

HP 850 Policy Analysis Spring 2009

Three Credits

Instructor: Vivian Valdmanis (email [v.valdma@usp.edu](mailto:v.valdma@usp.edu)) Course Title: Public Policy Analysis

Course Description: This course is designed to provide students with the necessary skills in order to participate in the public policy analysis arena. Topics include theoretical concepts of democracy and policy; pragmatism, problem definition, public interest politics, theory versus implementation failure. Special topics will be discussed in detail.

Prerequisites: Background in Health Care Services Research, Health Economics, and Statistics

Applicable student population: Graduate students in health policy, Public Health or other interested graduate students.

The Objectives and Goals for this course include the Following:

1. Understanding the role of an analyst in the public policy process
2. Define theoretical underpinnings of the public policy
3. Assessing the role of political science and other fields of study to public policy
4. Demonstrate an understanding of pragmatic issues in the public policy process
5. Write succinct but well developed analysis plans

Class time will be made up by lecture and class discussion with a focus on the latter. Students should be prepared with the readings completed and ready to discuss not only the theories of public policy analysis but the content as applied by the special topic areas.

January 14 Week 1: Introduction

Homework Chapter 1-2 *Policy Analysis* By David Wiemer and Aidan Vining Denoted as (W&V) in the rest of the syllabus.

January 21 Week 2: Defining theories of Democracy and applicability to the Public Policy Process and the Policy Process Handout in Class Sections from *Law, Pragmatism, and Democracy* by Richard Posner

Homework: Chapter 2 (W&V) Essay 1 Assigned

January 28 Week 3: Apply the concepts of side effectives, spillovers, externalities and the role of Ethics in Public Policy

Homework: Chapter 3 (W&V) Essay 1 Due

February 4, 11, 18 Weeks 4, 5, and 6: Politics, Markets, Policy Making and Political Theory Special Topics Handout – Sections from *Common Wealth* by Jeffrey Sachs

Homework: Chapters 4-7 (W&V) Essay 2 Assigned

February 25 Week 7: Political Approach and Various Theories of Voter Behavior, Democracy and Consistency in Decision-Making Hand out – Selected Readings from *Democracy Matters* by Cornel West and *The Myth of the Rational Voter* by Bryan Caplan Essay 2 Due

March 4 – Spring Break  
March 11 Reading Day

March 18 Week 8: Government Failures  
Chapter 8 and 10 (W&V) and *The Three Trillion Dollar War* by Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes Essay 3 Assigned

March 25 Week 9: Adoption versus Implementation – Theory and Implementation Success and Failure  
Chapter 11 and 12 (W&V) and *What Life Is Worth* Kenneth R. Feinberg Essay 3 Due

April 1 Week 10: *Noxious New York* by Julie Sze and *Fallout: The Environmental Consequences of the World Trade Center* by Juan Gonzalez  
Application of Voter Behavior, Government Failure, Market Failure Essay 4 Assigned

April 8 Week 11: Selected Readings on Bank Failures Selected Readings from *Too Big to Fail: The Hazards of Bank Bailouts* by Gary Stern and Ron Feldman  
Implementation Theory and Failure Essay 4 Due

April 15 Week 12: *Best Care Anywhere* by Phillip Longman  
An Example of What Works Essay 5 Assigned

April 22 Week 13: *Blunder* by Zachary Shore  
Why Mistakes are made in the Policy Process

Required Reading: (All Available through Amazon.Com)  
*Policy Analysis Practice and Concepts* by David Weimer and Aidan R. Vining Prentice Hall 2005  
*The Three Trillion Dollar War* by Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes  
*What Life Is Worth* Kenneth R. Feinberg  
*Noxious New York* by Julie Sze  
*Fallout: The Environmental Consequences of the World Trade Center* by Juan Gonzalez  
*Best Care Anywhere* by Phillip Longman  
*Blunder* by Zachary Shore

Grading: 5 Short Papers on topics relevant to class discussion, topic area and analysis or application of theory -- 20% each – However, students can opt of writing the final exam essay and take the average grade of the previous 4 essays plus 1/3 of a grade. Students will also have the chance to submit drafts of essays 1 and 2 for comments and revisions. Drafts will be commented on if received by Monday 8:00 am and returned to

students by 4 pm on the same Monday. A finished product for essays 3, 4, and 5 will be expected on the due dates.

The evaluation of the student work will be on both the student's presentation, including clarity of writing, analytical approach, and conclusions based on the evidence from the readings either empirical or theoretical. For example, students should pay attention to:

- 1). Clarity on the definition of the problem or issue
- 2). The applicable policy concept for this problem or issue
- 3). To what purpose would this analysis be used?

Evaluation: Based on class participation, exercises, presentation, and exam

Office Hours: Students are welcome to discuss their work. I will be available on Monday and Wednesday, 3:00 -- 4:30 pm and by appointment – please by email only [v.valdma@usp.edu](mailto:v.valdma@usp.edu)

Weather policy: If severe weather is predicted students may opt to leave early. If the class is canceled, an alternative date will be determined. Students will be notified by phone.

### Academic Integrity

*Academic integrity is at the center of the educational experience at USP. Students are therefore expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and not engage in nor tolerate academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, fabrication, cheating or plagiarism. Any violation of academic integrity will be investigated and, where warranted, the student will receive appropriate sanctions through the University's Student Conduct Process. Please familiarize yourself with the current USP Student Handbook. In particular, adherence to the Student Conduct Policy and Academic Integrity Policy will help to ensure that your learning and living experiences are founded on integrity.*

### Student Disability Support Services (SDSS)

*USP supports the educational endeavors of all students, including students with disabilities. The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.*

*If you believe you have a disability that may impact your ability to fulfill your course or degree requirements, and you would like more information on applying for an accommodation, please contact the Assistant Dean of Students who serves as the SDSS Coordinator at 215-596-8950.*

