PPPA 6049 - Urban and Regional Policy Analysis
Summer, 2013
SYLLABUS (May 22, 2013)

Nancy Y. Augustine, PhD    nya@gwu.edu    MPA 601F

Office Hours:    Thursdays, 5:00 – 5:45 and by appointment

Class meeting:    Thursdays, 6:10 – 8:45pm    COR 106
    May 20 - July 27 (no meeting on July 4)

    Managing Urban America (7th Ed). CQ Press College. The 6th edition is very similar and should be adequate.

Course Description:
This course examines urban and regional policy problems and responses. It will talk about how policy principles can be influenced by social, political, environmental, technological, and economic contexts. It will cover the logic of urban policy analysis (i.e., how to analyze urban problems and policies), urban trends, conditions, and processes, city-suburban policy interactions, and the role of the city in the regional and national economies. The latter part of the course will focus on specific urban problems and policies.

Student Learning Objectives
By the end of the term, students will be able to:

- Apply policy analysis methods to urban and regional issues.
- Recognize the structure and function of municipal governments.
- Identify sources of information and assemble evidence regarding urban problems and solutions.
- Distinguish the roles and actions taken by public, private, and non-profit organizations in the development of solution to the problems discussed.
- Analyze and evaluate proposed solutions to understand the tradeoffs among the positive, negative, and unintended consequences of the proposals.
- Make informed decisions about their personally preferred solutions.
- Develop interest in the subject and realize that public management professionals can work to help solve the problems faced by today’s cities.
- Argue that an issue is or is not appropriate for public policy.
- Argue that an issue is or is not appropriate for urban and regional government intervention.
- Communicate more effectively in writing and verbally.
Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, but I assume that you are familiar with the basics of policy analysis. The first night of class will include a review of these techniques. If this is the first time that you have formally encountered policy analysis, you should plan to study the readings carefully. I also assume that you have a basic understanding of U.S. political institutions and the policymaking process. Check Blackboard for supplementary readings designed to give you the needed foundation.

Method of Instruction and Classroom Policies

Class time is devoted to a combination of lecture, discussion, presentations, and group activities. Students are expected to actively participate in and contribute to learning. You are required to come to class every week, and I will take attendance. If you are unable to attend any class session, you are urged to get notes from another student in the class. A portion of the grade (see below) will be determined by the quality of your class participation and discussion.

I prefer students to leave their laptops and other electronica home or stashed during class time. However, I understand that you may genuinely want to type your notes. You may use your laptop (or similar) to take notes, but you will be required to post your notes to Blackboard. No additional points are earned for these postings, but you can lose points if your notes are poor or you fail to submit.

You are expected to do all of the required reading and to be prepared to bring it to bear upon class discussion. The required readings will be a launching point for lectures and discussions, not a substitute. Consider yourself responsible for material in required readings and material covered in class. You do not have to bring the textbook or hard copies of the assigned readings as long as you have notes to refer to.

I use Blackboard extensively. Plan to check it several times each week for announcements, new materials, and discussions. I also use email, especially for time-sensitive announcements. Check your GW email daily, and several times on the day of class. You are welcome to email me any time, but don’t count on me being on duty during evenings and weekends. If you are asking me something that requires a lengthy answer, I might ask you to come to office hours or talk to me before, during or after class.

Grading and Assignments

Assignments are designed to give students a broad background in policy analysis and research design, obtain knowledge of commonly used analytical techniques and their theoretical underpinnings, and develop the ability to think critically about assumptions and approaches used in analyzing public policies.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Individual contributions</td>
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<td>Metropolitan-area fact sheet</td>
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<td>Critical summary of a reading, presentation</td>
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<td>Policy analysis project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy problem</td>
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<td>Policy options</td>
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<td>Preferred policy option</td>
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<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>TOTAL possible</td>
<td>500</td>
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**Individual contributions to all students’ learning:**

- Participate through attendance, group work, and class discussion; throughout the term
  - a) Attendance is required.
  - b) Group work assignments will be provided in class and will generally not require work outside of class.
  - c) Class discussions will center on readings, lectures, and presentations.

**Metropolitan-area fact sheet**

- Develop a two-page written profile on one metro area, using a template that we will develop in class. To ensure that every student is working on a different metro area, you will submit your top three choices to me and I will make assignments.

**Critical summary of a reading**

- Write a summary and critical review of one of the class readings. Present the key points, discuss its shortcomings, and pose questions. Post your memo on Blackboard, for the benefit of other students. Summarize the key points verbally in class. Due dates throughout the term.

**Oral presentation**

- Present your critical summary of a reading to the class and lead a brief discussion. Scheduled for the next class following submission of the memo. Due dates throughout the term.

**Policy analysis memo**

- Write a policy analysis for the executive’s newly hired chief of staff, where the “executive” is the chief elected official of one of the jurisdictions in your metropolitan area. The setup is fictitious, but your analysis is real. You will address an actual problem faced by your jurisdiction in a topic area assigned early in the term (based on your request). This assignment will entail some in-class group work with other students working on the same topic.
  
  **Policy problem in your metro area** (June 14 at 6:00pm)
  **Policy options for your metro area** (June 26 at 6:00pm)
  **Preferred policy option** (July 5 at 6:00pm)

**Final presentation**

- Present your policy analysis memo with your group. In-class on July 25.
**Letter grading will be based on percentage of points earned:**

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

*90.0 – 92.4 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.

*88.0 - 89.9 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 objectives of this graduate course.

*86.0 - 87.9 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.

*84.0 - 85.9 B-: Borderline:* Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues in incomplete. (A B- average in all courses is not sufficient to sustain graduate status in good standing.)

*82.0 - 83.9 C+:* Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

*80.0 - 81.9 C:* Deficient – see above

*78.0 - 79.9 C-:* Deficient – see above

**Less than 78.0 F:** Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations or course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>May 23</td>
<td>1. Introduction – urban policy, regional policy, policy analysis</td>
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<td>May 24</td>
<td>DUE: Metro-area selections, 6:00pm</td>
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<td>May 30</td>
<td>2. Urban political structure and policymaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>DUE: Metro fact sheet at noon</td>
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<td>May 31</td>
<td>DUE: Critical summary selections, 6:00pm</td>
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<td>June 6</td>
<td>3. Decision-making and analysis; fiscal issues</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
<td>4. Urban issues, regional issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td>DUE: Policy problem in your metro area, 6:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>5. Human capital: labor and education</td>
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<td>June 26</td>
<td>DUE: Policy options for your metro area, 6:00pm</td>
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<td>June 27</td>
<td>6. Neighborhoods: Poverty and Race</td>
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<td>July 4</td>
<td>7. NO CLASS</td>
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<td>July 5</td>
<td>DUE: Preferred policy option, 6:00pm</td>
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<td>July 11</td>
<td>8. Transportation</td>
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<td>July 25</td>
<td>10. Course evaluation and final presentation</td>
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DETAILED CLASS SCHEDULE

◊ Bulleted items can be selected for oral presentations.

1. **Introduction – urban policy, regional policy, policy analysis May 23**

I assume that students are already familiar with policy analysis. The first night of class will include a review, but if this is the first time that you have formally encountered policy analysis, you should plan to study the readings carefully. I also assume that you have a basic understanding of U.S. political institutions and the policymaking process. At a minimum, you should skim the materials on the basics of state and local government arrangements.

Review of policy analysis: Patton and Sawicki

Basics of state and local government arrangements: Cities 101 (National League of Cities)

- About America – How the United States Is Governed (U.S. State Department)

England, chapters 1 (Managing American Cities in the Twenty-first Century) and 2 (Cities and the System of Intergovernmental Relations)

2. **Urban political structure and policymaking May 30**

England, chapters 3 (Urban Political Structure) and 4 (Urban Policymaking)


3. **Decision-making and analysis; fiscal issues June 6**

England, chapter 6 (Decision Making and Analysis)

◊ Stone (Deborah), Decisions


4. **Urban issues, regional issues June 13**
   Brookings, Metro America Report through page 35.

5. **Human Capital: Labor and Education June 20**
   Brookings, Metro America Report, chapters 6-7: Education Attainment; Work
   ◊ Bartik, The Case for Labor Demand Policies (chapter 1 of *Jobs for the Poor*)
   ◊ Downs, Anthony, "Policy Strategies for Large Cities," chapter 6 in *New Visions for Metropolitan America*
   ◊ OPTIONAL: Witte, Who Benefits from the Milwaukee Choice Program?

6. **Neighborhoods: Poverty and Race June 27**
   Brookings, Metro America Report, chapter 8: Income and Poverty
7. July 4 – no class

8. Transportation July 11
Brookings, Metro America Report, chapter 9: Commuting

Brookings, Metro America Report, chapters 1-4: Population and Immigration; Race and Ethnicity; Immigration; Age
Rosso, Andrea (2011) "The Urban Built Environment and Mobility in Older Adults: A Comprehensive Review" Journal of Aging Research

10. Course evaluations and final presentations July 25
ASSIGNMENTS IN DETAIL

1. **Individual contributions to all students' learning:**
   a) **Attendance:** just for showing up on time and staying for the entire class, you earn 4 points per class, up to a maximum of 36 points.

   b) **Group work** assignments will be provided in class and will not require work outside of class. Points are awarded on a sliding scale, according to your role in each activity, and how well you carry it out.
   - Report to the class on the group activity, 4 points (max per activity).
   - Lead the group discussion, make sure everyone chips in, take notes, 2 points (max per activity)
   - Play the devil's advocate, trying to come up with our arguments against your group's consensus; not every activity is well-suited for this role, 2 point (max per activity)

   c) **Class discussions** will center on readings, lectures, and presentations. You can earn 2 points per class by actively participating in general discussions and asking relevant questions, while not dominating the conversation (this is rarely a problem, but it happens). Maximum 18 points.

2. **Metropolitan-area fact sheet**

   Develop a two-page written profile on one metro area, using a template that we will develop in class.

   To ensure that every student is working on a different metro area, you will submit your top three choices to me and I will make assignments. You can submit your preferences by way of a "survey" in Blackboard. Go to the Topics and Readings folder, and then the module for the introductory class on May 23. Go to "Metro area selection." You will find a list of metropolitan areas at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_metropolitan_areas_of_the_United_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_metropolitan_areas_of_the_United_States). You may pick any metro area on the list in the top 100 by population – but even among these, you must make sure that the area has a newspaper or other critical and reasonably reputable news source.

   **Submissions:**
   - Selections are due by **Friday, May 24 at 6:00 pm**
   - Fact sheet is due by **Thursday, May 30 at 12:00 noon**

   Unexcused late submission will result in a 10-point deduction for >0 to 24 hours late, and an additional 10-point deduction for each subsequent day late.

3. **Critical summary of a reading and oral presentation**

   Written summary: Write a summary and critical review of one of the bulleted class readings listed in the syllabus. Optional readings are eligible for this assignment. Some papers include original quantitative analysis. You do not have to present it, but you should be ready to talk about what they did, what they found, and what it meant. Length 800 - 1000 words (3-4 pages, double-spaced).
Memos should be well-written and concise, and cited appropriately.

Oral presentation: Develop a one-page handout or a PowerPoint presentation. You are welcome to use Prezi as long as you give me something that I can use as a handout.

To ensure that every student is assigned to a different article, you will submit your top three choices to me and I will make assignments. You can submit your preferences by way of a "survey" in Blackboard. Go to the Topics and Readings folder, and then the module for the introductory class on May 23. Go to "Critical summary selection."

Requirements:

1. Read the article, then choose and describe three to four of the most important aspects (concepts, issues, factual information, etc.) of the reading. Justify your choices.

2. Identify one or two aspects of the reading that you didn’t understand, didn’t find convincing, or left you feeling skeptical. Explain where and how you and the author(s) parted ways.

3. Discuss how one or more ideas in this article relate to something else we discussed earlier in the term, or something you encountered in another class. Explain how the ideas reinforce (or contradict) each other.

Submissions:

Selections are due by **Friday, May 24 at 6:00 pm**

Written summary is due by **6:00 on the Tuesday before** the class in which the reading is scheduled to be discussed.

Oral presentation is due by **noon on the day of class** when the article is scheduled for discussion. I will make and distribute hard copies for students.

Unexcused late submission will result in a 20-point deduction for >0 to 24 hours late, and an additional 20-point deduction for each subsequent day late.

4. **Mini Policy Analysis Project**

Write a policy analysis for the executive’s newly hired chief of staff, where the “executive” is the chief elected official of one of the jurisdictions in your metropolitan area. The setup is fictitious, but your analysis is real. You will address an actual problem faced by your jurisdiction in a topic area assigned early in the term (based on your request). This assignment will entail some in-class group work with other students working on the same topic.

The project has multiple steps.

1. **Online:** Submit your top three choices for a policy issue that is relevant to your metro area. Now is the time to make sure that the policy issue actually is relevant to your metro area. You will be allowed to use news sources, but you will also be required to review program documents and reports, as well as speak to an elected or appointed official who is familiar with this issue. Submit your preferences by way of a “survey” posted on Blackboard by **Friday, May 31 at 6:00 pm.** I will make assignments within a day or two, and six groups of four or five students will be formed based on these assignments.
2. In-class: Come to class on Thursday, June 6 prepared to discuss the policy problem in your metro area. You should be prepared to discuss two or three variations. Groups will convene during class time to discuss definitions of the problem. The objectives are to agree to a set of choices that fall under a single problem definition, and to develop that definition. Once you have settled on a problem definition, brainstorm ways in which you might quantify the problem. At the end of the group meeting time, I will ask each group to report out.

3. Written assignment: Define the policy problem and how that problem plays out in your metro area. You should use the problem definition developed with your group, but you may not submit anyone else’s work. You may share notes, but you must do your own writing. Submit through Blackboard by Friday, June 14 at 6:00 pm. Length 400 - 500 words.
   a. What is the problem?
   b. What is the extent of the problem? Who is affected by the problem, and in what way?
   c. What is the cause or source of the problem?
   d. Why is it a problem now? What happened to put it on the agenda?

4. In-class: Come to class on Thursday, June 20 ready to discuss policy goals and options that could address your problem. Groups will convene during class time to discuss your policy goals and options. The objective is to help you prepare for the next (individual) writing assignment. At the end of the group meeting time, I will ask each group to report out. Organize your report by themes and common ground, rather than presenting each student’s approach individually.
   a. Policy goals: Using your problem definition as a starting point, brainstorm potential policy goals.
   b. Policy options: You might be able to find options already being discussed in the media, or you might have to look at other metro areas. Come prepared to discuss two or three policy options.
   c. If you have time, you could talk about how the policy goals map to the policy options.

5. Written assignment: Present two policy options, separately. Submit through Blackboard by Wednesday, June 26 at 6:00 pm. Length 400 - 500 words.
   a. What is the policy option?
   b. What are the strengths of the option in terms of the goals (or outcomes or values) being advanced?
   c. What are the weaknesses of the option in terms of the goals (or outcomes or values) not being advanced, or even being hindered?

6. In-class: Come to class on Thursday, June 27 ready to make the case for one of your policy options using three different approaches (introduced in class on June 6). Critique other group members’ arguments, and suggest ways to improve them. Groups will convene during class time for this discussion. The objective is to help you prepare for the next (individual) writing assignment. At the end of the group meeting time, I will ask each group to report out. Organize your report by themes and common ground, rather than presenting each student’s approach individually.

7. Written assignment: Make the case for your preferred policy option using three different approaches. Clearly distinguish each approach. Then tell me which approach you would be most
inclined to use and why. If your answer depends on the context, then describing a setting in which you would feel best able to present an argument. Submit through Blackboard by Friday, July 5 at 6:00 pm. Length 400 - 500 words.

8. In-class: On Thursday, July 11, groups will convene during class time to prepare for your final presentation. Each student will present his or her own analysis, as well as synthesize across all four analyses. Groups will not report out. Consider questions such as:
   - Why would a preferred policy in one metro area work or not work in one of the other metro areas?
   - Are there common threads across the four analyses in terms of strengths and weaknesses?
   - What are the potential positive and negative spillover effects from taking action on the policy problem? That is, what other policy problems do you potentially ease or worsen?

9. In-class: On Thursday, July 18, groups will convene during class time to prepare for your final presentation.

10. In-class: On Thursday, July 25, all students will present their analyses with their groups. Each group of four students gets 15 minutes. You may divide the content among you in any way that you wish, as long as speaking roles are roughly even.

Unexcused late submission of any of the written assignments will result in a 20-point deduction for >0 to 24 hours late, and an additional 20-point deduction for each subsequent day late.
UNIVERSITY AND CLASS POLICIES

The Syllabus: This syllabus is your guide to the course. If any questions arise, please check the syllabus before contacting me. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and I may revise content during the semester.

Late or Missed Class: Attendance is required. Any unexcused absence will result in a deduction from your grade. If you are late or absent from class, it is your responsibility to obtain all announcements, assignments, and handouts from Blackboard or from your classmates.

Submission of Written Work Products: It is your responsibility to make sure that you are able to access Blackboard to make your submissions on time. All work must be submitted by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit. Only extreme circumstances warrant exceptions. Unexcused late submissions will be marked down for each day that they are late.

Academic Honesty: All examinations and other graded work products are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. It states, in part: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html. You may also wish to consult the Office of Student Judicial Services web page (http://gwired.gwu.edu/osjs/Policies/) for more information about standards for conduct as well as your rights as a student.

Incompletes: You must consult with me to obtain an incomplete no later than the last day of classes in the semester. At that time, you will fill out the CCAS contract for incompletes for both of us to sign, and you will submit a copy to the School Director. Please visit http://www.gwu.edu/~ccas/faculty/files/Incomplete_poli0.pdf for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes, and consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook.

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

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: If you need extra time on exams or assignments due to a disability, let me know in the first week of class. Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should also contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

University Counseling Center: The University Counseling Center (UCC), 202-994-5300, offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations; confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices.

Security: In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

University Policy on Religious Holidays:

1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;

2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations;

3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

For other university policies on teaching, see http://www.gwu.edu/~academic/Teaching/main.htm.