Purpose

Government officials make decisions. Each of these decisions can affect millions of people and redistribute millions or billions of dollars. Some policy decisions are sound; some policy decisions are irrational. Many irrational decisions were based on the best of intentions.

This course will introduce you to explanations of how public policy is developed. It will also provide you with knowledge about a wide variety of analytical techniques for developing and evaluating policies that satisfy criteria for sound policy: efficiency, effectiveness, feasibility, ethics, equity, and others. These techniques are applicable to every conceivable environment—the public sector, the corporate sector, even your own home. By learning these techniques, you will become a more analytical thinker and have a more advanced skill as a practical, effective problem-solver.

Learning Objectives

- Be able to list and describe the models of public policymaking.
- Be able to use methods of evaluating proposed public policies.
- Know the approaches to policy evaluation for existing public programs.
1. TEXTBOOKS

The required textbooks, which are available at the bookstore, are:


2. EXAMINATIONS

There will be a midterm examination on Monday, October 5. It will account for 25 percent of the course grade. There will be a final examination on Monday, December 7. It will account for 30 percent of the course grade.

3. POLICY ANALYSIS RESEARCH PAPER

You are required to write a policy analysis research paper about a specific public policy, making extensive use of the basic policy-analysis approach that is based on the rationalism model of public policy. Your paper must (1) show an understanding of the policy, (2) present an enumeration of alternatives to the prevailing policy, (3) analyze the various alternatives, (4) select an alternative based on the analysis, and (5) propose a practical method of evaluating your selection after it has been implemented. The research paper must be based on and must make specific reference to literature of political science (i.e., your textbooks, lecture notes, monographs, articles in political-science journals, etc.).

Reference to your textbooks is essential.

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1 For advice about finding research materials, refer to the Web page at [http://faculty.UNG.edu/bfriedman/bfried/PSIAresearch/ResearchAdvice.html](http://faculty.UNG.edu/bfriedman/bfried/PSIAresearch/ResearchAdvice.html).
Students are required in all M.P.A. courses to use full-blown APA style on all papers (including research papers, term papers, written case-study assignments, etc.). It is advisable to obtain a copy of the style manual. It is available, for example, at this Web site:

http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html

A really helpful resource is the accompanying software to the APA style manual. The software is available by direct download or by purchase of an actual CD-ROM. *I strongly advise the purchase of the CD-ROM rather than the direct download.* The software is available, for example, at this Web site:

http://www.apastyle.org/stylehelper/

**Use the modifications to APA style** that appear at this Web page:

http://ung.edu/political-science-international-affairs/MPA/apa-modifications.php

Please take note of the miscellaneous rules about writing that appear on this Web page:

http://faculty.UNG.edu/bfriedman/bfried/MiscRule.html

The policy analysis paper is due on Monday, November 16. Please submit two hardcopies. Do not use report covers; just staple. The paper will account for 30 percent of your grade. Lateness will involve a 10-percentage-point penalty per week or part thereof; the instructor will not be obligated to accept any term paper submitted after the final examination is concluded.

For additional information about preparing a policy analysis, see the attached article entitled, "Guidelines for Preparing Policy Issue Papers."

**Notice about academic integrity; plagiarism and cheating:** The integrity code of the University of North Georgia—"On my honor, I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth, or tolerate those who do"—reflects the university’s commitment to academic integrity. The "Academic Integrity Policy" (2015-2016 Undergraduate Bulletin, at
http://ung.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=461#Academic_Integrity_Policy; see also the Student Handbook and the "Academic and Professional Integrity Policy" (described in the 2015-2016 Graduate Bulletin at http://ung.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=18&navoid=427#Academic_and_Professional_Integrity_Policy) are incorporated herein by reference. Please note that in this course, as in all others at UNG, plagiarism and other forms of cheating are expressly prohibited. Any student who commits plagiarism or cheating may receive a reduced grade, which may involve a failing grade, and his or her matriculation in the M.P.A. Program may be terminated by the M.P.A. Advisory Committee. A report of the incident will be provided to the university’s Academic Integrity Council. The council and the vice president for academic affairs may take additional action, which may include a formal reprimand, probation, suspension, or expulsion.²

4. ATTENDANCE

Attendance is compulsory. You are considered responsible for being attentive to lectures and class discussions, for taking notes, and for being aware of the content of all class announcements. Please take note of the university's policy on "Class Attendance" (2015-2016 Undergraduate Bulletin, at http://ung.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=461#Class_Attendance), which is incorporated herein by reference.

5. PARTICIPATION

Class participation and proper conduct are both expected, and will determine 15 percent of the course grade. As stated in the "Regulations of the M.P.A. Program," the participation requirement is based on this policy:

In most classes, it is improper for a student to be a passive spectator in class sessions. M.P.A. students are expected to be active participants in the proceedings of their classes. Contributions to class discussions are vital to the experience of graduate study in public administration and enhance the value of the program for all students enrolled in it.

² If you would like to read a discussion of the rationale for the rules about plagiarism, you are welcome to read my essay that is accessible on the Internet at http://faculty.UNG.edu/bfriedman/Studies/plgrm.htm.
Accordingly, the score for participation and conduct will involve these considerations: (1) ability to cite and interpret readings assigned for homework, (2) contribution to collective problem-solving processes, (3) demonstration of adaptability in coping with new situations, and (4) ability to support and enhance the value of the work of peers.

The conduct requirement includes the expectation that you will not allow any cellphones or other electronic devices to emit signals that will disturb the class. Turn them off or don’t bring them to class.

6. COURSE GRADES

Your instructor uses the conventional grading scale: 90-100%, A; 80-89%, B; 70-79%, C; 60-69%, D; below 60%, F.

Course grades are available on BANNER within about two days of the end of final examinations. Except in emergency situations, please do not request grades by telephone, E-mail, or similar method.

7. INCORPORATION OF OTHER CONTROLLING AUTHORITY

The contents of the following are incorporated by reference:

- All of the rules, regulations, and standards published in UNG’s undergraduate and graduate bulletins.
- The supplementary information that appears on the Web page at this URL address:
  
  http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php

SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

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M Aug. 24 Policy Process  
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Group Theory; Subgovernment Model  
D 22-23, 174-205, 229-247

W Aug. 26 Elitism; Public Choice  
D 23-27, 248-323

M Aug. 31 Systems Theory

W Sep. 2 Incrementalism; Rationalism  
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M Sep. 7 No Class – Labor Day

W Sep. 9 Rationalism; Game Theory  
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Innovation and Diffusion; Technocracy

M Sep. 14 No Class – Rosh Hashanah

W Sep. 16 Behavioralism

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W Sep. 23 No Class – Yom Kippur

M Sep. 28 Review

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W Oct. 28 Data Analysis; Reporting
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M Nov. 2 Problem Definition
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W Nov. 4 Political Analysis
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M Nov. 9 Evaluation Criteria; Alternatives

W Nov. 11 Evaluating Policies
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   Evaluating Methods
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   PSC 314-340

W Nov. 18 Evaluation of Implemented Policies
   PSC 341-353

MW Nov. 23, 25 No Class – Thanksgiving Break

M Nov. 30 Experimentation; Evaluation
   PSC 353-374

W Dec. 2 Review
QUESTIONS THAT MAY APPEAR ON THE M.P.A. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

1. What is public policy? What are some of the areas of public policy? Why do we study public policy?

2. Define “model.” What do we mean by “models of public policy”?

3. What is the “process” of public policymaking?

4. Explain “institutionalism.” What is role theory? What is Miles’ Law? In what way is institutionalism deficient in explaining public policy?

5. What is “group theory”? What are the two varieties of group theory? What law did Roberto Michels express?

6. What is “elitism”? How do elites have so much influence, given their minority status? What is the elite consensus?

7. Explain the rational model of public policymaking. What is the method? Why is rationalism rarely used?

8. What is “incrementalism”? How effective is this model in explaining public policy? What are its advantages? disadvantages?

9. What is “game theory”? Give an example of an application of game theory.

10. What is “public choice”? In what ways are the theories of Anthony Downs reminiscent of this model?

11. What is “systems theory”?

12. Describe the model of innovation and diffusion. What kind of states tend to have innovative governments? What kind of states tend to have governments that follow the lead of other states?
13. What is “technocracy”?

14. What is “behavioralism”? Explain either of the following: Barber’s theory of presidential character, or Downs’ categorization of public administrators’ temperament and behavior.

15. What approaches distinguish strategic thinking?

16. What steps occur in evaluation research?

17. Distinguish the entrepreneurial approach to public policymaking from the approach of technicians and politicians.

18. What kind of governmental system would be required to bring about absolute equality among all citizens? What do governments in the United States do to decrease the amount of socioeconomic inequality?

19. What is Pareto optimality? What is the Kaldor-Hicks criterion?

20. What circumstances create a moral obligation to “blow the whistle”?

21. Provide some guidelines for doing (a) productive interviews and (b) sound survey research.

22. What are some characteristics of a good written report?

23. Why is problem definition such a difficult element of policy evaluation?

24. What is cost-benefit analysis? What is the principle that underlies CBA? What are the difficulties of doing CBA?

25. Under what circumstances are severe penalties desirable as a policy option? Under what circumstances is it best for the government to refrain from intervention? What are some intermediate policy options that are available to government officials?

26. Why are agency employees alarmed when policy analysts do policy evaluations?
## Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loaded question</th>
<th>Opportunity costs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Marginal analysis</td>
<td>Externalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discounting</td>
<td>Sunk costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time value of a dollar</td>
<td>Satisficing</td>
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<td>Present value</td>
<td>Groupthink</td>
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<td>Future value</td>
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GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING POLICY ISSUE PAPERS

By William N. Dunn

The process of policy analysis may be initiated at any point after some stakeholder perceives the existence of a problematic situation; that is, a situation where there is a sense of uneasiness or frustration about the satisfaction of some need, value, or opportunity. In policy analysis it is important to distinguish between problematic situations and policy problems per se, since a given problematic situation permits many alternative formulations of the "problem." A policy maker, for example, may recognize the need for assistance in clarifying or resolving a problematic situation but nevertheless may be unable to say definitely what the problem is. By contrast, a policy analyst, legislator, or client group may suggest to policy makers that some problematic situation be investigated. A policy analysis may then be undertaken by commissioning an analyst within or outside an agency or by contracting policy analysts in universities, nonprofit research institutes, or private consulting firms.

However the process of policy analysis is initiated, policy makers and policy analysts are themselves often unclear about the nature and scope of the problem to be investigated. Different stakeholders, while agreeing on the existence of a problematic situation, frequently disagree about the nature of policy problems and their solutions. The existence of policy issues—that is, conflicts among stakeholders about the nature and range of possible solutions for policy problems—is the main reason why methods of problem structuring are central for public policy analysis. Policy problems are not "givens"; they are rather mental constructs that come about as different stakeholders react to the same problematic

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4 Policy stakeholders . . . are individuals or groups who affect and are affected by the process of policy formation and implementation.

situation. In other words, many of the most important policy problems are "ill structured," "messy," or "squishy," such that a large part of the task of policy analysis is to structure the problem itself.6

Purposes of a Policy Issue Paper

The main purpose of a policy issue paper is to structure policy problems. Consequently, a major task is to determine what policy makers and other stakeholders really want to accomplish. "Ultimate goals," as Quade observes,

may be easy to state but more immediate objectives that lead toward them are harder to determine. . . . It is easy for an analyst to accept a client's view of what is wanted without further discussion and then to set about searching for feasible alternatives and gathering data without giving a thought as to whether the stated objective, if attained, will contribute to solving the problem under attack.7

All of this is to say that the fatal error in policy analysis is solving the wrong problem. "We fail more often because we solve the wrong problem than because we get the wrong solution to the right problem."8

A policy issue paper should provide answers to a number of questions. What actual or potential courses of action are the objects of conflict or disagreement among stakeholders? In what different ways may the problem be defined? What is the scope and severity of the problem? How is the problem likely to change in


8 Ackoff, Redesigning the Future, p. 21.
future months or years? What goals and objectives should be pursued to solve the problem? How can the degree of success in achieving objectives be measured? What activities are now under way to resolve the problem? What new or adapted policy alternatives should be considered as ways to resolve the problem? Which alternative(s) are preferable, given certain goals and objectives?

Focus and Forms of the Policy Issue Paper

The policy issue paper may address policy problems in a wide variety of issue areas: health, education, welfare, crime, labor, energy, foreign aid, national security, human rights, and so on. Papers in any one of these issue areas may focus on problems at one or more levels of government. Health and air pollution, for example, are international, national, and local in scope. The policy issue paper may also take a number of specific forms, depending on the audience and the particular issue at hand. Thus, issue papers may be presented in the form of "staff reports," "briefing papers," "options papers," or so-called "white papers." An illustrative list of issues that may serve as the focus of a policy issue paper is presented below.

-- Which of several alternative contracts should be accepted by a union bargaining team?

-- Should the mayor increase expenditure on road maintenance?

-- Should the city manager install a computerized management information system?

-- Which public transportation plan should the mayor submit for federal funding?

-- Should a state agency establish a special office to recruit minorities and women for civil service positions?

-- Should a citizen's group support environmental protection legislation now before Congress?

-- Should the governor veto a tax bill passed by the state legislature?

-- Should an agency director support a plan for flexible working hours (flextime)?

-- Should a legislator support a bill restricting the sale of hand guns?

-- Should the president withhold foreign aid from countries that violate human rights?

-- Should the United Nations General Assembly condemn the violation of human rights in a particular country?

-- Should the United States withdraw from the International Labor Organization?

-- Should the foreign investments of multinational corporations registered in the United States be guaranteed by the government?

Elements of the Policy Issue Paper

A policy issue paper should be as complete as time and available information permit. An issue paper should "explore the problem at a depth sufficient to give the reader a good idea of its dimensions and the possible scope of the solution, so that it might be possible for a decisionmaker to conclude either to do nothing further or to commission a definitive study looking toward some action recommendation."10 An issue paper therefore deals primarily with the formulation of a problem and possible solutions, and only rarely reaches definitive conclusions. While an issue paper should contain concrete recommendations and outline plans for monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes, it is essentially the first phase of an in-depth policy analysis that may be undertaken at a later time.

In preparing an issue paper the analyst should be reasonably sure that all major questions have been addressed. Although issue

10 Quade, Analysis for Public Decisions, p. 69.
papers will vary with the nature of the problem being investigated, most issue papers contain a number of standard elements.11 These elements have been organized around [a] framework for policy analysis. . . .

[SEE THE TABLE ON THE NEXT PAGE]

Observe that each element of the issue paper requires different policy-analytic methods to produce and transform information about policy outcomes, policy performance, policy problems, policy alternatives, and policy actions. A policy issue paper, however, has one major characteristic not shared by integrated policy analysis. The issue paper is essentially a prospective (ex ante) investigation that begins with limited information about past policy actions, outcomes, and performance and ends with as much information as possible about the nature of policy problems, alternatives, and actions to be taken in the future.

11 For formats of policy issue papers see Quade, Analysis for Public Decisions, pp. 68-82; and Harry Hatry and others, Program Analysis for State and Local Governments (Washington, D. C.: The Urban Institute, 1976), appendix B, pp. 139-143.
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I. SOURCE AND BACKGROUND

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A. Description of Problematic Situation
B. Outcomes of Prior Efforts to Resolve Problems
C. Assessment of Past Policy Performance
D. Significance of Problematic Situation

II. THE POLICY PROBLEM

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A. Problem Statement
B. Approach to Analysis
C. Major Stakeholders
D. Goals and Objectives
E. Measures of Effectiveness
F. Potential Solutions

III. POLICY ALTERNATIVES

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A. Description of Alternatives
B. Comparison of Alternatives
C. Spillovers and Externalities
D. Constraints and Political Feasibility

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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A. Criteria for Recommending Alternatives
B. Description of Preferred Alternative(s)
C. Outline of Implementation Strategy
D. Provision for Monitoring and Evaluation
E. Limitations and Unanticipated Consequences

-- References
-- Appendices