UMass | Dartmouth

General Description: See Specific Course Syllabus When Available on Course Site

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COURSE: POL 530: Policy Analysis

Course Description:

This course provides opportunities to examine the main frameworks, theories, and models of the policy process. Focus areas include the assessment and evaluation of public policy and policy outcomes. Seminal empirical works provide the context for understanding the major academic literature in policy analysis, aiding students in developing their own policy analysis skills.

Outcomes of the Course:

- Students will produce a final policy analysis memo that identifies the root causes of the policy problem and its most important consequences; uses both evidence and logic to demonstrate why the policy needs to be addressed (being certain to explore multiple sides); provide four to five credible policy alternatives that merit your client's consideration; explain the rationale behind each and briefly describe how it would work; describe the evaluation criteria that should drive the decision about which alternative to select; project the performance of alternatives; assess the tradeoffs among alternatives, and recommend an alternative. A rubric will be provided.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate and apply key theories through problem sets, short written reflections, oral presentations, online experiential activities, in-class collaborative projects, short weekly exercises designed to facilitate weekly class engagement.

- Students will develop sensitivity to multiple ways of representing policy analysis knowledge through the reading of a text beyond the required text for the course and an online oral presentation to the class on the text. The project will involve collaboration with a peer(s). Students are expected to engage the audience during the presentation, allow space for questions and follow up by engaging the audience.

Some of the questions the course raises:

- Questions centering on a focused exploration of an area of interest: (problems and outcomes) What are the key problems, outcome measures, or policy questions in your field? (solutions and tools) What are the most prominent policy solutions or tools to address the key problems/questions? (implementation and logic models) What are some of the key aspects of policy or program implementation tied to the most prominent policy tools? (evidence and impact) What is the state of the evidence surrounding the impact of key tools or interventions?
- How is policy analysis defined and what are the phases of policy analysis?
- What is the difference between prospective and retrospective policy analysis; reconstructed logic and logic-in-use; problem structuring and problem solving?
- How are policy arguments structured and what are their elements?
- How are scorecards, spreadsheets, influence diagrams, decision trees and argument maps interpreted?

Equity and accessibility:

I wish to fully include students of all backgrounds in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations to enable you to participate fully. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information shared. Students with special needs are encouraged to contact the Center for Access and Success for information concerning campus disability-related policies and services.

<u>**Contact Information:**</u>	<u>**Hours of Operation:**</u>
Center for Access & Success	Monday - Friday: 8:30am-5:00pm
Office Phone: 508.999.8711	Hours are subject to change.
Location: Pine Dale Hall, Room 7136	
E-mail: access_success@umassd.edu	

Preferred Name & Preferred Gender Pronouns:

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me and peers of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records and so that peers may address you appropriately.

Plagiarism:

<u>I have absolutely no tolerance for academic dishonesty</u>! Please refer to the student handbook for the university guidelines on plagiarism, but understand that a referral to the judicial review board or failure in the assignment or class as a whole is entirely within reason. Plagiarism includes taking ideas from

others, without appropriate citations. If you are not familiar with APA citations, please consider undertaking relevant research and visiting the writing center. The Writing and Reading Center routinely conducts workshops on the APA format.

The Writing and Reading Center:

I encourage that students seek feedback on papers from the writing center on campus. The Writing and Reading Center is located on the second floor of LARTS, Room 220.

While classes are in session, tutors are available Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Fridays, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Face-to-face and online tutoring services are available.

To make an appointment, please stop by LARTS 220 or call 508-999-8710. The website address to the center is: http://www.umassd.edu/wrc.

Incompletes:

No student will be allowed an incomplete unless she/he has completed at least 75% of the course work. Any student obtaining an incomplete will have two semesters to make up the work, after which the grade turns into an "F". No incompletes will be given for any reason, unless it is discussed with the instructor beforehand.

Course Format/Attendance:

The course is delivered fully online. The course will be delivered both in lecture and seminar format. It will involve primarily a combination of small-group and whole-class discussion, with both student and instructor responsibilities for discussion leadership. The structure of the class is dependent on active engagement. Students are expected to read all assignments and student posts/reflections.

Generally, you can expect the following: A question or set of questions will be introduced on Sunday of each week. Students will respond to each question in *at least* a full thoughtful paragraph by **Friday 11:59 p.m**. Students then have until **Sunday 11:59 p.m**. to interact with the comments of at least two other colleagues. Sometimes, I will direct to you to different discussion forums in each lesson so that the dialogue is more focused (for example: one forum will cover one reading and another a second article). It is always best that you post early and often. Please refrain from posting responses that are left at the level of simple statement or that simply state agreement with a colleague without further contributing to the dialogue. The point is to support your statement and agreement with another student by stating reasons and offering your own interpretation of the subject matter. I also strongly encourage students to utilize parts of the reading and/or direct everyone to parts of the reading.

Students should make it a point to write in a word processing software (I'm trying very hard not to help market any one corporation) and then post. This way, your work will be saved in case of platform malfunction.

Please keep in mind that this form of linear engagement is not always wise pedagogically. It serves as a basic layout of what you may expect. I value spontaneity and welcome creativity! If you are ever unclear about directions in a given week, please contact me immediately for clarification. Chances are good that others may have similar questions.

The pedagogical value of the course is greater when students are exposed to content one week at a time. You are, of course, able to read beyond the respective week should you desire to read ahead. Please keep in mind, however, that readings may be subject to change depending on the unfolding discussions in class. It's always best to inquire before reading in advance.

Working Assumptions of the Course:

1. Depth is favored over breadth: This is not a survey course. There is no attempt to "cover" all of the material. We will deliberately revisit a number of topics and ideas but probably not be able to cover everything in the readings. You will be encouraged to read much more than we can discuss in class.

2. Ideas, not individuals are open to challenge: The nature of the course should produce a diversity of ideas. To ensure that multiple voices are heard the course must foster a high degree of psycho-social safety (not to be confused with comfort). As graduate students, you should feel comfortable challenging the ideas and thinking of others. However, that challenge cannot be in the form of personal attacks or disparagement. We will not always agree with one another; but we must always be respectful of one another. Please see the statement below governing all courses at the University. The statement was reviewed and approved by the University's Faculty Senate in 2015.

    "The purpose of a university is to disseminate information, as well as to explore a universe of ideas, to encourage diverse perspectives and robust expression, and to foster the development of critical and analytical thinking skills. In many classes, including this one, students and faculty examine and analyze challenging and controversial topics. If a topic covered in this class triggers post-traumatic stress or other emotional distress, please discuss the matter with the professor or seek out confidential resources available from the Counseling Center, http://www.umassd.edu/counselling/, 508-999-8648 or - 8650, or the Victim Advocate in the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality, http://www.umassd.edu/sexualviolence/, 508-910-4584. In an emergency contact the Department of Public Safety at 508-999-9191 24 hrs./day."

UMass Dartmouth, following national guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, requires that faculty follow UMass Dartmouth policy as a "mandated reporter" of any disclosure of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or violence shared with the faculty member in person and/or via email. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational abuse, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. While faculty are often able to help students locate appropriate channels of assistance on campus, disclosure by the student to the faculty member requires that the faculty member inform the University's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at 508-999-8008 to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, even if the student requests that the disclosure not be shared.

For confidential counseling support and assistance, please go to

http://www.umassd.edu/sexualviolence/

3. Questions represent opportunities to learn. Students often self-sensor. Questions can be a good indicator of your engagement with the subject matter. Your questions may lead to clearer understandings for us all.

4. The weekly themes and topics are not reserved to only the week in which they appear in the syllabus. All of the themes and topics in the course should be understood as ongoing conversations throughout the semester. Please expect to revisit discussions.

5. We will engage texts that older, but considered seminal to the themes of the course, as well as texts that are recent. Seminal texts should be read through a consideration of their significance to current issues in education policy.

6. Online environments require that students be more self-directed and that they manage their time efficiently. Students assume responsibility for their own learning and success: You get out of this experience what you put into it. Thus, students need to make their needs known.

7. The conversations engaged in the course often invites a lack of closure. I am not concerned about always ending discussions on "a positive note," nor do I seek finality in the dialogue or debate. I view classroom interactions as a process of exploration. Consider everything that unfolds in the course as an opportunity to extend your learning experiences beyond "the end of the conversation" in a given discussion board or week.

Assignments:

- Policy Memo – Students will produce a policy memo that identifies the root causes of the policy problem and its most important consequences; uses both evidence and logic to demonstrate why the policy needs to be addressed (being certain to explore multiple sides); provide four to five credible policy alternatives that merit your client's consideration; explain the rationale behind each and briefly describe how it would work; describe the evaluation criteria that should

drive the decision about which alternative to select; project the performance of alternatives; assess the tradeoffs among alternatives, and recommend an alternative. A rubric will be provided.

- Class Presentation during the Course of the Semester – In pairs or groups, students will co-lead one of the online interactions. This means that you will have some discretion with regards to the structure of the week's lesson. Students are encouraged to link weekly topics to local, national and/or global issues. Presenters are encouraged to use nontraditional approaches to teaching and learning, and also to select various forms of media to use in their presentation. A rubric will be provided for those who need concrete guidance.

- Class Participation – Students are expected to contribute to class discussions each week by sharing their thoughts on the readings; knowledge of local contexts; personal experiences as they relate to class topics; as well as any resources or media they feel is pertinent. Students are also expected to interact with peers weekly. A series of in class exercises (or take-home exercises in preparation for the following class) will be distributed and sometimes collected. The exercises are designed to align with the outcomes of the course and to assess engagement with course readings.

- Choice Reading & Presentation – Students will select a text out of a list and engage it throughout the semester independently and sometimes in class. Students will be responsible for a presentation that briefly summarizes the text, offers analysis, imagines alternatives to policy analysis, and imagines the texts possibilities in terms of impacting the policy process. The presentation will occur towards the end of the semester. Students are expected to thoroughly read and understand the text, be able to engage the audience during presentation and allow space for question as well as follow up by engaging the audience. A presentation rubric will be provided.

** **Reading all the assigned material is essential to making this pedagogical format work.**

Grading Rubric:

A: 100 – 90 B: 89 – 80 C: 79 – 70 D: 69 – 60 F: 59 – 0

Grading for the course will be determined along the following breakdown:

Assignment 1: Policy Memo 30%

Assignment 2:	Class Participation and In-Class Projects	30%
Assignment 3:	Course Presentations	20%
Assignment 4:	Reading and Final Presentation on a Selected Text	20%

Grading Format for Assignments (other than weekly online discussions)

A	Excellent and exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of good professional quality, shows an incisive understanding of the major policy issues and demonstrates a clear recognition and mastery of the appropriate analytical approaches to address the problems and questions.
A-	Strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity and is thorough and well-reasoned. It indicates a strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches and demonstrates a clear recognition and good understanding of the salient policy issues and problems.
B+	Competent and sound graduate student work. Work is well reasoned and thorough and methodologically and analytically sound, but is not especially creative or insightful, nor technologically or analytically sophisticated. It shows adequate understanding of the policy issues and problems, although that understanding may be somewhat incomplete. This grade indicates neither unusual strengths nor exceptional weaknesses.
B	Adequate graduate student work. Basically competent performance, although the work shows some weaknesses. Work is moderately thorough and well-reasoned, but there is some indication that the understanding of important policy issues is less than complete. It may also be inadequate in other ways, such as quality of reasoning, writing, or incomplete analysis. Methodological or analytical approaches are generally adequate but have one or more weaknesses or limitations.
B-	Borderline graduate student work. This work barely meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. The understanding of basic policy issues is incomplete and the methodological or analytical work performed is minimally adequate. The writing and reasoning barely qualify for professional quality work. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would barely suffice to sustain graduate status in good standing and does not reflect long-term professional quality work.
C	Deficient graduate work. This work does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed and flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues. Methodological work or analysis is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or basic skills competence expected of graduate student work. May also reflect unprofessional level of writing, organization, or reasoning skills.

Weekly Online Discussion Rubric & Grading (20 points weekly)

The online discussion rubric is embedded into the My Courses platform. You will be able to access the evaluation on a weekly basis.

Objective/Criteria	Accomplished 1	Accomplished 2	Proficient	Emerging 1	Emerging 2	Marginal
Posting Content	An accomplished posting provides a thoughtfully developed response that appropriately addresses the	An accomplished 2 posting provides a developed response that appropriately addresses the	A proficient posting provides a less developed response than the	The emerging posting meets the basic requirements for the discussion activity.	The emerging 2 posting meets the basic requirement s for the	Discussion activity not posted.

	assigned questions. The response also makes effective use of the readings for evidence and support of points. In addition, the response shows originality, engagement with the ideas in the readings, and explains points fully for readers.	assigned questions. The response also makes effective use of the readings for evidence and support of points. This response might need additional development in areas of originality and engagement with the ideas in the readings.	accomplished posting. Often, this posting does not develop its ideas in as much detail or fails to use the readings effectively to support the points under discussion. The posting meets the requirements, but often lacks full engagement with the activity and does not demonstrate complex thinking.	Overall, though, the emerging level posting lacks development, engagement, demonstration of critical thinking, and effective use of the readings. Meets the requirements for the assignment but does not go beyond those requirements.	discussion activity, but really lacks development of ideas and may not address all the questions asked in the space requested. The posting may also lack engagement or effective demonstration of critical thinking, and/or effective use of the readings.	
	10	9	8	7	6	0
Response to classmates	Writer has fully read the discussion board, posted more than the minimum number of required postings, and demonstrated real engagement with classmate ideas. Responses are developed and refer to readings and other postings and work to elicit more conversation.	Writer has read the discussion board, but not completely. The writer has posted the required number of responses, development is needed.	Writer has read the discussion board, but not fully. The writer has posted the required number of responses, but not gone beyond or the responses are undeveloped.	Writer has not read the board fully. The writer does not post the required number of postings, or the postings are undeveloped and only a few sentences in length.	Writer has not read the board fully; doe not post the required number of postings; the posts are undeveloped and only a few sentences in length; there is little to no evidence of having read the week's materials.	No responses to classmates.
	8	7	6	5	2	0

Execution	The response is well written in proper length and with attention paid to documentation formatting for	Overall, the writing is clear and written in proper length but there are sentence level errors and/or	Overall, the writing is clear and written in proper length but there are	The posting is correct in length but has several sentence level errors and/or does not	The posting is incorrect in length and has numerous sentence level	No posting.

quotes. No sentence level errors.	incorrect APA citations.	sentence level errors and/or incorrect APA / MLA citations.	follow correct APA / MLA documentation format.		
2	1.5	1.5	1	1	0

Journals:

I highly encourage students to access journals to develop knowledge of the public policy process and policy analysis. Some journals worthy of consideration include:

- Public Policy and Administration

- Public Administration Review

- Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory

- Public Administration

- The American Review of Public Administration

- Policy Studies Journal

- Policy & Politics

- Administration & Society

- Social Policy & Administration

- Policy & Society

- International Journal of Public Administration

- Public Performance & Management Review

- Journal of Policy Analysis & Management

- Policy Sciences

- Journal of Policy Analysis and Management

Note: A number of these journals are available to you through the library. Some are available online with your UMD credentials.

Text for the Course:

- Bardach, Eugene & Patashnik, Eric M. (2016). (5th ed.). *Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- All other readings will be available through myCourses.

Choice Texts (select <u>one</u> for independent reading throughout the semester):

❖ Note: The choice text is designed to offer students an opportunity to explore areas of interest. Consider it an exploration into less technical policy research literature that appeals to a broad audience and that may be both focused and broad in scope. The texts may also open up an opportunity for students to think about a policy issue worthy of pursuing for the policy memo assignment (see list of assignments).

Semester Schedule:

1st Week
Peer, instructor, and Course Introduction

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Course Syllabus
- ➢ Upload an introductory video of yourself that focuses on your personal & educational biography, your relationship to public policy and experience with online education. (Due by **Friday at 11:59 p.m**.)[i]
- ➢ Interact with peers by commenting on introductions. (Due by **Sunday at 11:59 p.m.)**
   - o Note: This is just a casual "get to know" peers and instructor introduction, similar to what would occur in a face to face classroom. Students are not required to respond to everyone. The usual requirement is to respond to at least two peers. Students are *encouraged* to go beyond two.
- ➢ Post any questions concerning the course structure, readings, assignments, and/or course expectations. (Due by **Friday at 11:59 p.m.**)
- ➢ Turn in your initial survey. (Due by **Friday at 11:59 p.m.)**

2nd Week
What is Policy Analysis? What is Policy Research? What is Evaluation Research?

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Bardach & Patashnik, *Introduction.* pp. xv-xx.
- Wildavsky, Aaron, *The Art of Policy Analysis*.
- Kraft & Furlong, *Policy Analysis: An Introduction*, pp. 93-116

3rd Week
Theories of the Policy Process: The Policy Cycle & The Policy Regime Framework

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Weible, *Understanding and Influencing the Policy Process*. pp. 1-21
- Howard, *The Policy Cycle: A Model of Post-Machiavellian Policy Making*?
- Hoberg, *Policy Cycles and Policy Regimes: A Framework for Studying Policy Change.* pp. 3-30.

4th Week
Theories of the Policy Process: From Rational Choice to Constructivism

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Ostrom. *Review: Rational Choice Theory and Institutional Analysis: Toward Complementarity*. pp. 237-243.
- Schneider. *What is Next for Policy Design and Social Construction Theory?* pp. 103-119.

5th Week
Recent Developments in Policy Theories

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Petridou. *Theories of the Policy Process: Contemporary Scholarship and Future Directions.*
- Cairney. *Standing on the Shoulder of Giants: How Do We Combine the Insights Of Multiple Theories in Public Policy Studies?*

6th Week
Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: Defining Policy Problems & Assembling Evidence

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Bardach & Patashnik, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis*, Pp. 1-18 (before step three).
- The U.S. Department of Education, *A Nation At Risk.* https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html.

7th Week

Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: Specifying Policy Alternatives

Reading(s) & Assignments:

- Bardach & Patashnik, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis*, Pp. 18-27 (before step four) and Appendix B, "*Things Governments Do,*" Pp. 155-163. (Appendix B – a broad list of policy instruments – provides an excellent foundation for specifying policy alternatives).

8th Week
Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: Selection of Evaluation Criteria to Confronting the Trade-Offs

- Bardach & Patashnik. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis.* pp. 27-71.
- Bardach & Patashnik. *Appendix A,* Pp. 141 – 154.

9th Week
Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: Deepening the Analysis & Reporting

- Bardach & Patashnik. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis. The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. pp. 71-82.

10th Week
Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: Assembling Evidence

- Bardach & Patashnik. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis. The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. pp. 83-112.

11th Week
Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: Design Problems

- Bardach & Patashnik. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis. The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. pp. 113-124.

12th Week
Concepts and Methods Applied in the Analysis of Policy: "Smart (Best) Practices" Research

- Bardach & Patashnik. A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis. The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. pp. 124-140.

➢ Presentations

13th Week

➢ Presentations

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[i] Students can expect a due date of every Friday for initial posts and a response to peers due on every Sunday.