

# PS185 Introduction to Policy Analysis

Seminar Leader: Dr. Agatha Siwale  
Course Times: Wed & Fri 15:45-17:15  
Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits  
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Office Hours: Thursday, 12:30pm – 2:30pm  
Office Location: P98a

## Course Description

Public policies shape almost every dimension of our lives, from the seemingly basic questions around garbage disposal, to the highly complex and weightier issues around education and healthcare provision, the economy, environment and foreign policy. This course offers you the opportunity to engage with the fascinating processes and actors that shape policy outcomes and adopts a primarily political approach to policy analysis. The first half of the course will introduce you to the key elements of public policy making from how policy problems are defined, how alternative solutions to problems are identified and assessed and eventual selections are made between competing policy alternatives. You will be exposed to various sources of evidence upon which the assessment of alternatives is carried out and how different players use ‘research’ to support their positions. The second part of the course focuses on selected substantive policy areas including welfare and social security policy, education policy and cultural policy. Through writing of policy memos, doing presentations and undertaking reviews of research done by others, students will have first-hand exposure to both the basic steps of policy analysis and an opportunity to critique research outputs of others.

The structure of class sessions is highly interactive, allowing you to work in small teams as you engage with real life policy problems through simulating the role of policy actors based on case studies of homelessness, migration and border policies, informal mining, conflict etc. This will involve both role-play, debate sessions and engagement with online databases and websites of policy makers. Cases are drawn from both developed and developing country contexts.

## Course Goals:

1. To introduce students to key processes, actors and underlying theories of public policy making.
2. To explore selected substantive policy areas such as welfare, education and cultural policy.
3. To equip students with skills for undertaking and presenting findings from policy analyses.
4. To enable students to evaluate the research produced by others and to interrogate how and why various kinds of evidence are used by different players in policy processes.

## Learning Outcomes for Students:

As a result of this course, you will:

1. Acquire vital knowledge and understanding of the key elements of policy making and actors involved.

2. Understand various theories of public policy and evaluate their utility in making sense of policy problems.
3. Analyse real policy problems and produce an evidence-based policy memo for presentation to policy-makers.
4. Evaluate the research outputs of others through production of journal article review paper.
5. Develop your communication (both written and verbal) and analytical skills, for effective articulation of policy positions and recommendations.

## Requirements

1. Contributions to discussion and peer feedback: 10%
2. Critical Review: 30%
3. Final Policy Paper: 40%
4. Presentation: 20%

### *1. Contributions to discussion and peer feedback/ Participation (10%)*

You are all expected to do the assigned readings *before* each class and to actively participate in discussions. The highest grades for participation will be awarded to those who make valuable contributions to discussions and demonstrate an effective engagement with and application of readings (up to A-/A). Good faith attempts at participation will attract an average grade (up to B-/B/B+) while attendance without participation will attract a C-/C. The goal, however, is not to aim at saying something (or anything) each time we meet but to develop the art of analyzing ideas expressed by others and contributing to them as well as expressing your own stand-point.

It is expected (and encouraged) that debates and opposing view-points shall arise during the class discussions. However, we are all expected to be courteous and respectful of each other's views. Personal attacks during the class will, therefore, not be tolerated. Participation will also include occasional short quizzes based on readings and previous sessions.

### *2. Critical Review (30%)*

You will write a short paper of **1000 - 1200 words** that offers a critical review of the methods, evidence and arguments raised in a peer reviewed journal article. You are encouraged to use the style adopted for published reviews of academic journals. Further details on the format of the review and aspects to focus on will be given during the introductory classes.

**Due Date: Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2019**

Questions to consider when reviewing the papers:

1. What is the main argument of the author(s)?
2. What evidence is given in support of the arguments?
3. Is the evidence convincing? Where does the evidence seem sufficient/plausible/strong and why?
4. Where is the evidence unconvincing? Why?
5. How could the arguments have been made more convincing?
6. What is the significance/relevance of arguments made?

You have the option of choosing between the following articles:

1. Stone, Deborah A. (1989). Casual stories and the formation of policy agendas. *Political Science Quarterly*, 104, 2 (Summer): 281-300.
2. Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87(02), 334-347. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2939044>
3. Helmke, G., & Levitsky, S. (2004). Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2(4), 725-740. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3688540>

### 3. Final Policy Analysis Memo (40%)

The goal of this assignment is to allow you to deeply engage with a policy problem/issue of your choice and analyse possible solutions to it, based on research. For the assignment, imagine you are a policy analyst in an organization of your choice. A policy-maker requests your assistance in coming up with a policy position on a specific issue and in identifying various policy alternatives that could be used to address the problem/issue. The issue should be narrowed to a specific area such as recruitment of high school students into terrorist groups, violation of environmental rules by businesses, etc. rather than broad areas such as education policy. Alternatively, the memo could focus on reform of specific legislation or policy that has attracted public uproar or has failed. Justify your selection of your preferred course of action through a critique of the strengths and limitations of the alternatives. Your paper will consist of five main sections:

i) **Executive Summary** – This begins with a *B.L.U.F. statement* – the *Bottom Line Up Front* – which gets straight to the point of what you think the appropriate response to an identified problem should be. Key questions the summary addresses include:

- **Who** is your target audience? – use memo Headings (To: , From: , Date: , Subject: ) and a direct reference to the person or organization you are writing to indicate this but it also shapes the style and intonation of the memo.
- **What** is the problem? who is affected? Why should we care (urgency)?
- **Why** should policy action or a change be initiated?
- **What** are the policy alternatives – briefly highlight key ones and their costs and benefits
- **What** is your recommended action and why?

This is a summary and so should only highlight these key aspects and then expand on them in the memo.

#### The Actual Memo

ii) **Introduction: Identification of an issue:** What is the specific issue or problem that you seek to resolve? What are the consequences or implications of the problem that make it important or urgent to resolve at this time? At this point you could briefly provide a road-map to how you will analyse the issue in the memo.

#### Main Body:

iii) **Policy Alternatives:** What previous attempts have been made at solving the problem? What are the current alternatives for resolving the problem? What are the pros and cons of the available policy alternatives?

iii) **Recommendation:** What is the best possible solution? On what basis is it selected as the preferred option? What policy goals will it meet and what negative elements will be minimized?

iv) **Conclusion:** Here you sum up the key arguments of your memo – the problem, the alternatives, the recommended solution and re-emphasise the urgency of addressing the problem. Remember, a memo is a correspondence to a particular audience and so you should have their decision-making needs in mind as you write. Extensive historical and background details should therefore be avoided except where essential.

#### *Submission Deadlines for the Memo:*

1. **Consultation for topic proposal and paper outline:** To help you think about the final memo from early on, you each come for a consultation session to discuss your proposed topic and outline for how you will address your specific issue (bullet points of key areas and potential sources of data).

**A sign-up sheet will be circulated for consultation sessions which will take place during week 8 (March 18th – 22<sup>nd</sup>).**

2. **Final Policy Memo Submission:** The policy analysis memo should be between **4000 and 4500** words in length. **Due date: 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.**

#### **4. Presentation (15%)**

You will each have the opportunity to present the findings from your policy analysis to the class (15 minutes presentation). Fellow students will then provide feedback, ask questions and give comments based on your presentation (10minutes discussion time). You will have the opportunity to use the feedback to improve your final memo. **Presentations will be done between the 26<sup>th</sup> of April and 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.** An online google sign-up sheet will be set up at least 6 weeks before the 26<sup>th</sup> of April on which you can select a date for presenting.

#### Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Late submission of essays by up to 24 hours will result in a downgrade by one full grade (e.g. from B to B-). Essays that are more than 24 hours late maybe rejected for grading, particularly where the explanation given is not satisfactory. Where a late essay is accepted for grading, it must be submitted within one week of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

#### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin upholds the highest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Cases of academic misconduct including cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

#### Attendance

You must attend ALL classes and participate actively in sessions. Absence from two sessions of 90 minutes in a semester will attract deductions from your participation grade unless permission is sought in advance in accordance with the Student Handbook's regulations on illness or leaves of absence.

## Reading Material:

The key textbook for this class is:

- Kraft, M. E., & Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press.

You are advised to purchase a copy of the textbook for reference throughout the course. Other book chapters, articles and additional readings will be posted on the online platform.

## Schedule

*Please note that this schedule is subject to change depending on emerging class needs during the term. I will inform students in advance of any changes and the online platform will also be used give advance notices of changes.*

	Topics	Readings and Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> Wed, 30 Jan	<i>Course Introduction:</i> - Key Concepts and definitions in Public Policy	- Kraft, M. E., & Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7 <sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 1, (pp. 2-14).
Fri, 1 Feb	- What is the context of policy analysis?  - Why do governments intervene in societal issues?	- Kraft, M. E., & Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7 <sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 1, (pp.15-27).
<b>Week 2</b> Wed, 6 Feb	Introducing Policy Analysis:  - What is it and what does it involve?	- Kraft, M. E., & Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7 <sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 4 (pp.118-130 Steps in Policy Analysis).  Further Reading: - Kraft, M. E., & Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7 <sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 1, (pp.27-34).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walker, W., E. (2000). Policy Analysis: A Systematic Approach to Supporting Policymaking in the Public Sector. <i>Journal of Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis</i>, 9, 11–27.</li> </ul>
Fri, 8 Feb	<p>Key Actors in Policy Processes:</p> <p>State Institutions – Part 1 (Presidential Democracy - US)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 2, (pp. 45-61).</li> </ul> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Birkland, T. A. (2011). An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts and models of public policy making. Third edition. Routledge. Chapter 4</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> Wed, 13 Feb	<p>Key Actors in Policy Processes:</p> <p>State Institutions – (Parliamentary Democracy Europe - Part 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, Torbjörn Bergman. Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies (<i>Parliamentary Democracy</i> Pg 9 – 26) <b><i>This is a google book chapter so please search for it online under googlebooks.</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Further/ Optional Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donald L. Horowitz. <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, Volume 1, Number 4, Fall 1990, pp. 73-79</li> </ul>
Fri, 15 Feb	<p>Non-state Policy Actors (Part 1: Interest groups, social movements, political parties)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anderson, James E. (2010). <i>Public policymaking</i>. 7th ed. Cengage. Chapter 2, ‘Nongovernmental participants’ (pp. 59-68)</li> </ul> <p>Further/Optional Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Birkland, T. A. (2011). An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts and models of public policy making. Third edition. Routledge. Chapter 5</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> Wed, 20 Feb	<p>Non-state Policy Actors (Part 2 – Public opinion, media)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Birkland, T. A. (2011). An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts and models of public policy making. Third edition. Routledge. Chapter 5</li> </ul>
Fri, 22 Feb	<p>Theories in Public Policy (1): Elite and Group theory</p>	<p>Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 78-85 on elite and group theory).</p>
<b>Week 5</b> Wed, 27 Feb	<p>Theories in Public Policy (2): Institutional, Rational choice and systems theory.</p>	<p>Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 85-</p>

		89).
Fri, 1 Mar	The Policy Process Model: Problem Definition and Agenda setting and policy formulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stone, Deborah A. (1989). Casual stories and the formation of policy agendas. <i>Political Science Quarterly</i>, 104, 2 (Summer): 281-300.</li> <li>- Kingdon, J., <i>Agendas, alternatives and public policies</i>, London: Longman, 1995. Chapter 1 (pg 1-9)</li> </ul> <p><u>Further Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anderson, Chapter 3 – Policy Problems (pp. 83-107)</li> <li>- Hupe, P. L. and Hill, M. J. (2006). The Three Action Levels of Governance: Re-framing the Policy Process Beyond the Stages Model. In Peters, G. B. and Pierre, J. (Eds.). <i>Handbook of Public Policy</i> (pp. 201 - 216). London, England: Sage Publications.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b> Wed, 6 Mar	Policy Legitimation, Implementation and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Batory, A.. "Why do anti-corruption laws fail in Central Eastern Europe? A target compliance perspective." <i>Regulation &amp; Governance</i> 6, no. 1 (2012): 66-82.</li> </ul> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Birkland, T. A. (2011). <i>An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts and models of public policy making</i>. Third edition. Routledge. Chapter 9</li> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). <i>Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives</i>. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 100-105 on policy legitimation to evaluation).</li> </ul>
Fri, 8 Mar	Policy Typologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). <i>Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives</i>. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 111-113 on policy typologies).</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Due Date: Critical Review Paper</i></b></p>
<b>Week 7</b> Wed, 13 Mar	How do you write a Policy Memo? What are the information sources needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weimer, D. L., &amp; Vining, A. R. (2017). <i>Policy analysis: Concepts and practice</i>. Sixth edition. Routledge. Chapter 1 'Preview' (pp. 1-30) – <b><i>Check for this under online under googlebooks please</i></b></li> </ul>
Fri, 15 Mar	What are the types of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). <i>Public</i></li> </ul>

	policy analysis?	policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7 <sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 4 (pp.131-142 on Types of Policy Analysis and the kind of analysis needed).
<b>Week 8</b> Wed, 20 Mar	Problem analysis to policy action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 5</li> <li>- Anderson, Chapter 7 – Policy Impact, Evaluation and Change (pp. 290-316)</li> </ul>
Fri, 22 Mar	Assessing policy alternatives: what criteria do we use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 6 (pp. 178-192)</li> </ul> <p><i>Everyone should have come for their policy memo consultations.</i></p>
<b>Week 9</b> Wed, 27 Mar	Methods of Policy Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kraft, M. E., &amp; Furlong, S. R. (2018). Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage and CQ Press. Chapter 6 (pp. 192-215)</li> </ul>
Fri, 29 Mar	Why do policies fail?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dunleavy, P. (1995) 'Policy Disasters: Explaining the UK's Record', Public Policy and Administration, 10 (2): pp. 52 - 70.</li> </ul> <p><u>Further Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- McConnel, A. (2010). Policy Success, Policy Failure and Grey Areas In-Between. Journal of Public Policy, 30(03), 345–362. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X10000152">https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X10000152</a></li> <li>- Quiggin, J. (2006). Economic constraints in public policy. In R.E. Goodin, (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy. Oxford, (pp. 529-543).</li> <li>- Birkland, T. A. (2011). An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts and models of public policy making. Third edition. Routledge. Chapter 9</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> Wed, 3 Apr	How and why do policies change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lindblom, Charles. 1959. "The Science of Muddling Through" <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 19 (2).</li> <li>- Kingdon, John W. (1995). Agendas, alternatives, and public policies. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Longman. Chapter 8</li> </ul>
Fri, 5 Apr	<b>Substantive Policy Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fawcett, H. (2006). Social Policy: Pensions. In</li> </ul>

Muddling Through



	Welfare and Social Security Policy	<p>Peters, G. B. and Pierre, J. (Eds.). <i>Handbook of Public Policy</i> (pp.187-200). London, England: Sage Publications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wilensky, H. L. (2006). Social Policy: Is there a crisis of the welfare state? Peters, G. B. and Pierre, J. (Eds.). <i>Handbook of Public Policy</i> (pp. 201 - 216). London, England: Sage Publications.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b> Wed, 10 Apr	Education Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marton, S. (2006). Education Policy. Peters, G. B. and Pierre, J. (Eds.). <i>Handbook of Public Policy</i> (231-248). London, England: Sage Publications.</li> <li>- Peck, C. A., Gallucci, C., &amp; Sloan, T. (2010). Negotiating Implementation of High-Stakes Performance Assessment Policies in Teacher Education: From Compliance to Inquiry. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i>, 61(5), 451-463. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109354520">https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109354520</a></li> </ul>
Fri, 12 Apr	Cultural Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mulcahy, K.V. (2006). Cultural Policy. Peters, G. B. and Pierre, J. (Eds.). <i>Handbook of Public Policy</i> (219-230). London, England: Sage Publications.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Mid-Term Break April 15-21</b>	
<b>Week 13</b> Wed, 24 Apr	Criminal Justice Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Newburn, T. (2006). Criminal Justice Policy. Peters, G. B. and Pierre, J. (Eds.). <i>Handbook of Public Policy</i> (365-380). London, England: Sage Publications.</li> </ul>
Fri, 26 Apr	<i>Policy Memo Presentations</i>	
<b>Week 14    Wednesday, 1 May Labour Day</b>		
Fri, 3 May	<i>Policy Memo Presentations</i>	
<b>Week 15</b> Wed, 8 May	<i>Policy Memo Presentations</i>	
Fri, 10 May	<i>Wrap-Up</i>	
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>Completion Week May 13-17</b>	
<b>May 17</b>	<i>Submission of final policy memo</i>	