

Pol 535 Public Policy Analysis

Instructor: Eser Sekercioglu
Office: N741 Social and Behavioral Science
Office Hours: By appointment
e-mail: msekerci@ic.sunysb.com

Spring 2006
Tuesday 6-9:00 PM
SBS N702

Overview

The primary aim of this course is to provide you with the analytical and critical tools necessary both for evaluating policy analysis pieces you will encounter in your careers and doing your own analysis. A successful policy analyst should have working knowledge of three distinct areas:

- a) Political processes behind the policy problem,
- b) Mathematical methods required to do analysis,
- c) And analytical (mostly drawn from the field of economics) tools that are required to confront policy problems.

This course is designed to provide the third item on the list. To do so, in the first part of the course, we will explore the field of public policy analysis in general. We will also compare competing models of Public Policy. The second part of the course is devoted for the actual practice of policy analysis. We will first develop the economic and analytical skills necessary for successful analysis. After having acquired the toolbox we will learn the elements of successful policy analysis. We will seek answers to questions such as, *What makes a policy a good policy?*, *Why do we need public policy at all?*, *What are the defining characteristics of US policy process?*, *Why are the markets unable to solve policy problems?*, *Is there a reliable method for measuring social costs and benefits of public policy?*

Most classes will be structured lectures. However, the students are expected to participate in the class discussions, hence familiarizing yourselves with the material prior to class is a must.

Course Requirements

- **4 critical response assignments.[25%]** Critical response assignments are responses to specific questions about the assigned readings that will be posted one week prior to the class. During the semester I will post 8 questions for chosen weeks. (One question every chosen week). You can select any four of the questions to respond. Assignments are due on the class. There are no length limitations but an average answer will take 3-4 double spaced pages.
- **Participation. [15%].** You are expected to come to class prepared, i.e. having completed the assigned readings. 15 % of your grade will be based on your active participation in class discussions.
- **Exam1 [30%].** The exam will be in-class and involve several short essay questions and definitions.
- **Exam2 [30%].** Exam 2 is not a comprehensive final exam. You will be responsible for material that is covered after the first exam. The format will be similar to Exam 1.

Course Policies

- **Academic Misconduct:** Any student who is caught cheating or plagiarizing (as defined by the Stony Brook Student Handbook) will receive an F for the assignment and be reported to the Board of Academic Conduct at Stony Brook University.
- **Late Papers and Assignments:** All work is due at the beginning of the class period for which it is assigned. You will not receive credit for late work without documentation of extenuating circumstances.
- **Incompletes:** Incompletes will not be granted without prior approval from the instructor.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. In the case of chronic absenteeism, University policy will **NOT** permit me to give credit for the class. As an instructor, I have no discretion concerning this policy. Please attend every class, and send an email when extenuating circumstances prevent you from attending class. Habitual lateness or early departure will count as absences.
- **Disabled Student Services and Academic Accommodations:** If you have any physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out the assigned coursework, please contact the staff in the Disabled Student Services Office (DSS), Room 113, Humanities Building (phone: 632-6748/TDD) . All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Blackboard

This course has a blackboard website. Readings designated (BB) on the syllabus and assignments will be posted on the blackboard website for this course.

If you have not used Blackboard before here is information provided by the Blackboard concerning access to the site.

You can access class information on-line at: <http://blackboard.sunysb.edu>

If you have used Stony Brook's Blackboard system previously, your login information (Username and Password) has not changed. If you have never used Stony Brook's Blackboard system, your initial password is your SOLAR ID# and your username is the same as your Stony Brook (sparky) username, which is generally your first initial and the first 7 letters of your last name.

For help or more information see:

<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/helpdesk/docs/blackboard/bbstudent.php> For problems logging in, go to the helpdesk in the Main Library SINC Site or the Union SINC Site , you can also call: 631-632-9602 or e-mail:

helpme@ic.sunysb.edu

Required Readings

Weimer, David L. and Vining, Aidan R. (2005). Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice. (Fourth Edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson

Gosling, James, J. (2004). Understanding, Informing, and Appraising Public Policy. New York : Pearson Longman

Several book chapters and articles. (Will be available online at the Blackboard.) Those readings are designated (BB) on the syllabus.

January 24: Organizational meeting.

Part 1: Basic Concepts and Models of Public Policy

January 31: A general introduction to public policy.

- Greene, Jeffrey.(2004) The Basics of Public Policy (BB)

February 7: Setting the stage

- Gosling, Chapters 1-2 and 4

February 14: Introducing Models of Public Policy

- Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 3, 4, 5. (BB)
- Gosling, Chapter 3 and 6
- Lindbloom, Charles E. 1959. "The Science of Meddling Through". *Public Administration Review*, 19. (BB)
-

February 21: Policy and Policy Analysis

- Weimer and Vining, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Munger, chapter 2 (BB)

February 28: Policy making in a nutshell

- Gosling, chapters 5, 7, and 8.

March 7: Exam 1

Part 2: Analyzing Policy

March 14: Microeconomic Foundations of Public Policy Analysis and Market Approach

- Weimer and Vining, chapter 4
- Munger, Chapter 3 (BB)
- Canadian Cancer Society Report. 1999. High Tobacco Taxes Reduce Smoking. (BB)
- Powell, Lisa M. and Chaloupka, Frank I.. (2005) Parents, Public Policy, and Youth Smoking. *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management*, Winter2005, Vol. 24 Issue 1, p93-112.

(For an overview of microeconomic concepts keep these documents handy.)

- John Bouman, Chapters 1 -3 . also accessible at http://www.howardcc.edu/social_science/microbk.htm

- McAfee, Introduction to Economic Analysis, Chapter 2. (BB) *Do not bother with the calculus, just make sure that you understand the concepts introduced.*

You might also check this online course in introductory economics.

http://www.amosweb.com/cgi-bin/awb_nav.pl?s=cls&c=dsp&crs=micro

March 21: Rationales for Public Policy: Why do we need public policy at all? (Market failure and other limitations of the competitive model)

- Weimer and Vining. Chapter 5 -6
- Hardin, Garret. (1968). "The tragedy of commons". *Science*, Vol.162, p1243-1248

March 28- Rationales for Public Policy: Government failure

- Weimer and Vining. Chapter 7 , 8 , and 9.
- Munger, chapter 6 (BB)
-

April 4: Conceptual Foundations for Solution Analysis

- Weimer and Vining, chapters 10, 11, and 12.

April 11 : Spring Break

April 18: Doing Public Policy Analysis

- Weimer and Vining, chapters 13, 14, and 16, also skim chapter 15.

April 25: Professional Ethics

- Weimer and Vining, chapter 3

May 2: Exam 2.