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# PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

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PUP 6009 - SECTION 123G  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

**INSTRUCTOR**

PROF. SUZANNE M. ROBBINS

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OFFICE HOURS: T/R 10:30-12

**CLASS MEETS:**

FRIDAYS, 3-6PM

101 ANDERSON HALL

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

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This course provides an introduction to the professional practice of policy analysis. We consider a number of fundamental questions: What are the rationales for collective action in private affairs? What are the limitations to collective action? What are the generic instruments of public policy? What are the appropriate roles for policy analysts in democratic societies? Answering these questions builds the conceptual foundations for doing policy analysis.

We will examine the systematic methods of policy design, development, and assessment of policy solutions. It assumes that you already have some familiarity with the basic concepts and terminology of public policy and public administration. The required skills for doing policy analysis are best learned through practice. Therefore, the primary vehicle for your learning will be completion of a policy analysis project and policy memos. We will follow a process for policy analysis to enable you to: identify data sources and evaluate their utility, establish criteria to analyze the policy, assess alternative policies, select among policy alternatives, and finally monitor policy implementation and evaluation.

Policy analysis is used in a variety of ways inside and outside the public and nonprofit sectors, and the tools of policy analysis plays an important and essential role in decision making at all levels of governments and nonprofits. 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—remember that politics govern the exercise of authority, power, and privilege to determine who gets what, when, and how; and
- Read and understand policy research.

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## REQUIRED READING

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Weimer, David L. and Aidan R. Vining. 2011. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Boston: Longman/Pearson Higher Ed.

Bardach, Eugene. 2012. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. 4<sup>rd</sup> ed. Washington, DC: Sage.

Additional readings in course outline and as necessary for project research.

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## COURSE ASSESSMENT

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Your grade will be based on the following (elaborated below):

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| 1. Class participation, discussion, "pop briefings"  | 10% |
| 2. Policy Memos (4 @ 10% each)                       | 40% |
| 3. Policy Analysis Project (report and presentation) | 30% |
| 4. Midterm Exam                                      | 20% |

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### CLASS DISCUSSION, PARTICIPATION & POP BRIEFINGS

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First, please be punctual; class begins at 3:00 p.m. Please allow for parking issues.

Second, given the nature of this seminar, your participation in class discussions and group exercises should demonstrate a command of the assigned material and the ability to relate the concepts to cases and current policy issues. Your active class participation will make the course more valuable for all of us.

Third, the "pop-briefings" simulate the sort of oral report you are likely to be called upon to make while you are working on a major project as a policy analyst. You will have a total of ten minutes to provide an introduction to the issue you are addressing in your policy analysis project, pose an analytical question you are trying to address, and lead discussion of it. Keep the intro of your issue to about one minute, and allow at least five minutes for discussion. Discussion may be extended at my discretion. I will randomly select two or three presenters each class starting our fourth week.

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### POLICY MEMOS

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Policy memos address real situations in which a public or private decision-maker must make a decision. Usually, a decision maker will have a variety of information at her/his disposal and, while the amount of information may be voluminous, it may be contradictory, incomplete, or simply confusing. Your job is to make an intelligent decision maker into a "smart consumer" by culling information and facts, applying your expertise, and presenting alternatives. The memo exercises provide an opportunity to practice analytical writing, and each is related to the policy analysis project. Please come prepared to discuss the policy memo in class. You will receive instructions for the memos on the first day of class.

## POLICY PROJECT

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A semester-long project on a policy issue gives you an opportunity to apply the concepts and craft skills introduced in the course: identification of data sources and evaluation of their utility; establishment of criteria to analyze the policy; assessment of alternative policies; and selection among policy alternatives. The policy analysis project is an individual effort, and each of you will represent a client (sector) and develop a comprehensive, structured policy analysis for this client.

Projects will be assigned randomly in the first class. An important lesson from the project is gaining experience in confronting new issues. As issues necessarily vary in many ways, random assignment provides at least ex ante fairness.

Your task is to provide a policy analysis of the issue that you have drawn. Your goal is to prepare a final report to your “client” of no more than 15 double-spaced pages exclusive of an executive summary (required), references or endnotes (required), and appendices (optional). During the semester there will be several exercises to help you move toward an effective final report. Please see the course schedule for due dates. Explicit directions for the project will be distributed on the first class meeting.

## MIDTERM EXAM

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We will have one exam mid-semester. This class will be short answer/essay and will test your mastery of the fundamental material introduced through that point. This exam is meant to hold students accountable for the analytical tools presented in class. Therefore, this test will present several questions which reinforce the technical elements of Weimer and Vining, part II. Students will be expected to draw graphs showing how markets relate to the use of policy analysis and welfare analysis and also explain how a policy analyst would interpret the results.

## GRADING

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I will be judging your exams, writing and presentations as a whole, looking at your knowledge, as well as your judgment in selection and presentation of material. Please note that the UF’s graduate grading system allows passing grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+ and C. With that in mind, work that does not merit at least a B is not considered acceptable graduate work. The following is offered as a guideline:

**A/A-:** An excellent grasp of the facts. Evidence of considerable organizing intelligence and powers of argument.

**B+:** Sound factual knowledge. Evidence of sound expository power, i.e. a clear line of argument throughout the essay.

**B:** Knowledge of the basic facts. Ability to draw some conclusions, although of a somewhat superficial and generally conventional kind. Main lines of argument visible but with some problems.

**C:** Knowledge of the basic facts but weak in argument or relevance, OR reasonably relevant but displaying factual weakness.

## OTHER POLICIES

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Requirements for class attendance are consistent with the attendance policy stated in the Graduate Catalog Regulations found here: <http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1219>. Attendance is required.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points and acceptable graduate-level grades may be found here: <http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1219>.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Cell phone use is prohibited during class. Laptops and tablets are permitted, but I reserve the right to prohibit them if they become a distraction.

All work in this class is to be your own. Please take note of the student Honor Code, Student Conduct Code and Standards of Ethical Conduct, which may be found in the Graduate Catalog: <http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1219>.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	
<b>1</b>	29-Aug	Introduction to Policy Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 1</li> </ul>	Projects Randomly Assigned
<b>2</b>	5-Sep	Policy Analysis Overview: What role does policy analysis play in democratic societies? What roles should it play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 2, 3, 14</li> <li>Musso, Biller, and Myrtle. 2000. "Tradecraft: Professional writing as problem solving." Journal of Policy Analysis and Management 19(4) Fall:635-645</li> <li>Bardach Appendix A</li> </ul>	Memo 1 due
<b>3</b>	12-Sep	Foundations of Policy Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 4</li> </ul>	
<b>4</b>	19-Sep	Rationales for Public Policy: Market Failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 5, 6</li> </ul>	
<b>5</b>	26-Sep	Goals other than Efficiency as Rationales for Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 7</li> </ul>	Memo 2 due
<b>6</b>	3-Oct	Government Failure as Limitation and Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 8, 9</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	10-Oct	Midterm Exam		Midterm Exam
<b>8</b>	17-Oct	NO CLASSES		
<b>9</b>	24-Oct	Structuring Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 15, 16, 17</li> <li>Bardach Parts I, II, III Appendix C</li> </ul>	
<b>10</b>	31-Oct	Structuring Analysis, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued from last week</li> </ul>	Memo 3 due
<b>11</b>	7-Nov	Policy Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 10, 13</li> <li>Bardach Appendix B</li> </ul>	
<b>12</b>	14-Nov	Policy Design, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued from last week</li> </ul>	
<b>13</b>	21-Nov	Strategy and Alternatives for Feasible Policy Adoption and Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 11, 12</li> </ul>	Project Drafts due (2 copies)
<b>14</b>	28-Nov	NO CLASSES		
<b>15</b>	5-Dec	In class presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weimer/Vining, 18</li> </ul>	Memo 4 due
<b>16</b>	12-Dec			Final projects due via email