parts of them- applying the concepts, tools and learnings of the week. The assignments won't be more than two-pages long, with very few exceptions. The assignment is due the next Monday on Turnitin and CANVAS by 9:00AM, except for the days where the outline states there is no assignment. There will be 10 graded assignments in total during the term. Policy briefs and memos are the essential tool of professional communication about policy issues. They have to be tailored to non-academic audiences while condensing rigorous details about policy, context and academic research about the issues at stake. The assignment will help students consolidate their knowledge about policy and their skills as effective policy communicators.

**Midterm Exam:** The exam will be written online on March 9<sup>th</sup> using either Collaborate Ultra or Zoom. Students must have their cameras and audio on during the entire length of the exam of 1.5 hours.

**Final Exam:** The exam will be written online on April 8<sup>th</sup> using either Collaborate Ultra or Zoom. Students must have their cameras and audio on during the entire length of the exam of 2 hours.

**Final project:** The instructor will provide client options. Students will make groups of four and work with those clients to develop options to the policy problem posed by them. Students need to engage with the client early on and follow the steps of policy analysis learned in class to help solve their actual and pressing issues and provide alternatives of either policy design or policy evaluation. The final grade will be the presentation and the policy report presented to them and to the class. TAs will guide the students throughout the exercise and help solve their questions and tutoring them into a successful engagement.

## **CLASS POLICIES**

**Class etiquette:** The instructor will mute everyone during the lecture part of the class to secure a clear recording for the non-synchronous students. However, it is important that everyone who is not speaking using the mute button during the Q&A and class discussions to guarantee an orderly interaction among us.

**Recording:** Students are not permitted to record lectures, online office hours, group or personal meetings that happened online.

**Late or missing work:** Students are expected to actively participate and contribute to the weekly workshops. For weekly assignments two points per 24 hours will be deducted after the deadline has passed. Missing workshops or late assignments will not be accepted unless there are legitimate reasons for the delay. The instructor understands different health and mental problems that could arise during the course that could grant an extension, but it will only apply if the student approach the instructor or TA before the deadline and in writing.

**Grade review policy:** Students who wish to appeal grades assigned to their academic work may do so. The initial appeal should be made to the TA before one week has passed of your grade notification. TAs can make a decision if

justified. You have the right to appeal to the instructor who will make a final decision.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**Academic Integrity:** *University policy on Academic Integrity will be strictly enforced.* As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on essays, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor or TA.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

**Access and Diversity:** The university accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the [Access and Diversity Unit](#). Students must register with the Disability Resource Centre to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions. For more information, please refer to the following guide: <http://students.ubc.ca/about/access>.

**Mental health concerns:** If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date. The university has a new policy on academic concession. The full policy is available at: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>

### Reach out and ask for help if you need it

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer student's support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record.

For more information: <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>

For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>

**Religious Accommodation:** The university accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. However, you must notify the TA in the first week of class if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. For more information, please refer to the [UBC Policy on Religious Holidays](#).

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (2020) (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) by Eugene Bardach & Eric M. Patashnik.
- *Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach* (2018) (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) by William Dunn.

I highly recommend buying Dunn's book which has also recommendations and checklists about policy memoranda and policy presentation, useful throughout the course and beyond. If you go to [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com) the book price whether paperback or ebook is 92.00 CAD. Unfortunately, the library cannot provide access to a book that will be mandatory in its entirety, including the annexes instructions and samples of policy memoranda.

A similar recommendation for Bardach's book since it a useful manual you will always need for policy analysis, plus you will need to read the book in its entirety. The cost on Amazon Canada is 50.44.

The rest of materials will be made available through the Canvas link to the UBC library reserve for the course:

Supplementary texts:

- *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Concepts and Practices* (2000) by Michael Munger.
- *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* (2017)(6<sup>th</sup> Edition) by David L. Weimer & Aidan R. Vining.
- *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Comparative Policy Analysis* (2019) by Guy Peters / Guillaume Fontaine.
- *Handbook on Impact Evaluation: Quantitative Methods and Practices* by Shahidur Khandker, Gayatri Koolwal, and Hussain Samad (2010). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2693>
- *Impact Evaluation: Treatment Effects and Causal* (2019) by Markus Frölich & Stefan Sperlich. Just the chapter about Basic Definitions, Assumptions and Randomised Experiments (pp. 3-41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781107337008.003

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### WEEK 1: Introduction to the Course and to Policy Analysis

January 12

We will start by discussing the course, its goals, format and outline and present the clients we are going to work for.

The central objective of this class will be to answer a very simple question: What is policy analysis?

Readings:

Weimer & Vining, chapter 2

### The process of policy analysis in the policy-making process

January 14

The discussion is centered around how, when for whom we usually do policy analysis and how analysis has impacted the policy-making process as a whole.

Readings:

Dunn, chapters 1 & 2

**Assignment #1:** Think about the most pressing problem that needs to be solved through public policy in your neighborhood/city and describe it the best you can in one page. A free writing exercise; don't research about it.

January 14

### WEEK 2: Defining the problem

January 19-21

Defining the policy problem is the most fundamental building block of the policy process and yet, the most difficult to achieve.

Readings:  
Bardach, The Eighfold Path pp. 1-93

<b>Assignment #2:</b> Choose the problem/issue you will address during the semester and define it using Bardach's method. Two pages maximum.	<b>January 18</b>
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**WEEK 3: Risk assessment**

**January 26-28**

After defining the problem, we need information and setting up principles by which the policy process will be define. We need to assess risk, establish comparisons, benchmarks, alternatives, trade-offs

Readings:  
Dunn, pp. 10-21 and Chapter 2.

<b>Assignment #3:</b> Build up a basic knowledge about the problem, including past attempts at solving it, literature written about it for context. Two pages maximum.	<b>January 31</b>
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**WEEK 4: Discounting and other methods of systematic assessment**

**February 2-4**

We continue to explore methods and tools to assess options of intervention

Readings:  
Dunn, chapter 4  
Munger, chapter 9 &10

<b>Assignment #4:</b> Choose one method of assessing policy options and test it in your problem. Two pages maximum	<b>February 7</b>
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**WEEK 5: Cost-Benefit Analysis**

**February 9-11**

Cost-benefit analysis is probably the simplest way of assessing policy alternatives. We will learn how and when it is advisable.

Readings:  
Dunn, pp. 209-218; Munger, chapter 11

<b>Assignment #5:</b> Conduct either CBA or CEA in your problem. Try to find actual numbers to your costs and benefits estimation, if not make a good guess to try to be as realistic as possible with the results. Present your conclusions. Two or three pages.	<b>February 14</b>
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**WEEK 7: Designing policy towards decision-making choices**

**February 23**

How can we effectively communicate our analysis, options and choices? This session will discuss how to present policy analysis and decision-making processes.

Readings:  
Dunn, chapters 8 & 9.

**Midterm Exam**

**February 25**

**WEEK 8: Program Evaluation**

**March 2-4**

The importance of doing evaluation. The differences between monitoring and conducting proper impact evaluation. Methods.

We will have a special guest lecturer, the Director of Program Evaluation of UN Women at New York Headquarters presenting her experience on the ground.

Readings:  
World Bank Handbook, chapters 1 & 2  
UN Women: <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook>

Chapters 1 & 7 (if possible, read also the country portfolio evaluation guidance in case students want to make more specific questions to the UN Women specialist).

### **WEEK 9: Treatment effects and causal analysis**

**March 9-11**

Introduction to impact evaluation through quasi-experiments and causal analysis

#### Readings:

Frölich & Sperlich, chapter 1

List, John A. 2011. "Why Economists Should Conduct Field Experiments and 14 Tips for Pulling One

Off." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 25 (3).

**Assignment #6:** Design an impact evaluation using the knowledge you have so far about it. Explain what you are going to measure in terms of a dependent variable, vs. independent(s) variable(s) model. Maximum two pages.

**March 14**

### **WEEK 10: Field experiments**

**March 16-18**

Randomized experiments for program evaluations. Its complexity and applications.

#### Readings:

GREEN, J. (2010). Points of intersection between randomized experiments and quasi-experiments. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 628(1), 97-111. doi:10.1177/0002716209351517

Walser, T. M. (2014). Quasi-Experiments in Schools: The Case for Historical Cohort Control Groups. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 19(5/6), 1–8.

**Assignment #7:** Draft a quasi-experiment to measure impact. Explain the “treatment” and the “placebo” and how the evaluation will assess causality or impact.

**March 21**

### **WEEK 11: Case Comparison and observational studies**

**March 23-25**

Small-N analysis and mix-methods to assess impact.

#### Readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapter 14

#### Additional readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapters 7 & 8

### **WEEK 12: Surveys, focus groups and other tools**

**March 30-Apr1**

Small-N qualitative assessments to evaluate central and specific programs features.

#### Readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapter 17

Bardach, Part II

**Assignment #8:** Design a survey or a questionnaire for a focus group to measure a program impact. Be as specific as possible.

**April 6**

### **WEEK 13: Policy analysis and program evaluation in perspective**

**April 6-9**

Conclusions about policy design and program evaluation. Group presentations.

#### Readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapter 9

### **Final exam**

**April 19**

### **Main dates**

Weekly assignments	Mondays
Mid-term exam	February 25
Final project presentations and report	April 6-9
Final exam	April 19