

**PUBL 609: Social Science Approaches to Policy Analysis
Spring 2020**

Monday 7:10-9:40 pm, PUP 438

Instructor:

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office hours: Monday 4:30-6:30 (or by appointment)

UPDATED January 23, 2020

COURSE SUMMARY & OBJECTIVES

This course provides an overview of philosophical and theoretical foundations of academic policy analysis and research. We will focus on broad frameworks for policy research to help students understand modern perspectives on social science research, academic policy research, and the role of policy analysis in a democratic society. This course is designed to serve as a foundation for understanding the broad theories that have influenced academic policy research. It is not an exhaustive review of literature.

Learning objectives:

- Apply theoretical frameworks to explain policy problems, processes, and outcomes
- Explain and apply positive and normative theoretical frameworks to policy analysis
- Develop empirical research questions that are supported by theories
- Apply theoretical frameworks to empirical policy analysis

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course culminates in a written examination. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings, to actively participate in and lead class discussion as benchmarks for the paper, and to meet due dates for benchmark assignments. Required readings represent only a sample of the important readings in the field. Students are expected to explore further readings on topics for class presentations and written assignments. In addition to required readings, students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss current policy issues in relationship to classroom topics.

Grading (pass/fail) is based primarily on the examination. The grade will be determined by a committee comprised of the course instructor and the student's academic advisor. The academic advisor must approve the student's comprehensive exam topic by week 5.

If you have not already passed the public policy comprehensive exam, your course grade (pass or fail) will be the grade for your Public Policy comprehensive exam. At the discretion of the advisor and instructor, a student who fails the exam during this course may be granted one opportunity to rewrite the exam by October 2020.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are strongly encouraged to work together on all assignments. However, you must turn in original work that is your own. All external sources must be correctly cited. For more information on UMBC policies regarding academic integrity:

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

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. Services for students with disabilities are provided for all students qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADAA of 2009, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC department designated to coordinate accommodations that would allow for students to have equal access and inclusion in their courses.

If you have a documented disability and need to request academic accommodations, please refer to the SDS website at <https://sds.umbc.edu/> for registration information or visit the SDS office in the Math/Psychology Building, Room 212. For questions or concerns, you may contact us at disability@umbc.edu or (410) 455-2459. If you require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your SDS-approved accommodations.

DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Employee, per [UMBC's Policy on Prohibited Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Other Related Misconduct](#) (located at <http://humanrelations.umbc.edu/sexual-misconduct/umbc-resource-page-for-sexual-misconduct-and-other-related-misconduct/>). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a Responsible Employee I am required to report disclosures of sexual assault, domestic violence, relationship violence, stalking, and/or gender-based harassment to the University's Title IX Coordinator.

If you need to speak with someone in confidence about an incident, UMBC has the following Confidential Resources available to support you:

The Counseling Center: 410-455-2472

University Health Services: 410-455-2542

(After-hours counseling and care available by calling campus police at 410-455-5555)

Other on-campus supports and resources:

The Women's Center, 410-455-2714

Title IX Coordinator, 410-455-1606

Additional on and off campus supports and resources can be found at:

<http://humanrelations.umbc.edu/sexual-misconduct/gender-equitytitle-ix/>.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PAPER

The objective of this paper is to present a strong theoretical foundation for an empirical policy research paper.

Your paper should include:

- A clear statement of the issue or problem. What is the theoretical foundation for defining this issue as a public problem and a target for public sector intervention?
- Considering multiple academic fields (economics, sociology, political science, etc.) and philosophical frameworks (welfare economics, democratic theory, distributive justice, etc.) that contribute to public policy research, how have past researchers approached this policy problem? What questions have been asked, what methods have been used, and how has this contributed to new understanding of the problem?
- Integrating past research and core theories of public policy, identify a set of testable, theory-drive question relative to this specific public problem that build on prior policy research.
- Finally, identify general empirical strategies (e.g. interviews, event histories, content analysis, etc), that could be used address these research questions. Explain why these methods are appropriate evidence to answer your questions.

There are four benchmark assignments for the final paper (see schedule below for due dates): 1) proposal, 2) reading list, 3) annotated bibliography, and 4) final outline. **All assignments must be approved by your reader.**

Required textbooks

Gerring, John (2012). *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Second Edition. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, Kevin B. & Larimer, Christopher, W. (2017). *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. 3rd Edition. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

All other readings on Blackboard

Benchmark Due Dates

Assignments should be approved by your reader in advance. Give Jane an approved copy by Friday at 5 pm.

Week 4 – Approved proposal identifying a policy problem

Week 7 - Approved reading list

Week 11 - Approved annotated bibliography

Week 12 - Approved paper outline

Final Paper Due Date

Friday, May 16 at 5 pm.

SCHEDULE OUTLINE

CLASS MEETINGS (MONDAYS)	UNIT	BENCHMARK DUE	DUE DATE (FRIDAYS)
1. Jan 27	1.1 Theoretical Foundations of Social Sciences		
2. Feb 3	1.2 Problem Definition		
3. Feb 10	1.3 Types of Policy Research		
4. Feb 17	NO CLASS	Topic Proposal	Feb 21
5. Feb 24	1.4 Good, Bad, and Testable Theory		
6. Mar 2	2.1 Objectives of Policy Research		
7. Mar 9	2.2 Connecting Theory and Methodology	Reading List	Mar 13
8. Mar 16	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK		
9. Mar 23	2.3 Methods and Purpose		
10. Mar 30	2.4 Measurement of Policy Objectives		
11. Apr 6	NO CLASS	Annotated Bibliography	Apr 10
12. Apr 13	2.5 Substantive Values and Policy Research		
13. Apr 20	NO CLASS	Outline	Apr 24
14. Apr 27	3.1 Workshop: Asking Good Questions		
15. May 4	3.2 Workshop: Bibliography to Lit Review		
16. May 11	NO CLASS	Final Paper	May 15

FULL SCHEDULE

*indicates weekly empirical example for in-class discussion

Part 1: Theoretical Foundations for Policy Studies

January 27: Unit 1.1 Theoretical Foundations of Social Sciences

*Berry, F. S., & Berry, W. D. (1990). State lottery adoptions as policy innovations: An event history analysis. *American political science review*, 84(2), 395-415.

Discussion Questions:

What policies or programs are you interested in?

What are the broader/deeper social science research questions underlying your interests in these policies or programs?

February 3: Unit 1.2 Problem Definition: Market Failure and Government Failure

Weimer, David L. and Vining, Aidan R. (2005). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practices*. 4th Edition Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. Chapters 5-9

*Meier, Kenneth and McFarlane, Deborah (1996). Statutory Coherence and Policy Implementation: The Case of Family Planning. *Journal of Public Policy*, 15(3), 281-298.

Discussion Questions:

What is the rationale for policy intervention in your area of interest?

Does the policy address a specific market failure? Through what mechanism?

What is the potential for government failure?

February 10: Unit 1.3 Types and Typologies of Policy Research

Smith & Larimer – Chapters 1-2 (everyone) plus at least one chapter on a policy research type

*Maroulis, S. (2017). The Role of Social Network Structure in Street-Level Innovation. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 47(4), 419–430.

Discussion Questions:

What type of policy research (processes, implementation, analysis, etc.) are you interested in conducting?

What types of questions are asked in this type of research?

What types of methods are emphasized in this type of research?

February 24: Unit 1.4 Good, Bad, and Testable Theory

McCool, Daniel C. (1995). *Public Policy Theories, Models, and Concepts*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Section 1: The theoretical foundation of policy studies, pp. 1-27.

Stone, Deborah (2012). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. 3rd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Chapter 1

*Ferris, J., & Graddy, E. (1986). Contracting out: For what? With whom?. *Public administration review*, 332-344.

Discussion Questions:

What theories from core coursework are relevant to your policy topic?

What frameworks are you drawn to and why?

Are these theories testable?

Part 2: Theory-Driven Policy Research

March 2: Unit 2.1 Objectives of Policy Research

Lasswell, Harold (1951). The immediate future of research policy and method in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 45 (1), 133-142.

Radin, Beryl (2000). *Beyond Machiavelli: Policy Analysis Comes of Age*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Chapter 1: A Portrait of the Past, pp. 9-54.

Forester, John (1993). *Critical Theory, Public Policy, and Planning Practice: Toward a Critical Pragmatism*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. Chapter 7.

Wildavsky, Aaron (2007). *Speaking Truth to Power: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. Chapter 16.

*Herweg, N. (2016). Explaining European agenda-setting using the multiple streams framework: the case of European natural gas regulation. *Policy Sciences*, 49(1), 13-33.

Discussion Questions:

What do you want to accomplish with your research?

Who is it for?

What is the contribution?

March 9: Unit 2.2 Theory and Methodology

Gerring Chapters 1-9

*Ostrom, E., Walker, J., & Gardner, R. (1992). Covenants with and without a sword: Self-governance is possible. *American political science Review*, 86(2), 404-417.

Discussion Questions:

Why do different types of research apply different methodologies?

How are methods related to research questions?

What is the relationship between assumptions underlying theories and the assumptions underlying methods?

March 23: Unit 2.3 Methods and Purpose

Alkin, M.C. & Christie, C.A. (2004). An evaluation theory tree. Chapter 2 in *Evaluation Roots*, M.C. Alkin (ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rossi, P.H., Freeman, H.E., & Lipsey, M.W. (1999). *Evaluation: A Systemic Approach*, 6th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chapter 12: The social context of evaluation.

* Stritch, A. (2015). The Advocacy Coalition Framework and Nascent Subsystems: Trade Union Disclosure Policy in Canada. *Policy Studies Journal*, 43(4), 437-455.

March 30: 2.4 Measurement and Policy Objectives

Weimer, David L. and Vining, Aidan R. (2005). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practices*. 4th Edition Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. Chapter 16.

Bradley, W. J., & Schaefer, K. C. (1998). *The uses and misuses of data and models: The mathematization of the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 1-2

*Kilburn, K., Handa, S., Angeles, G., Tsoka, M., & Mvula, P. (2018). Paying for Happiness: Experimental Results from a Large Cash Transfer Program in Malawi. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 37(2), 331-356.

Discussion Questions:

What are society's criteria for evaluating public policies and programs?

What analytic tools measure these criteria?

How does measurement influence how goals are prioritized?

April 13: Unit 2.5: Substantive Values & Policy Analysis

Stone, Deborah (2012). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. 3rd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Chapter 2-3

Ellis, Ralph (1998). *Just Results: Ethical Foundation for Policy Analysis*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Chapter 1: The Value Component of Policy Analysis.

DeLeon, Peter (1997). *Democracy and the Policy Studies*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. Chapter 4: The Policy Sciences for Democracy.

*Kim, J. and Kiesel, J. (2018). The long shadow of police racial treatment: Racial disparity in criminal justice processing. *Public Administration Review*, 78(3): 422-431.

Discussion Questions:

What normative values are important in discussing your policy of interest?

What are society's goals for the policy?

What goals and values can and cannot be measured?

Part 3: Workshops for Writing Comps

April 27: Writing Good Questions

May 4: From Bibliography to Lit Review