

-GSM 6201: Public Policy Studies-

Mondays – 6:00pm to 9:00pm –Room M204
Atkinson Graduate School of Management
Willamette University
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-Instructor-

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-Office Hours-

Mudd 305 – Mondays 12:00pm to 5:00pm – Or by appointment.

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-Course Description-

As described in the course catalog, GSM 6201 “[s]tudies the process of policy formation and the tools and methods used to conduct policy analysis. The course examines a variety of policy areas of current interest (such as poverty, health, energy, the environment, urban affairs). Students prepare position papers, diagnosing policy problems and evaluating alternative solutions in terms of their political, economic, legal, and administrative feasibility.” In particular, this course will study policy from an economic, or “rationalist,” perspective. Students will learn how the failure of markets can inspire collective interventions and, conversely, how government failings can compel communities to adopt policies that loosen restrictions on markets. The course also will consider situations in which public policy solutions are sought because communities find the distribution of goods across community members undesirable, or because they view current political institutions and/or social practices as unfair. By recognizing the sources of these community problems, students will gain insight into the types of policies that can be used to address public challenges. Such insight will help students not only select tools to construct and analyze policy, but it will also train them to communicate policy-relevant information clearly and accurately. Through these activities, students will acquire knowledge and skills useful in navigating the myriad and complex public policies that affect managers of businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies.

-Learning Objectives-

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Recognize the source of a public problem and use that information to identify the general category of policy alternatives that might resolve the problem in question.
- 2) Design specific policy alternatives that coincide with the general class of policy solutions you deem suitable for a given public problem.
- 3) Assess the purpose, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, technical viability, political feasibility, and ethical rightness of specific policy alternatives you propose as solutions to a public problem.
- 4) Convey—both to policy experts and policy novices—the steps of your policy analysis, the results of that analysis, and the uncertainty surrounding your findings.

-Course Website-
wise.willamette.edu

-Required Reading Materials-

Weimer, David L., and Aidan R. Vining. 2011. *Policy Analysis, 5th Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Longman. (Abbreviated as “WV” in the reading schedule listed later in this syllabus.)

Editions of this textbook have instructed generations of policy analysts. As a result, if you find yourself managing a team of policy analysts after this course, a significant portion of that team will have learned their craft from this textbook. The authors of this book rank among the most skilled policy analysts in the world; they appear to have placed their theoretical and practical knowledge of policy analysis into this book, thereby offering a valuable resource for learning how to analyze public policy.

Gertler, Paul J., Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura B. Rawlings, and Christel M. J. Vermeersch. 2011 *Impact Evaluation in Practice*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. (Abbreviated as “Gertler et al.” in the reading schedule listed later in this syllabus.)

This text provides a thorough and insightful introduction to impact evaluation. Impact evaluation bears an important relationship to policy analysis: impact evaluation often provides the data and estimates employed in analyzing policies. As a result, we will draw on this text in the latter weeks of the term. The text is exceptional (see Rema Hana’s review in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, Volume XLIX (September 2011), pp.724-725) and it is made freely available by the World Bank at the following website: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTHDOFFICE/Resources/5485726-1295455628620/Impact_Evaluation_in_Practice.pdf .

Emison, Gerald Andrews. 2007. *Practical Program Evaluations: Getting from Ideas to Outcomes*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. (Abbreviated as “Emison” in the reading schedule listed later in this syllabus.)

Emison’s text explains how to evaluate the programs that carry out public policies. The book is focused on the pragmatics of evaluation. We will draw on the brief cases Emison provides as a means of seeing how to translate the theoretical niceties of policy analysis into actual practice.

Bardach, Eugene. 2009. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, 3rd Edition*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. (Abbreviated as “Bardach” in the reading schedule listed later in this syllabus.)

Like Emison, Bardach provides a practical guide to performing policy analysis. We will read Bardach to gain a sense of how policy analysts in the field execute their duties and how they overcome pitfalls that often go unrecognized in academic discussions of policy analysis. The book will serve as a valuable resource for you as you complete your course project.

Various articles posted on WISE resources and listed in this syllabus.

In addition to the texts listed above, we will read articles in preparation for some class sessions. All of the articles will be accessible electronically via the Hatfield library and I will post links on WISE directing you to the Hatfield library portal providing access to the article.

R Statistical Software

Periodically, we will perform statistical analyses and computations in class. To do so, we will use the open source, statistical software package, R. Please download it at: <http://ftp.osuosl.org/pub/cran/> I will be available to help with downloading problems, but I also encourage you to type “youtube how to download r” into Google in the event you experience problems; you will find many videos on youtube explaining how to download and install R on your computer.

-How This Course Relates to Your Broader Education at the AGSM-

As mentioned in the course description, public policies delimit and direct what businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies do and what they can try to achieve. Thus, managers benefit when they understand public policies. By recognizing the challenges that public policy can solve, managers can identify when it is appropriate to turn to government for assistance in resolving a community problem and when it is appropriate to seek a market-based solution. By understanding the general categories of public policies available to resolve community problems, managers can articulate potential solutions to community problems and they can forecast the likelihood that a community problem is resolved. By possessing the skill to analyze public policies, managers can anticipate how a public policy will affect their organization and they can develop strategic plans consistent with that information. Finally, by maintaining the ability to discuss public policies, managers can better share information about the means through which collective interventions affect their organization. In sum, the tools acquired in this course complement those obtained in your broader education at AGSM.

-Pedagogies-

In this course, I will use a variety of “pedagogies.” Some classes will involve me delivering lectures; other classes will involve exercises, student presentations, case analysis, or class discussions. The intellectual content of the class session—as opposed to some pedagogical dogma or fad—will drive the selection of pedagogical methods. The same philosophy will determine the activities you engage in when completing assessments. Assessments will require you to perform a range of activities including reading, computation, oral presentation, and primary research (among other activities).

-Assessments-

Assessments in this course aim to measure the knowledge and skills you have acquired, thus allowing both you and I to identify areas for improvement. This holds for assessments completed during the early and middle portions of the term, as well as for the final stretch of the term. In other words, the final assignment provides you information about how you can continue to improve your understanding of public policies and policy analysis once you have completed this course.

Consistent with the objectives of this course and the above-mentioned orientation toward ongoing learning and improvement, the assessments will take four forms:

I. Optional, Ungraded Weekly Assessments.

The weekly assessments of knowledge and skill acquisition will provide you the opportunity to gauge whether or not you have mastered the topics covered in class every Monday. Each assessment will be posted, on WISE, under the Resources Tab and within the folder associated with a given week. I will release an answer key one week from when the assessment is released. I encourage you to use these study guides to double-check your knowledge of the class material and, in so doing, to develop a dialogue with me concerning any topics that you need help mastering.

II. Memos.

The course will require you to complete 3 memos. The memos assess your ability to apply course concepts and tools to real public policy challenges. The first memo will ask you to restructure an existing policy analysis to make it easier to interpret. The second memo will require you to identify a situation in which a market has failed and is in need of a public policy solution. The third memo will require you to identify a public problem and identify potential generic solutions to the problem. These memos will gauge your understanding of important course concepts and will provide a training ground for the focal assessment of the course—namely, your policy analysis report. Each memo will be worth 20 points. Guidelines and rubrics for each memo will be released throughout the semester.

III. *Policy Analysis Report and Presentation.*

The most important component of your course grade consists of a policy analysis report (10 pages) and presentation (15 minutes). This project will focus on a topic of your choosing, though you will need to clear the topic with me. The report is worth 40 points total. You will first submit a draft report worth 10 points and, then, you will submit a final report worth 30 points. The presentation is worth 10 points. Midway through the semester, I will post a scoring rubric for both the report and the presentation on WISE, under the Resources tab, within the folder “Policy Analysis Report and Presentation.” As indicated in the course schedule later in this syllabus, you will be required to submit a draft report in advance of your presentation; failing to submit your draft report on time will result in the deduction of 5 points from the final report grade. Other students will read this draft report and one student will provide formal comments.

IV. *Peer Commentary on Colleagues’ Policy Analysis Reports.*

In advance of the presentation of final policy analysis reports, students will provide formal comments on one of their peers’ reports. Midway through the semester, I will provide guidance on how to conduct a peer-review of your colleague’s work and I will post a rubric explaining how I will score your peer review. The peer review will be worth 10 points.

-Late Work-

Please note that assignments should be delivered by 9:00 am on the designated due date. If you believe that you will not be able to turn in a course project assignment on time, please contact me. I will not deduct points if you face uncontrollable circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time. Unexcused late work will receive a penalty of 1% of the assignment’s total points for each day it is late (the first day’s penalty being levied at 9:01am on the due date). Presentations and peer commentary are excluded from this policy as is the draft version of your report. Presentations and peer commentary must be submitted based on the schedule presented later in this syllabus or they will receive no credit; the draft report receives a 5 point penalty if it is turned in after the deadline listed in the schedule of readings.

-Grading-

Course grades will be determined using the following, fixed percent scale (please note that the square brackets denote “inclusive” and the rounded parentheses denote “exclusive”):

A:	[95%, 100%]	A-:	[90%, 95%)	B+:	[85%, 90%)
B:	[80%, 85%)	B-:	[75%, 80%)	C:	[65%, 75%)
F:	[0, 65%)				

-Expectations of Conduct for Students, Faculty and Staff- -Atkinson Graduate School of Management-

We are a community of learners. Our professional commitment is to create an environment that advances the science and practice of managing organizations. As individuals, we conduct ourselves with honor and integrity, treat everyone with respect, take responsibility for our actions, and fulfill our promises.

Examples of conduct consistent with this expectation include

- ~ Taking initiative
- ~ Crafting solutions
- ~ Completing assignments according to an agreed schedule
- ~ Offering constructive criticism and accepting it appreciatively
- ~ Taking responsibility for our own learning and that of others

We expect someone who observes or learns about behavior inconsistent with our expectations of conduct to initiate corrective action by clarifying the situation and encouraging the responsible party to act appropriately. In the case of a violation of School or University policies or the laws of relevant jurisdictions, notify the appropriate enforcement authorities.

Affirmed by the students, staff, and faculty, Fall, 2002.

-Americans with Disabilities Act-

I will gladly help create a learning environment that accommodates the diverse abilities of all students. I ask that students desiring academic accommodations arising from eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act provide documentation from Disability Services, located in the Bishop Wellness Center, within the first several weeks of the semester.

-Changes to this Syllabus-

I believe this syllabus puts forth a plan that will help you master the concepts, skills, and materials central to understanding how managers engage with politics and public policy. Nonetheless, unforeseen circumstances may require the modification of this syllabus to ensure learning. I reserve the right to make such changes, but I will consult you before making those adjustments.

-Calendar of Readings, Assignments, and Examinations-

Week	Date	Class Learning Objectives (Related Course Objective Listed in Parentheses)	Readings	Assessments
1	1/13/14	<p><u>The Scope of Policy Analysis, I:</u> <u>What is policy analysis?</u></p> <p>1. Define the objectives and methods of policy analysis (1, 2, 3, 4)</p> <p>2. Identify the components of a policy analysis (1, 2, 3, 4)</p> <p>3. Distinguish policy analysis from related forms of research and analysis (1, 2, 3, 4)</p>	<p>W&V (pp.2-22)</p> <p>---</p> <p>Walsh et al. (2013). “State-Level Policy Interventions to Address Childhood Obesity in Wisconsin”</p>	
2	1/20/14	<p><u>The Scope of Policy Analysis, II:</u> <u>What values guide policy analysis?</u></p> <p>1. Recognize common ways that ethical considerations influence policy analysis (1, 2, 3, 4)</p> <p>2. Utilize an understanding of basic ethical concepts to identify the normative assumptions underlying a piece of policy analysis (1, 2, 3, 4)</p> <p>3. Forecast ethical dilemmas in policy analysis and develop methods for selecting among alternative ways of resolving those conflicts (1, 2, 3, 4)</p>	<p>Emison, pp.45-46</p> <p>---</p> <p>Summers. (1991). “World Bank Memo.” (Actual Memo) (Easier to Read Version)</p> <p>--</p> <p>W&V, Ch. 2-3</p>	
3	1/27/14	<p><u>The Scope of Policy Analysis, III:</u> <u>What social goals does policy analysis seek to advance?</u></p> <p>1. Use the model of an idealized competitive economy to define “efficient” social outcomes (1, 2, 3)</p> <p>2. Apply the concept of Pareto Efficiency to determine if a social arrangement is “efficient” (1, 2, 3)</p> <p>3. Identify values other than efficiency that policies might promote (1, 2, 3)</p>	<p>W&V Ch.4</p>	<p>Memo 1 Due</p>

Week	Date	Class Learning Objectives (Related Course Objective Listed in Parentheses)	Readings	Assessments
4	2/3/14	<u>Identifying Public Problems I:</u> <u>Market Failure</u> 1. Define the concept of market failure (1) 2. Apply the concept of market failure to substantive problems to determine whether a public policy solution is needed (1) 3. Recognize common sources of market failure (1)	Bardach, pp.1-10 -- WV, Ch.5	
5	2/10/14	<u>Finding Policy Solutions I:</u> <u>Resolving Market Failures</u> 1. Use tools for assessing whether or not a market failure has occurred (2, 3) 2. Link certain types of market failure to generic policy solutions known to resolve the market failure (2, 3) 3. Devise means of evaluating the success of the policy solution (2, 3)	Bardach, pp.11-26 -- Emison, pp.33-34 -- WV, pp. 219-234	
6	2/17/14	<u>Identifying Public Problems II:</u> <u>Inequality and Fairness</u> 1. Familiarize yourself with methods of measuring inequality (1, 3) 2. Develop an understanding of how perceptions of unfairness impact communities (1)	Bardach, pp.26-38 -- WV, Ch.7	

Week	Date	Class Learning Objectives (Related Course Objective Listed in Parentheses)	Readings	Assessments
7	2/24/14	<u>Finding Policy Solutions II:</u> <u>Resolving Distributional Problems</u> 1. Identify generic policy solutions that ameliorate inequality (2, 3) 2. Learn principles of institutional design that promote fairness and tolerance (2, 3) 3. Recognize tradeoffs—particularly in terms of efficiency—resulting from efforts to alter distributional patterns (2, 3)	Bardach, pp.38-56 -- WV, pp.235-261	Memo 2 Due
8	3/3/14	<u>Identifying Public Problems III:</u> <u>Government Failures</u> 1. Define the concept of government failure (1) 2. Apply the concept of government failure to real public problems (1) 3. Recognize common sources of government failure (1)	Bardach, pp.56-64 -- Emison, pp.37-38 -- WV, Ch.8	
9	3/10/14	<u>Finding Policy Solutions III</u> <u>Resolving Government Failures</u> 1. Identify generic policy solutions that resolve government failures (2) 2. Forecast the challenges of resolving government failures(2, 3) 3. Recognize potential pitfalls of artificially constructed market mechanisms (2, 3)	Bardach, pp.137-143 -- WV, pp.210-218	

Week	Date	Class Learning Objectives (Related Course Objective Listed in Parentheses)	Readings	Assessments
10	3/17/14	<u>Enacting Policy Solutions I: Policy Adoption</u> 1. Trace the policy adoption process (3) 2. Identify crucial actors in the process of policy adoption such as gate keepers, agenda setters, median voters, and veto players, (2, 3) 3. Assess the resources, motivations, and beliefs of pivotal actors in the policy process (2, 3)	Bardach, pp.65-93 -- Emison, pp.40-41 -- WV, Ch.11	Memo 3 Due
Spring Break				
11	3/31/14	<u>Enacting Policy Solutions II: Policy Implementation</u> 1. Apply your understanding of forward and backward mapping to sketch out the implementation of a policy (2, 3) 2. Identify steps of policy implementation that could give rise to the principal-agent problem (2, 3) 3. Apply concepts from transaction cost economics to identify institutional arrangements that will facilitate successful implementation (2, 3)	WV, Ch. 12 & 13	
12	4/7/14	<u>Enacting Policy Solutions III: Policy Evaluation</u> 1. Master the basic features of the Rubin Causal Model (3) 2. Use the Rubin Causal Model to specify data that needs to be collected to conduct a program evaluation (3) 3. Recognize challenges in program evaluation that might inhibit the collection and analysis of data needed to conduct a program evaluation (3)	Emison, Ch.2, 3, & 5 -- Gertler et al., Ch.3	Draft Policy Analysis Report Due

Week	Date	Class Learning Objectives (Related Course Objective Listed in Parentheses)	Readings	Assessments
14	4/14/14	<u>Enacting Policy Solutions IV: Communicating Policy Advice</u> 1. Identify ways of translating the written form of a policy analysis into an effective spoken presentation (4) 2. Recognize attributes of your audience or client that should be taken into account when presenting policy analysis (4) 3. Develop an understanding of appropriate means to convey uncertainty in your findings (4)	Read Your Peers' Reports and Come to Class Ready to Discuss Them	Peer Critiques Due
15	4/21/14	<u>Student Presentations</u>	Read Your Peers' Reports and Come to Class Ready to Discuss Them	Presentations Due for Students in Group A
16	4/28/14	<u>Student Presentations</u>	Read Your Peers' Reports and Come to Class Ready to Discuss Them	Presentations Due for Students in Group B Final Policy Analysis Report Due 5/5/2014