University of Washington   **Professor W. Zumeta, zumeta@uw.edu**
Evans School of Public Affairs   **Office: 231 Parrington, Phone: 543-0743**
Pb Aff 513B, Spring 2011   **Office hrs: Tu 3-4/Th 4-5 & by appntmnt**
Tu/Th 1:30-2:50 PM, Parrington 108   **TA: Daniel Brody, dobb14@uw.edu**

PB AF 513B: PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

Making policy is, for many, the most exciting role in public service (or probably in any organizational setting). Managers aspire to this role after years of service. Policy analysts often get a chance to play an important part in policymaking much earlier in their careers. In addition to being exciting, policy analysis is excellent training for moving into senior management later because it forces one to think about "big" issues of purposes and how to achieve them, and about an organization's external environment. Policy analysis also sharpens the capacity for rigorous thinking. Most importantly, public policy analysis is about the collective, societal decisions that shape the quality of all our lives. What could be more exciting?

The purpose of this course is to provide a conceptual framework and some practical experience in integrating the MPA core course work in economics, quantitative methods, organizations and management, politics, and budgeting so that you learn to analyze public policy options and decisions in a practical and broad gauged way. We will read about, discuss, and work through the processes of identifying and defining policy problems and policy objectives, establishing operational criteria for decisions, assessing stakeholders and their stakes, devising alternative policy actions to address problems, projecting and assessing systematically the impacts of these actions, and attending to political, organizational, and democratic process considerations relevant to authoritative adoption and successful implementation of public policies. A major effort will be made to impart craft as well as conceptual knowledge. Thus, an important part of the course work will involve student execution (in small teams) of an independent policy analysis encompassing all the above elements and designed to be useful to an identified real-world *client* (user or user group, whether simulated or real). To further impart concreteness to the course, we will examine together a number of cases designed to pose real policy problems where policy analysis played or could play a useful role.

Policy analysis requires several distinct sets of skills: the ability to frame a problem in a way amenable to analysis, technical understanding of data and analytical tools and their relevance, a comprehension of the analytics of resource allocation, understanding of politics and process norms within and outside the organization with which the analyst is working, and the ability to produce and present a useful analysis for one's audience(s). The course will cover all of these, but will give particular attention to the first and last elements mentioned.

Texts and Readings:

1. David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 5th edition. (Pearson-Prentice-Hall, 2010). **(Required, available at University Bookstore.)**

2. Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 3rd edition. (CQ Press, 2009.) **(Required, available at University Bookstore.)**

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3. John W. Kingdon, _Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies,_ 2nd edition. (Harper Collins, 1994). **(On reserve at Odegaard Library.) Note: Only chapters 4, 5, and 8 from this book will be assigned. Chapter 8 will be made available electronically.**

4. Two cases from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, will be used in class. These can be accessed at: http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu/index.asp. The syllabus indicates the identifying case number. A small fee is charged by KSG.

5. Other readings and cases will be made available electronically via the catalyst site for this class. The catalyst site can be accessed using the following URL: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/zumeta/20489/>.

The texts and supplemental readings provide a good summary of the policy process (especially Kingdon), and the theory, methods and craft of policy analysis (especially Weimer and Vining, and Bardach). It is important to keep up with the reading assignments if you are to make sense of the classes and be able to complete the assignments competently. Quality of students' class participation will be monitored and graded.

Course Requirements:

Team project: A critical element of the course is the _team policy analysis project_. Policy analysis is a practical craft, the best way to learn about it is to try it as you are learning. Thus, students will choose as soon as practicable, with our help as needed, a policy analysis project topic as the basis for _three written memos and an in-class oral briefing_ over the course of the term. You are to work in _teams of two or three (two preferred) on your projects and submit joint memos,_ because team efforts are the way policy analysis is typically carried out in real organizations. After all, two heads _are_ usually better than one. Some class time and most of the section meeting time will be devoted to workshops on aspects of the project work and, at the end of the term, formal presentations of project research results will occur in class. In forming project teams, students may wish to give some attention to who is scheduled for which section meeting time for it will facilitate your work if both/all project team members are able to attend the same section meeting.

Case analyses: Each student will also submit written analyses of <u>one</u> of the assigned cases on the syllabus (your choice except that _Mayor Schell's Zero Homeless Families Pledge_ is <u>excluded</u> from eligibility for the written assignment.) <u>Your written analysis must be turned in before class on the date the case will be discussed</u>. Questions to help focus your analysis of the cases will be made available on the class catalyst site. <u>Everyone is expected to be prepared for class discussion of each case</u> whether or not they have written it up. Study groups for preparing and discussing the cases in (or outside of) section meetings are encouraged, though your case write-ups must be individual work.

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Readings and class preparation: There is also plenty of other material to read for the course in preparation for classes. Clearly, preparation for all types of classes ("regular," case-based, and project workshops) and active participation are important for the course to be successful. Also, the readings and classes are designed to be complementary to your efforts on the project and case analyses. Thus, evident preparation and class participation will be monitored and rewarded in individual course grades.

<u>Your final grade will be determined as follows:</u>

1. Policy analysis memo based on an assigned case of student's choice (individual)- **15**%

2. Policy Analysis Project Memo #1 (project team): Defining the Policy Problem- **15**%
      (**<u>Due in class April 21</u>**, 3 pages)

3. Policy Project Memo#2 (project team): Policy Objectives, Criteria and Options- **15**%
      (**<u>Due in class May 5</u>**; 6-7 pages, *incorporating refinement of problem definition*)

4. Team Oral Briefing on policy analysis project- **15**%
      (**<u>In class May 24, 31, or June 2</u>**)

5. Policy Analysis Final Report (Project Memo #3 by project team)- **25**%
      (**<u>Due on or before June 2 class</u>**; 12-15 pages + appendices, data displays, etc.)

6. Class contributions (individual)- **15**%.

Note: Late penalties will be assessed for overdue papers unless prior arrangements have been made (with a very good reason) <u>well in advance</u>!

<u>Project Topics and Assignments</u> (Please refer to this in preparing the project assignments):

A few pointers on choosing a policy analysis project topic:

- Pick a relatively narrow topic (students are prone to selecting topics that are too large to analyze adequately in one quarter);
- Pick a topic that interests you (this helps with motivation);
- Consider using a work-related topic from your job, internship or volunteer work; the fact that someone out there really cares about the topic may also spur motivation and should help you in gaining access to information and focusing on a client (audience).
- Get started early, <u>long</u> before the first project memo is due, so that you can contact potential users and resources, size up the project realistically, and begin developing a working relationship with your teammate(s). It will be very problematic for you if you discover around the time that the first project memo is due (or later, god forbid) that your project is not feasible due to lack of data or client access.

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You are encouraged to find a teammate with similar interests on your own and to begin this process as soon as possible. The class email list and Daniel (TA)'s help are available for this purpose. Daniel can help with vetting project topics but I (the instructor) must ultimately approve each project topic. I encourage all teams to come in during my office hours before the first project memo is due or make an appointment for another time if necessary. Otherwise, approval can be granted via email exchange but this is less likely to be satisfactory.

Experience shows that most MPA students have interests and contacts that lead rather readily to appropriate topics, or at least can find a teammate who does. For those unable to find a topic, the Evans School's Public Service Clinics web site may be a helpful source of ideas. I can also provide suggestions upon request regarding finding appropriate topics.

Memos: You should <u>address your project memos to a specific client</u> (real or imaginary) and, ideally, will actually share your work with that person or group. (You will normally need to provide some explanatory background in a preface or footnotes in your memos for readers like me who will not be aware of everything the client would be.) This targeting will help a lot in focusing your work and simulates the real world of most policy analysts. Note that the first two memos are interim, partial efforts rather than complete analyses. In the first project memo you will present an initial description and *definition* of the problem you will be analyzing and the *stakeholders* involved. In the second project memo, <u>*in addition to including a refined version of your problem definition based on my feedback,*</u> you will set out and explain the *policy objectives and criteria for choice* you have established and will describe the *policy options* to be considered seriously for addressing the problem. You will <u>not</u> actually evaluate the options in this memo, however. I will read both these memos closely and will give you ample feedback to guide your subsequent work.

The final written report (project memo #3) should incorporate the basic information from the earlier memos <u>and reflect feedback you have received on them</u>. Assume that your client has read your earlier memos, but still wants everything pulled together in one paper. Also, assume the memo will be shared with a larger audience (e.g., the agency head, budget director, chief executive of the government, perhaps legislators, outside stakeholders, etc.), so it must be intelligible to them and not too narrowly focused. Then, you should evaluate the policy options in light of the criteria you have established and the best information and relevant theory you can marshal about the likely effects of each option. **Remember that <u>this is the heart of the analysis</u> and needs to be substantive and well supported by reasoning and evidence, as well as cogently written.** You should also <u>highlight the important differences in the effects of the options</u> (i.e., the *tradeoffs* among them). Be sure to integrate considerations of *political feasibility and implementation issues*. It makes little sense to recommend an impractical alternative and does not make you look very smart. ***<u>The paper should conclude with a recommendation</u>*** for the client's consideration, i.e., you should offer a recommended choice among your policy alternatives. Even though this is not the expectation in all settings, it provides a good discipline for you as a student to actually have to put yourself in the decisionmaker's shoes. You should also *<u>provide an outline of an adoption and implementation strategy for your recommended alternative</u>*. Your final report should include a short (1-2 page) ***<u>Executive Summary</u>*** covering the essential elements of your problem definition, analytic methodology, key findings and conclusions, and your recommendations. This is all some decisionmakers will read, although staff and critics will look closely at the rest (as will I)!

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Oral briefing: Due to class size and time constraints, the oral presentation of your analysis (often called a *briefing*) will be **strictly** limited to about 10 minutes with a few of these for questions from the audience, including me and any guests you or I may invite. (I'll tell you the exact time allocations once I see how many presentations there will be.) The time may be a bit shorter than you would have in a real situation but not as much so as you might think. Again, it provides good discipline for you in organizing your presentation to focus on the heart of the matter— the rational basis for making a policy choice. **Each member of the analysis team should participate approximately equally in the delivery of the briefing.** Normally, all team members receive the same grade on the briefing although I reserve the right to differentially reward unusually strong or weak performances.

Basically, the presentation should briefly summarize the problem, the policy objectives and criteria for choice, the options you considered, *how* you assessed their likely impacts (essentials of methodology, evidence, etc.), the results of your assessment, the major tradeoffs among the options, and your recommendation to the client. Because of the limited time, you will have to choose carefully what to present and what to leave out (this can still be in the written report) **and *practice* to ensure smooth delivery**. The presentation should include slides or other visuals so that the audience can follow you. Types of visuals that are often particularly helpful are a brief outline of the presentation as a "road map" for the audience, charts or graphs depicting the nature and extent of the problem under study, a diagrammatic summary (not overly detailed) of your evaluation of the policy options, and a pithy depiction of your recommendations and their analytic basis. Of course, it is up to you to decide what is most appropriate based upon the nature of the problem and your analysis.

Each project team is to prepare and distribute to me and the electronic class list at least 24 hours prior to their presentation. All students are expected to review these prior to the class where the presentations are made and to be prepared with good questions for the presenters.

TA Sections
There are two TA sections for this course held Thursday 3-3:50pm and Friday 1:30-2:20pm. These sections will focus on providing support for the team projects. This will include working on applying concepts from the readings and lectures to your policy project. For this reason, it is preferable if your entire group can attend one of the sections. These sections can also be used for further discussion of readings and cases.

Office hours
I will hold office hours from 3-4 PM on Tuesday, i.e., right after class, and Thursday from 4-5 PM (right after section meeting). I'm also glad to make an appointment to meet with you at another time if these times are not convenient.

TA Office hours
Daniel will normally hold office hours from 1-3 PM on Wednesdays or by appointment in the TA office room (PAR 124).

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Course Outline and Readings:

Tu Mar 29   **Introduction to the course; what is policy analysis? (Part 1)**

Reading (in-class handout):
"A Review of Gun Buy-Back Program," *Seattle P-I*, May 28, 1993.

Th Mar 31   **What is policy analysis? (Part 2)**
The policymaking process and the place of policy analysis;
ethical dilemmas in policy analysis.

Reading:
1. Bardach (text), "Introduction" and Appendix A.
2. Weimer and Vining (text), chapters 2 & 3.
3. Russ Lidman and Paul Sommers. (2005). "The 'Compleat' Policy
   Analyst: A Top Ten List." *Public Administration Review* 65(5), 628-634.

Recommended:
John Kingdon, "Processes: Origins, Rationality, Incrementalism, and
Garbage Cans." Ch. 4 in his *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*.
(Book is on reserve at Odegaard Library.)

Tu Apr 5   **How to do it: policy analysis in the real world**

Guest: TBA

Reading:
1. Bardach, Appendix A (pp. 107-121), "Specimen of a Real-World Policy
   Analysis."
2. Get started on readings for Thursday, which are substantial!

Recommended:
1. Peruse the sample 513 project papers from past years on course site.
2. W&V, ch. 1, "The Canadian Salmon Fishery."

Th Apr 7   **Problem diagnosis: theoretical concepts**

Reading:
W&V, chapters 5, 7, & 8. On market and government failure and
distributional and other policy purposes other than efficiency.

Recommended:
W&V, chapters 4, 6, & 9. (Note: chapter 4 is a useful review of the basic
economics underlying the above chapters so you may want to review it
before tackling them. Ch. 9 is a nice example of the application of theory-
based diagnostic thinking in policy analysis.)

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Tu Apr 12   **Identifying policy problems and stakeholders;**
                       More on problem diagnosis and definition

                       <u>**Reading:**</u>
                       1. Bardach, pp. 1-10.
                       2. W&V, pp. 340-top of 348 (in ch. 15).
                       3. Zumeta and Frankle, *California Community Colleges: Making Them*
                          Stronger and More Affordable. National Center for Public Policy and
                          Higher Education, 2007, pp. 1-6. You may also be interested in the
                          "Summary of Major Conclusions and Recommendations," pp. 46-52,
                          also available at the class site.
                       4. **Case to prepare:** *A Heritage Worth Saving?: The Case of the Acheen Street*
                          Malay Mosque Village. Evans School Electronic Hallway.

                       <u>**Assignment due:**</u>
                       Note: If you choose this case for your written analysis, it is **due at the**
                          beginning of class. (The same applies to subsequent cases.)

                       <u>**Recommended:**</u>
                       Kingdon, chapter 5, "Problems." (Book is on reserve at Odegaard.)

Th Apr 14   **Gathering evidence and documenting policy problems**

                       <u>**Reading:**</u>
                       1. W&V, chapter 14, "Gathering Information for Policy Analysis."
                       2. Bardach, pp. 10-15 and 65-93 ("Assembling Evidence").
                       3. <u>**Case to prepare:**</u> *Mayor Schell's Zero Homeless Families Pledge.* Access at
                          course site. <u>**Note:**</u> This case is <u>**not**</u> eligible for the individual written
                          assignment.

                       Project topics and teams must be settled by this date! Project topics
                          must be approved by the instructor! Contact Daniel Brody (TA) with
                          final project title and team member names.

Tu Apr 19   **Problem definition workshop**

                       <u>**Reading:**</u>
                       J. Musso, R. Biller, and R. Myrtle, "Tradecraft: Professional Writing as
                          Problem Solving," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 19(4) (Fall
                          2000), 635-646.

                       <u>**Assignment due:**</u>

                       Each project team should bring <u>5 copies</u> of a <u>draft</u> of your problem
                       definition memo to class for peer critique in small groups.

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Th Apr 21   **Goals, objectives and decision criteria.**

          Reading:
1. Bardach, "Select the Criteria," pp. 26-38. You may want to read pp. 15-26 here too (although assigned for next class) for the sake of continuity in reading the book.
2. W & V, pp. 348-354.
3. Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Race Matters: Racial Equity Impact Analysis." http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/racial_equity_analysis.pdf (2 pages).
4. **Case to prepare:** *Buying Time: the Dollar-a-Day Program.* Kennedy School of Government case #961.0.
    Access at: http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu/index.asp

          Assignment due: Project problem definition memos due from each project team at the beginning of class.

Tu Apr 26   **Design of policy options: theory**

          Reading:
1. Bardach, "Construct the Alternatives" (pp. 15-25), "Smart (Best) Practices Research"(95-110), & "Things Governments Do" (127-135).
2. W & V, chapter 10, "Correcting Market and Government Failure: Generic Policies."

          Recommended:
1. W&V, chapter 13, "Government Supply: Drawing Organizational Boundaries."
2. L. McDonnell & R. Elmore (1987). "Getting the Job Done: Alternative Policy Instruments." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 9(2), 133-152.

Th Apr 28   **Policy options: practice I**

          Case to prepare:
          Selecting Communal Lands in Zimbabwe. Evans Electronic Hallway.

Tu May 3   **Policy options: practice II**

          Case to prepare:
          Portland's Urban Growth Boundary. KSG cases #1703.0 & 1704.0.
          (See URL above)

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Th May 5   **Evaluation of policy impacts: theory**

                                 Reading:
                                 1. Bardach, 38-52, "Project the Outcomes."
                                 2. W&V, pp. 354-375. (Another look at chapter 1 is also recommended.)
                                 3. WA State Institute for Public Policy (2008, July). *Evidence-Based Programs to Prevent Children from Entering and Remaining in the Child Welfare System: Benefits and Costs for Washington.*
                                 4. H. Hatry et al, "Estimating Program Costs," in *Program Analysis for State and Local Governments* (Urban Institute, 1987), pp. 49-62.

                                 Recommended:
                                 1. D. H. Greenberg & U. Appenzeller (1998). *Cost Analysis Step by Step: A How-to Guide for Planners and Providers of Welfare-to-Work and Other Employment and Training Programs.* Especially chapters 2 & 3.

                                 Policy Project Memo #2, "Goals, Criteria and Policy Options," due! Note: This memo <u>should also incorporate a revised version of your problem definition memo</u> reflecting the feedback received from me.

Tu May 10   **Policy choice processes and communicating analysis**

                                 Reading:
                                 1. Weimer & Vining, Ch. 11 and pp. 375-382.
                                 2. Bardach, pp. 56-64 ("Decide" and "Tell Your Story").
                                 3. **Case to prepare:** *Growing Resentment (A): Regulating Farm Worker Safety in Washington State Orchards.* Electronic Hallway case.

                                 Recommended:
                                 Kingdon, ch. 8, "The Policy Window and Joining the Streams."

Th May 12   **Evaluation of Policy Impacts via Benefit-Cost Analysis**
                                 Guest: TBA
                                 Reading: TBA

Tu May 17   **Building implementation thinking into policy analysis**

                                 Reading:
                                 1. W&V, chapter 12.
                                 2. Richard Elmore, "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions." *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1979-80), 601-616.
                                 3. **Case to prepare:** *Implementing a New Drug and Alcohol Program in Sacramento County, A & B.* Electronic Hallway case.

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Th May 19   **Policy project workshop**

                 <u>**Assignment:**</u>
                 Each policy analysis project team should come to class prepared with <u>5 copies</u> of a <u>draft</u> matrix of policy alternatives and criteria for evaluation that apply to its policy problem. These will be exchanged among teams in the class workshop as a device for testing each team's ideas and for bringing fresh insights to bear, as well as for testing clarity of presentation.

Tu May 24   **See below**

Th May 26   **No class. Instructor is participating in a conference on this date.**

Tu May 24
Tu May 31   <u>**Policy analysis team oral briefings**</u> **on analysis results. <u>Slides should be distributed by each team to the instructor, TA, and class members at least 24 hours prior to their presentation</u>. Presentations will be mounted on the classroom equipment and ready to run when it is your turn.** Presentation time will be strictly limited to fit in everyone equitably, but there will be a brief period for questions and reactions from the class, TA, and me. Exact time allocations will depend on the number of presentations but figure on roughly 10 minutes.
Th June 2

                 (Note: Students should be prepared to run a bit late in these class sessions to fit everyone in equitably.) Each team member should be "on stage" for approximately the same amount of time. **<u>For the sake of the group enterprise and in fairness to your colleagues, you are obligated to attend these classes even when you are not presenting</u>!** They provide an excellent learning experience.

Th June 2   **FINAL WRITTEN POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT FROM EACH TEAM DUE IN CLASS in printed form! (Please also provide an electronic version.) A penalty will be assessed for late papers.**