

**PPOL 5150-Public Policy Analysis
(Spring 2022)**

Class: Tuesday and Thursday, 08/02/2022-10/05/2022
Venue: 4504 and Zoom (access Zoom Meetings via Canvas)
Time: 09:00-10:20 am (L1)
10:30-11:50 am (L2)

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or by appointment (personal Zoom meeting ID: 694 669 5664)

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Course Description

Government officials are frequently confronted with decisions about whether or not to initiate, continue, modify, or terminate policies or programs, and the knowledge and skills in policy analysis are essential for them to make intelligent choices. The course will cover important considerations in conducting policy analysis, such as identifying policy problems, establishing criteria, assessing policy alternatives, choosing among policies, and projecting policy impacts.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to help MPP students develop analytical skills in conducting policy analysis. Upon completion of the course, students are expected to: 1) identify basic concepts and techniques used in policy analysis; 2) demonstrate competency in applying basic techniques of policy analysis to real policy problems; 3) distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate uses of policy analysis in the public sector; 4) appreciate institutional and political context of policy analysis.

Textbooks

1. Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: CQ press.
2. Weimer, D. L., & Vining, A. R. (2017). *Policy analysis: Concepts and practice* (6th ed.). New York: Taylor & Francis.
3. Boardman, A. E., Greenberg, D. H., Vining, A. R., & Weimer, D. L. (2018). *Cost-benefit analysis: concepts and practice* (5th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Assessment

The assessment of student performance in the course will be based on four individual assignments, class participation, and two group presentations and reports. The following weights will be used to determine course grades:

Component	Weight	Due Date
1 st Assignment	5%	20 February
2 nd Assignment	15%	7 April
3 rd Assignment	15%	24 April
4 th Assignment	10%	8 May

Class participation	15%	5% for attendance; 10% for in-class and after-class participation.
1 st group project presentation and report	15%	20 March
Final group project presentation & report	25%	28 May

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

All work must be entirely your own. Please cite the relevant work whenever you borrow ideas from others, using the proper reference format (e.g., APA, MLA). Examples of violations of the academic integrity code include but are not limited to: failure to use quotation marks when quoting, failure to give full credit when paraphrasing, use of others' ideas or work products, submission of work prepared through impermissible collaboration, and submission of work prepared by you for another class. (Your work in this class may be related to your work in another class, but the work you submit for this class should not duplicate that submitted for another class. If you anticipate an exception, please do not hesitate to ask.) Violation of the Academic Integrity Code may result in failure in the course, as well as more serious academic sanctions. For details about the academic integrity code, please refer to <https://acadreg.ust.hk/generalreg.html>.

Please check for plagiarism before you turn in each homework, for example using the anti-plagiarism software Turnitin available on Canvas. **A rule of thumb is that the similarity score should not exceed 15%, excluding references.**

LATE HOMEWORK POLICY

The only legitimate justification for late homework submission is sick leave or family emergency. For sick leave, you need to present proof of sickness such as a "certificate of sickness" which is obtainable from the doctor. In any other case, extensions on homework due dates are granted only on a case by case basis, and you will need to request extensions from the instructor at least five days before the due dates. For instance, if you have several assignments due at the same time, you may request an extension, which may or may not be granted.

The "hard deadline" for each assignment is 2 days past the original due date. Late submissions are penalized if extensions are not granted beforehand: your grade will be reduced by 30% if the homework is one day overdue, and by 60% if two days overdue. Any submissions are not accepted beyond the hard deadline.

TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: All readings and case materials can be accessed through Canvas. Readings marked with * at the beginning and the case materials are the high-priority ones. Others are optional.

PART I Introduction

(Lecture-1: 8 Feb) Introduction to Policy Analysis

Readings:

1. *Weimer, D. & A. Vining. (2017). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, **Chapter 2**: "What Is Policy Analysis". pp. 30-41.
2. Wu, X, M. Ramesh, M. Howlett, and S. Fritzen (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*, Routledge. **Chapter 1**: "Public Managers and the Policy Process".

Case 1: The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge: a White Elephant Project?

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Do you think the primary justification for the bridge is persuasive to you, and why?
- Do you think the current bridge is the best choice to achieve the aim above, in light of other possible options/alternatives at the time?
- How likely is the bridge to realize the projected economic gains?
- Assuming all the benefits could be realized, and considering its human, environmental impacts and cost overruns, is the bridge still justified?

(Lecture-2: 10 Feb) Policy Analysis: Profession and Products

Readings:

1. Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* (6th edition), **Chapter 3:** “Towards Professional Ethics”. pp. 42-55. ***Chapter 1:** “Preview”. pp. 3-29. **Chapter 16:** “Case Study: The Canadian Pacific Salmon Fishery” pp. 376-397.

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Think tanks differ in a variety of ways, including their areas of specialization and the degree to which they advocate specific policies. Characterize the following think tanks after visiting their websites: Cato Institute (www.cato.org), Fraser Institute (www.fraserinstitute.ca), Progressive Policy institute (<https://www.progressivepolicy.org>), RAND Corporation (www.rand.org), and Resources for the Future (www.rff.org). In addition, search for other think tanks that might be of interest to you and share with the class.
- Think back to the research papers you have written for undergraduate courses. In what ways were your paper similar in content and structure to the kidney shortage report? In what ways did your papers differ?
- Now think about articles you have read in scholarly journals. How does the sample policy analysis differ in content and structure from published academic research?

(Lecture-3: 15 Feb) Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving in Policy Analysis

Readings:

1. *Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (6th edition), CQ Press, **Part I.** The Eightfold Path, pp. 1-96.

Case 2: Lantau Tomorrow Vision: To Reclaim or not to Reclaim?

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- How would you define the policy problem in the case?
- Who are the main supporters of the reclamation project and what are their justifications?
- Who are the main opponents to the project and what are their justifications?
- What are the alternatives to land reclamation in order to solve the policy problem identified above? How would you compare and evaluate these alternatives?

Assignment No.1 due on 20 Feb.

PART II CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

(Lecture-4: 17 Feb, Lecture-5: 22 Feb) Rationales for Public Policy: Market Failures

Readings:

1. Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* (6th edition), **Chapter 4:** Efficiency and the Idealized Competitive Model. pp. 59-73, ***Chapter 5:** Rationales for Public Policy: Market Failures, pp.74 - 113.

Case 3: From Private Loan to Fundraising Fraud: the Wu Ying Case

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Why did the official loan system fail in this case?
- When should government get involved in the private loan market? What went wrong with the private loan market?
 - What type of good is the loan, particularly loans to small and medium enterprises?
 - Are there externality-related market failures in the private loan case?
 - Are there monopoly-related market failures in the private loan case?
 - Are there information asymmetry-related market failures in the private loan case?

(Lecture-6: 24 Feb) Rationales for Public Policy: Other Limitations of the Competitive Framework

Readings:

1. *Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 6th edition, **Chapter 6:** Rationales for Policy Analysis: Other Limitations, pp. 114-129.

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Why is the premium for health insurance provided by an employer typically much lower than the premium for the same coverage purchased by an individual?
- Why is it that public subsidy programs often result in much higher levels of expenditures than initially estimated?

(Lecture-7: 1 Mar) Rationales for Public Policy: Distributional and Other Goals

Readings:

1. *Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 6th edition, **Chapter 7:** Rationales for Policy Analysis: Distributional and Other Goals, pp. 130-155.

Case 4: Development, Resettlement, and Social Exclusion at the Myitsone Dam in Myanmar

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What are the main problems of the Myitsone Dam? Are these problems unpredictable and inevitable?
- Are there any distributional concerns of the projects? Who are the primary beneficiaries of the projects? Who are the sufferers?
- What, if any, can be done to prevent similar problems in the future?

(Lecture-8: 3 Mar) Limits to Public Intervention: Government Failures

Readings:

1. *Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 6th edition, **Chapter 8:** Limits to Public Intervention: Government Failures, pp. 156-181.

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What are the tradeoffs involved in democracy? Despite the inherent problems of democracy, what is its paramount advantage compared to other systems of social choice?

- Politicians usually favour quick policy fixes rather than long-term solutions. Why is that? What are some common examples of such quick fixes that do not solve the problems fundamentally?
- Any single intervention by the government has at least one unintended side-effect, which is sometimes positive but often negative. Can you think of any government intervention that might have negative side-effects?

(Lecture-9: 8 Mar) Policy Problems as Market and Government Failures

Readings:

1. *Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017) *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 6th edition, **Chapter 9:** Policy Problems as Market and Government Failures: The Madison Taxicab Policy Analysis Example. pp. 182-201.

Case 5: The Banana Project in Hainan Province, China

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What were the key challenges of banana production in Hainan?
- What types of market failures can you identify in this case? Did the Hainan government do anything to fix these market failures?
- Besides market failures, are there other causes behind the failure of the banana project, e.g., government failures?

(Lecture-10: 10 Mar) Presenting the policy problem of your choice (I)

(Lecture-11: 15 Mar) Presenting the policy problem of your choice (II)

(Lecture-12: 17 Mar) Policy Instruments

Readings:

1. *Howlett, M., M. Ramesh and A. Perl (2020). *Study Public Policy: Principles and Processes* (4th Edition), Oxford University Press, “The Substance of Policy Formulation”, pp. 142-168.
2. Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, **Chapter 10:** “Correcting Market and Government Failures: Generic Policies,” 6th edition, pp. 205-258.
3. Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 6th Edition, SAGE Publications, **Appendix A.** Things Governments Do, pp. 147-155.

Case 6: Beyond Dongjiang: Hong Kong's Journey toward Water Security

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What are the main market failures? What are the relevant policy instruments?
- What are the main government failures? What are the relevant policy instruments?
- Are there any policy instruments that can be used in dealing with market failures and government failures at the same time?

1st Group Project Report due on 20 Mar.

PART III CONDUCTING POLICY ANALYSIS

(Lecture-13: 22 Mar) Defining the Problem

Readings:

1. *Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, **Step One**: Define the Problem, pp. 1-14.
2. Wu, X, M. Ramesh, M. Howlett, and S. Fritzen (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*, Routledge. **Chapter 2**: Agenda Setting, pp. 26-49.
3. Guess, G. M., & Farnham, P. G. (2011). *Cases in public policy analysis*. Georgetown University Press. **Chapter 2**: Problem Identification and Structuring. pp. 23-73.

Case 7: Fighting Crime: the Case for Empty Prisons

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What kind of problem are we dealing with?
 - What was the predominant problem definition when the case was written?
 - What are alternative problem definitions?
- How did different issue frames by past administrations lead to different policy recommendations?
- What policy recommendations would you propose based on your preferred problem definition?

(Lecture-14: 24 Mar) Gathering Information for Policy Analysis

Readings:

1. Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 6th Edition, SAGE Publications, ***Step Two**: Assemble Some Evidence, pp.14-21; and **Part II**: Assembling Evidence, pp. 97-121.
2. Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* (6th edition), **Chapter 14**: “Gathering Information for Policy Analysis”, pp. 326-339.

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Analysts have a responsibility to those who they rely on for information. What ethical principles do you think should guide analysts’ information gathering from people?
- To what extent do you agree with this statement “the Internet is one of the most important tools of the policy analyst”?

(Lecture-15: 29 Mar) Constructing the Alternatives

Readings:

1. *Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, **Step Three**: Construct the Alternatives, pp. 21-31.
2. Wu, X, M. Ramesh, M. Howlett, and S. Fritzen (2010). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*, Routledge. **Chapter 3**: Policy Formulation, pp. 29-49.
3. Patton, C & D. Sawicki (2016). *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*. **Chapter 6**, “Identifying Alternatives,” pages 215-242.

Case 8: Municipal Solid Waste Management in Hong Kong

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What are the main policy problems at hand?
- What approaches might be used to develop sets of policy alternatives?
- What sets of policy alternatives should be considered to address the problems at hand?

(Lecture-16: 31 Mar) Policy Learning: “Smart (Best) Practices” Research

Readings:

1. *Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 6th Edition, SAGE Publications, **Part IV: “Smart (Best) Practices” Research: Understanding and Making Use of What Look Like Good**, pp. 133-145
2. Dolowitz, D. P., Marsh, D. (2000). Learning from abroad: the role of policy transfer in contemporary policy making”, *Governance: an international journal of policy & administration*, 13(1), pp.5-24.

Case 9: Public Managers and Plastic Bags: Designing and Implementing Effective Policies to Reduce Plastic Bag Use – Experience from Hong Kong, Ireland, Denmark, Kenya, and Singapore

- Why are the plastic bag taxes particularly successful in Ireland and Denmark? What lessons can be drawn?
- Stakeholder identification: Who are the key players in policy pertaining to plastic bags, and who are the most likely adversaries and supporters of plastic bag levies or bans? How could the key players, adversaries, and supporters be most effectively engaged?
- Given the successes and failures of plastic bag levies in other countries, how should Singapore proceed with reducing plastic bag usage going forward, given its political, economic, and cultural context?

(Lecture-17: 7 Apr) Selecting the Criteria

Readings:

1. *Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, **Step Four: Select the Criteria**, pp.31-49.
2. (optional) MacRae, Duncan & Dale Whittington. (1997). *Expert Advice for Policy Choice*. **Chapter 2: Selecting Criteria**, pp. 66-111.
3. (optional) Stone, D (2012). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, W.W. Norton & Company, **Chapters 2-6**, pp. 39-153.

Case 10: Relocation of the Beijing Zoo

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Which stakeholders presented their goals in this case?
- What are the goals of different stakeholders? What are the underlying values held by these stakeholders?
- Are there any differences between the direct goals, indirect goals, and basic goals of each stakeholder group?
- What should be the goals of relocating the Beijing Zoo?

Assignment No.2 due on 7 April.

(Lecture-18: 12 Apr) Projecting Policy Outcomes **(Guest lecture by Prof. Tianle LIU, Harbin Institute of Technology (Shenzhen))**

Readings:

1. *Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019), *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, **Step Five**: Project the Outcomes, pp. 49-69.
2. (optional) Patton, C & D. Sawicki (2016). *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*. **Chapter 7**: Evaluating Alternative Policies, pp. 243-313.
3. (optional) Wu, X, M. Ramesh, M. Howlett, and S. Fritzen (2010), *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*, Routledge. **Chapter 3**: Decision Making, pp. 50-65.
4. Qi, Y., Stern, N., He, J. K., Lu, J. Q., Liu, T. L.*, King, D., & Wu, T. (2020). The policy-driven peak and reduction of China's carbon emissions. *Advances in Climate Change Research*, 11(2), 65-71.

(Mid-term break)

(Lecture-19: 19 Apr) Using Decision Matrices in Policy Analysis

Readings:

1. * Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2017). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* (6th edition), "Solution Analysis" in Chapter 15: "Landing on Your Feet: Organizing your Policy Analysis", pp. 355-375.
2. Weimer, D. & A. Vining (2005). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, **Chapter 11**: "Goals/Alternatives Matrices: Some Examples from CBO Studies," 3rd edition, pp. 311-330.
3. Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E. M. (2019), *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, **Step Six**: Confront the trade-offs and **Step Seven**: Stop, Focus, Narrow, Deepen, Decide! pp. 69-84.
4. MacRae, Duncan & Dale Whittington. (1997). *Expert Advice for Policy Choice*. **Chapter 5**: "Aiding Choices with Criteria/Alternatives Matrix", pp. 193-236.

Case 11: An Analysis of Subsidies and Other Options to Expand the Productive End Use of Scrap Tires in California

Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions:

- How did the analysts come up with the relative weights of criteria used in the Quantitative Alternative-Criterion Matrix (Table 9)? Do you think it is a good approach? How would you do it differently?
- Is it possible to draw policy recommendations based on Qualitative Alternative-Criterion Matrix (Table 8)?
- What are main strengths and weaknesses of the analysis? How would you structure the analysis differently if you are the lead consultant for the analysis?

Assignment No.3 due on 24 April.

PART IV. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

(Lecture-20: 21 Apr) A Practical Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis

Readings:

1. *Boardman, A. E., Greenberg, D. H., Vining, A. R., & Weimer, D. L. (2018). *Cost-benefit analysis: concepts and practice* (5th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Chapter 1: Introduction to Cost-Benefit Analysis.**
2. Stokey, E. and R. Zeckhauser (1978), *A Primer in Policy Analysis*, W. W. Northton & Company. **Chapter 9: “Project Evaluation: Cost-Benefit Analysis”**, pp. 134-158.
3. Lisa Heinzerling and Fran Ackerman (2002), *Pricing the Priceless: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Environmental Protection*, Georgetown Environmental Law and Policy Institute.
4. Arrow, K. J., Cropper, M. L., Eads, G. C., Hahn, R. W., Lave, L. B., Noll, R. G., . . . Stavins, R. N. (1996). Is There a Role for Benefit-Cost Analysis in Environmental, Health, and Safety Regulation? *Science*, 272(5259), 221-222. doi:10.1126/science.272.5259.221

Please come to class ready to discuss from both sides of pros and cons of using the cost-benefit analysis as a tool in public policy, considering moral and practicality issues.

(Lecture-21: 26 Apr) The Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Guest lecture by Prof. Xun WU)

(Lecture-22: 28 Apr) Valuation Techniques in Cost-Benefit Analysis

Readings:

1. *The Treasury of the New Zealand Government (2015). *Guide to Social Cost Benefit Analysis*. Step 4: Value the costs and benefits. (pp. 16-33)

Case 12: Assessing the Willingness to Pay (WTP) for Improved Water Supply in Sri Lanka

Readings:

1. Asian Development Bank (2013). *Cost-Benefit Analysis for Development: A Practical Guide*. Chapter 5: Assessing the Willingness to Pay (WTP) for Improved Water Supply in Sri Lanka

(Lecture-23: 3 May) Final group project presentation (I)

(Lecture-24: 5 May) Final group project presentation (II)

Assignment No.4 due on 8 May.

(Lecture-25: 10 May) Final group project presentation (III)

Final group project due on 28 May.