

PA 770 Policy Analysis

Wednesdays, DTC 677, 6:00—8:45pm

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 4:00 – 5:50pm, and by appointment

Course Objectives

Policy analysis is an inter-disciplinary field that uses theories, concepts, and methods from disciplines such as economics, political science, sociology, and other related fields to address substantive issues in the public policy arena. The class lectures and case discussions provide an introduction to the principles of policy analysis. In addition, the labs provide an opportunity to learn the technical skills required to undertake policy analysis. The students will learn the language of policy analysis, and how to write with organization, clarity, and precision.

The class discussion is built around a series of five case studies that address current questions in public policy and the analysis of decision-making challenges and processes. We will spend much of our time thinking about how to define a policy problem; how and why a problem gets on the agenda of policy makers; what the policy alternatives are in addressing the problem; who the key actors are in the policy process; what the tradeoffs (if any) are that need to be considered; and how relevant information is identified, collected and processed by analysts and policy makers.

Course Objectives

The specific goals of the course are to assist the student in:

- Developing skills to analyze policy that are supported both theoretically and empirically
- Evaluating the distributional aspects of policies and programs incorporating political factors into policy analyses
- Effectively communicating the results of policy analyses
- Learning through debates (a) how to obtain and use policy-relevant data and supporting documentation effectively, (b) how to speak publicly, and(c) how to deliver critical information precisely.
- Introduce students to some of the major analytic approaches to decision making in a public management environment.
 - **Benefit-Cost Analysis.** A review and application of one of the fundamental tools of economic analysis with an emphasis on capital infrastructure investments.

- **Linear Programming and Constrained optimization.** An exploration of the logic underlying problems of objective maximization (e.g. profit, outputs) with an emphasis on linear programming.
- **Decision analysis.** The basic concepts of decision trees, probabilities, expected values, payoffs and risk. Stochastic process theory, and cueing theory.

Required Textbook

Bardach, Eugene and Patashnik, Eric. *Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving (Fifth Edition)*. CQ Press

Recommended Materials and Readings

- Gruber, Jonathan. *Public Finance and Public Policy*. (4th Edition). Worth Publishers
- Albright, Christian and Wayne Winston. 2004. *Spreadsheet Modeling and Applications: Essentials of Practical Management Science*, 1st Edition Cengage Learning

Five Cases:

Two Cases from Electronic Hallway are posted on ilearn

- Science, Discrimination, and the Blood Supply: SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY'S Blood Drive Ban.
- Flu Vaccine

You can purchase the Harvard Cases through this link:

<http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/52379164>

- California High-Speed Rail
- Tough Choices for the Illinois Pension System
- Pursuing Educational Equity at San Francisco Unified School District

In addition, I will distribute handouts, lab exercises and other reading material to supplement the texts as we go along. The materials will be delivered through both lectures and discussions. Students are expected to read the assigned texts before class and come to class prepared to participate in the discussion.

I will be delivering this course as a “hybrid” course. We will meet as a class on various Wednesday nights as indicated on the course calendar. For the other weeks, I will be posting materials covering the week’s materials. Our in-person sessions will be organized as

“workshops” designed to help you comprehend and apply the course material. In the sessions I will give a short summary of the major points from the online lectures. Then we will do some problems and/or have a discussion over an administration or policy question in class. Finally, I will take questions on the material or anything that we do in class.

Case studies

The purpose of the case studies is to give you an opportunity to recognize the “messiness” of public policy problems you will face and to develop an analytical problem-solving orientation. Each student is expected to analyze each of the five cases and to discuss each of the cases in detail in class. Each student will also prepare a five-page written case memo for each of the cases. In analyzing the cases, you are encouraged to discuss the cases in groups prior to class. However, each student should prepare his or her case memo individually.

Spreadsheet Modeling

The labs introduce you to modeling approaches that can be used to solve private and public sector management problems. In this class you will become comfortable with the practice of model building and gain experience with specific modeling techniques including expected value, decision trees, linear programming, project scheduling, queuing, and simulation analysis. There will be a strong emphasis on how to interpret model results and sensitivity analysis across the various methods. There are one midterm and one final exam for the lab.

Policy Debate Project

Students will select a “pro” or “con” position from a list of current policy issues, then you will prepare an oral argument for it. (You do not have to personally believe in the position you are arguing. In fact, the test of a truly skilled debater is being able to convince an audience on a position that he/she personally disagrees with.) A classmate will take the opposing side. Your objective is to sway the rest of the class to your side, and convince them that your opponent’s position is inferior. This is an individual assignment. You should not develop your debate together. Just as in a real debate between policy advocates, you will hear your opponent’s argument for the first time during the debate itself. Your task is to build your best argument for your own position, defend your position against anticipated criticisms, and build another argument why your opponent’s position is wrong or not as good as yours.

Each debate will be structured between persons A and B, as outlined in the table below.

Outline of the debate

1. Position A: Pro
 - i. A thesis: 8 minutes
 - ii. B rebuttal: 1 minutes
 - iii. A redirect: 1 minutes
2. Position B: Con
 - i. B thesis: 8 minutes
 - ii. A rebuttal: 1 minutes
 - iii. B redirect: 1 minutes
3. Closing statements

Participation

This class requires a great deal of active participation, both during in-person and online sessions. There will be a series of online engagement activities throughout the semester; these activities will serve as the foundation for much of your learning and participation in the class. In addition, the ilearn site features a forum for each online class session, so that students can ask clarifying or probing questions that may fall outside of the assigned engagement activities. During in-class sessions we will engage in a traditional lecture-discussion format sometimes while at other times those sessions will feature student-led discussion.

Grading

Participation and attendance are expected and mandatory, being a significant part of the grade. It is your responsibility to read the relevant sections beforehand and to be able to actively participate in classroom discussions. Doing these assignments is also the best way to prepare for the exams. The point breakdown for your performance in this course is as follows:

	Points	Percent
Participation	100 pts	15%
Final Exam	100 pts	20%
Homework—Case memo	100×5= 500 pts	5%×5= 25%
Homework—Spreadsheet Modeling	100×5= 500 pts	5%×5= 25%
Policy Debate Project	100 pts	15%
Total		100%

Academic Dishonesty

The university policy will be strictly upheld in this class. Any misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action as provided in Title 5, California Code of Regulations. The Student Discipline Officer, housed in the Dean of Students Office, is responsible for administering the Student Disciplinary Procedures for the California State University.

Communication

By far the easiest way to get a hold of me is through email at jqwang@sfsu.edu. I will check my email regularly and will respond as soon as I am able. I will also be maintaining regular office hours, and am happy to meet with you in my office outside of established hours if I am available and if an appointment is arranged in advance.

CHSS Policy

Syllabi are to incorporate the Academic Senate Policy regarding finals week, the deadlines or

withdrawals, late adds, CR/NC option and information related to course registration and Disability Programs and Resource Center. A sample listing of the required College policies are shown below.

Final Exam: According to Academic Senate policy F76-12 a time period is set aside at the end of each semester for a formal examination period. All classes are expected to meet during the final examination period whether an examination is given or not. The final examination schedule is published each semester in the Class Schedule.

http://www.sfsu.edu/~acadres/final_exams/finalf16.htm

CHSS Withdrawal Policy: The last day to drop a class is September 14, 2016 until 11:59pm. Starting September 15 – November 22, 2016 you must submit a paper withdrawal petition. Withdrawal from a class starting **September 15, 2016** will be considered for *serious and compelling* reasons only and **must have accompanying documentation**. The following reasons are **not** considered *serious and compelling*: Changing your major, poor performance, class not required for graduation/major, lacking the pre-requisite, instructor forgot to drop me, not attending class or more time needed for other classes. If you wish to withdraw from class due to unexpected changes in your work schedule, illness or family emergencies, **documentation will be required**, along with a copy of unofficial transcripts. Submit your petition **within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., within 2 weeks of a change in work hours.)** From **November 23 – December 14, 2016** you may not withdraw from a class or the University, except only in the case of a **serious** documented illness or verified accident.

Withdrawals **cannot** be initiated electronically and must be submitted using a paper application. All electronic submissions of withdrawals will be denied automatically by the Associate Dean. **You are only allowed to withdrawal from a maximum of 18 units and take a class no more than 2 times at SF State.** Approval from the instructor and/or Chair does not constitute automatic approval from the associate dean so continue attending class until a decision is made. Please refer to the following website for further information on withdrawal polices:

<http://chss.sfsu.edu/src>

CR/NC Option: The last day to request CR/NC option is October 19, 2016 until 11:59pm. The Associate Dean will not approve requests for changes if you miss this deadline.

Late Add Policy: The period to add classes via permission numbers is August 24 – September 14, 2016. It is your responsibility to procure a late permission number from your instructor and add the class. Faculty cannot add you into a class. Starting **September 15, 2016**, a Waiver of College Regulations form must be signed by your instructor, Chair and CHSS Associate Dean to add. This will be approved only if there was an administrative error.

Check your registration through *SF State Gateway*: Sign up for CR/NC, drop and add classes by the appropriate deadline online through *SF State Gateway*. **ALWAYS** check your registration after making any changes and **BEFORE** deadlines to be sure you are registered properly for your classes. Deadlines for all registration procedures, including withdrawals and requests for credit/no credit, are listed in the class schedule and will be strictly adhered to by the instructor, the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of College of Health & Social Sciences. **It is**

ALWAYS the student's responsibility to ensure their schedule is correct, even if the instructor indicates they will drop you.

This can be viewed on the Registration Calendar at the following website:

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~admisrec/reg/regsched2167.html>

Disability Programs and Resource Center: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>

For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

Class Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Aug 24 (6:00-7:15pm) (In person)	Introduction—Syllabus and Overview	
Workshop #1 Aug 31 (Online) Sept 7 (In person)	The eightfold Path	Case #1 SJSU Blood Drive Ban Bardach and Patashnik Part I
Workshop #2 Sept 14 (Online) Sept 21 (In Person)	Agenda Setting and Political Feasibility Market Failure and Externality Government Interventions in Markets Assembling Evidence	Case #2 Flu Vaccine Gruber, Chapter 5, 6, 7 Bardach and Patashnik Part II
Guest Speaker Dr. Beth Neary, Senior Administrative Analyst from Health Department SF		
Workshop #3 Sept 28 (Online) Oct 5 (Online) Oct 12 (In person)	Cost Benefit Analysis Time value of money Valuation of costs for our project Valuation of benefits and transfers for our project	Case #3 California High-Speed Rail Gruber, Chapter 8
Guest Speaker Charles MacNulty, Program Development and Data Specialist, Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development		
Workshop #4 Oct 19 (online) Oct 26 (In person)	Education Policy	Case #4 SF Unified School District Gruber, Chapter 11 Bardach and Patashnik Part III
Workshop #5 Nov 2 (Online)	Pension Policy	Case #5 Illinois Pension System Gruber, Chapter 13 Bardach and Patashnik Part IV

Nov 9
(In Person)

Workshop #6 Application: Policy Debate

Nov 16
(Online)

Nov 23 Thanksgiving (No Class)

Nov 30
(In Person)

*Guest Speaker Dr. Erin Godtland, Assistant Director and Dr. Jessica Rider, Senior Economist,
U.S. Government Accountability Office*

Dec 14 **Policy Debate Presentation**
(In Person)

Dec 21 **Exam**

Note: Schedule is subject to change, and I reserve the right to make revisions to the syllabus should we get ahead or behind schedule. I will announce such changes in class and through the course website.
