

PS185 Introduction to Policy Analysis

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Course Schedule: Monday & Wednesday, 17:30-19:00
Office Hours: Wednesday, 15:30-17:30 (by appointment)

Course Description

The course is designed to introduce you to the field of policy analysis by drawing on classic texts in comparative politics and public policy. It provides foundational knowledge on different theories explaining why public policies are adopted in the first place and how they change over time by looking at practical case studies in different policy areas. Moreover, it introduces the nuts and bolts of policy analysis for advising policymakers on how to respond to problems in various domains. Thus, the course integrates discussions on what practitioners expect from public policy experts with a critical social science perspective on policy processes.

Learning Outcomes

During the course, you will acquire the analytical tools to analyze actors and their strategic behavior during the political process and gain some experience in analyzing policy processes from the inception of a new public policy issue to its implementation and evaluation. Key learning outcomes include:

- an introductory theoretical knowledge of public policy processes
- an ability to engage with policy problems, conduct policy analyses and decide on the best policy solution
- an ability to communicate the outcomes of policy analyses and make recommendations to a target audience both verbally and in writing.

Requirements and Grade Breakdown

The course will be assessed through a combination of assignments which are designed to achieve the overall goals and learning outcomes of the course. All the written assignments must be submitted in electronic format.

Assignment	Length	Weight	Deadline
Participation in class	Throughout the semester	20%	Week 1-Week 15
Individual presentation in class	20 minutes + 10 minutes Q&A	20%	2 students/week Week 5 – Week 14 (Wednesdays)
Op-ed	1500 words	20%	29 th of September 2019
Policy brief	4000 words	40%	18 th of December 2019

Participation in class: You are expected to attend all the classes, prepare the required reading for each class, and actively participate in class discussions. You will be assessed on the quality and quantity of your contributions. The highest grades for participation will be awarded to those who make valuable contributions to class discussions and demonstrate an understanding of and engagement with the readings. Attending without contributing to group work or class discussions will only earn you a minimum pass. Expect occasional short quizzes based on the readings or previous sessions.

Individual presentation in class: Presentations will be carried out individually. You should critically discuss the topic of the week (through the indicated reading material) and provide a relevant practical case study to your audience. The example can be from any area of public policy (e.g. education, defense, health, environment, agriculture, migration, etc.) and context (e.g. local, national, regional, global). Ideas for presentations can be discussed in advance with me (I am also available for consultations once you have a draft of the presentation) and I am happy to guide you towards further reading. If you use a PowerPoint/Prezi/Keynote presentation or handouts, please submit them to me after the class. Presentation will be evaluated on their quality, clarity and your ability to master the topic.

Op-ed: You will have to write an op-ed (opinion editorial) article. This is an essay in which you present your expert opinion or insight on a specific policy problem or current political debate. Op-eds are used to raise awareness about an issue or convince others about a direction in which a policy should go. You may write as yourself or as a hypothetical representative of a fictive or real organization. The assignment should include a footnote/endnote with the name and short description of the media outlet (newspaper/magazine/blog/social network where you th) in which you would like to publish your op-ed and the reason why you think this outlet is suitable for it. The op-ed will be evaluated based on its structure, writing style, internal logic and richness of the argument.

Policy Brief: You will have to write a policy brief on a topic of your choice (it can be the same topic as your op-ed or individual presentation). Policy briefs are written to persuade policy-makers and decision-makers to take a certain course of action. For this assignment, imagine that you are a non-governmental stakeholder (e.g. think-tank, NGO, private sector organization, student organization, etc.) and you want to convince the government to address a certain policy problem and adopt your recommended solution. The issue should be narrow and specific (e.g. housing crisis in Berlin, inner city pollution, tuition fees for public universities), rather than broad and general (e.g. education policy, health policy, foreign policy). Alternatively, the brief could focus on existing legislation or policies that have failed or have attracted public uproar. Your policy brief should:

- (1) Identify a policy problem: What is the specific problem or issue that you seek to resolve? What is the background of this problem and how did it emerge? What are the consequences or implication of the problem that make it important and urgent to deal with?
- (2) Assess policy alternatives: What previous/current attempts have been made to solve the problem? Why have they been unsuccessful? What policy alternatives are available for solving the policy problem? What are the pros and cons of these policy alternatives?
- (3) Provide policy recommendations: What is the best possible policy solution? On what basis did you select it as the preferred course of action? What policy goals will it meet?

Overall, the brief should include a clear policy problem, be analytically and empirically rigorous in assessing policy alternatives, provide persuasive policy recommendations on the chosen issue, and have an appealing layout. The assignment will be evaluated based on its link to policy practice, substance, insight, clarity, the quality of writing and overall presentation.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. You are expected to follow the university code of academic integrity at all times throughout the course. Any work you submit, must be your own original work. Make sure that you properly reference all the sources you use (e.g. books, journals, newspaper articles, websites, etc.). Cases academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) in which you fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

As per Student Handbook guidelines, essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Essays that are more than 24 hours late may be rejected for grading, particularly if the explanation offered for the delay is not satisfactory. If a late essay is accepted for grading, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade higher than C. Thereafter, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Attendance

You are expected to attend ALL classes. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Schedule

Course Structure

Week	General Theme	Topic
1	Introduction	Organizational issues. Course structure and evaluation. Introduction to the main topics of public policy
2	Public policy as a discipline and as a profession	Public policy and public goods
3		Historical trajectories: from Weber to new public management and governance
4		Public policy for professionals
5		The policy cycle
6	The policy process and its analysis	Problem formulation, agenda setting and policy streams
7		Policy formulation and design & evidence-based policy making
8		Advocacy Coalition Framework
9		MIDTERM BREAK
10		Policy convergence, diffusion and transfer
11		Implementation
12		Policy monitoring, evaluation, feedback and termination
13	Complications and challenges for policy analysis	Policy actors' roles and impact
14		Policy processes at the global level
15	Conclusion	Summary of the main issues discussed during the course
16		COMPLETION WEEK

Detailed Class Schedule

Every week we will be discussing one central topic to public policy and policy analysis. The weekly lectures will provide the building blocks of our discussions and seminars, but the readings will represent the cement to consolidate your knowledge about the topic. Only ONE reading is assigned for each week, but it is a COMPULSORY reading and you should read it carefully. Come to classes prepared with notes and questions on the reading so that we can have a fruitful discussion. Read the news and see how you can apply the ideas, concepts, and theories we talk about in class.

If you want to read more on the topics we discuss each week, check out the following handbooks in the library:

Weimer, D. L., & Vining, A. R. (2011). *Policy analysis: Concepts and practice*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Moran, M., Rein, M. & Goodin, R.E.(Eds.)(2008) *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, Oxford: OUP.

Kraft, M.E., & Furlong, S.R. (2018) *Public Policy: Politics, analysis and alternatives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

WEEK 1 (2nd – 8th of September 2019) – Introduction to the main topics of public policy

In the first week, we will get to know each other and I will introduce the class, the syllabus and the assignments for the course. Moreover, we will survey the main topics of public policy and get a broad understanding of the types of issues we will cover in this course.

WEEK 2 (9th – 15th of September 2019) – Public policy and public goods

Questions of the week: what is public policy and how can we analyze it? What is the difference between public and private goods?

Reading

Weimer, D.L. & Vining, A.R. (2010) *Policy Analysis. Concepts and Practice*, Prentice-Hall, ch. 2.

WEEK 3 (16th – 22nd of September 2019) – Historical trajectories: from Weber to New Public Management and governance

Question of the week: how have the delivery modes of public policy changed over time? As such, we will look at the historical trajectories of public policy from the Weberian model (demand for a powerful administration) to New Public Management (demand for more market forces in public policy) and governance (demand for more interconnectedness).

Reading

Eliassen, K. & Sitter, N. (2008) *Understanding Public Management*, Sage, ch.5.

WEEK 4 (23rd – 29th of September 2019) – Public policy for professionals

Questions of the week: What is the role of policy advisors and policy advocacy professionals? How and what should policy professionals write for policy-makers?

Reading

Wilson, R. (2006) *Policy Analysis as Policy Advice*, in Moran, M., Rein, M. & Goodin, R.E.(eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch.7.

WEEK 5 (30th of September – 6th of October 2019) – The policy cycle

Questions of the week: What is the policy cycle? What is right and wrong with the policy cycle idea? What is the policy cycle useful for and what are its limitations?

Reading

Werner, J. & Wegrich, K. (2007) 'Theories of the Policy Cycle', in Fischer, F., Miller, F. & Sidney, M.S. (eds.) *Handbook of public policy analysis: theory, politics, and methods*, Boca Raton: CRC Press.

WEEK 6 (7th – 13th of October 2019) – Problem formulation, agenda setting and policy streams

Questions of the week: Why do certain issues become part of public policy debate while others do not? What are 'opportunity windows'? Can they be manipulated? How and by whom?

Reading

Kingdon, J.W. (1995) *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, 2nd edn, New York: Longman, ch. 1.

WEEK 7 (14th – 20th of October 2019) – Policy formulation and design & evidence-based policy making

Question of the week: Which factors influence policy design? What are the challenges to policy formulation? What constitutes 'evidence'? How is evidence used in policy formulation? What are the problems and challenges?

Reading

Sidney, M.S. (2007) 'Policy Formulation: Design and Tools', in Fischer, F., Miller, F. & Sidney, M.S. (eds.) *Handbook of public policy analysis: theory, politics, and methods*, Boca Raton: CRC Press.

WEEK 8 (21th – 27th of October 2019) – Advocacy Coalition Framework

Questions of the week: How does the advocacy coalition framework explain policy change and learning? What factors can influence the change of/within advocacy coalitions?

Reading

Weible, C.M. & Sabatier, P.A. (2007) 'A Guide to Advocacy Coalition Framework', in Fischer, F., Miller, F. & Sidney, M.S. (eds.) *Handbook of public policy analysis: theory, politics, and methods*, Boca Raton: CRC Press.

WEEK 9 (28th of October – 3rd of November 2019) – MIDTERM BREAK

WEEK 10 (4th – 10th of November 2019) – Policy convergence, diffusion and transfer

Questions of the week: How and why are policy lessons, models or tools transferred between (and within) countries or between policy domains? What explains the adoption of similar policies across countries over time? Under which conditions can we expect that policies converge or diverge? Why do countries converge on some policies but not on others?

Reading

Knill, C. (2005) 'Introduction: Cross-national policy convergence: concepts, approaches and explanatory factors', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(5), pp. 764-774.

WEEK 11 (11th – 17th of November 2019) – Implementation

Questions of the week: When and why did implementation studies emerge? What are the key challenges of putting policies into practice and facilitating compliance? How are policy formulation and implementation connected?

Readings

Hill, M. (2005) *The Public Policy Process*, 4th edn, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, ch.9.

WEEK 12 (18th – 24th of November 2019) – Policy monitoring, evaluation, feedback and termination

Questions of the week: What are the challenges of policy evaluation? What is evaluated? Who monitors/evaluates policies? How is evaluation used? When do (or should) policies terminate? Why is it difficult to terminate a policy?

Readings

Vedung, E. (2006) 'Evaluation Research', in Peters, B.G. & Pierre, J. (eds.) *Handbook of Public Policy*. Sage

WEEK 13 (25th of November – 1st of December 2019) – Policy actors' roles and impact

Questions of the week: What are the different policy actors in policy making? What is their role and impact in public policy?

Readings

For this class you will have to choose a policy actor whose role you want to review and read the appropriate text. The possible choices are: policy analyst, government, public manager, think tank, international organizations and civil society. Please let me know about your choice in advance so we can cover all the actors (the distribution will be made on a first come first served basis). I will distribute the readings closer to the time of the class.

WEEK 14 (2nd – 8th of December 2019) – Policy processes at the global level

Questions of the week: What do terms like 'global governance', 'global public goods' and 'global public policy' mean in the absence of a global government?

Readings

Stone, D. (2013) 'The Global Agora: Privatising Policy Processes in Transnational Governance' in *Knowledge actors and transnational governance: the private-public policy nexus in the global agora*, pp. 15-36. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

WEEK 15 (9th – 15th of December 2019) – Conclusion

This week we will briefly summarize the main issues we discussed during the course. In addition, you will be asked to present the main structure and arguments of your policy brief in a short presentation in front of the class. This exercise is meant to help you get feedback and inspiration for your final paper from your colleagues.

WEEK 16 (16th – 20th of December 2019) – COMPLETION WEEK
