

Theory and Practice in Public Policy
School of Public Policy
PUBP700.005
Fall, 2008
Wednesdays, 7:20-10:00 p.m.

Instructor: Jeremy D. Mayer, jmayer4@gmu.edu, 703-993-8223

Office Hours: 4:00-6:00 p.m. Wednesdays Room #247. If you cannot make this time because of work or other obligations, we can certainly schedule an appointment. My email is the best way to reach me.

Course Objectives

Theory and Practice in Public Policy, the gateway course for the Master's Program in Public Policy, introduces you to tools and concepts that will help you navigate in the world of public policy in two ways. First, we explore several types of theories and assess their strengths, weaknesses and applicability to public policy in order to understand different varieties of theory, their uses and application. Second, you will be introduced to several perspectives on the practice of policy analysis and be given an opportunity to engage in an analytical policy project that allows you to practice working in a team. Strong ethical and international components are built into the course.

The objective of this course is to help you become a more sophisticated policy professional with an ability to operate effectively and ethically in a political environment. While many of the applications will be U.S.-based, the theories apply more broadly to policymaking elsewhere. You will be presented with a variety of ways of looking at political phenomena, conceiving of relationships, and understanding outcomes. The course seeks to heighten your sensitivity to economic and political context and your appreciation of theoretical rigor, disinterested analysis, and empirical evidence for assertions.

You will hone your skills in recognizing values, seeing multiple sides of issues, casting alternative frames to problems, understanding underlying interests, identifying stakeholders, and devising strategies for action. Finally, the course aims to enhance your proficiency in identifying and using appropriate, authoritative source material and in writing and speaking articulately, succinctly, logically, and convincingly. Upon completion of this course, you should be well underway toward becoming a policy analyst and well prepared for the remainder of the MPP program.

Specific Skills

You will be taught and will practice the following skills in this class:

1. How to find, assess and use sources appropriately and with greatest effect.
2. How to develop criteria against which to assess policy options.
3. How to apply basic policy tools to policy problems.
4. How to work in a team effectively, to use the talents of all team members, and to generate maximum participation from each team member.
5. How to identify, avoid, and otherwise handle conflicts-of-interest in your professional life.

6. How to apply ethical precepts, beyond those of conflicts-of-interest, to public policy and to your professional life.
7. How to speak before a group forcefully and convincingly.
8. How to use theory in practice.
9. How to write and present a professional policy analysis.
10. How to create a strategy to achieve adoption and implementation of a recommended course of action.

Assessment

You will be asked to work individually and in teams in order to demonstrate your facility with the theories and their appropriate use, as well as to hone your research, public presentation and writing skills. Papers and examinations are treated as pedagogical exercises to augment your learning in the course. Grades will be apportioned in the following manner:

* One 4-5 page Analytical Paper	20% of grade
* Midterm exam	20%
* Class participation, attendance and (possibly) pop quizzes	10%
* Group policy analysis project	25%
* Final exam (covers entire semester)	25%

If you are working a schedule that requires you to miss more than 3 classes, you should consider taking this course in a different semester. Class participation is an important part of your grade; participation does not mean talking a lot. It means preparing carefully by completing the assigned reading before each day's class. Good participation can mean one deft comment that moves the discussion forward.

Arlington Campus Library Public Policy Liaison

The GMU Arlington Campus Library is teaming up with SPP to provide special instruction to students in PUBP700. The Public Policy Liaison of the Arlington Campus Library has helped us develop a curriculum to teach students about the enormous range of materials available to our students. You will learn how to access, cite and appropriately use library sources and will be given practice exercises to ensure that you can find exactly what you need when you need it.

University Honor Code

No cheating, plagiarizing, or other unprofessional conduct will be tolerated. (Please see SPP 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
3. 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...

SPP 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 School of Public Policy 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 SPP 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 commercial services to which the School subscribes. 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 SPP 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>)

Academic Accommodation for a Disability

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please email and then make an appointment to see Dr. Mayer, and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Required Texts and Readings

Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (Chatham House Publishers, 2000).

CapWIN [Capital Wireless Integrated Network] *Cap WIN Governance Options*. (Can be found on course website)

A. Lee Fritschler and Catherine E. Rudder. *Smoking and Politics: Bureaucracy Centered Policymaking*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007).

NOTE: It is very important that you purchase the 6th edition as it is substantially different than the previous editions.

Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Manual of Style*, (4th) ed. or later (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000 or later).

Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Harvard University Press, 1970).

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1998).

Charles E. Lindblom, *The Market System: What It Is, How It Works, and What to Make of It* (Yale University Press, 2001).

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action (Any edition)*

Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, Revised Edition (W. W. Norton, 2002).

The Washington Post (daily: all U.S. and international news)

Class Schedule, Topics, and Assignments

The Fundamentals of Policy Analysis

Class 1. August 27

Lecture Topics

- Introduction: Distribution of the syllabus and class assignments:
- Conceptual Overview of the Course
- Bardach: The Practice of Policy Analysis (Part 1)
- Possible policy analysis project topics

Class 2. September 3

Assignments Due Today

- 1. Read *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis* , including appendices (Bardach) and the Capwin study, distributed via email.**
- 2. Read the front section of Hacker.**
- 3. Review the websites at the end of this syllabus or on our WebCT site.**
- 4. Be ready to answer the class questions below.**
- 5. Go to the GMU Library website and become familiar with the library resources. They are extensive.**

Lecture Topics: The Practice of Public Policy

Bardach's main arguments

Successful Research in Policy Analysis: The Complete Professional

What does it mean to be a professional?

What a policy professional does

Successful Teamwork

Class questions for study and discussion:

1. Why does Bardach suggest that the analyst must revisit the early steps of the analysis, especially the definition of the problem, many times?
2. Which step does Bardach say is the most difficult? Why?
3. What alternative must you *always* consider?
4. What does Bardach say about the evaluative criteria? What are some of the evaluative criteria that you personally might choose to focus on?
5. What do you consider to be the most important advice that Bardach gives?
6. Can you think of any real life policy situations in which it might not be feasible to go through all eight steps? If so, give an example. If not, why not?

7. In Capwin, examine how the different political arenas affected the outcome.
8. Based on Capwin, consider how federalism in America shapes public policy.

Note: You will be provided with an article in class to use for next week's assignment. If you are not able to attend class this week, you are responsible for obtaining a copy of this article from one of your colleagues.

Class 3. September 10
READINGS: ONLINE

Lecture Topics:

Normative Theory as a Guide to Ethical Behavior

Acting Ethically

Ethical Conduct: A Guide to a Professional Life Worth Living

Class 4. September 17

Assignments Due Today

1. Read *Activists Beyond Borders*.
2. Teams turn in the name of their proposed client and the definition of their problem for their policy analysis project.
3. Be prepared to answer the class questions below.

Lecture Topics: Groups in Concert: International Policy Networks

Keck and Sikkink: Causal Relations and Causal Dynamics

Class questions for study and discussion:

1. What is Keck and Sikkink's theory?
2. What is new about Keck and Sikkink's transnational advocacy networks? Haven't such formations been in existence since the 19th century?
3. In what ways do Keck and Sikkink use social movement theory?
4. Of what are TANs composed? How are TANs organized? Where is power located within TANs? How do you know?
5. What is the boomerang technique? Is it exclusively applicable to international activities?
6. What does it mean to frame an issue? What is the importance of this concept?

7. Why does the development of advocacy networks and global public policy networks bring state sovereignty into question? Is this a significant matter?
8. What advice would you give someone who wants to change a public policy but who has no particular political connections and is not wealthy?
9. What is the distinction between normative and empirical theory? Why make this distinction?
10. What techniques in Keck and Sikkink are used to influence public policy?
11. Are these techniques applicable in domestic politics? Explain.

Check out these human rights websites

Human Rights Online: <http://oz.uc.edu/thro/Educ-Guide.html>

Interview: <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Stover/stover-con99-0.html>

Example Projects from Ford Foundation:

http://www.fordfound.org/publications/recent_articles/close_to_home.cfm

Class 5. September 24

Assignments Due Today

Lecture Topics: Theory and Model & Making an Effective Argument

Class Questions for Discussion:

- What is a premise? What is an assumption?
- What is an inductive argument and how does it differ from a deductive argument? Give examples of each.
- Find an article in today's paper and identify the premise and the assumptions.
- To what degree is a policy analysis descriptive and to what degree is it prescriptive?
- What is the role of evidence in a policy analysis? What is the role of values in a policy analysis? How are the two reconciled?
- Where do policy options come from?
- How does the analyst decide which policy options are viable?
- How does the analyst go about developing criteria against which to assess policy options?
- Why does Bardach emphasize that applying the criteria to the options is a matter of focusing on outcomes, not intentions? Why is this difficult?
- Why are unintended consequences a problem for policy analysts and policy makers? Why do they occur? What can be done to minimize them?
- You want to cite a web site that you have used. What is the appropriate format?
- You have been asked to use a consistent citation style in your papers. How do you find and use an appropriate citation scheme?

- In your opinion, what are the five best electronic sources for public policy research? Provide their web addresses. Indicate the criteria you used to make this selection and the way you applied the criteria to each of your choices.

Class 6. October 1

4-5 page Analytical Paper topic will be distributed in class – DUE NEXT WEEK

Assignments Due Today

1. **Read all of *The Market System*. Please read this book carefully and completely. Like Blackburn, Lindblom makes very complex ideas understandable to the layperson. This is an extraordinary skill and one that good analysts need to develop. Try to see how Blackburn and Lindblom accomplish this feat.**

Lecture Topic: Economics: Understanding the Market Context

Class questions for study and discussion :

1. “[I]n our time the market system has become a global coordinator of cooperative performances of at least 2 billion people.” Explain.
2. How does Lindblom’s view of entrepreneurs relate to corporate scandals of 2002? In your answer, define “entrepreneur.”
3. Between 1997 and 2001, U.S. companies spent \$90 billion to lay 39 million miles of fiber optic cable - enough to circle the earth 1,566 times. Only 2.6% of that is currently in use. How might a capitalist explain this result in light of the putative efficiency of the market?
4. At base, how do markets work, according to Lindblom? Why does Lindblom consider the market system to be such a marvelous achievement?
5. What are some alternatives to markets?
6. Is a market system necessary for democracy?
7. Does a market system inflict harm on democracy? So what?
8. What does Lindblom mean when he repeatedly says that the market system pertains to society, not merely the economy?
9. What is a spillover and what is its importance for markets and governments?
10. What is the role of efficiency in markets and governments?
11. You want to encourage saving (using mechanisms like IRA’s, for example). What factors would you want to take into account in devising a sharp, efficient policy proposal?
12. What is the difference between a concept and its operationalization or measurement? Why is this distinction important?
13. What is systematically collected, empirical evidence? What is its importance in public policy analysis?

14. Lindblom argues that markets could theoretically exist in a non-democratic political system. Place this comment in the context of Lindblom's text.
15. You have been asked to determine the degree to which the former Communist countries in the Eastern Bloc are governed democratically. How would you go about performing this task? Be sure to reference Lindblom's discussion of the relationship between democracy and markets, as one but only one element of your response.

Class 7. October 8

Assignments Due Today

1. 4-5 page Analytical Paper is due.
2. Read *The Logic of Collective Action*, pp. 1-97.

Lecture Topics: Individuals in Concert:

The Logic of Collective Action

A classic

An example of empirical, deductive theory

The Role of Scientific Theory in Policy Analysis

Class Questions for study and discussion:

1. You are a consumer -- and until business spending picks up, the economy is depending on you. Are you up to the job? Explain.
2. What is rational actor theory?
3. What is the theory of collective action?
4. What is a free rider? What is the significance of this concept to the policy analyst?
5. What difference does the size of a group make in predicting the likelihood of collective action?
6. What is a latent group? Why is this concept important to Olson?
7. What is the importance of a closed shop to a labor union?
8. What is the difference between a latent group and an organized group?
9. What are the limits of rational actor theory?
10. Public or rational choice theory applied to economic activity seems to produce far more felicitous results than when applied to the social or political realm. Explain.
12. In what ways do Olson's and Keck and Sikkink's theories differ? Compare their usefulness.

Class 8. October 15

Assignments Due Today

1. Project Team leaders should turn in a tentative bibliography indicating sources that will be used for the policy analysis, a more fully developed description of the problem your team will be addressing in its policy analysis, and the names of your team members.
2. Take-home mid-term distributed at the end of class. DUE NEXT WEEK
3. Read *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, pp. 1-61, 76-105, and 120-126.

Lecture Topics: Structuring Choice

Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Hirschman's Main Ideas
 The Loyalties of the Policy Analyst: The problem of bias

Class questions for study and discussion:

1. What does a reading of Hirschman suggest to you about the efficacy of privatization? Is he correct? Explain. Be sure to define "privatization."
2. How does loyalty influence the use of exit or voice? Provide examples.
3. Under what circumstances is voice most effective?
4. Under what circumstances should a policy professional quit a job?
5. Would Hirschman endorse the practice of whistle blowing?
6. Is it possible to retain personal integrity while working in institutions driven by political, economic and other values that may conflict with professional standards? Explain.
7. What's the value of a Consumer Product Safety Commission?
8. Why have a Securities and Exchange Commission?
9. Should democracies have freedom of information acts?
10. Why might agencies tend to err on the side of secrecy when classifying information?
11. Why do people who believe in limited government worry about the use of Orwellian language? (What is Orwellian language?)
12. What difference does accurate auditing of public corporations make?

Class 9. October 22**Assignments Due Today**

MID-TERM EXAM DUE.

Lecture Topics:

Implications of Federalist # 10 and Constitution

Preview of Smoking and Politics

- How does the policymaking role of bureaucrats square with Article I, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution granting the legislative power to Congress?
- Discuss the concept of policy agenda in light of the cigarette labeling controversy.
- What are some of the reasons that are given for the growing importance of agencies and bureaucracies?
- Public policy-making by private entities

Class 10. October 29

Assignments due today

1. Read Policy Paradox.
2. Read Numbers as Political Tools: Facts Do Not Speak for Themselves in WebCT.

Lecture Topic: The Political Project

Class questions for study and discussion

1. “It is important to represent both sides of the issue.” What is defective about this characterization?
2. In what ways does the theory of collective action fail as a theory of political mobilization?
3. Which is prior: policy issues or political contests? Explain.
4. How does language affect policy problems?
5. What might be an example of a conflict of interest that a policy analyst might confront? What are some other examples of conflict?
6. What is just, according to Stone?
7. What is the difference between justice as a concept and its operationalization or measurement?
8. What does it mean to say that conceptual boundaries are contested? Provide an example from Stone.
9. What does Stone mean when she says, “The definition of security, like other policy goals, is an exercise in political claims-making”?
10. What does it mean to say that problem definition is “the strategic representation of situations”?
11. Explain the idea that no fact speaks for itself. What are the hidden stories in numbers?
12. What are the implications behind the following assertion: “Problems, then, are not given, out there in the world waiting for smart analysts to come along and define them correctly”?
13. What is the relationship between counting and political mobilization?

14. "People, unlike rocks, respond to being measured." So what?
15. What are the differences between the rationality project and the political project?
16. Why does Stone contrast these two projects?
17. What is the role of values in policy making, according to Stone?
18. Using Stone and Schattschneider, devise a strategy to reinvigorate the Democratic party. Identify the obstacles to implementing this strategy and how you would circumvent them. (You will want to think about this question again next week after you have read the remainder of Stone.)

Class 11. November 5

1. Read *Smoking and Politics*.

Lecture Topic: Who Makes Policy and How?

Class 12. November 12

Case Studies: Exercises and Discussions

Please Read Cases online and come to class prepared

Class 13. November 19

All Group Project Written Material Due Today

Group Presentations: Week I

Thanksgiving Break

Class 15. December 3

Group Presentations: Week II

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED AT END OF CLASS

December 10

NO CLASS SESSION -- FINAL EXAM DUE