

PSCI/MPIA 5354 Public Policy Analysis

<http://Scholar.vt.edu>

Jeremy Hunsinger

[jhuns@vt.edu](mailto:jhuns@vt.edu)

AIM buridan1

office hours 3-5 wednesday afternoon. Online office hours arranged via email.

This course will cover contemporary public policy analysis. It will confront central themes in public policy analysis, its foundations, and its uses. In examining these topics, amongst others, we hope to develop a critical understanding of the issues of public policy analysis as they occur now, and will occur in the future. This course is about actually performing professionally as a public policy analyst.

The course goals are:

1. To gain a solid understanding of the public policy analysis;
2. To develop a critical appreciation for the challenges of public policy analysis;
3. To develop the student's understanding of public policy applied to their field.
4. To critically evaluate scholarship in the field;
5. To perform public policy analysis at a very high level of competence.

This is a graduate level course and with that comes high expectations. For a graduate course you should be spending 3 hours in the online classroom, 0-10 hours doing the assigned readings, and 2-6 hours of research on materials related to your research project each week. You should plan to average around 15 hours per week on this class.

These course goals will be evaluated through four types of assignments:

#### 1. Participation

Participation takes place in the forums in the scholar e-learning system. There you will ask each other questions, reply to questions, post commentary, and generally pursue enlightened discourse. Participation should take the form of well thought out contributions to the discussion, usually of paragraph or longer length. On average I expect that during a week you will contribute somewhere between 10 and 20 times. I expect that these will be spread out over the period of a week, and participation is thought of as something that you do during weeks, and therefore it is inadvisable to skip weeks. Participation is very real and yes I grade it as fairly as I can. If you choose not to do it at all, you will fail the course. If you choose to do very little of it, you will get a very poor grade in the section. In short, participation is required. 15 points total

#### 2. Reading reviews

For each book, there is a reading review due. It is due Monday evening after 5pm and before Tuesday morning at 1am. Your reading review is posted in the forums, so your peers can read it. You should write somewhere between 500 and 1000 words, sometimes more, sometimes less about the readings. You should attempt to critically analyze the reading. You should attempt to demonstrate that you have read the readings. You should point out issues, confusions, or questions that you have about the readings. You should point out what you thought about the readings, but not what you felt about them, or how you evaluate them, good or bad. We are going to analyze the readings, not evaluate them. There should be a greater depth to your analysis than like/dislike/good/bad. There are nine possible reading reviews. You may skip one reading, but not the first week's reading review nor the last reading review. Given that each reading review reflects your own perspective on this material, there should be no plagiarism. You should cite appropriately. Five of the reading reviews will be graded. Each graded reading review is worth 3 points. 15 points total

### 3. Public Policy Analyses

You will perform three different public policy analyses in this course, each one on the same topic. You will choose the topic.

#### Part 1: Research

You will have to choose one area of specialization and one set of policies or policy goals to analyze. A policy goal might be 'increase privacy in libraries', or 'increase participation in public meetings'. You will spend the first four weeks of this course gathering material to research your policy. Each of these researching projects will require access to an academic library and the internet. You will turn in as much research as you can both times, attempting to do a thorough literature review of your topic based in published policy and published academic writing. The goal this part of the assignment is to develop your expertise in the literature surrounding your questions. You should get copies of all the materials you are collecting and be able to provide copies of them to me should I request them. Each one of these will be worth 5 points.

#### Part 2: Policy Analysis

Each policy analysis will develop from perspectives presented in the course readings. They will be between 8 and 12 pages in length. They will use one perspective covered in the Dryzek book or in one of our other books. You will have to define a clear audience for your policy analysis. You will have to provide a clear argument for that audience. That argument will be based on data that you gathered in your research. From your first analyses to your final analysis you will build upon your same case study, developing your argument, and addressing a new audience, with new methods that we are learning about in class. Each assignment will be worth 15 points.

Total for research and analyses is 55 points.

#### Final Exam:

The final exam is a take-home essay exam in which you describe what you have learned in this class and specify its applicability in your career. It will be three questions to be answered out of a possible five questions. It will be worth 15 points

Total points for the class is 100 points.

#### On plagiarism and academic dishonesty:

You are bound by the graduate honor code in the course. If you are unfamiliar with the honor standards, they are in your student handbook.

#### On group work:

Working in a group is allowed on major assignments. If you work as a group, your effort will be judged as a group, but you will also need to do work commensurate with having more people working on a project. You will also need to turn in documentation on who has performed what for that assignment.

#### On Disabilities:

I cannot act on any issue that you may have that differentiates you from the rest of the populace unless you have that difference documented by the university and the university tells me how to manage the difference. Without university documentation, I must treat everyone the same, which is a standard of fairness.

#### On Leeway and Emergencies:

If you need more time for something, ask before it is due. If you have an emergency, take care of your emergency and contact me at your convenience afterwards. This course is not more important than the welfare of humans or animals within your care or yourself. I always will try to treat every situation fairly. I may ask for documentation of some situations. However, most reasonable things are... by definition reasonable, so do what is reasonable.

#### On Incompletes:

I do not give incompletes. I will give you the final grade that you earn in the class when the class is complete. If there are extenuating circumstances, then we will come to an arrangement, and after the arrangement is completed, I will change your grade to reflect that arrangement.

On Citation:

You will cite appropriately using APA or Chicago Manual of Style. If you fail to cite appropriately, you will be failed for the assignment. If you merely make mistakes, you will only lose points.

Grades:

The grades of the course will look like this:

5 reading reviews =	15 points
Participation	15 points
Policy Analysis	55 points
Final Exam	15 points
Total	100 points

Books:

Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again 978-0521775687

Policy Analysis By Design 978-0822953920

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving 978-0872899520

How Does a Policy Mean?: Interpreting Policy and Organizational Actions 978-0878406128

The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning 978-0822313724

Policy Design for Democracy 978-0700608447

Democratic Governance 978-0691145396

Democracy and Expertise: Reorienting Policy Inquiry 978-0199565245

Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society 978-0485006346

optional:

Authoritative Governance: Policy Making in the Age of Mediatization 978-0199281671

These books are available almost everywhere. [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and Barnes and Noble have all of these. I am aware that you may not want to buy all of these books, which is perfectly fine, any library will be able to get them for you via inter-library loan if they do not already have copies of the books. Some of the books were available electronically also. You will be responsible for reading the books prior to the week they are due.

On the books and reading:

The books in this class should not be thought of as textbooks. They are better thought of as; things to think with, to argue with, and things that are very likely wrong. That said, the books do have some facts, they do provide interesting positions, and they are worth reading in full. There is quite a bit of reading in this course. The way I read a non-fiction book is this: first, I read the conclusion first, then I read the front matter, then I will read the chapters, and if i do not have time to read the chapters, then i will read most of the chapters, and use the index to find out if the book deals specifically with my topics, and then i will look up those passages that deal with my topics. You should strive to read all of the texts. You should also read them critically, patiently, and hopefully with pleasure.

**Week 1 Tues. 18 Jan.**

Introduction

Read Making Social Science Matter

**Week 2 Mon. 24 Jan.**

Types of public policy analysis

Read Policy Analysis By Design

Turn in Reading review on Making Social Science Matter

**Week 3 Mon. 31 Jan.**

Basics of traditional policy analysis

Turn in Reading review on Policy Analysis By Design

Read A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving

Turn in topic and initial research by Friday at midnight

**Week 4 Mon. 7 Feb.**

Turn in Reading review on A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis

Read How Does a Policy Mean?: Interpreting Policy and Organizational Actions

**Week 5 Valentine's Day**

Turn in Reading review on How Does a Policy Mean?

Read The Argumentative Turn

Turn in second research by Friday at midnight

**Week 6 Washington's Birthday**

Turn in Reading review The Argumentative Turn

Read Policy Design for Democracy

**Week 7 Mon. 28 Feb.**

Turn in Reading review Policy Design for Democracy

Read Democratic Governance

**Week \* Spring Break**

Read Democracy and Expertise (Suggested)

**Week 8 Mon. 14 March**

Turn in Reading review Democratic Governance

Turn in First Policy analysis by Friday at Midnight

**Week 9 Mon. 21 March**

Read Democracy and Expertise

**Week 10 Mon. 28 March**

Turn in Reading review Democracy and Expertise

**Week 11 Mon. 4 April**

Turn in Second Policy analysis by Thursday at Midnight

**Week 12 Mon. 11 April**

Read Political Machines

**Week 13 Mon. 18 April**

Turn in Reading review Political Machines

**Week 14 Mon. 25. April**

Turn in Final Policy analysis by Friday at Midnight

**Week 15 Mon. 2 May**

Wed. 4 May class ends

Wed. 11 May Final exam due.