

PLS 505 Applied Public Policy Analysis

Spring 2007

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Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays 4-6 pm (Leutze 261)

Course Description: This course presents approaches, techniques and other tools for the practice of policy analysis in public and non-profit organizations, the community, and society. There will be an emphasis on constructing policy analyses useful to decision makers in organizations and elective bodies and how analysts can become better advice givers. The policy making and administrative context within which analysis takes place is also presented. This is a skill based practice class where students will have an opportunity to practice applications of their newly acquired craft/trade.

Course Goals: To have students master the skills necessary to complete a comprehensive policy analysis and develop better presentation skills to decision makers. The course also will help students gain knowledge about the key concepts, terms, and the techniques of analysis used in the field of public policy analysis.

Course Pre-requisites: PLS 541- Cost Benefit Analysis or permission of Instructor.

Course Requirements and Grading: There will be a series of weekly written assignments which will count for 40% of your grade. There will be a group policy project worth 40% of your grade. Finally, there will be a take home final (a case study to be analyzed) worth 20% of your grade.

Books Ordered and Required:

Eugene Bardach (2005 Second Edition) A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

John Hird (2005). Power, Knowledge and Politics: Policy Analysis in the States. Washington D. C.: Georgetown University Press.

Carl Patton and David Sawicki (1993 second edition). Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Assignments and Schedule:

January 22 Introduction to class
 Why study Policy Analysis ?
 Program and Policy Analysis, Some definitions and distinctions
 The Role of Analysis in Decision Making
 The Policy Analysis/Program Evaluation Professions
 Career Paths in Policy Analysis

Read: Hird, Chapters 1-4.

January 29 Dr. James Leutze , Rural and Coastal Projects
 Analysis and Credibility
 What adds credibility to analysis ?
 Major purposes of analysis
 The Advice Giving Profession, Skills and Concepts
 What is good practice?

Read: Hird, Chapters 5-7.

Assignment: Check the web pages of policy think tanks and organizations. Look at their publications, staffers, mission statement, public relations, etc. In your judgment, pick out 2 or 3 organizations that you think have the most credibility and in TWO pages indicate why they are the most credible. Certainly the largest think tanks—The Brookings Institution, Urban Institute, Rand Corporation, American Enterprise Institute, etc. can be used but also do not forget smaller ones, ie., John Locke, Inc. in North Carolina. Be prepared to make a 10 minute power point presentation on your memo. Use bullet format.

February 5 Dr. James Leutze, Rural and Coastal Projects
 What is policy analysis?
 What is Good Practice?
 Major skills and knowledge of policy analysts
 Rationality in policy analysis

Read: Bardach, entire book. In one page answer the question—To what extent is policy analysis rational ? Be prepared to argue your position. Also be prepared to make a 10 minute power point presentation on the one pager.

February 12 Learn by Doing
 Ex Ante vs. Ex Post Analysis
 Three Major Types of Analysis
 Policy Formats and Designs
 Executive Summaries
 White Papers, Position Papers

Read: Patton and Sawicki, chapters 1-4. Then complete a one page memo indicating a policy problem you would like to work on and give a rationale for your selection. Present a 10 minute power point on your problem and rationale.

February 19 Problem definition
 Developing criteria and alternatives for analysis
 Trade-offs between criteria
 Dividing into groups and setting up a Policy Project Team

Read: Patton and Sawicki, chapters 5-8.

February 26 Advice Giving
 What constitutes good advice giving?
 Speaking truth to power
 Advocacy vs. Advice Giving

Read the Atlanta case, Patton and Zawicki , chapter 16 (p.450) and draft a three page memo in which you indicate the key facts, the major stakeholders and their interests, at least three options and three criteria, then make your recommendation and give your rationale. Assume you are staff to the Pepper Adams and you are providing him/her advice on three alternative policies that the city could use to approach redevelopment. Remember you represent and are speaking to Pepper Adams so your advice should be directed to his/her interests not yours and not other elective officials. Or assume you are giving your advice to the Mayor. You can speak to either one.

March 12 . Evaluating Policy Options and estimating a quantitative score
 How many options to present
 Throw away options and their value
 Education vs. Pragmatism

Read: Patton and Sawicki, chapters 7-9. Bring to class a description of the policy project for your group. What is the problem? Justification and rationale for doing the analysis? Tentative identification of four alternatives or options you will explore. Your preferred solution. This is a group project. Present 10 minute power point on project.

March 19 Estimating long range costs and benefits of policy options
 Review notes from Public Economics Class—Cost Benefit analysis
 Calculating the cost benefit ratio/Net Present Value

Read: Patton and Sawicki, chapter 12 case study on Solid Waste Collection.. Analyze three options and make your recommendation. Outline should include background, stakeholders, options, criteria, analysis, recommendations. Three page limit. Do power point presentation. Ten minutes. This is not a group project. Results aimed at City Manager and elected city council.

March 26 Focusing on political feasibility and Sensitivity Analysis
 Balancing efficiency with political feasibility
 The big trade off---efficiency and equity
 Review roles of analyst
 Analyst vs. Advocates

Read: Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 13. Analyze case and make a recommendation. Handout will describe conditions of analysis. Format includes background, stakeholders, at least three options, criteria, analysis, your recommendation. Make sure you take into account both short and long term benefits and costs. Your recommendations are aimed at the President of U.

April 2 Making Oral Presentations
 Utilization models—how do decision makers make up their minds
 How and what kind of data to use
 Persuading decision makers

Read: Chapter on Advice giving will be given out. Each group will develop a tentative outline

for their presentation. Bring to class in written form. Present in 10 minute power point presentation. This is a group project.

Take home final, a case study will be handed out. Analysis due April 9 th.

April 9 Project meetings and consultation with Instructor. Final case analysis due.

April 16 Project meetings and consultation with Instructor.

April 23 Project meetings and consultation with Instructor.

April 30 Final Presentations.

Appendix A—Some possible public policy analysis projects (in consultation with Dr. James Leutze):

Coastal projects:

- Recommend secondary infra-structure projects (policies) and their costs for the proposed new Port Facility in Southport (ie., ignore costs of immediate facility and dredging. Focus on secondary impacts like schools, highways, pollution, wetlands, water and sewer capacity.)
- What type of zoning should be used for property close to or adjacent to the Ocean? Setbacks? Height? Types of use? ie, Special Coastal Zoning ordinance for entire State or Sub-Region. Check Florida and California and other Gulf and Pacific and Atlantic states and regions. Develop best practice for North Carolina.
- Develop and design a model impact fee ordinance for local government in the state. Explore and analyze options before making recommendations. Compare impact fees with other ways of paying for infra-structure development. Which is best? Why?
- Assume there are a finite number of fish available off the coast of North Carolina. Recommend ways of allocating access to those fish for commercial and recreational purposes. Recommend options for allocation.
- Develop and evaluate alternative funding formulas and sources for beach re-nourishment, dredging, draft inlets, etc. This is an alternative financing project that assumes a major withdrawal of federal funds for these type of projects.

Other Regional Projects:

- Develop the best way for generating affordable housing for people in the lowest 25% income category in this region. Look at a range of options including modular housing, high density, mixed use development, shared or communal housing (owned by a cooperative), etc.
- Developing the most cost effective strategies for attracting high value industry in this region (look at and evaluate other strategies being used by states and communities).
- Same as above, but focus on strategies for rural areas especially those who have recently lost manufacturing, textile, and furniture industries. Check Ferrill Guilroy, the Rural Center in Raleigh.

- Explore alternative ways of absorbing more “gray” and “brown” population groups to this region.
- Improving input and governance in the region or how to stimulate more “civic engagement”? See Ford Foundation projects.
- Improving regional governance institutions and structures in the Region, options and alternatives.
- Improving the Quality of Life in the Region, options and alternatives.
- Reducing income inequality in the Region between newcomers and native North Carolinians.