

PPPA 6011

Politics & Policy Analysis

Fall 2018

Professor

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& Public Administration
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Class Meetings

Monday, 3:30-5:20
1776 G St. NW (#C-115)
Mondays, 6:10-8:00
Bell Hall (#107)

Office Hours

By appointment at:
<https://elizabethrigby.youcanbook.me>

Overview

This course examines the role of politics in the work undertaken by policy analysts—across a wide range of settings both inside and outside of government. Drawing from theoretical and empirical work in political science, as well as current case studies, it emphasizes different ways that political institutions, behaviors, and processes both constrain and provide new opportunities for the use of policy analysis. The course serves as part of the interdisciplinary core curriculum for the Master of Public Policy (MPP) program, as well as an introduction to the field of policy analysis for students in their first or second semester in the program.



The facts are coming! The facts are coming!

Learning Objectives

- *Define* policy analysis and *explain* how the work undertaken by policy analysts varies across settings and has changed over time.
- *Develop and analyze* policy proposals across key criteria (e.g., effectiveness, equity, sustainability) in order to *provide* clear policy recommendations.
- *Understand* policy feedback effects and accurately *assess* the likelihood of successful policy implementation and policy sustainability over time.
- *Appreciate* the political and institutional constraints on policymakers, policy analysts, and policy proposals within our system of governance.
- *Evaluate* the role of interest groups, coalitions, and policy networks in organizing political conflict and shaping policy outcomes.
- *Appreciate* the challenges and opportunities facing a policy analyst in our political institutions and *develop* strategies for increasing the odds that your policy analysis will be appropriately used.
- *Recognize* the advantages and limitations of policy analysis within a representative democracy, and *critically evaluate* the appropriate role for policy analysts in the policymaking process,
- *Understand* the interdependence of politics and public policy—how the distribution of political power shapes policy choices and how policy choices reshape future political dynamics.

Course Materials

Some of the materials for this course are posted in the files section of our course Blackboard page (blackboard.gwu.edu), or consist of articles available at the links provided in the course outline. But the majority of the readings are drawn from the following four books, which students are required purchase ASAP from an online bookseller (in either print or e-book format).

- [*] Beryl Radin (2013), *Beyond Machiavelli: Policy Analysis Reaches Midlife, 2nd Edition*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Richard Rothstein (2017). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Company.
- Baumgartner, F. R., Berry, J. M., Hojnacki, M., Leech, B. L., & Kimball, D. C. (2009). *Lobbying and policy change: Who wins, who loses, and why*. University of Chicago Press.
- Patashnik, Eric M., Alan S. Gerber, and Conor M. Dowlings (2017). *Unhealthy Politics: The Battle over Evidence-Based Medicine*. Princeton NJ: University of Princeton Press.

[*] Important Note: The Radin book is needed at the very beginning of the semester and is often back-ordered. Please order it in advance. If unavailable through your preferred bookstore, you can also order it directly from the publisher (Georgetown University Press) in either paper or e-book format.

Course Workload and Effort

Course Credit: 3.0 credit hours.

Course Effort: Across the 15 week semester, students should expect to devote 7.5 hours per week to this class. This total includes a two hours class session each week, as well as an average of 5.5 hours of out-of-class time spent on: assigned reading, class preparation, and assignments.

Course Prerequisite

There is no formal prerequisite for this course. However, it assumes that students have a basic understanding of American political institutions, behaviors, and policy processes. It is recommended that all students review the document “*Important Ideas about American Politics*” (posted in Course Material section of Blackboard). If any of these sections include significant new material, you should review the chapter on that topic (e.g., Congress, elections, the constitution) in any American Politics textbook. It may also be helpful to watch documentaries that discuss the policymaking process. One that I recommend is the Frontline piece on “Obama’s Deal,” available at: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/obamasdeal/>.

Course Requirements and Grading

MPP Program Planning (10%). During the semester, students will be asked to improve their understanding of the policy analysis field and identify (or narrow down) their career objectives. To assist in this process, students will undertake at least three professional development activities (see options listed below). Students will then complete the MPP Program Planning worksheet available on Blackboard. The activities and the worksheet must be completed before the end of Thanksgiving vacation for full-credit.

Professional Development Activities (choose at least three, record completed activities on worksheet):

- Create or update your LinkedIn profile and link to the TSPPPA group and at least one TSPPPA professor;
- Conduct an informational interview with a policy analyst who works in the type of organization or area of policy in which you are most interested;
- Conduct a second informational interview with another policy analyst who works in a different type of organization or area of policy;
- Attend the “What does it mean to be a policy analyst?” career panel on Friday September 28th (3:30-5:00) to learn more about the variety of careers in this field;
- Meet with TSPPPA Career Center to develop a strategy for career advancement;
- If you are ready to, declare your MPP field [for the field declaration form, see: <https://tspppa.gwu.edu/academic-advising-mpa-and-mpp-students/>];
- If you are unclear on your field of study, meet with your core adviser to discuss your options.

Class Engagement (10%). This is a participation-based course in which all students are expected to prepare for class by reading the assigned material, attending class regularly, and actively participating in class. Active engagement requires coming to class with an open mind and willingness to be challenged and learn from others’ perspectives, as well as the courage necessary to raise challenging issues, overlooked perspectives, and critiques of assumptions made by other students, the professor, and authors of course readings. Grading will be based on the degree to which students’ engagement in class reflects these norms, evidence of careful preparation for class, and analytic thinking in which course material is applied to policy cases/current issues, including those related to students’ work, areas of study, or lived experience. Students are expected to attend

all class sessions and should email to notify the professor (erigby@gwu.edu) prior to any missed class. Excessive absences (more than two excused, or any unexcused) will result in reduction in the class engagement grade.

Short Homework Assignments (15%, 5% each). In preparation for three class sessions, students will complete short homework assignments based on the assigned readings for that class. Students should upload their assignment to Blackboard more than 24 hours before class and bring a copy of the assignment to class to refer to and to inform a class activity using the students' homework responses.

1. Information on five policy analysis organizations (due before Class 2)
2. Examples of five “things governments do” from Color of Law (due before Class 4)
3. Draft criteria-alternatives matrix for airport siting analysis (due before Class 5)

Group Report on Policy Analysis Organizations (10%). Students will work in small groups to analyze the “policy analysis landscape” for a single policy issue (e.g., gun control). Groups and issues will be determined at the end of Class Session 1 and much more information on the assignment will be provided then. Students will be provided time to work with their group during Class Session 2 and will present the results of their analysis at the beginning of Class Session 3.

Policy Analysis Memo (15%). Students will complete a short memo analyzing options for siting an airport (based on case study posted in Blackboard). The memo should be addressed to the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners discussing the key trade-offs facing this policymaker and recommending the policy alternative she should pursue. The memo should be 2-3 single-spaced pages, including a matrix comparing the alternatives on key criteria. Additional detail will be posted in Blackboard and discussed during Class 6. Memos should be uploaded to Blackboard before Class 7. Note: For those new to policy and/or memo writing, refer to the additional resources posted in Blackboard—especially: <http://withoutbullshit.com/blog/10-top-writing-tips-psychology/>

Reading Responses (20%, 10% each). Students will prepare written reading responses for any two of the six class sessions in Section 3 (Classes 7-12). Students should reflect on the assigned reading and prepare an approximately two page essay highlighting the most important take-aways from the class readings and listing 3-5 questions for further discussion in class. These reading responses should be uploaded to Blackboard at least 24 hours before the class in which the readings will be discussed; students should also bring a copy of their reading response to class to refer to during the discussion.

Policy Challenge (20%). Instead of a final exam, students will demonstrate their ability to undertake policy analysis within a specific political context through a three-part “Policy Challenge” at the end of the semester. All students will focus on the same issue (it will be one piece of legislation under consideration in Congress). The policy focus (and the specific piece of legislation) will be announced at the beginning of the policy challenge. Students will be provided with the needed background materials, resources and specific instructions to complete the following three tasks.

1. *Role of Objective Technician.* Between Class 12 and 13, students will take on the role of an analyst at Congressional Research Service and prepare a 1-2 pg. “confidential memo” summarizing the legislation and issue it aims to address. This memo should be uploaded to Blackboard at least 24 hours before class 13.
2. *Role of Issue Advocate.* During Class 13, students will take on the role of an advocate for the bill and work in small groups to prepare for and then conduct “mock Hill visits” in which the advocates role play meetings with various Members of Congress who support or oppose the legislation.
3. *Role of Client Advocate.* At the end of Class 13, students will be assigned the role of a staffer for a particular Members of Congress and will prepare a one-page memo advising their boss on whether or not to support the legislation (due before Class 14).

Much more information on the policy challenge will be provided at the end of Class 12. In the meantime, the best way to prepare for the Policy Challenge is through active participation in this course, including careful reading and thoughtful reflection on the implications of the theories and empirical work we cover throughout the semester. In terms of allocating time to the Policy Challenge, students should plan to devote any 3-5 hours of work to the policy challenge between Class 12 and 13 and another 3-5 hours of work between Class 13 and 14. It is also essential that students attend the entire Class 13 session. Note: Students will not be allowed to spend more than a total of 10 out-of-class hours on the Policy Challenge (both to make the challenge fair to all students and because a time limit more accurately reflects the conditions in which these types of analysis must be completed in the real world).

A Note on the Grading Scale.

Students' grades will reflect the following philosophy/standard:

A Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of professional quality.

A- Very Good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of creativity and a strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches, is thorough and well-reasoned, and meets professional standards.

B+ Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, without serious analytical shortcomings. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic course objectives.

B Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

B- Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues is incomplete.

Course Schedule At-a-Glance

#	DATE	TOPIC	DUE <i>Note: upload >24 hours before class and bring copy to class</i>
SECTION 1 – THE FIELD OF POLICY ANALYSIS			
1	8/27	Two Cultures: Politics & Analysis	
<i>NO CLASS 9/3 – LABOR DAY</i>			
2	9/10	Policy Studies as a Field	Homework 1: Description of five policy analysis organizations working on your selected policy issue
3	9/17	Approaches to Policy Analysis	Handout for group report on policy analysis organizations
SECTION 2 – POLICY TOOLS, ALTERNATIVES, AND COMPROMISES			
4	9/24	Things Governments Do	Homework 2: Five examples of things governments do in The Color of Law
*	9/28 (F) 3:30-5:00	<i>Panel on Policy Analysis Careers *Optional, but strongly recommended</i>	
5	10/01	Alternatives and Trade-offs	Homework 3: Draft Criteria-Alternatives Matrix for Airport Siting
<i>NO CLASS 10/8 – FALL BREAK</i>			
6	10/15	Policy Compromises	Policy Analysis Memo: Siting an Airport
SECTION 3 – POLICYMAKING PROCESS			
7	10/22	Political Context	Reading Response (complete 2 of 6)
8	10/29	Theories of Policy Change	Reading Response (complete 2 of 6)
9	11/05	Lobbying and Policy Change	Reading Response (complete 2 of 6)
10	11/12	Lobbying and Policy Change (cont.)	Reading Response (complete 2 of 6)
11	11/19	Unhealthy Politics	Reading Response (complete 2 of 6)
12	11/26	Unhealthy Politics (cont.)	Reading Response (complete 2 of 6)
<i>REMINDER: TURN IN MPP PROGRAM PLANNING WORKSHEET</i>			
POLICY CHALLENGE – TOPIC TBD			
13	12/03	Mock Hill Visits (Policy Challenge pt. 2)	CRS Memo (Policy Challenge pt. 1)
14	12/10	Class Wrap-Up: Discuss Evaluating the \$15 Minimum Wage Case Study	Staffer Memo (Policy challenge pt. 3)

Note: Additional details will be posted on Blackboard and/or provided in class before each assignment is due.

Course Outline, Readings, and Assignments

SECTION 1 – The Field of Policy Analysis

Class 1. Two Cultures: Politics and Analysis (Aug. 27)

Readings

Beryl Radin. *Beyond Machivelli*, 2nd Ed. Read Chapter 5: “Dealing with Two Cultures: Analysis and Politics.”

TSPPPA Case Study - *USDA Research on Food Expenditures* – read description of case, linked/attached supplementary materials, and think about the questions at the end in preparation for our class discussion.

Class 2. Policy Studies as a Field (Sept. 10)

Readings:

Beryl Radin. *Beyond Machivelli*, 2nd Ed. Read Introduction and Chapters 1-4 and Chapter 9.

Hugh Heclo, “Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment” [posted excerpt]

John W. Kingdon (1995), Chapter 6, “The Policy Primeval Soup” in *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, New York: Longman Press.

DUE: Homework #1: Description of five policy analysis organizations in the Policy File Database (access through GW library -- see second database at: (<http://libguides.gwu.edu/pubpolicydatabases>)). [Note: refer to instructions in Blackboard and distributed at Class 1]

Class 3. Approaches to Policy Analysis (Sept. 17)

Readings:

Beryl Radin. *Beyond Machivelli*, 2nd Ed. Read Chapter 6-8.

Susan Iott (2010), “Policy Sciences and Congressional Research: Making Sense of the Research Question.” *Policy Sciences*. 43, 3:289-300.

David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining (2005). “Toward Professional Ethics,” Chapter 3 in *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

DUE: Group Handout for Presentation on Policy Analysis Organizations

SECTION 2 – Policy Tools, Alternatives, & Compromises

Class 4. Things Governments Do: Housing Segregation (Sept. 24)

Eugene Bardach and Eric M. Patashnik (2016). “Things Governments Do.” From *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path for More Effective Problem Solving* (5th edition). New York: Sage Press [Read: Appendix B].

Richard Rothstein (2017). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Company. [Read chapters 2-7]

DUE: Homework 2: Identify and describe (in a few sentences each) five different examples of “things governments do” discussed by Rothstein in *The Color of Law*



Class 5. Alternatives and Trade-offs (Oct. 1)

Readings:

Eugene Bardach and Eric M. Patashnik (2016). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path for More Effective Problem Solving* (5th edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press. [Part I, pg. 1-72].

Michael C. Munger (2000), “The Process of Policy Analysis” (re: tradeoff matrix), p. 6-14 in *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts and Practices*. New York: W.W. Norton.

TSPPPA Case Study: Where to Site an Airport?

DUE: Homework 4 (bring hard copy of typed answers to class)

Read the posted case study about Siting an Airport and choose 3-4 criteria by which to compare the alternative sites. Draft a criteria-alternatives matrix using those criteria.

Class 6. Policy Compromises (October 15)

Readings:

Sarah Binder and Frances Lee (2013). “Making Deals in Congress.” Chapter 3 in Jane Mansbridge and Cathie Jo Martin (eds), *Negotiating Agreement in Politics*. Washington DC: APSA. Available at: <http://www.apsanet.org/portals/54/Files/Task%20Force%20Reports/Chapter3Mansbridge.pdf>

Ta-Nehisi Coates (2016). “Better is Good”: Obama on Reparations, Civil Rights, and the Art of the Possible. *The Atlantic*. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/ta-nehisi-coates-obama-transcript-ii/511133/>

DUE: Memo RE: Airport Siting

Based on the outcomes matrix refined during Class 5, write a 2-3 pg. memo (including matrix) to the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners discussing the key trade-offs facing this policymaker and recommending the policy alternative she should pursue.

SECTION 3 – The Policymaking Process

Class 7. The Political Context (October 22)

Guy Peters (2010). *American Public Policy, 8th Edition*, Chapter 2. “The Structure of Policymaking in American Government.”

- For illustrations see:
 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/24/president-trump-couldnt-pass-obamacare-repeal-this-is-why/?utm_term=.3ef5840e7762
 - <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/7/24/16019984/obamacare-repeal-republican-flow-chart>

Noel, Hans (2010). “Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don’t.” *The Forum*, 8(3):12. Available at: http://faculty.georgetown.edu/hcn4/Downloads/Noel_Forum.PDF

Mettler, Suzanne (2016). “The Polycscape and the Challenges of Contemporary Politics to Policy Maintenance.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 14(2): 369-390.

Suzanne Mettler (2015). Why Americans Can’t See Government and Why it Matters. *Scholar Strategy Network* brief available at: <http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/content/why-americans-cant-see-government-and-why-it-matters>

Class 8. Theories of Policy Process (Oct. 29)

Readings:

Lindblom, Charles (1959). “The Science of Muddling Through.” *Public Administration Review*, 19 (2): 79-88.

Cairney, Paul. (2012). “Punctuated Equilibrium.” Chapter 9 of *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian.

Cairney, Paul. (2012). “The Role of Ideas.” Chapter 11 of *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian.

Schneider, Ann L, Helen Ingram and Peter DeLeon. (2013). “Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations.” In Paul Sabatier and Christopher Weible, *Theories of the Policy Process, 3rd Edition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- For illustration see: Farai Chideya. (2015). *Most People Get Free Stuff from the Government: What kind they get varies by race and income level*. Available at: <http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/most-americans-get-free-stuff-from-the-government/>

Class 9. Lobbying and Policy Change (November 5)

Readings:

Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, and David C. Kimball (2009). *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why?* Read Chapters 1-4 & Chapter 11.

DUE: Reading response (complete 2 of 6)

Class 10. Lobbying and Policy Change cont. (Nov. 12)

Readings:

Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, and David C. Kimball (2009). *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why?* Read Chapters 5-8 & Chapter 12.

DUE: Reading response (complete 2 of 6)

Class 11. Unhealthy Politics (Nov. 19)

Readings:

Patashnik, Eric M., Alan S. Gerber, and Conor M. Dowlings. 2017. *Unhealthy Politics: The Battle over Evidence-Based Medicine*. Princeton NJ: University of Princeton Press. Read Intro. & Chap. 1-4.

DUE: Reading response (complete 2 of 6)

Class 12. Unhealthy Politics cont. (Nov. 26)

Readings:

Patashnik, Eric M., Alan S. Gerber, and Conor M. Dowlings. 2017. *Unhealthy Politics: The Battle over Evidence-Based Medicine*. Princeton NJ: University of Princeton Press. Read Chapters 5-6, and the Conclusion.

DUE: Reading response (complete 2 of 6)

SECTION 4 – The Policy Challenge

Class 13. Understanding an Issue and Advocating on Capitol Hill

Readings:

Background material posted on Blackboard re: selected legislation and issue.

DUE: “Confidential Memo” on legislation (Policy Challenge pt. 1)
Adopting the role of an analyst at the Congressional Research Service, prepare a 1-2 pg. memo summarizing the identified legislation and how it addresses (or not) the problem at hand (include arguments for and against the law).

Class 14. Conducting Politically-Informed Policy Analysis (Dec. 6)

Readings

Case Study: *Evaluating Washington State’s \$15 Minimum Wage* (see links posted in Blackboard)

DUE: Memo to Member of Congress (Policy Challenge pt. 3)
Adopting the role of staffer to the assigned Member of Congress, write a one page memo about the identified legislation and clearly state your recommendation in terms of whether to actively and/or passively support or oppose the legislation.

More Information on Academic Policies @ TSPPPA

Standard Trachtenberg School Policies

1. **The Syllabus:** This syllabus is a guide to the course. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester.

2. **Incompletes:** A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of “I” (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit the website for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

3. **Submission of Written Work Products Outside the Classroom:** It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically with the express permission of the instructor.

4. **Policy on Late Work:** All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor.

5. **Academic Honesty:** GW’s Code of Academic Integrity is at studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity. All exams and other graded work products are to conform to the Code. Its definition of “academic dishonesty” includes “cheating of any kind” and “misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.”

6. **Changing Grades after Completion of the Course:** No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

7. **Religious Holidays:** Religiously observant students should notify the instructor the first week of classes regarding any session that will be missed; the courtesy of an absence without penalty will be extended.

8. **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** To receive accommodations on the basis of disability, please provide documentation from the GW’s Disability Support Services, Rome Hall 102 (202-994-8250). See also: gwired.gwu.edu/dss.

9. **Mental Health Services:** This GW office 24/7 assistance to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations, and counseling services as well as referrals. See: counselingcenter.gwu.edu