Harry Truman School of Government & Public Affairs
University of Missouri
PA 4430: Public Policy Analysis
Spring 2024

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Course Objectives

Public policy is the government's decisions and actions (and, just as importantly, its indecision and inaction) which have major consequences for the economy, the environment, and individuals. Why does the government choose to address the problems it does? What determines if it succeeds or fails in solving those problems? Who controls this process, if anyone?

This course provides an introduction to public policy analysis. The key elements of policy analysis are introduced: problem structuring, monitoring, evaluation, forecasting, policy simulation, and recommendation. During the semester, we will not focus on a specific policy area; rather, we will use case studies from a variety of areas as examples. The relationship between policy analysis and current events will be a recurrent theme of the course.

The course seeks to help students develop the following specific skills:
- The ability to participate in the policymaking process and to bring about policy change.
- The ability to analyze policy problems from diverse angles and understand a set of analytical tools.
- The ability to communicate effectively in the policymaking process and policy analysis with a policy brief and memorandum.

Course Format

This is an online asynchronous course. This means that each week, you will watch recorded lectures; read, watch, or listen to assigned media; and participate in class activities (through discussion boards) on your own time by the end of that week (Sunday night). There will also be specific deadlines for assignments (see Course Calendar). This is *not a self-paced course* in which you work your way through all of the course material and assignments on your own time! It is important that you complete each week's work before the end of that week. All lectures and other material will remain on Canvas through the semester so it is available for you to review, but you will not be able to catch up on activities or other assigned work from past weeks, unless you have worked out a specific accommodation with me due to an emergency or other issue.

Grade Breakdown and Description of Assignments

Grade Breakdown

Policy Brief (Individual)	20%
Policy Analysis Memorandum (Group)	30%
Participation – Discussion Board	30%
Group Presentation Video	10%
Peer Review	10%

Letter Grades

Final letter grades will be decided based on the following cut points. There will be *no* rounding up of grades as rounding grades up is an arbitrary and unfair practice.

A+	100% to 98%
A	< 98% to 93%
A-	< 93% to 90%
B+	< 90% to 87%
B	< 87% to 83%
B-	< 83% to 80%
C+	< 80% to 77%
C	< 77% to 73%
C-	< 73% to 70%
D+	< 70% to 67%
D	< 67% to 63%
D-	< 63% to 60%
F	< 60% to 0%

Course Requirements and Evaluation

All assignments are to be turned in online via Canvas by 5 p.m. on the due date unless otherwise noted. Late work will not be accepted without explicit permission from the instructor obtained 24 hours before the due date. All written products submitted as part of the course must be written using a scholarly style appropriate to the field in which you normally conduct your work (e.g., APA, MLA, AMA, Chicago).

Policy Brief – Individual (20%)

A key consideration in policy analysis is identifying and structuring the problem related to a policy issue so that solutions can be crafted. You will prepare a 2-page (single-spaced, 12-pt. font, 1-inch margins) memorandum addressed to a client. Your job is to make an intelligent decision-maker into a "smart consumer" by culling information and facts, applying your expertise, and presenting alternatives. Well-written policy brief successfully and clearly shows what policy problems are and what causes are, suggests your policy solution, and answers why this solution is better than other alternatives with evidence. The policy brief exercise provides an opportunity to practice analytical writing, and each is related to the policy analysis project. More details and rubrics will be provided in class.

Policy Analysis Memorandum – Group (30%)
The final group project for the course is a policy analysis in the form of a policy memorandum to a client by using the concepts and materials presented over the semester. This semester-long project on a policy issue gives you an opportunity to apply the concepts and craft skills introduced in the course: identification of data sources and evaluation of their utility; establishment of criteria to analyze the policy; assessment of alternative policies; and selection among policy alternatives. A key consideration in policy analysis is identifying and structuring the problem related to a policy issue so that solutions can be crafted. Expected length is 8 to 10 pages (double-spaced, 12-pt. font, 1-inch margins), including a 1-paragraph executive summary and a policy decision matrix and excluding references, endnotes, charts, and figures. Students have the option of turning in a draft of their memorandum by Sunday of Week 12 for comments. More explicit information regarding the paper is available on Canvas.

For group assignment, each student must sign up for a policy issue group of about 6-8 students based on their interests by Sunday of Week 2. These groups are based on broad policy issues. Hopefully, every student will have their choice of group, but some may need to be reallocated to make sure there is some balance across groups.

- Each policy issue group will have a shared discussion board where they can discuss policy proposals. I will provide some examples for each issue area, but group members are encouraged to make their own suggestions, too. If there is no clear consensus, I will help the group decide among its preferred alternatives. Policy issues/agenda should be chosen by Sunday of Week 7, before Spring Break begins.
- After the policy issue is chosen, each policy group will be divided into two different proposed policy teams. Each team needs to have at least 3 members. Separate discussion boards will be established for each side of the topics, and the real work of the assignment will begin.
- Students work in small teams to write the policy analysis memorandum and will upload each group's video for peer review (see Group presentation). Each team will feature a particular policy proposal and another team will suggest another policy analysis about the same policy issues/agendas.
- Every team member is encouraged to keep their written communication with each other on the discussion board as much as possible so every team member is in the loop, and I can see how things are going.

Participation (30%)
With no synchronous meetings, the discussion boards on Canvas will be the heart of our class. In addition to lectures, readings, and other media, the module for each unit will include discussion prompts based on those materials. Your thoughtful participation in each of these discussions is important to your success and to that of the class. For each discussion, you will receive full credit if you make a good-faith effort to participate and engage with the material. This means not just responding directly to the prompt, but engaging with other students on the board with replies where appropriate. As such, I do not recommend completing all of your participation at the beginning of each week before many of your classmates have posted in the discussions. (If your schedule is more conducive to completing most of your work early in the week, I suggest budgeting a little bit of time later in the week to return to the discussions and reengage.) While I don't want to impose

an artificial and arbitrary minimum length for these posts, you will probably need to write at least a paragraph to respond thoughtfully to the prompts and each other, and perhaps more than one in some cases. Please note that you cannot successfully participate in discussion activities if you have not read or watched the assigned media and lectures!

You may skip up to three (3) discussion boards in total during the semester with no penalty and no questions asked. Any additional skipped or late discussions beyond the free skips are subject to the "Extensions and Late Assignments" policy (see "Course Policies"). There is a "grade" column on Canvas that will keep track of your number of free skips used; this is just for your information and does not affect grade calculations.

In all discussions, I expect students to be respectful of each other.

Group Presentation (10%)
Your team for policy analysis memorandum will present the project and upload this recorded video in Canvas. The presentation should be total 15 minutes in total in which you summarize your team's policy analysis memo.

Peer Review (10%)
Each team is assigned as a reviewer of another team who shares the same policy issue/agenda. When watching another team's presentation, each team member as a discussant should leave some comments in Canvas. After receiving the peer review, each team should respond to the comments professionally. This peer review activity will give you an opportunity to reflect on your own policy analysis memorandum from different viewpoints.

Required Readings and Media
All required readings come from required texts (listed below) or are available through Canvas. For most weeks, the syllabus also includes recommended readings, many of which are available through Canvas. *All required readings and media are freely available online, hosted on the course Canvas page, or available through the university library's many subscriptions (https://library.missouri.edu/).* These readings are not required for the course but may be of interest to students who want to delve deeper into certain topics. I am happy to recommend further reading on any topic.

The following book is required reading for the course and are available through the university bookstore:
- Bardach. E. (2011). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving.* SAGE. [Any edition: fourth, fifth, or sixth editions are acceptable].

Course Policies

Extensions and Late Assignments
Extensions of assignment deadlines or forgiveness for missed discussion board participation beyond the free skips (see "Assignments and Grades") will only be granted in the case of a family

or medical emergency. Please contact me as early as possible (ideally before the deadline) if you need such an accommodation.

Respect for Diversity
Given that this class discusses current policy events to illustrate policy analysis techniques, it is imperative to keep a safe atmosphere of trust and respect in our virtual classroom. It is my intention that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, and that the diversity that students bring to the classroom be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. Please show respect for all worldviews expressed when posting on the discussion board and when interacting with your classmates in team assignments. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful of your peer's emotions and be mindful of your own. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture.

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities; the MU Equity Office, or equity@missouri.edu.

Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion, and Privacy
University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity 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 is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor. Please visit https://osrr.missouri.edu/guidelines/index.html to familiarize yourself with your obligations related to academic integrity and conduct as a student enrolled at the University of Missouri.

All written work must be turned in on Canvas, where it will be run through the "TurnItIn" plagiarism detection software. Also, please be aware that I am quite familiar with ChatGPT! My perspective on this interesting technology is that it probably won't be as useful for academic

cheating as many people believe. For one thing, the same technology can be used to detect likely cheating – there is already at least one such program that is freely available, and I expect that proprietary plagiarism detection software companies like TurnItIn will be incorporating similar solutions in the near future. I also enjoy playing around on ChatGPT myself, and can easily feed it (and other AI chatbots) the same information that a student would see what it spits out. In short, if you try to use this technology to cheat in this course, there is a good chance that I will catch you. Plagiarism (including from an AI) and other academic integrity violations will result in a grade of 0 on the assignment in question and will be reported through the appropriate channels at the university. Please note that for the mock legislative hearing assignment, a violation may negatively affect the overall grade of the coalition, so it is in your interest to keep each other honest.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if disability-related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the MU Disability Center (http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Grade Disputes
If you feel a grade you have received (from me or the teaching assistant) is *unfair* for a reason that you can articulate, please email me with a written explanation of why you believe this to be the case. A two-line email does not qualify - you must make a convincing case in a professional and respectful manner. I will reevaluate the work and decide if a grade change is warranted. Note that I may revise your grade downward!

If a grade that you have received makes you *unhappy*, but you cannot articulate a reason why it is unfair (or you do not wish to dispute the grade), I advise you to talk to me or the teaching assistant about it either during office hours or by making an appointment for another time. We can discuss ways to improve your performance. It's better to handle it this way rather than keep your frustration to yourself.

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.

<u>Course Calendar</u>

Each week begins on Monday when the module for that week will be made available on Canvas. The module will contain all relevant lectures and discussions as well as assigned media that is not freely available online or through the library. Students should complete all lectures, assigned media, and activities for the week by Sunday night.

Week 1: Policy and Policy Process

- Course introduction
- Discussion activity: Getting to know each other.

- Lecture: What is Public Policy? What is the Policy Process?
- Assigned reading: Paul Cairney. March 4, 2016. "Policy Concepts in 1000 Words: What is Policy?" https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/what-ispolicy-3/

- Lecture: Who is The Audience in Policy Writing? Writing in the Policy World
- Assigned reading: Chris Yiu. September 4, 2021. "How to get policy work done." Blog post: https://yiu.co.uk/blog/how-to-get-policy-work-done/

- Lecture: Who Controls Public Policy? Who Governs?
- Assigned media: "How billionaires benefit from 'stealth politics,'" CBS News, April 13, 2022: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDwXBGBLPTw

Week 2: What are Policy Problems?

- Lecture: Defining and Understanding Policy Problems
- Assigned reading: Jon Haidt. February 22, 2023. "Social Media is a Major Cause of the Mental Illness Epidemic in Teen Girls. Here's the Evidence." Substack essay: https://jonathanhaidt.substack.com/p/social-media-mental-illness-epidemic

o Justifications for government action
- Lecture: Market Failures
- Assigned reading: Marc Ribaudo, Fred Kuchler, and Lisa Mancino. November 1, 2008. "Market Failures: When the Invisible Hand Gets Shaky." Amber Waves (US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service): https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2008/november/marketfailures- when-the-invisible-hand-gets-shaky/

- Lecture: Policy Values
- Assigned media: "The Trolley Problem | The Good Place | Comedy Bites": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtRhrfhP5b4&t=75s
- Optional reading: Molley Crockett. December 12, 2016. "The trolley problem: would you kill one person to save many others?" The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/2016/dec/12/thetrolley- problem-would-you-kill-one-person-to-save-many-others

Week 3: Policy Process and Policy Analysis

- Lecture: Problem Structuring and Goal Setting
- Assigned Reading: Bardach, E. 2011.pp. xv-xx, 1-11
- Musso, J., Biller, R., & Myrtle, R. (2000). Tradecraft: Professional writing as problem-solving. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 19(4).

- Stone, D. 1989. Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly*, 104(2): 281-300.

- Lecture: New Social Risks and Agile Government within Limited Time.
- Assigned Reading: Moon, M. J. (2020). Fighting COVID-19 with agility, transparency, and participation: Wicked policy problems and new governance challenges. *Public Administration Review*, *80*(4), 651-656.

Week 4: Policy formation and adoption

- Lecture: Policy Analysis and Choosing Among Alternatives
- Assigned reading: Eugene Bardach and Eric M. Patashnik. 2016. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/CQ Press. (Introduction, PDF on Canvas)

- Lecture: Policy Learning and Policy Diffusion
- Assigned reading: Charles R. Shipan and Craig Volden. 2021. Why Bad Policies Spread (And Good Ones Don't). Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 1, PDF on Canvas).

Week 5: Assembling evidence, measurement, sampling, and bounded rationality

- Lecture: Assembling Evidence, Measurement, and Sampling
- Assigned Reading: Bardach, E. 2008. pp. 11-16; 79-108. Part I, Step 2: Assemble some evidence; Part II: Assembling evidence
- Mitchell, J. 2007. "The use (and misuse) of surveys in policy analysis," in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*, ed. F.Fischer, GJ. Miller, and M.S. Sidney, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

- Lecture: Bounded Rationality and Incrementalism
- *Assigned media: https://thedecisionlab.com/biases/bounded-rationality*

Week 6: Survey Design and Policy Implementation

- Lecture: Survey Design and Types of Policy Tools of Instruments
- Assigned reading: Schaeffer, N. C. and S. Presser (2003). The Science of Asking Questions. *Annual Review of Sociology,* 29: 65-88.
- Miller, Patrick. (2020). Tipsheet – Sensitive questions. Initiative Survey Methodology Duke University.

- Lecture: Communicating to the public
- Assigned reading: Kevin Liptak. December 21, 2015. "Six times Obama blamed the message, not the policy." CNN: https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/21/politics/obama-communicationsstrategy/ index.html

Week 6: Policy Implementation (2)

- Lecture: Understanding Bureaucracy and Policy Implementation
- Assigned media: "CDC director orders reorganization of agency after COVID pandemic missteps." CBS News, August 17, 2022: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=129dCYYT_BE

- Lecture: Centralized vs Decentralized Implementation
- Assigned media: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. 2019. Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers (Policy Highlights): https://www.oecd.org/cfe/Policy%20highlights_decentralisation-Final.pdf

Week 7: Establishing Evaluation Criteria and Identifying Alternatives

- Lecture: Methods & Techniques for Analyzing Policies
- Required Reading: Bardach, E. 2008. pp. 31-47.

- Lecture: Identifying Alternatives
- Burwick, A., Davis, E., Karoly, L., Schulte, T., & Tout, K. (2020). Promoting Sustainability of Child Care Programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Considerations for States in Allocating Financial Resources. New York: Foundation for Child Development.

Week 8: Spring Break

Week 9: Decision-making Models and Decision Trees

- Lecture: Policy Forecasting and Decision Trees
- Assigned Reading: Bardach, E. 2008. pp. 47-63.
- Lipscomb, Stephen, Duncan Chaplin, Alma Vigil, and Hena Matthias. "How the COVID-19 Pandemic Affected Academic Proficiency Rates in Pennsylvania in 2021: Findings from a Predictive Model." Cambridge, MA: Mathematica, 2022.

Week 10: Cost-benefit Analysis

- Lecture: Policy Typology and Cost-benefit Analysis
- Assigned Reading: Arrow, K., et al. 1996. "Benefit-Cost Analysis in Environmental, Health, and Safety Regulation: A Statement of Principles" AEI-Brookings Joint Center. (Canvas)
- BGVW, Chapters 1 & 2
- Boo, F. L., Palloni, G., & Urzua, S. (2014). Cost–benefit analysis of a micronutrient supplementation and early childhood stimulation program in Nicaragua. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1308(1), 139-148.

Week 11: Policy Evaluation

- Lecture: Policy Evaluation

- Assigned reading: Paul Cairney. December 21, 2013. "Policy Concepts in 1000 Words: Success and Failure (Evaluation): https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2013/12/21/policyconcepts- in-1000-words-success-and-failure-evaluation/
- Assigned reading: Stephen Loiaconi. September 16, 2021. "Experts: Proposed ecigarette tax could drive teens to more harmful products." ABC: https://abc6onyourside.com/news/nation-world/experts-proposed-e-cigarette-taxcould-drive-teens-to-more-harmful-products

Week 12: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Communicating Policy Analysis

- Lecture: Policy Evaluation and Monitoring
- Assigned reading: Bardach, E. 2008. pp 63-78.
- The World Bank (2016). Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of Anti-Corruption Action Plans
- Smith (2015), chapters 4, 8, and Conclusion (Ethics for policy communication).

- Lecture: The Politics of Policy Analysis
- Assigned reading: Shulock, Nancy. 1999. The Paradox of Policy Analysis: If It is Not Used, Why Do We Produce So Much of It? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 19(4): 226-244.

Week 13 Policy Revision and Policy Feedback

- Lecture: Policy revision- Policy Durability and Flexibility
- Assigned media: Eric Patashnik. November 29, 2010. "Consolidating change against forces of reaction" (keynote address, part 1 of 5, ANZSOG): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYQorF0K2EE

- Lecture: Policy Feedback & Path Dependence
- Assigned media: Nancy Beadie. March 1, 2016. "EduTalks: Nancy Beadie & Path Dependence in Federal Education Policy." University of Washington College of Education: youtube.com/watch?v=1mg-gsjatck

Week 14: Communicating Policy Analysis - Application

- Wrap-up: Can we have evidence-based policy analysis?
- The group presentation and Policy Analysis Memorandum is due on 5/5.

Week 15: Finals week
- The peer review with the response is due on 5/11.