

Policy Analysis

POLITICAL SCIENCE / ETHICS & POLICY STUDIES

PSC 723/EPS 710

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Spring 2007

Professor: Dr. Kenneth E. Fernandez
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Office: Department of Political Science; Wright Hall B209
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Time/Date: M 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 (5% of grade):* This course is designed as a workshop and in-class participation is crucial. Please 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 (15%):* 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 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 articles and book chapters will be randomly assigned to students (approximately 5 articles or chapters per student). 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 (30%):* 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 write up a brief literature review (3 – pages with 10 citations) about the scope, causes, and potential solutions of the policy problem being addressed. Each student will present their findings and recommendations.
- 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 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:

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. 1999. *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.

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., 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.

Disability Policy: The UNLV Disability Resource Center (DRC) houses the resources for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Rm 137. Their numbers are: (702-895-0866/Voice; 702-895-0652/TDD). For additional information please visit <http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/drc>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 – January 15

Martin Luther King's Day – No Class

Week 2 – January 22

Introduction to Course

- 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 3 – January 29

Theories of Public Policy

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

Due: CITI Certificate

Read: Sabatier, Paul. 1999. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press

Week 4 – February 5

What is Policy Analysis?

- 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 5 – February 12

Case Example #1

Due: Brief Literature Review on Mass-Transit in Urban Areas (email instructor by 3pm 2/5)

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

Week 6 – February 19
President’s Day – No Class

Week 7 – February 26
Efficiency, Competition, Markets

- 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 8 – March 5
Fairness and Equality in Policy Analysis

- 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 3/5)

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

March 12
Spring Break – No Class

Week 9 – March 19
Government Failure

- 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 10 – March 26
Policy Adoption and Implementation

- 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 3/26)

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 11 – April 2

Doing Policy Analysis

- 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, 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.

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.

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Week 12 – April 9

Cost-Benefit Analysis

- 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 13 – April 16

The Politics of Policy Analysis

- 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 14 – April 13

Policy Analysis Example: Criminal Justice

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

Week 15 – April 30

Study Week – Final Team Progress Report

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