

University of Oregon
School of Planning, Public Policy and Management (PPPM)

PPPM 636: Public Policy Analysis
Winter 2023 (CRN 24313) Syllabus
Tue. & Thur. 2-3:20 p.m. --- 116 Lokey Education Building

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to public policy interventions in the U.S. and the methods that public sector professionals and researchers use to analyze the impacts and effectiveness of policy solutions. We will examine the rationale for policy interventions themselves, developing systematic methods of thinking about policy design, development and assessment. Students will develop the skills required to define and critically analyze policy issues and problems, articulate relevant decision-making criteria for policy analysis, and evaluate alternative policy solutions. Throughout this course we will discuss current U.S. policy debates and controversies, particularly drawing on examples from environmental, health, social and welfare policies. This course is a core requirement for the Master of Public Administration program. PPPM 628 (Public Sector Economics) is a prerequisite for this course.

Public policy analysis could be considered as one component of the policy making process, beginning with the identification and definition of a problem in the public realm, the generation of policy options or choices for addressing the problem, the selection of a particular policy option through political institutions, and the development of a plan for implementation and evaluation of that policy. An important goal of policy analysis is to help policy makers arrive at informed policy choices with an understanding of what the expected outcomes of those policy choices will be. In a world of complex political and socioeconomic processes, predicting the effectiveness of a particular policy while identifying any potential unintended consequences is difficult. Policy analysis aims to bring systematic, evidenced-based reasoning to that task.

CLASSROOM AND ACADEMIC POLICIES

Course Website

The syllabus, reading materials, assignments and announcements will be posted on the University of Oregon's Canvas website (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu>). Please check the course website frequently as these materials may be updated in the future.

Classroom Policies

The following policies are designed to help ensure that all participants benefit fully from the class:

- **Work environment:** To help create a classroom in which students feel safe and comfortable enough to express their thoughts, please be open-minded and respectful of other peoples, ideas, opinions and worldviews.

- **Courtesy:** All participants in the class should treat each other with the professional courtesy and respect expected in a workplace. All forms of communications should reflect professional standards in tone, presentation, formatting, and spelling.
- **Electronic devices:** Please do not use laptops, mobile phones or unauthorized electronic devices in class unless you are using them for class-related activities (e.g. taking notes).
- **Email:** I will aim to respond to your emails within 48 hours during workdays. Please review Canvas and course syllabus prior to asking questions about the class.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is prohibited and includes, but is not limited to, **tampering with grades, resubmitting the same assignment/work for more than one class, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, giving or receiving unauthorized help, and furnishing false information.** Please review the Dean of Student's website for the complete definition of academic misconduct. You are responsible for ensuring that your actions do not constitute academic misconduct. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is your obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

Violations of Course Policies

Students who fail to adhere to the guidelines described in this section may receive an F for the course and may be subject to additional penalties from the School or the University.

Writing Lab

If you would like to improve your writing skills, please take advantage of the free services provided by the Writing Lab of the Tutoring and Academic Engagement Center. A high-quality writing skill is not only important for your success in this course; it can be a defining factor in your career success (so please take it seriously)!

Accessibility and Disability

Students with documented accessibility/disability needs should see the course instructor as soon as possible. They should also request a verification letter from the Counselor for Students with Disabilities.

Workplace Harassment Prevention

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment and abuse, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. UO employees have a duty to report such actions or behaviors to their supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. The University Health Center and University Counseling and Testing Center can assist and work confidentially with students.

Inclusion Statement

The College of Design is a community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact your instructor and/or department head. The university Bias Education and Response Team is another resource that can assist you.

GRADING POLICY

You are expected to receive rigorous, challenging education at this university. Hence, please do all the readings, attend all classes, and turn in all assignments to receive a passing grade in this class. I will strive to grade your work in a fair and rigorous manner. The grading scale is displayed below. However, your grades may be adjusted upwards to ensure consistency with the distribution of grades in previous classes if necessary.

Range	Grade
≥ 95%	A
≥ 90% and < 95%	A-
≥ 85% and < 90%	B+
≥ 80% and < 85%	B
≥ 75% and < 80%	B-
≥ 70% and < 75%	C+
≥ 65% and < 70%	C
≥ 60% and < 65%	C-
≥ 50% and < 60%	D
≥ 40% and < 50%	F
< 40%	

ASSIGNMENTS

- (1) **Participation** (10 percent of final grade): This class will be a combination of lectures and discussions. Students will be expected to do all assigned readings, attend all class meetings, and be fully prepared to participate in discussions and learn from one another.
- (2) **Policy Analysis Paper** (20 percent of final grade): **Due on Friday, March 17, 11:59pm.** Details will be posted online.
- (3) **Presentation of Policy Analysis Paper** (10 percent of final grade): **In class on Tue. & Thur. (Mar. 14 & 16).** Details will be posted online.
- (4) **Midterm Exam** (30 percent of final grade): This will be a **closed-book exam in class on Thursday, February 16, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.**
- (5) **Final Exam** (30 percent of final grade): This will be a **comprehensive, closed-book exam in class on Tuesday, March 21, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

NB: There are no extra credit assignments. Late submissions for the Policy Analysis Paper will attract a 25% deduction from your score each day unless you had an emergency. Early/late exams are only allowed under university-approved conditions (e.g. documented serious illness, family emergency or religious obligation).

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

The required textbooks are listed below. **Additional reading materials can be found on the Modules page in Canvas.**

- Bardach, Eugene and Eric Patashnik, *A Practical Guide to Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 6th edition, Sage/CQ Press, 2019. (ISBN-13: 978-1506368887) (Previous editions ok, also.)
- Gruber, Jonathan. *Public Finance and Public Policy*, 4th Edition, Worth Publishing, New York, NY, 2012. ISBN: 978-1429278454.
- Krugman, Paul and Robin Wells, *Microeconomics*, 3rd Edition, Worth Publishers, New York, NY, 2012. ISBN: 978-1429283427.
- Other readings or materials of interest may be brought in for discussion or added to the reading list over the course of the semester.

Week #1 – Jan. 10 & 12

Course Overview & Introduction

- Kraft and Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives* (5th edition, 2015), Chapter 4 'Policy Analysis'.
- Bardach and Patashnik, Appendix B 'Things Governments Do'.
- Mayer, I.S., C. E. van Daalen, and P. W. G. Bots. Perspectives on Policy Analysis: A Framework for Understanding and Design. *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, 4(2), 2004. **(Focus on the different types/styles of policy analysis)**

Doing Policy Analysis (material for Policy Analysis Paper)

- Kraft and Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives* (5th edition, 2015), Chapters 4, 5 and 6
- Gruber, Chapter 1 'Why Study Public Finance?' and Chapter 3 'Empirical Tools of Public Finance'.
- Bardach and Patashnik, 'Introduction', 'Parts I, II and III', and Appendix B 'Things Governments Do'.

Week #2 – Jan. 17 & 19

Economics Review – Demand, Supply, 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'.

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 – Jan. 24 & 26

Cost Benefit Analysis

- Portney, Paul R. "Benefit-Cost Analysis".
- Gruber, Chapter 8 'Cost-Benefit Analysis'.
- Rosen, H. and T. Gayer, *Public Finance*, 8th edition, Chapter 8 'Cost-Benefit Analysis'.
- 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.

Week #4 – Jan. 31 & Feb. 2

Externalities, the Environment, and Environmental Policies

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

Week #5 – Feb. 7 & 9

Asymmetric Information

- Weimer, D. and A. Vining, Chapter 5 'Rationales for Public Policy: Market Failures' (pp. 104-112).

Risk, Uncertainty, and Insurance

- Weimer, D. and A. Vining, Chapter 6 'Rationales for Public Policy: Other Limitations to the Competitive Framework' (pp. 119-124).
- Camerer, C. and H. Kunreuther, 'Decision Processes for Low Probability Events: Policy Implications', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Fall 1989.

Discussion of Policy Analysis Paper (if time allows)

- Ofori, & Rouleau, M. D. (2021). Modeling the impacts of floating seaweeds on fisheries sustainability in Ghana. *Marine Policy* 127. (**Identify how this article followed "The Eightfold Path" in Bardach & Patashnik**)

Week #6 – Feb. 14 & 16

Health Insurance Policy

- Krugman and Wells, Chapter 18, 'The Economics of the Welfare State', pp. 513-end.
- Gruber, Chapters 15 and 16 'Health Insurance I and II'.
- Kaiser Family Foundation, *Focus on Health Reform: Summary of the Affordable Care Act*, (April 25, 2013, Publication #8061-02) (<http://kff.org/health-reform/fact-sheet/summary-of-the-affordable-care-act/>).

❖ **Feb. 16: Midterm exam in class – 2 to 3:30 p.m.**

Week #7 – Feb. 21 & 23

Tax Incidence, Equity and Efficiency

- Gruber, Chapters 18, 19 and 20 on 'Taxation...'

Week #8 – Feb. 28 & Mar. 2

Factor Markets, Earnings, and Inequality

- Krugman and Wells, Chapter 19, 'Factor Markets and the Distribution of Income'.
- Weimer, D. and A. Vining, Chapter 7 'Rationales for Public Policy: Distributional and Other Goals'.
- 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), 60-78.
- Wilkinson, R. and K. Pickett (2011). *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, Bloomsbury Press, Forward, and Chapters 1 and 2.

Week #9 – Mar. 7 & 9

Poverty and Poverty Policy

- Krugman and Wells, Chapter 18, 'The Economics of the Welfare State', pp. 499-513.
- Gruber, Chapter 2 'Theoretical Tools of Public Finance' (mainly sections 2.2 and 2.4) and Chapter 17 'Income Distribution and Welfare Programs'.
- Schiller, B., *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination* (Pearson, 2008), Chapter 3 'Counting the Poor'.

Week #10 – Mar. 14 & 16

- ❖ **Policy Analysis Paper – Student presentations in class**
- ❖ **Policy Analysis Paper – due on Friday, March 17, 11:59pm.**

Finals week

- ❖ **Final exam in class – Tuesday, March 21, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.**