

# Policy Analysis

## POLITICAL SCIENCE / ETHICS & POLICY STUDIES

### PSC 723/EPS 710

#### University of Nevada, Las Vegas

#### Fall 2008

Professor: Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez  
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Office: Department of Political Science; Wright Hall B209  
Office Hours: T 10-11:30 and W 4:00-5:30 pm, or by appointment.  
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Time/Date: W 5:30 – 8:20pm., Wright Hall B224

**Class Description:** This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the study of public policy and provide you with experience in policy analysis. Key issues explored include: the nature of policy analysis, the various stages and actors of the policy process, theories of public policy, methods used to analyze public policies, and factors shaping the actual utilization of policy analysis. Students will gain experience in the various methods of defining and describing public policy problems and issues, formulating and assessing possible strategies and alternative responses, recommending policy actions for decision making, designing and evaluating implementation plans, and communicating policy advice in written and oral presentations. We will use a variety of short cases and a semester-long project to develop these skills.

**Course requirements:** This graduate seminar will not be a lecture based course. Instead it will be a hands-on course where participation in and outside the class will determine your grade.

*1. Class Participation and Attendance (15% of grade):* This course is designed as a workshop and in-class participation is crucial. Come prepared to contribute to class discussion by carefully reading the assignments and providing thoughtful feedback on the work of other students.

*2. Reading Summary Presentation (20%):* The readings will be divided up among the class and each student will be responsible for writing and presenting an overview of their assigned readings—the main topics, arguments, findings, policy recommendations. Students will be expected not only to summarize the assigned material but to isolate critical arguments made by the author as well as flaws in the arguments or methodology. Everyone should read all assigned readings and come to class with questions and comments. The various readings will be randomly assigned to students. If you have a conflict on the days/readings assigned it will be your responsibility to trade with another student and notify the instructor of the change.

*3. Case Studies (15%):* Three cases from the Kennedy School of Government Case Program will be examined (pension reform; mass-transit; mental health care). Prior to the class meeting each student will do some library research and write up a brief literature review (2 pages with 5 citations)\* summarizing the scope, causes, and potential solutions of the policy problem being addressed. Each student will present their findings and recommendations. \*Note, the citations must be different from the ones previously done in other classes - see <http://faculty.unlv.edu/kfernandez/psc723.htm>

*4. Group Project – 5 project reports (10% each)*

Each student will participate in the class research project. The class will be divided into three teams which will be given various tasks to complete and report back to the class at various times throughout the semester (see Class Schedule below). Teams will be randomly assigned and will change after each project report. Further information on this project will be provided in a handout on the first few class meeting.

**The assignment of letter grades is as follows:**

92 <= A	80-81 = B-	67-69 = D+
90-91 = A-	77-79 = C+	62-66 = D
87-89 = B+	72-76 = C	60-61 = D-
82-86 = B	70-71 = C-	> 59 = F

**Required Texts (a copy of each text has been placed in Physical Reserves):**

Weimer, D.L. and A.R. Vining. 2005. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* 4th Edition. Prentice-Hall.

Auerhahn, Kathleen. 2003. *Selective Incapacitation and Public Policy*. SUNY Press.

Sabatier, Paul, ed. 2007. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press

Stone, Deborah. 2001. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, Revised Edition. W. W. Norton & Co.

**Additional Readings available on WebCampus (<https://webcampus.nevada.edu>)**

Fernandez, Kenneth and Max Neiman. 1998. "California's Inmate Classification System: Predicting Inmate Misconduct," *Prison Journal* 78 (December): 406-422.

Graham, Steve and Dolores Perin. 2007. "Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School." A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Greene, Peterson, and Du. 1999. Effectiveness of School Choice. *Education & Urban Society* 31 (2): 19—213

John F. Kennedy School of Government Case Program, Harvard University:

Case #C14-01-1639.0. 2001. "Sound Move: The Debate over Seattle's Regional Transit System."

Case #C16-02-1649.0. 2002. "Public Takes on Private: The Philadelphia Behavioral Health System."

Case #C16-06-1837.0. 2006. "Pension Reform in California."

May, Peter J. 1986. Politics and Policy Analysis. *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (1): 109-125.

Meier, Kenneth J. and Lael R. Keiser. Public Administration as a Science of the Artificial: A Methodological Prescription. *Public Administration Review* 56 (5): 459-466.

Meier, Kenneth J., Robert D. Wrinkle, and J. L. Polinard. 1999. Representative Bureaucracy and Distributional Equity: Addressing the Hard Question. *The Journal of Politics* 61, 4(November): 1025-1039.

Meier, Kenneth J., Warren S. Eller, Robert D. Wrinkle, and J. L. Polinard. 2001. Zen and the Art of Policy Analysis: A Response to Nielson and Wolf. *The Journal of Politics* 63, 2(May): 616-629.

Nielson, Laura B., and Patrick J. Wolf. 2001. Representative Bureaucracy and Harder Questions: A Response to Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard. *The Journal of Politics* 63, 2(May): 598-615.

Romero, Francine Sanders. 2001. The Policy Analysis Course: Toward a Discipline of Consensus. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 20 (4): 771-779.

Williams, David G., Max O. Stephenson, Jr., and David J. Webber. 1991. Teaching the Missing Pieces of Policy Analysis. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24, 2 (June): 218-220.

Witte. 1998. The Milwaukee Voucher Experiment. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 20(4): 229-251

# CLASS SCHEDULE

## Week 1 – August 27

### Introduction to Course

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- A. Course Design: Objectives, Structure, Philosophy and Expectations
- B. Class Policy Analysis Project Description and Team Assignment
- C. Assignment of Readings
- D. Complete CITI Course - <http://www.unlv.edu/Research/OPRS/citi-info.htm>

Readings: Romero, Francine Sanders. 2001. The Policy Analysis Course: Toward a Discipline of Consensus. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 20 (4): 771-779.

Williams, David G., Max O. Stephenson, Jr., and David J. Webber. 1991. Teaching the Missing Pieces of Policy Analysis. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24, 2 (June): 218-220.

## Week 2 – September 3

### Theories of Public Policy

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- A. Rational Choice
- B. Irrationality and Public Policy
- C. Learning and Public Policy

Due: CITI Certificate

Read: Sabatier, Paul, ed. 2007. *Theories of the Policy Process*.

## Week 3 – September 10

### What is Policy Analysis?

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- A. Discuss the Steps in the Analytic Process
- B. Problem Identification and Definition
- C. Data and Method in Policy Analysis

Due: Progress Report #1: Answers to preliminary questions (see handout)

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Chapters 2, 3, and 13

Fernandez, Kenneth and Max Neiman. 1998. "California's Inmate Classification System: Predicting Inmate Misconduct," *Prison Journal* 78 (December): 406-422.

Graham, Steve and Dolores Perin. 2007. "Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School." A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

May, Peter J. 1986. Politics and Policy Analysis. *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (1): 109-125.

## Week 4 – September 17

### Case Example #1

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Due: Brief Literature Review on Mass-Transit in Urban Areas (email instructor by 2pm)

Case: #C16-02-1649.0. Sound Move: The Debate Over Seattle's Regional Transit System

## **Week 5 – September 24**

### **Efficiency, Competition, Markets**

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- A. Collective Action Problems
- B. Market Efficiency
- C. Market Failure

Due: Progress Report #2

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Chapters 4 and 5

## **Week 6 – October 1**

### **Fairness and Equality in Policy Analysis**

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- A. Rationales for Policy Intervention
- B. Rational actors and Self-Interested Preferences
- C. Social Welfare Goals and Values

Due: Brief Literature Review on Relevant Issue: Managed Health Care (email instructor by 2pm)

Case: #C16-02-1649.0. 2002. "Public Takes on Private: The Philadelphia Behavioral Health System."

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Chapters 6 and 7

## **Week 7 – October 8**

### **Government Failure**

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- A. Paradox of Democracy and Voting
- B. Principle Agent Problem, Shirking, Rent Seeking
- C. Correcting Market and Government Failure

Due: Progress Report #3

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Chapters 8, 9 & 10

## **Week 8 – October 15**

### **Policy Adoption and Implementation**

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- A. Feasibility of Policy
- B. Factors affecting Success
- C. Costs, Bargaining Costs, and Opportunity Costs

Due: Brief Literature Review on Relevant Issue: Pension Reform (email instructor by 2pm)

Case: #C16-06-1837.0. 2006. "Pension Reform in California."

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Chapters 11 and 12

## **Week 9 – October 22**

### **Doing Policy Analysis**

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- A. Problem Analysis
- B. Goals and Constraints
- C. Methods/Communicating Results

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Chapters 14 & 15

Meier, Wrinkle & Polinard. 1999. Representative Bureaucracy and Distributional Equity. The Journal of Politics 61, 4: 1025-1039.

Nielson & Wolf. 2001. Representative Bureaucracy and Harder Questions: A Response to Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard. *The Journal of Politics* 63, 2: 598-615.

Meier, Eller, Wrinkle & Polinard. 2001. Zen and the Art of Policy Analysis: A Response to Nielson and Wolf. *The Journal of Politics* 63, 2: 616-629.

### **Week 10 – October 29**

#### **Cost-Benefit Analysis**

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- A. Monetization
- B. Estimating Effects and Net Benefit
- C. Limitations to Cost-Benefit Analysis

Due: Progress Report # 4

Read: D.L. Weimer and A.R. Vining. 2005. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, Chapters 16 & 17

### **Week 11 – November 5**

#### **The Politics of Policy Analysis**

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- A. Review the steps in the analytic process
- B. Consideration of politics, bounded rationality and alternative models of policy resolution
- C. Discussion of the appropriate form for Policy Analysis Memo

Read: Deborah Stone. 2001. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*.

### **Week 12 – November 12**

#### **No Class**

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Group Project Meetings

### **Week 13 – November 19**

#### **Policy Analysis Example: Criminal Justice**

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Read: Kathleen Auerhahn. 2003. *Selective Incapacitation and Public Policy*. SUNY Press.

### **Week 14 – November 26**

#### **Statistical Techniques and Policy Analysis**

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- A. Quantify if Possible
- B. Going Beyond OLS Regression

Read: Meier, K. J. and L. R. Keiser. Public Administration as a Science of the Artificial: A Methodological Prescription. *Public Administration Review* 56 (5): 459-466.

Greene, Peterson, and Du. 1999. Effectiveness of School Choice. *Education & Urban Society* 31 (2): 19—213

Witte. 1998. The Milwaukee Voucher Experiment. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 20(4): 229-251

### **Week 15 – December 3**

#### **Study Week – Final Team Progress Report**

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- A. Progress Report #5
- B. Discussion of Project and Final Report

## How to log into WebCampus...

The following time restrictions apply to WebCampus:

- Semester courses are available in WebCampus two (2) weeks before the first day of instruction.
- 1. Open your Internet browser and go to <http://webcampus.nevada.edu>.
- 2. Choose the **University of Nevada, Las Vegas** link.
- 3. Enter in your WebCampus username.
  - Your WebCampus username is the same as the prefix to your Rebelmail e-mail address. If your Rebelmail address is **heyreb**@unlv.nevada.edu, your WebCampus username is **heyreb**. Scroll down for more instructions on determining your WebCampus username.
- 4. Enter in your password.
  - First time logging into WebCampus? Your password by default is your date of birth. For example, if you were born on April 23, 1975 your password would be 04231975.
- 5. Click **OK**.
- 6. If you are logging in for the first time, you will be prompted to create a new password. Follow the instructions to change your password and proceed to WebCampus.

## How to get your WebCampus username...

Username Convention: Rebelmail email prefix

Password Convention: Initial password is the date of birth (MMDDYYYY)

1. Go to [Online Registration: http://register.unlv.edu/registerOnline.html](http://register.unlv.edu/registerOnline.html)
2. Read all of the information. When ready, click the "Go to Online Registration" button at the bottom of the page.
3. Once logged in, click on the **Update Address** button.
4. Your Rebelmail e-mail address will be displayed. Your WebCampus username is the same as the prefix to your Rebelmail e-mail address.
  - If your Rebelmail address is heyreb@unlv.nevada.edu, your WebCampus username is heyreb.

\*Rebelmail is the official UNLV e-mail account for all students. This account does not need to be activated in order for students to use WebCT.

**NOTE:** It can take 24-48 hours from the time of registration to the time a student is enrolled into WebCampus. If it has been longer than 48 hours, or if you have any additional questions, you can contact the Student Helpdesk.

### Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. Pacific

Friday – Saturday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Pacific

Sunday: noon - 5:00 p.m. Pacific

\*For current hours visit the help desk website.

**Website:** <http://oit.unlv.edu/help/student/>

-WebCampus Support