

University of Oregon
Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management

PPPM 415 – Policy and Planning Analysis – Fall 2019
(CRN 15157) Syllabus

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Office Hours: **Tues/Thurs 3:45 to 5 p.m.**
and by appointment

Class Meetings: Tues/Thurs 2-3:20 p.m.
Class Location: 112 Lillis Hall

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This course will introduce you to a broad range of issues faced by policymakers and planners in the U.S. and to the tools and frameworks used to understand those issues by researchers and public sector professionals. Throughout this course we will discuss current U.S. debates and controversies, particularly drawing on recent examples from environmental, health, and social issues.

This course is a required course for PPPM majors and minors. Students from other departments are welcome, but priority registration is given to PPPM majors and minors.

Prerequisite. The course requires an understanding of basic microeconomics. The prerequisite is Principles of Microeconomics (EC 201) or the equivalent. This is a strict prerequisite.

Recommend background. Although not formal prerequisites for this course, students will benefit from completing the PPPM undergraduate introductory sequence – *Introduction to Public Policy* (PPPM 201), *Introduction to City Planning* (PPPM 205), and *Introduction to the Nonprofit Sector* (PPPM 280), along with *Quantitative Methods* (PPPM 413) prior to taking this course.

This course will most likely be offered again in Winter and Fall 2020.

Readings

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings will be made available via the course Canvas site. While most of the course readings are listed here and currently available on Canvas, additional readings may be added over the course of the term (particularly those relating to current policy events).

Course Website

The course website is located on the University of Oregon's Canvas system (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/>). The class syllabus, announcements and other materials will be posted on the Canvas site. Please check the course website frequently for updates. In addition, make sure that you are receiving email from Canvas and from your '@uoregon.edu' address. I will use this email address to communicate with you.

Class Format and Participation

This class will primarily consist of lectures and discussion. Questions are expected and welcomed. Students should come to class having completed the reading relevant to that class and be fully prepared to participate in discussion and learn from one another.

Accessibility

Students who have a documented accessibility/disability issue and anticipate needing accommodations in this course should make arrangements to see the instructor as soon as possible. They should also request that their Access Advisor or the Accessible Education Center verify their request.

Exams and Assignments

(1) **Midterm Exam** (35 percent of final grade): **In class on Thursday, November 7th (Week #6).**

There are no early or late midterm exams. If a student must miss an exam for an unavoidable reason (documented serious illness, family emergency or religious obligation), the missing exam score will be replaced by increasing the percentages assigned to the other grading opportunities for term. This must be arranged with the instructor prior to the scheduled exam time.

(2) **Final Exam** (35 percent of final grade): **Wednesday, December 11th (Finals Week), 12:30-2:30pm**

The final exam will be comprehensive. There are no early or late final exams. Failure to take the final exam for an unavoidable reason (serious illness, family emergency or religious obligation) will result in a grade of Incomplete. The reason for missing the exam must be documented prior to the scheduled exam time. Missing the final exam for any other reason will result in a grade of 'F'. Travel plans do not qualify as a serious illness or emergency. University policy prohibits early final exams.

(3) **Problem Set** (5 percent of final grade): The problem set at the beginning of the term will help you review the underlying economics used in this course. Randomly selected problems on the problem set will be chosen for grading. These should be turned in in class on **Thursday, October 17th (Week #3).**

(4) **Reading Quizzes** (10 percent of final grade): **A Reading Quiz administered on the Canvas class website is due prior to the Tuesday class during most weeks.** (Note the exception in Week #4 when the Reading Quiz is due on Thursday.) There will be 7 Reading Quizzes assigned and your **2 lowest quiz scores will be dropped.** The average score from the remaining 5 quiz scores will count as 10 percent of your final course grade. Reading Quizzes are designed to help you engage with the course material prior to it being covered in class. A quiz will typically consist of 5-10 multiple choice questions drawn from the assigned reading. Reading Quizzes are expected to be taken 'open book', you may consult the course readings as you take the quiz. However, you are expected to do your own work on quizzes; **working with other students in answering the quiz questions will be considered academic misconduct.**

(5) **Policy Memo Assignment** (15 percent of final grade): In this assignment you will be asked to write a short (~5 pages) analysis of the underlying issues relating to an assigned policy topic. The **assignment will be available following the Midterm Exam and discussed in class on Tuesday, November 12th (Week #7) and due in class on Tuesday, November 26th (Week #9).**

Grading

My goal in teaching this course is to provide readings, class lectures and discussions that challenge you intellectually. You are expending a great deal of time, energy and money on your college education and you should expect that all of your courses challenge you. Accordingly, I will do my best to set the bar high and grade your work in a fair and rigorous manner. Grades in this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned during the term. Grades will be assigned in the following manner:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| 94.0% or higher | A |
| 90.0 to 93.99% | A- |
| 87.0 to 89.99% | B+ |
| 83.0 to 86.99% | B |
| 80.0 to 82.99% | B- |
| 77.0 to 79.99% | C+ |
| 73.0 to 76.99% | C |
| 70.0 to 72.99% | C- |
| 66.0 to 69.99% | D+ |
| 63.0 to 66.99% | D |
| 60.0 to 62.99% | D- |
| 59.99% or below | F |

I may adjust grades upward from this distribution, depending on the distribution of scores in a particular class. In the past, when I have taught this class, grades have been approximately distributed as follows: A's 20%, B's 50%, C's 25% and occasional D's and F's. This distribution may or may not apply to this course.

- Completed work. You must take both exams and complete the policy memo assignment in order to receive a passing grade in this class.
- Appeals of graded assignments. If you feel the need to appeal a graded assignment, you can do so by sending me an email with a description of the portion of the assignment you are appealing, the grade you received and the reason you think you deserve more credit. You may send this email following a 24 to hour waiting period after assignments have been handed back. This will give you time to consider your answer and to write a careful appeal indicating why you might deserve more credit. Do not send an email appeal until at least 24 hours have passed following the return of the graded assignment. After my review, I may decide not to change your grade or I might adjust the grade either upward or downward. For privacy reasons, I can only discuss your graded assignment in my office or via email. Please do not try to initiate a discussion about your assignment before or after class.
- Exam scoring. The midterm exam and the final exam scores will be standardized so the class mean is 80 and the standard deviation is 10. The calculation of standardized exam scores from raw scores is a four step procedure:
 1. Calculate the deviation from the class mean by subtracting class mean from each individual "raw" score.
 2. Divide the result by the standard deviation of all individual raw scores in the class.
 3. Multiply the result by 10.
 4. Add 80 to obtain the standardized exam score.

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at <http://conduct.uoregon.edu>) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor or turn in work that is not of their own making (i.e. no plagiarism) or . If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. **In this course, the penalty for**

cheating on an exam ranges from a score of zero on the exam to an assigned grade of 'F' in the class, depending on the severity of the offense. The penalty for turning in plagiarized written work is an 'F' in the class. All acts of academic misconduct will be reported to UO administration.

Professional Practice

This course is a core course in the PPPM undergraduate pre to professional degree program. As such, students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times.

- Students should treat each other and the instructor with the professional courtesy and respect expected in a workplace.
- All communications relating to this course and all work turned in for this course should reflect professional standards in tone, presentation, formatting, spelling and so on.
- The classroom is a place of focused learning. This requires that students arrive on time, stay until the end of the class period, do not disrupt the class by leaving the room temporarily, and refrain from non to learning activities. **Students will be asked not to use computers or smart phones during class.** Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class session.

The Tools of Policy Analysis versus Policy Advocacy – Classroom Discussion

In this course, we will discuss a variety of public policy issues. Such issues are controversial and many people frequently have deeply held convictions regarding right and wrong policy approaches to particular problems. It is important to recognize and respect these values. Indeed, it is this type of commitment that draws many people to public service. However, it is equally important to understand that our approach in this course will be to take an evidence to based approach to the analysis of public policy. How individuals feel about the virtue of particular policies is not part of that framework. Additionally, citing anecdotal experiences is not helpful in developing an understanding of how public policy will affect the typical person. We will apply analytical tools to assess various public policy issues from the perspective of economic efficiency and distributional outcomes. In doing so, we will focus firstly on the theoretical and empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of public policy. I welcome discussion in this class that is respectful and focused on the analysis of public policy. Students may naturally find themselves thinking about and evaluating public policy issues based on what seems right or virtuous to them. However, I will try my best to keep the classroom discussion focused on the analytical framework and available evidence to base.

Letters of Reference

I receive many requests from students for letters of reference for scholarships, internships, graduate school admission or employment. I'm happy to consider writing such letters for students who are strong academic performers in one of my classes. If you receive a grade of "A", feel free to ask me for a letter. If you receive a grade of "B", perhaps another instructor would be better choice. If that's not possible, I will consider your request.

To request a letter write me an email, indicating which class(es) you took from me and your course grade(s). In your email, include the following materials: an unofficial transcript, your statement of purpose for the particular application you are making (if applicable), your resume, and a link to the opportunity you are applying for (if available). Your email should also include the date when the letter is required, and plan on giving me at least one month (more if possible) to complete the letter. I will let you know within two days if I am able to write a letter for you.

Course Schedule and Readings

- Readings with a dark bullet point are 'textbook' readings.
- Readings with a circle bullet point are 'case study' readings.

Week #1 – Tuesday and Thursday (Oct 1 and 3)

Tuesday: Introduction to Policy Analysis

- Kraft and Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives*, 5th edition (CQ Press, 2015), Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.
- Bardach, E., *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 2nd edition (CQ Press, 2004): 'Appendix B – Things Government Do'.

Thursday: Economics Review – Supply, Demand, and Price Elasticities

- Levy, J., *Essential Microeconomics for Public Policy Analysis* (Praeger Publishers, 1995), Chapter 2 'Definitions and Axioms' and Chapter 3 'Supply and Demand'.

Week #2 – Tuesday and Thursday (Oct 8 and 10)

- ❖ **Online Reading Quiz #1 – due on Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.**

Tuesday: Economics Review – Price Ceilings and Floors

- Krugman, P. and R. Wells, *Microeconomics*, 3rd edition (Worth Publishers, 2013), Chapter 5 'Price Controls and Quotas: Meddling with Markets'.

Thursday: Policy as Market Intervention – Drug and Housing Policies

- Miron, J. and J. Zwiebel, 'The Economic Case against Drug Prohibition', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Fall 1995.
- Anderson, D.M. and D.I. Reese 'The Legalization of Recreational Marijuana: How Likely Is the Worst Case Scenario', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2014, 33(1):221-32.
- Metcalf, G., 'Sand Castles Before the Tide? Affordable Housing in Expensive Cities', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 32, No. 1, Winter 2018.

Week #3 – Tuesday and Thursday (Oct 15 and 17)

- ❖ **Online Reading Quiz #2 – due on Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.**

- ❖ **Problem Set Due in Class, Thursday, Oct 17th.**

Externalities and the Environment

- Stiglitz, J., *Economics of the Public Sector*, 3rd edition (W.W. Norton, 2000), Chapter 9 'Externalities and the Environment'.
- Cochran, C. and E. Malone, *Public Policy: Perspectives and Choices*, 5th edition (Lynne Rienner, 2014), Chapter 11 'The Environment: Issues on a Global Scale'.
- ~~Gruber, J., *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 5th edition (Worth Publishers, 2016), Chapter 6 'Externalities in Action: Environmental and Health Externalities', pp. 153 to 171.~~

Week #4 – Tuesday and Thursday (Oct 22 and 24)

Tuesday: Externalities and the Environment (cont'd from above)

- Popovich, N., Albeck-Ripka, L. and K. Pierre-Louis, '78 Environmental Rules on the Way Out Under Trump', *The New York Times*, updated December 28, 2018.
(<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/05/climate/trump-environment-rules-reversed.html>)

- Tol, Richard S.J., "The Economic Impact of Climate Change", *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 2018, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 4-25.

❖ **Online Reading Quiz #3 – due on Thursday, 1:30 p.m.**

Thursday: Information Problems – Asymmetric Information

- Weimer, D and A. Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 4th edition (Pearson, 2005), Chapter 5 'Rationales for Public Policy: Market Failures' **pp. 104 to 112.**

Week #5 Tuesday and Thursday (Oct 29 and 31)

Tuesday: Information Problems – Risk and Uncertainty

- Krugman, P. and R. Wells, *Microeconomics*, 3rd edition (Worth Publishers, 2013), Chapter 20 'Uncertainty, Risk and Private Information'.
- Camerer, C. and H. Kunreuther, 'Decision Processes for Low Probability Events: Policy Implications', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 1989.

Thursday: Information Problems – Applications to Insurance

- Gruber, J., *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 4th edition (2013), Chapter 12 'Social Insurance: The New Function of Government'

Week #6 – Tuesday and Thursday (Nov 5 and 7)

❖ **Online Reading Quiz #4 – due on Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.**

Tuesday: Health Insurance and Reform in the U.S.

- Rosen, H. and T. Gayer, *Public Finance*, 8th edition (McGraw to Hill, 2008), Chapter 9 'The Health Care Market'.
- Kraft and Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives*, 5th edition (CQ Press, 2015), Chapter 8 'Health Care Policy'.
- Simon, K., A. Soli and J. Cawley, "The Impact of Health Insurance on Preventive Care and Health Behaviors: Evidence from the First Two Years of the ACA Medicaid Expansions", *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2017, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 390-417.
- Kaiser Family Foundation, *Focus on Health Reform: Summary of the Affordable Care Act*, (April 25, 2013, Publication #8061 to 02) ([http://kff.org/health to reform/fact to sheet/summary to of to the to affordable to care to act/](http://kff.org/health%20to%20reform/fact%20to%20sheet/summary%20to%20of%20to%20the%20to%20affordable%20to%20care%20to%20act/)).

❖ **Thursday, Nov 7th – Midterm Exam.**

❖ **Policy Memo Assignment posted.**

Week #7 – Tuesday and Thursday (Nov 12 and 14)

❖ **Online Reading Quiz #5 – due on Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.**

Tuesday: Public Goods

- Gruber, J., *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 4th edition (2013), Chapter 7 'Public Goods'.

❖ **Discussion of Policy Memo Assignment.**

Thursday: Taxation – Efficiency, Equity and Incidence

- Cochran and Malone, *Public Policy: Perspectives and Choices*, 5th edition (Lynne Rienner, 2014), Chapter 5 ‘Funding Public Policy: From Theory to Practice’. **Read: ‘Case Study on Tax Expenditures’ (Box on pp. 118-119) and pp. 120-end.**
- Gruber, J., *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 4th edition (2013), Chapter 19 ‘The Equity Implications of Taxation: Tax Incidence’, **pp. 557 to 571.**

Week #8 – Tuesday and Thursday (Nov 19 and 21)

❖ **Online Reading Quiz #6 – due on Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.**

Inequality and Well to Being

- Schiller, B., *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, 10th edition (Pearson, 2008), Chapter 2 ‘Inequality’.
- Peck, D. (2011). ‘Can the Middle Class be Saved?’, *The Atlantic*, 308(2), 60 to 78.
- Wilkinson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger* (Bloomsbury Press, 2011), Preface, Chapters 1 and 2.

Poverty and Redistributive Policy

- Schiller, B., *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination* (Pearson, 2008), Chapter 3 ‘Counting the Poor’.
- Schiller, B., *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination* (Pearson, 2008), Chapter 13 ‘Welfare Programs’.

Week #9 – Tuesday (Nov 26) and Thursday (Thanksgiving Holiday)

❖ **Policy Memo Assignment due in class, Tuesday, Nov 26th.**

Tuesday: Poverty and Redistributive Policy (cont’d) from above.

Thursday – No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday.

Week #10 – Tuesday and Thursday (Dec 3 and 5)

❖ **Online Reading Quiz #7 – due on Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.**

Cost Benefit Analysis and Applications

- Rosen, H. and T. Gayer, *Public Finance*, 8th edition (McGraw to Hill, 2008), Chapter 8 ‘Cost to Benefit Analysis’, **pp. 150-152 and pp. 156-end (drop sections titled ‘Inflation’, ‘Private Sector Project Valuation’ and ‘Internal Rate of Return’).**
- Belfield, Clive R. et al. “The High/Scope Perry Preschool Program: Cost-Benefit Analysis Using Data from the Age-40 Follow Up”, *Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 41, No. 1, Winter 2006.
- Varian, Hal, “Recalculating the Costs of Global Climate Change”, *The New York Times*, December 14, 2006.

Finals Week

Final Exam: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 11th, 2019.