

*HESB 30015 and POLS 30152
Analyzing Public Policy
Professor Betson
11:45 AM to 1 PM
305 DeBartolo Hall*

While public policy professionals often engage in both policy analysis and policy evaluation, a distinction is made between two these activities. Policy analysis reflects the activities surrounding the decision of how best to address a perceived problem facing society, evaluation addresses the question of how well did a policy 'solve' the problem. While the tools and approaches used for both of these activities are similar if not identical, policy analysis, performed prior to implementation of any policy, is a more speculative undertaking. Consequently, a continuing question confronting policy analysts and this course is whether policy analysts are an objective advisors to decision makers or are they policy advocates? This will be a continuing point of discussion throughout the class.

Harold Lasswell defined political science as the study of "Who gets what, when, how." Definitions of economics provided in many principle textbooks have a similar ring. Consequently it should not be surprising that representatives from both disciplines ply their trades to the study of public policy. While political science is often described as the study of the possible, economics seems to be preoccupied with the study of what is desirable. This tension will play itself out throughout this course and while my background is in economics, I will attempt to illustrate how political concerns can have a bearing on the analysis of public policy.

The course is divided into two parts: the conceptual and the practical. The first half of the course will be devoted to the justification for collective intervention in private individual choices and what policies will promote a better society. While we will draw upon real-world policy situations, this section of the course will be primarily conceptual to introduce the student to terms and ways of thinking developed in the field of welfare economics. The second half of the course will be devoted to the practice of policy analysis. By following Bardach's eight steps to policy analysis, the course will provide concrete assistance of how to undertake an analysis of policy. This classroom reading and discussion will be reflected in a written policy analysis conducted by the student and a classroom presentation of their research.

Required Text:

There are two textbooks for the course. Both are available from the ND Bookstore and online sites such as Amazon.

Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts and Practices by Michael Munger

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving (3rd Edition) by Eugene Bardach

There will several readings available from the library at the Electronic Reserves. During the semester, additional readings, handouts, announcements, and homework assignments will be made available on the web (designated by 'on Web') at

<http://www.nd.edu/~dbetson/courses/courses.html>

Grading:

The final course grade will be assigned using the following weights:

Class Participation	15%
Decision Memo (1/26)	5%
Essay on the sale of organs (2/2)	5%
Essay on legal treatment of externalities (2/23)	5%

Problem Set on Financing of Roads (3/2)	5%
Midterm Exam (3/9)	25%
Research Paper	30%
Research Presentation	10%

Honor Code Policy:

I expect all students to abide by the Notre Dame Honor Code. Specifically, the copying of another student's work is considered an honor code violation just as copying answers during an exam would be considered an honor code violation. However, seeking help either from me or another student on the homework is encouraged.

Attendance Policy

The Academic Code (Du Lac) states 'students are expected to attend classes regularly and punctually.' I have the same expectation as the university. I will hold students accountable for excessive class absences through reductions in the class participation component of the course grade.

Class Participation

For each class, you are expected to have completed the reading for the day and be prepared to participate in the class. After Spring Break, I will notify any student whose performance in class I judge to be below average (C or lower).

Policy Analysis/Presentation

While it is possible to learn how to do policy analysis from books and discussion, I am a firm believer in 'learning by doing.' Consequently each student will be expected to complete an analysis of a policy problem of their own choosing. 30% of the course grade will be devoted to the written policy analysis and 10% will be devoted to your oral presentation to the class.

By 2/9, students should have submitted a statement (less than one page) of the policy problem that will be addressed in their research. Identification of a problem to address in your research is not an easy task. I would suggest reading Munger (pages 7 and 8) and Bardach (pages 1 to 10) for specific advice. The submission of the proposal should be done electronically. This statement is worth 5 percentage points of the 30 percentage points devoted to policy analysis paper.

By 2/16, each student should have submitted a 'revised' proposal that includes not only the statement of the problem that would you address in the research but also an initial statement of the alternative 'solutions' that you will examine (one to two pages). For some advice on thinking about alternative policies that might be considered, you should read Bardach (pages 15 to 26 and Appendix B). This statement should also be submitted electronically and is worth 5 percentage points of the 30 percentage points devoted to policy analysis paper.

The remaining 20 percentage points out of the 30 percentage points will be the final draft of your research. The final draft of the paper is due on 4/21 and should be submitted electronically. If you wish to have me look at a completed draft prior to this due date, you should submit a draft prior to 4/13.

The last three meetings of the course will be devoted to student presentations. Prior to Easter Break, we will randomly assign students to one of these three dates. On the day prior to your presentation, you should submit a 'policy brief' to the class electronically. Given the number of students enrolled, you should anticipate that your oral presentation should last a minimum of 10 minutes to a maximum of 15 minutes. After your presentation, 5 minutes will be devoted to questions from the class.

Office Hours:

My regular office hours will be from 10 to Noon on Tuesday and from 1:30 to 4:45 PM on Thursday. If you are not available for these times, appointments at other times can be arranged. You should be aware that my other class is at 1:30 to 2:45 on MW. Prior to the midterm exam, I will hold extra hours. My office is 404 Decio Hall. You are strongly encouraged to come and talk even if you are not having problems with the material. I can be contacted at 1-5068 (office telephone) or via email at dbetson@nd.edu.

Class Schedule Disclaimer:

Since each class is different with regards to their interests, some discussion of certain material may be lengthened while others may be shorten. Consequently the following schedule is tentative and is subject to change as the semester proceeds. However, the posted exam date is fixed but the material covered on them will reflect what we have covered prior to them.

Class Schedule – Tentative

- 1 1/19 What is Policy Analysis?
Reading: Munger (Preface and Chapter 1)
- 2 1/24 Review of Microeconomics
Reading: Munger (Chapter 7)
- 3 1/26 Case Study: Reagan and the US Auto Industry
Reading: U.S. Auto Industry: Policy Overview and Recent History (on Web)
Reagan Statement on Domestic Auto Industry (on Web)
Assignment: Decision Memo calling for a 10% reduction in Japanese Auto Sales
- 4 1/31 Markets: Choice, Exchange and Competition
Reading: Munger (Chapter 3)
- 5 2/2 Case Studies: School Choice and Kidney Donations
Reading: Pro and Cons of School Choice (on Web)
Schools of Choice (on Web)
WSJ debate on the sale of kidneys (on Web)
Becker Blog on Kidney Markets (on Web)
Assignment: One Page Essay: Should Individuals be allowed to sell their organs?
- 6 2/7 Market Failures – Rational for Collective Intervention into Private Decisions?
Reading: Munger (Chapter 4)
- 7 2/9 No Class – Policy Analysis Proposal (Statement of Problem)
- 8 2/14 Market Failures – Pure and Impure Public Goods
Reading: Gruber (Chapter 7 – on Web)
Copying and Copyright (on Web)
- 9 2/16 No Class – Second Draft of Proposal (this draft should contain a description of alternative solutions to the problem)
- 10 2/21 Market Failures – Externalities and the Coase Theorem
Reading: Frank (Chapter 17 – on Web)
Coase 'The Problem of Social Cost' (on Web)
Sturges v. Bridgman
- 11 2/23 Legal v. Economic Remedies
Reading: Boomer v. Atlantic Cement (on Web)
Spur Industries v. Del Rey (on Web)
Assignment: One Page Essay – Did the courts have a consistent approach to providing a remedy for 'pollution' in these two cases?
- 12 2/28 Government Failures – Potential Problems of Democracy
Reading: Munger (Chapter 6), Hirshleifer (Chapter 16 – on Web)
- 13 3/2 Limits to Policy Analysis
Reading: Munger (Chapter 5)
Assignment: Problem Set on Financing of Roads and Bridges

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| 14 | 3/7 | Review and Potential 'Catch Up' day |
| 15 | 3/9 | Midterm Examination |
| | 3/12 to 3/20 | Spring Break |
| 16 | 3/21 | Defining the Problem
Reading: Bardach (Part I, pages 1 to 10) |
| 17 | 3/23 | Assembling the Evidence
Reading: Bardach (Part I, pages 10 to 15 and Part II) |
| 18 | 3/28 | Construct Alternatives and Selecting the Criteria
Reading: Bardach (Part I, pages 15 to 38, and Appendix B) |
| 19 | 3/30 | Projecting the Outcomes
Reading: Bardach (Part I, pages 38 to 52) |
| 20 | 4/4 | Cost Benefit Analysis
Reading: Munger (Chapters 10 and 11) |
| 21 | 4/6 | Confronting the Trade-Offs and Deciding
Reading: Bardach (Part I, pages 52 to 57) |
| 22 | 4/11 | Tell Your Story
Reading: Bardach (Part I, pages 57 to 64) |
| 23 | 4/13 | Best Practices
Reading: Bardach (Part III) |
| 24 | 4/18 | Real World Exam – Mandatory Drug Sentencing
Reading: Bardach (Appendix A) and Full RAND Report (will be emailed to you) |
| 25 | 4/20 | Continuation of Discussion |
| | 4/21 | Final Draft of Policy Analysis Paper is due |
| | 4/25 | No Class -- Easter Monday |
| 26 | 4/27 | Student Presentations |
| 27 | 5/2 | Student Presentations |
| 28 | 5/4 | Student Presentations |