

**Political Science 307**  
**T, TH 11:30-12:50 pm**

**Spring 2018**  
**Hill Hall 104**

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**Office Hours**  
T 3-4 p.m.  
And by appointment

## **PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS**

This course is about problems, solutions, and the politics of joining them together into public policy. We will think about how our political system transforms social conditions into public problems, and how political actors decide which solutions to adopt. At any given time, many definitions of policy problems are possible, and many alternative solutions are available. How can policy analysis help decision makers to understand problems and to select solutions that can improve our lives? What are the techniques we can use to analyze problems and devise solutions? How do we know which policies are working? How do we decide which problems to solve? How do advocates and political officials use data and policy analysis in their work? How can policy analysts best communicate their findings?

In this course we will learn to analyze policy problems, to analyze the policy process, and to write policy memos that can help decision makers and advocates to do their work. We will do this through readings, discussions, and in-class case studies. We will also serve as policy analysts for two local organizations who need policy research for their work.

By the end of the semester, you will:

- understand the steps involved in policy analysis, be able to conduct research on policy issues and know how to prepare policy memos with appropriate documentation,
- be able to explain the process of policy making in the American political system, including how different political actors affect public policy, and
- gain experience working as a policy analyst for an organization.

### **REQUIRED READING MATERIAL**

All required reading material will be posted on Blackboard, at the link "Readings." Please note that in addition to reading material I select and post, you will also be conducting policy research, which will involve additional reading.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course assumes basic knowledge of the American political system. The Political Science course 790: 201, Introduction to American Government, is a required prerequisite.

### **Timeliness and Attendance**

Be on time. Attendance is required, and students will check in via Blackboard each day. Check-in will take place until 11:35 a.m. Students who are late should see me after class or email me to explain why they were late. You can be marked Late twice with no penalty. After that, you will lose ½ point from your final grade for each late arrival. You will lose 1 point for each unexcused absence. In accordance with university policy, absences can be excused only in the following cases: illness, death in the family, religious observance, official college business. These instances must be documented.

**Written assignments.** This is a writing-intensive class. Throughout the semester you will write a series of **Policy Memos** and **Policy Analysis Reflections**. You will also work in small groups to prepare a **Client Memo** and a **Client Presentation for one of the client organizations** this semester. You will receive written instructions for each assignment. In general, grades reflect how well your written work demonstrates 1) your understanding of course material, and your ability to apply concepts to policy cases, 2) your ability to conduct research about a policy issue to answer the assignment’s or client’s questions, 3) your ability to convey your ideas in a persuasive and strong way, 4) your ability to write clearly in a well-organized manner, with proper mechanics. Late papers lose one-half grade per day.

You will have the chance to revise the individual policy memos you write, but not the reflections or the final group memo and presentation. For the group project, you will submit drafts for feedback before the final deadline. For revisions of policy memos, you have the chance to increase each grade by up to 7 points (three-quarters of a grade increase). Papers must show substantial “re-vision” to earn additional points — that is, clarification of arguments and information, additional research, re-thinking of your conclusions, and rewriting for clarity, precision, and grace. Simply fixing typos will not result in any grade change. It is a good idea to meet with me to discuss what needs to be done in a revision. **Paper revision deadlines will be noted on Blackboard. I will not accept late revisions.**

#### **COURSE GRADE**

Your course grade will be constructed as follows:

2 Policy Memos	30%
2 Policy Analysis Reflections	30%
Group Memo and Presentation	30%
Participation in class discussion and group projects	10%

#### **ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES**

**Students with disabilities:** If you have a documented learning or other disability, please arrange to meet with me during the first week of class to discuss any accommodations necessary for your successful participation.

**Classroom behavior:** Silence cell phones and computers, and refrain from texting, emailing, and surfing the Internet during class for purposes other than class assignments. Such behavior disrupts all of us in the classroom, interferes with the learning process, and creates lapses in attention that often require fellow students or the professor to repeat important information. You should not expect additional time from students or the professor because you have failed to pay attention in class.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on Academic Integrity (<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/oas/ai>), also posted on Blackboard. Particularly note the following excerpt from the policy:

**“Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by

quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one’s own words another person’s written words or ideas as if they were one’s own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one’s work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other nontextual material from other sources without proper attribution.

**Cheating:** Cheating is the use of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results and reports, analyses, etc. as one’s own work when they were, in fact, prepared by others. ...

**Fabrication:** Fabrication is the invention or falsification of sources, citations, data, or results, and recording or reporting them in any academic exercise. Some examples are:

- Citing a source that does not exist.
- Making up or falsifying evidence or data or other source materials.
- Falsifying research papers or reports by selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one’s conclusions or claimed experimental precision.”

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**(All readings are indicated with R are on Blackboard under the menu heading “Readings”)**

**What are Public Policies? What is Policy Analysis? What are Policy Memos?**

Week 1	Tues., Jan. 16 Thurs., Jan. 18	Introduction Case Study: Victims’ Compensation Fund R: Just Money
Week 2	Tues., Jan. 23 Thurs., Jan. 25	Case Study: You design a public policy R: Goals, Values, Criteria
Week 3	Tues., Jan. 30  Thurs., Feb. 1	Steps in Policy Analysis R: Excerpts from Bardach, <i>A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis</i> “The Eightfold Path” <b>Policy Analysis Reflection 1 Due</b> R: Case Study Reading for Steps in Policy Analysis
Week 4	Tues., Feb. 6  Thurs., Feb. 8	Writing Effective Policy Memos R: Excerpts from Smith, <i>Writing Public Policy</i> “Two Checklists” “Chapter 3: Definition: Frame the Problem”  Writing Effective Policy Memos

R: Excerpts from Smith, *Writing Public Policy*  
"Chapter 7: Briefing Memo"  
R: "Big Bets and Black Swans: A Presidential Briefing Book"

Week 5      Tues., Feb. 13    Specifying the Problem and Identifying Causes  
R: Excerpts from Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis*  
"The Eightfold Path" (Step One)  
R: Identifying Causes Folder  
R: Proper Causal Theory, pp. 241-243

Thurs., Feb. 15    Case: Food Politics  
B: "Sugar Controversies"

Week 6      Tues., Feb. 20    Policy Tools and Policy Alternatives  
R: Excerpt from Bardach, "Things Governments Do"  
R: Policy Tools, pp. 243-252  
Thurs., Feb. 22    R: Excerpt from Bardach, Steps Three, Four, Five

### **Students as Policy Analysts: Policy Research for Policy Change and Policy Implementation**

During this part of the semester, we will be meeting with the client organizations, working on the policy research projects that they "hire" us to do. We will also be reading and learning about conceptual topics necessary for this work, including the roles of the executive, legislature and the courts in policy making, the roles of advocacy and lobbying, the process of agenda setting, the use and types of evidence in policy analysis, and other topics that come up in the projects. You will receive a detailed syllabus for this half of the semester once projects are defined and dates for meeting with client organizations are pinned down. You will receive specific instructions about the group projects with benchmarking assignments.

Week 7      Tues., Feb. 27  
Thurs., March 1    **Policy Memo 1 Due**

Week 8      Tues., March 6    Nedra Morsy, Make the Road New Jersey  
Thurs., March 8    Anjum Gupta and Samantha Rumsey,  
RU-Law Immigrant Rights Law Clinic

**Week 9      March 10-18 Spring Break**

Weeks 10-14    Project work  
Tues., April 10    **Policy Memo 2 Due**

Week 15      Tues., April 24    Presentations of Group Projects  
Thurs., April 26    Presentations of Group Projects

### **Deadlines for Exam Period (5/3-5/9)**

Thursday, May 3      **Group Memos due**  
Tuesday, May 8      **Policy Analysis Reflection 2 Due**