Policy Analysis
PUAD 645 001  Spring 2020

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Course Information

Meets: Wednesdays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm, Van Metre Hall 477
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 6:00 – 7:00 pm, Founders Hall 652, or by appointment
Contact: Email bstabile@gmu.edu

Course Description

This course in public policy analysis and decision-making provides a forum for the study of systematic methods of policy design, development, and assessment, and their theoretical context. In particular, we will follow a process for policy analysis to enable you to: identify data sources and evaluate their utility, establish criteria to analyze a policy, assess alternative policies, select among policy alternatives and begin to think about monitoring policy implementation and evaluation. (An in depth exploration of the theory and methods for program evaluation is offered in POGO 646).

Policy analysis is used in a variety of ways, both inside and outside the public and nonprofit sectors, and the tools of policy analysis play an essential role in decision making at all levels of government.

After taking this course, you will be able to:

- Conduct basic policy analysis for real-world problems;
- Prepare well-organized, clear, and understandable policy documents;
- Plan and present policy arguments and briefings;
- Understand the political context of policy analysis;
- Read and understand policy research.

There are three prerequisites for this course (PUAD 502, 511, 540). You must already be well acquainted with the basic concepts and terminology of public policy and public administration.

Course Requirements/Evaluation*

Class participation and presentations 20%
Take Home Test I 20%
Policy Analysis Project 35%
Take Home Test II 25%

*Explanations of these assignments are included in appendices at the end of this syllabus.

A grade of A or A- indicates sustained excellence and outstanding performance on all aspects of the course. The grades of B and B+ denote mastery of the material and very good performance on all aspects of the course. The grade of B- is given for marginal quality work that is not quite up to graduate level standards. The grade of C denotes work that may be adequate for undergraduate performance, but is not acceptable at the graduate level. The grade of F denotes the failure to perform adequately on course assignments.

Assignments must be submitted on time to receive full credit.

Finally, all students are required to use their GMU email accounts or have GMU emails forwarded to their regular email accounts, as this will be the primary means of correspondence with students regarding the class.

Citation Rule of Thumb: See Appendix C for Full Honor Code and Plagiarism Info

You are responsible for knowing how to properly cite referenced material. To be on the safe side, if you use more than three consecutive words of another author or speaker, put them in quotation marks and cite them. If you are citing five lines or more from another’s work, those lines should be single-spaced and indented.

Plagiarism is using another’s words or ideas and representing them as your own. In this age of clicking, cutting and pasting, it is easier than ever to plagiarize (and to detect plagiarism), but it is as important as ever to respect the rights of owners and originators in the marketplace of ideas. The use of quotation marks and meticulous, proper citation will help you to avoid going astray.

Every written assignment you submit should have a bibliography, and should make use of either footnotes, endnotes or in text citations.

Required Readings

Required course readings consist of one main text, available in the George Mason University bookstore, and supplementary readings available via E-Reserves on Blackboard or via the link provided.

Recommended Reading


Weekly Readings and Assignments

Session 1 (January 22): Value Conflicts and Political Systems

Clemons and McBeth. “Public Policy, Power, the People, Pluralism, and You,” Chapter 1 in *Public Policy Praxis*.


Sessions 2 (January 29): Policy and Rationality


Session 3 (February 5): Rationality and its Detractors

Clemons and McBeth. “Public Policy, Power, the People, Pluralism, and You,” Chapter 3 in *Public Policy Praxis*.


Session 4 (February 12): The NonRational (Political Approach)

*Topic Proposals Due.*


**Session 5 (February 19): Doing Policy Analysis**


**Session 6 (February 26): Doing Policy Analysis, Part II**

*Background/Problem Statements Due: Be prepared to outline the problem briefly for your classmates*


*Midterm distributed.*

**Session 7 (March 4): Social Equity in Policy and Administration**

*Midterm due.*

“Minnowbrook 50 Social Equity Manifesto” to be distributed by instructor

**March 11: No Class Meeting this Week – GMU Spring Break**

**Session 8 (March 18): Social Construction: Benefits and Burdens Ascribed to Stakeholders**

*Identification of Policy Alternatives Complete*


Recommended Reading:

Session 9 (March 25): Activism and Movements Influencing Policy

**Identification of Criteria Complete**


Session 10 (April 1): Intersectionality and Policy Analysis

**Group Identification of Stakeholders Complete**


Session 11 (April 8): Markets and Technology: Limits in Policy


Session 12 (April 15): Postpositivist Policy Analysis and Case Study In-Class Exercise


**Draft should be ready for final edits**

Session 13 (April 22): Begin Policy Project Presentations
Final Distributed

Policy Analysis Project Due

Session 14 (April 29): Policy Project Presentations

Final due.

Appendix A: Participation

Students must be well acquainted with the readings for each session and be prepared to discuss them in detail. All students are expected to actively participate in and contribute to the course dialogue. Students are required to use name cards (provided during first session) throughout the semester to facilitate discussion. To be prepared for each session’s discussion:

1. Write a brief statement encapsulating, in a sentence or two, the overarching theme of the evenings readings, and be prepared to share it.

2. Identify a quote of significance from the reading that really strikes you and that you think warrants further examination and discussion.

3. A few times during the semester, bring an article from the popular press to our attention on an issue that illustrates course themes, or might be usefully examined with course frameworks or methodologies.

3. Consider using Twitter to share articles and insights on topics of interest to our inquiry. I’m @bstabile1.

The class participation grade takes into account a student’s presence in class and contributions to the course dialogue. Conscientious participation entails:
- earnest discussion and demonstrated knowledge of assigned readings
- application of course concepts to relevant current events or the work circumstances and experience of individual students
- courteous, professional, and respectful dialogue with course colleagues
- **use of name card during each class**, for the benefit of the instructor and fellow students alike

**Meaningful and well-mannered** participation in class discussions is particularly important for the purposes of this class. As active participation, whether listening or conversing is required, **electronic devices ought not be used during class time.**
If you must miss more than one, or perhaps two, classes, you can mitigate (but not eliminate) the negative impact on your grade by submitting a written synopsis of 750 words about the missed night’s readings.

All written work is expected to be of the highest quality, representing both grammatically correct and carefully considered analysis. Elements of central importance to sound analysis include adequate depth, breadth, relevance and clarity of the concepts considered.

Appendix B: Policy Analysis Group Project and Presentation

Each student will create a policy analysis following Clemons and MacBeth's and Weimer and Vining’s guidelines, reviewed in sessions 5 and 6. The finished product – a paper of about 20 pages in length, with appendices – is due at the beginning of the class Session 13 and must include the following elements:

1. An executive summary of the report (not to exceed one page)
2. A succinct discussion of the problem (including relevant history and context, component parts, reason for the problem, some relevant academic literature and related matters)
3. Identification of the client for whom the project is undertaken
4. Identification of the stakeholders
5. Presentation of any data that you may have collected (primary or secondary) that you want to bring to bear on solving the problem
6. A Policy Matrix identifying and rating the Alternatives and Goals that form the basis of your analysis, and accompanying narrative discussion.
7. Identification and Assessment of possible solutions and possible opposition
8. Conclusion and recommendation (Provide reasons based on the evaluation of the criteria.)
9. Assigned reading: Incorporate relevant class readings and lectures into your policy analysis and indicate how they apply.

You should have at least three sections at the end of your policy analysis. For the first, provide a one-page assessment of your client’s background, interests, financial support, political leanings, and purpose of commissioning your analysis. Then indicate how these factors influenced your policy advice. In the second, list the stakeholders affected by your policy analysis. Indicate conceptually what a stakeholder is and how your group identified stakeholders in your policy. Remember that the general public is almost always a stakeholder. In the third appendix, include footnotes and a complete bibliography at the conclusion of your analysis.

*Written work should be submitted to the instructor* as an email attachment in Word format to bstabile@gmu.edu, and labeled with your last name, the course number and the assignment title as follows: “Smith 645 Midterm,” or “Smith 645 Policy Analysis.” Submissions should be double-spaced, in 12 pt font, and on numbered pages.
with standard margins. They are due by the start of class on their due dates. No hard copy is required for any assignment. Page length does not include the required list of references (bibliography,) endnotes or appendices (if any).

**Appendix C: Plagiarism Policy and Honor Code Information**

**University Honor Code**

No cheating, plagiarizing, or other unprofessional conduct will be tolerated. (Please see Schar School statement below.) These are defined in the University Catalog as follows:

A. **Cheating** encompasses the following:

1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students.

2. The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including but not limited to the following: fraud; duress; deception; theft; trick; talking; signs; gestures; copying from another student; and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information.

4. Attempted cheating

B. **Plagiarism** encompasses the following:

1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

C. **Lying** encompasses the following:

The willful and knowledgeable telling of an untruth, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deceit, or fraud in an oral or written statement relating to academic work. This includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Lying to administration and faculty members.

2. Falsifying any university document by mutilation, addition, or deletion...

**Schar School Policy on Plagiarism: One Instance of Cheating and You Are Expelled**

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the
School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the Schar School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to any commercial services to which the School might subscribe. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html)

The Schar School Statement on Plagiarism, the University Honor Code, and some valuable Resources on Graduate Research and Writing are available at http://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/masters-advising/masters-101/topic-5-graduate-research-and-writing/

**Academic Accommodation for a Disability**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

**Resources:**
GMU Writing Center http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/
GMU Libraries http://library.gmu.edu/
GMU Counseling and Psychological Services http://caps.gmu.edu/