

**PUBL 610-04: Advanced Policy Analysis for Health, Education, and Social Welfare**  
**Fall 2021**  
**Mondays 4:30-7:00 pm**

**Syllabus Updated September 10, 2021**

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesday 8-10 am or by appt

Sign up and meeting link [here](#)

**additional important syllabus information is posted in BB**

### **Summary and Objectives**

Governments play a central role in social welfare as a regulator, provider, and funder of health care, education, and a social safety net. This course focuses on applying policy analytic frameworks to questions of the role of government in social policy and the efficiency, equity, and justice of different policy strategies. Students will learn economic, sociological, ethical, and political frameworks for policy analysis and apply an integrated framework to current debates in health, education, and welfare. The course is appropriate for masters and doctoral students with an interest in health, education, urban, social policy, and economic policy and doctoral students planning dissertation work in these fields.

Completion of ECON 600, ECON 601, PUBL 602 or a similar course is recommended.

At the end of the course students will be able to:

- Define the goals of social policies
- Apply economic models to policy design in health, education, and welfare
- Use decision analysis to evaluate policies with uncertainty
- Predict the impact of program on participants, communities, and beyond
- Compare policy options in terms of in terms of costs, benefits, and investments over time
- Write a concise and informative policy memo for a policy stakeholder audience

### **Readings**

Weekly required readings are posted on BB.

## Grading

Short memos	3 x 20 pts
Problem sets	3 x 20 pts
In-class project	1 x 20 pts
Final policy memo	1 x 40 pts

**Bring printed assignments to class on the due date. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Lowest score on short memo and/or problem set will be discarded.**

**Pass/fail registration is not permitted in this course.**

## Academic Integrity

Students are strongly encouraged to work together on all assignments. You must turn in original work that is your own. You will not receive credit for projects or exams that are identical to another student's work. If you use outside sources, you must cite them.

For more information on UMBC policies regarding academic integrity:

<http://oue.umbc.edu/home/home/academic-integrity/>

## Weekly Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Due
Unit 1. Frameworks for Social Policy Analysis			
1.	September 13	Gov't Role in Health, Education, and Welfare	
2.	September 20	Goals of Public Policies	
Unit 2. Changing Behavior through Policy			
3.	September 27	Utility Analysis – Theory	Memo 1
4.	October 4	Policy Applications	
Unit 3. Policy Analysis with Uncertainty			
5.	October 11	Decision Analysis – Theory	Problem Set 1
6.	October 18	Testing to Reduce Uncertainty	Memo 2
7.	October 25	Policy Applications	
Unit 4. Policies as Investment			
8.	November 1	CBA and Time Value of Money	Problem Set 2
9.	November 8	Valuing Social Welfare	
10.	November 15	Policy Applications	
11.	November 22	THANKSGIVING WEEK - NO CLASS	
Unit 5. Principal-Agent Programs			
12.	November 27	P-A Theory and Implementation Problems	Problem Set 3
13.	December 6	Policy Applications	Memo 3
Culminating Assignments			
14.	December 13	Policy presentations	In-class project
15.	December 17	Final due date	Final policy memo

## **Memo Assignments (20 pts each)**

**Up to 2 pages each (single-spaced, 12 pt font, 1" margins)**

1. Select a generic policy idea that interests you (e.g. health insurance for kids, universal pre-k, minimum wage). Using Stone's four policy goals, discuss what social problem the program seeks to remedy and how/if it addresses each policy goal.
2. Pick a policy that operates through a cash or in-kind transfer to individuals or households. Concisely describe the policy objective, policy design, and the mechanism through which it seeks to change behavior. Briefly describe who is eligible. Analyze and critique the policy as strategy to achieve specific program goals and broader social goals.
3. For a policy problem that interests you describe two potential remedies with different timelines (e.g. increasing high school completion through early childhood investment vs. GED programs). Discuss the benefits of each, who is targeted, and how the timeframe influences assessment of equity and efficiency. Considering the broad policy goals, is a long- or short-term solution preferred?

## **Final Policy Memo**

**Up to 5 pages (single-spaced, 12 pt font, 1" margins)**

Select a specific policy that interests you (e.g. Maryland's TANF program) and write a comprehensive policy analysis memo that includes:

1. Concise description of what the policy does
2. The social problem it is meant to remedy
3. Expected outcomes at the individual and aggregate levels
4. Eligible/target populations
5. Potential to address each of Stone's four policy goals
6. Problems and/or unintended consequences
7. Recommendations for improvement