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DAY/TIME/PLACE: Monday
9:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.
HBH 2003

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment only

PREREQUISITES

This course is designed for students in the Master of Science in Public Policy and Management program who have skills equivalent to what is taught in the School’s core courses in economic analysis, statistical methods, management science, financial analysis, organizational design, policy and politics, and professional writing. In particular, a good understanding of economics and statistics, and an understanding of American government institutions and programs, will be necessary in order for a student to participate effectively in the class discussions and to successfully complete the assignments.

DESCRIPTION

Successful policy analysis in real-world settings is far more than being able to collect data, run regressions, use optimization models, or identify market failures. It involves:

- anticipating issues that will need analysis;
- determining when a problem exists and what is causing it;
- defining and prioritizing the goals to be achieved in addressing the problem;
- developing creative alternatives to address the problem;
The course is designed to teach you a number of principles and approaches that can help you in carrying out these tasks and to provide you with experience in applying those principles to realistic policy problems. The course will improve your understanding of how public policies are actually developed, analyzed, and implemented, and it will explain the roles the policy analyst can play at each of these stages. The examples used will primarily be real-world cases, with all the complexity that implies.

Although this is called a "methods" course, the primary “methods” it will teach are strategies for thinking critically and creatively about public policy problems and solutions and for helping public and private leaders to make good decisions about public policies. Statistics, econometrics, operations research, financial analysis, and other sophisticated analytical tools are taught in depth in many other courses at the Heinz College and elsewhere at Carnegie Mellon, and you will not learn more of these types of methodologies in this course. Instead, this course will focus on ways to quickly and effectively analyze available data with limited resources and time.

During the course, you will learn by doing analyses yourself and by discussing how to analyze problems in class, rather than (merely) reading books or articles or listening to lectures. You will examine several different complex policy problems in depth, and you will jointly (through class discussion) and individually (through assignments) assess the importance and causes of these policy problems, develop alternative approaches for addressing them, evaluate the impacts of those alternatives, and grapple with the complex and often conflicting considerations involved in making recommendations for action. The specific policy problems have been selected to expose you to a range of substantive areas (e.g., criminal justice, economic development, education, energy, environmental protection, health, and human services) and to a range of generic types of public policies (e.g., regulations, entitlement programs, incentives, etc.). One of the goals of the course is to demonstrate that the ideas, techniques, and experience in one substantive area can provide important lessons for tackling problems in other, seemingly very different substantive areas, and consequently that there is a benefit to learning about and doing policy analyses on issues in diverse areas. Moreover, even if you intend to focus your career on policy issues in a particular area, the job market may not cooperate during the early stages of your career. Many students have found it valuable to develop some knowledge and experience in policy areas beyond those in which they are primarily interested.

The course will also examine in depth each of the stages in the policy analysis process, beginning with the factors that determine which policy problems will be dealt with by policy-makers, and continuing with some of the principles and pitfalls involved in analyzing problems, developing and analyzing alternatives, and implementing policies and programs in a political environment.
These discussions will draw on a wide range of policy examples and detailed cases that demonstrate the principles being discussed.

The topics discussed in class will be limited to U.S. domestic policy issues. Foreign policy and defense policy issues are not discussed, although the approaches to analyzing problems taught in the class will be applicable to many aspects of these issues. Since the cases and assignments deal with U.S. domestic policy issues in some depth, you need to have a reasonable degree of familiarity with U.S. federal, state, and local government institutions and programs to understand the class discussions and successfully carry out the assignments. International students without this level of understanding may experience some difficulty and they will likely need to spend a significant amount of additional time doing background research on the topics in order to understand class discussions and successfully complete the assignments.

Effective written and oral communications are essential skills for a policy analyst. The ability to clearly and convincingly convey the results of an analysis to a decision-maker can make the difference between whether an analysis has an impact on policy or is ignored. Poor grammar, confusing style, and typographical errors in written materials can do as much or more to reduce the credibility of an analysis as inappropriate use of quantitative methodologies or inaccuracies in calculations. Consequently, in the assignments in the course, you will be expected to produce well-written memoranda and other materials. A significant portion of the grade for each assignment will be based on the quality of your writing and the thoroughness of your proofreading, and failing grades will be given to students who submit materials that are difficult to understand or have been poorly proofread.

**OBJECTIVES**

If you successfully complete this course, you will:

1. Have an in-depth understanding of several complex policy issues in diverse substantive areas.
2. Understand the major steps in the policy analysis and development process, including (a) how and when policy issues become important, and (b) how initiatives to address those issues are developed, analyzed, presented, implemented, evaluated, and terminated.
3. Understand a number of common pitfalls in policy analysis and how to avoid them;
4. Improve your ability to think critically about policy issues, think creatively and analytically about alternatives for addressing the issues, and think practically about successful implementation of recommended alternatives.
5. Develop experience in doing both quick turnaround and in-depth policy analyses on complex policy issues.
6. Improve your skills in effectively communicating policy analyses to decision-makers.
7. Understand what it is like to work as a policy analyst in a government or civic agency and what techniques can be used to increase your effectiveness in that role.
COURSE MATERIALS

There will be no textbook for this course. There are no textbooks that provide a good treatment of the full range of material in the course, and it would be unreasonably expensive for you to buy a separate book for each segment of the course, even if there were a good book for each segment (and in some cases there is not). Instead, most of the key concepts will be conveyed through a combination of lecture and discussion in class. This means that attendance in class is essential.

In addition, a series of journal articles and book chapters will be used to supplement the information provided in class. Some of these readings will be required, and class discussion or assignments will be based on their content. It will be important for you to read and understand required readings. Although you will not be tested on the specifics in these readings, you will be expected to understand and remember the basic ideas and principles that the readings convey, and to demonstrate your understanding of the readings during the discussions in class and through the assignments submitted. When specific readings are assigned for particular class sessions, you should plan to complete the readings prior to class and be prepared for discussion about them in class.

The readings for the course will be posted on Carnegie Mellon’s Canvas web-based course management system. Most classes will also have one or more handouts as part of the discussion but these will generally not be posted on Canvas.

In addition, since policy analysis is not just a task that is assigned to policy analysts working in government or civic agencies, but a set of critical thinking skills that can be applied to issues affecting citizens every day, you are encouraged to read a newspaper each day and think about current public policy issues using the techniques and perspectives being discussed in class. This will help enrich the discussion in class and reinforce the skills being developed through in-class discussions and assignments.

ATTENDANCE

Please plan to attend every class and be on time. The bulk of the material to be learned will come through the lectures and discussions in class, and the readings will not serve as an effective substitute. Therefore, missing a particular class means you will have missed the opportunity to learn the material covered in that class, and that could seriously impair your ability to understand the material in later classes and to successfully complete the assignments. If an illness or something urgent prevents you from attending a class, you should notify me of this promptly. I will not be able to repeat any material that you miss.

Coming to class late or leaving early is disruptive to other students and means that you will miss important material. If you routinely arrive late or leave early, you will receive a failing grade for class participation. Being “on time” means being in the room and seated, at or before the scheduled class starting time. If something urgent requires you to be late or leave early on a particular day, please let me know in advance.
Although I will do my best to avoid it, if it is necessary for me to miss a scheduled class session due to out-of-town travel, I will announce it well in advance. If the class needs to be rescheduled, I will make every effort to reschedule it at a time convenient for all students.

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION

In-class discussion is an essential part of the course, and you will need to participate actively to gain the maximum benefit from the course. One of the key objectives of the course is to teach you how to think critically and to respond rapidly and effectively when presented with unfamiliar issues. Classroom participation is an important opportunity for you to improve these skills.

You should prepare for each class by: (1) reading any articles assigned for class and being ready to comment on them and answer questions about them; (2) reading case discussion materials and being ready to offer recommendations about how a policy-maker should address the situation described in the case; and (3) reviewing your notes from the previous classes and being prepared to ask and answer questions about the topics covered in those classes. If for some reason you have been unable to prepare for class, you should let me know in advance.

In the discussions in class, you will be encouraged to offer creative ideas. In most cases, there is no one “right” solution to any problem, so suggestions for alternative approaches are welcome. You will also be expected to treat the other students and their ideas with respect. You can disagree with another student’s ideas, explain why, and offer alternatives, but you will need to do so in a respectful way. Disrespectful or offensive actions toward other students will not be tolerated.

Please do not engage in sidebar conversations with other students during class. If you have a question or an important point to make, you should make it publicly as part of the class discussion.

Although it will be helpful if you take notes on the key points I explain in class, I recommend that you do not try to write down everything that is discussed in class. You will gain the greatest benefit from the course if you actively engage in thinking about the topics we discuss and if you contribute to the discussion in class. It is difficult for most people to do that if they are trying to write or type everything that is said. I will repeat the most important points in multiple classes.

You are welcome and encouraged to ask questions during class or after class about anything you don’t understand, including topics covered in previous classes. The goal of the course is to improve your knowledge and skills, and the only way I will know that you don’t understand something is if you ask a question! Don’t worry about asking “dumb questions” – it is almost a certainty that if you don’t understand something, someone else doesn’t understand it either, and so the answer to any question you ask will usually be helpful to other students as well as yourself. Asking questions will never hurt your grade, but failing to ask a question about something you don’t understand could hurt your grade if your lack of understanding leads you to do something incorrectly on an assignment.
COMPUTERS, PHONES, RECORDERS, AND FOOD

Cell phones, smartphones, music players, and other electronic devices should be turned off during class. If you are expecting an urgent call during the scheduled class time that cannot be taken at any other time, please notify me at the beginning of the class.

You may use computers, tablets, or other devices in class for note-taking, but using these devices in class for other reasons is not permitted because it could become a distraction to other students.

You may not use audio or video recorders or cameras in class without prior permission.

Food and beverages are permitted in class as long as they do not create noise or odors that are distracting or offensive to others.

ASSIGNMENTS

In order to help you gain practical experience in carrying out a policy analysis and to demonstrate mastery of the principles in the course, you will be expected to complete several assignments during the course of the semester. The assignments are designed to give you an opportunity to apply the principles discussed in class to policy issues with which you have little or no prior knowledge or experience. The assignments will require considerable thought; they will not merely be minor variations on examples discussed in class. There will not be a single “right” way to do the assignments (but there will also be many wrong ways to do them). The principles and examples discussed in class will help you to develop a successful response to the assignment.

All of the assignments will be individual projects, not group projects, and you will be responsible for carrying out all of the work on each assignment by yourself. All materials needed for the assignments will be posted on Canvas. All documents you prepare for an assignment should be submitted in Microsoft Office format (Word, Excel, and/or PowerPoint), not PDF or other formats. (If you want to also submit a document in PDF format to ensure proper formatting, that is fine, but please also submit the Word, Excel, and/or PowerPoint files that were used to generate it.) All assignments should contain sufficient supporting materials to enable me to determine how you reached your conclusions and to verify any calculations you made. Also, before emailing the documents, make sure that they print out in a professionally formatted manner. (A spreadsheet submitted merely as documentation of calculations need not be formatted, but if a spreadsheet is submitted as a table for a formal report, then it should be formatted to print in a way that would be acceptable as part of such a report.)

The final assignment (the “Policy Analysis Project”) will be more complex than the others and will be due at the end of the semester. The work you carry out on this final assignment will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply most of the principles and methods that you have learned throughout the course. The end product of this project is not "a term paper;" it will involve the development of several realistic documents (for example, a memorandum describing your analysis and recommendations in a format appropriate for an elected official and a press release describing the recommended proposal). It is important to note that the value of the work you do on the Policy Analysis Project can go beyond the grade for the course. A well-
done project can be used to demonstrate to prospective employers the kind of policy analysis work that you can do. This can be a significant advantage when competing for policy analysis jobs.

Late assignments will *not* be accepted. This means you will receive a failing grade if an assignment is submitted after the stated deadline. Deadlines for assignments are strictly enforced; if the deadline for an assignment is 5:00 p.m., an assignment submitted at 5:01 p.m. will be considered as a late submission and you will automatically receive a failing grade for that assignment. It will be far better for you to submit something by the deadline than to try and prepare something better but miss the deadline, because you can receive partial credit for the former but you will not receive any credit for the latter. All assignments will require a considerable amount of data analysis, creative thinking, writing, and editing, so you should start working on each assignment as soon as you receive it in order to ensure you have adequate time to complete it in a high-quality fashion.

All assignments should be submitted by email (addressed to Miller.Harold@GMail.com) no later than the date and time specified as the deadline for the assignment. (Assignments should be emailed to me directly; I will *not* use Canvas for submission of assignments.) Do not assume that because you hit “send” that I received the email containing your assignment! If you do not receive a reply from me within a few hours indicating that I received the assignment, contact me to verify that I received it.

No extensions on deadlines will be granted. Moreover, if you do a poor job on an assignment or fail to submit it on time, you will not be given an opportunity to do additional assignments to raise your grade. “Incomplete” (I) grades for the course will not be given, except in cases of documented severe illness or other extraordinary circumstances with approval from the Dean.

**GRADING**

There will be no examinations in the course. Grades will be given for the assignments and for class participation, and the grades will be combined based on the following weights.

- **Assignments 1 & 2** — 40%
- **Policy Analysis Project** — 30%
- **Class Participation** — 30%

The grades for the assignments will be based on (1) the creativity, quality, and thoroughness of the analysis, (2) the extent to which your submission was responsive to the specifications of the assignment, (3) the extent to which you used applicable principles and methods taught in class, and (4) the quality of the writing. There will be no tolerance for sloppy work, and written documents are expected to be proofread *carefully*. Significant numbers of typographical errors or confusing sentences will typically result in a failing grade for the assignment.

The grade for class participation will be based on both the quality and quantity of your contributions. A few thoughtful and creative ideas will carry more weight than many trivial or obvious points, and counterproductive participation (e.g., trying to dominate the discussion,
going off on tangents, or belittling the ideas of other students) will carry negative weight. Given the importance of participation, failure to attend classes without acceptable justification could result in a failing grade for the class participation component, and possibly a failing grade for the course.

If you disagree with a grade you receive on an assignment or for the course as a whole, you are welcome to request that I re-evaluate the work you submitted and/or the computations I used in assigning the grade.

**POLICIES ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

The assignments will **NOT be group projects**, and you will be expected to work independently on each assignment and to submit written material that represents your own personal work effort. Unless it is specifically authorized in writing as part of a graded assignment, collaboration between you and another student is strictly prohibited and will be considered cheating.

If you do not understand an assignment, or if you are having significant difficulty completing it, you are welcome to send me an email asking any questions you have. You can also schedule an individual meeting with me before or after class if you wish. You are not permitted to seek assistance on graded assignments from other faculty or individuals who are not currently taking the course. If you do seek and receive such help, you will be considered to have cheated, since your submission is supposed to reflect only your own thinking and work.

The most extreme form of cheating is directly copying another student’s work. However, since there will be no single “right” way to do the assignments in this course, any unusual similarities between the approaches to analysis or presentation in the assignments submitted by you and another student will also be taken as a rebuttable presumption that cheating has occurred by both you and the other student.

If you attempt to help another student with an assignment, you may well be subject to a penalty for cheating, so please restrain any impulses you may have to help other students who are taking the course. **If you have any doubt as to what type of assistance or collaboration is acceptable on a particular assignment, please ask me for guidance and wait for an answer before undertaking that assistance or collaboration.**

If you use materials from a book, article, website, or other source as part of your analysis and fail to properly reference it or to acknowledge that it is not your own creation, you will be considered to have plagiarized that material.

If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing in the preparation of materials that are evaluated for grading purposes, you will not only fail that assignment, but you will automatically be failed in the course, and you will be referred to the Dean for additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the school.
FEEDBACK

You are strongly encouraged to let me know — in person, by telephone, via e-mail, or through an anonymous note — if there are ways that the course could be improved, if you are having problems mastering the material, or if the course is not meeting your needs or expectations. While it may not be possible to address all concerns or solve all problems, I will do my best to make improvements when possible and to explain why other concerns or suggestions cannot be addressed. There is no grade penalty for "complainers," and you are welcome and encouraged to make suggestions and criticisms. In addition, evaluation forms will be distributed at the middle and end of the course in order to get specific feedback on how well the course is working. (These will be in addition to the official course evaluation form administered by the University.)

READINGS

(All readings will be available for download from Canvas for registered students.)


SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative schedule of topics. The number of days devoted to a particular topic may be increased or decreased depending on class interest, etc. If there are significant changes in the schedule, a revised schedule will be distributed.

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| **August 28 (#1)** | Course Overview  
Introduction to Policy Analysis  
Case #1: Prescription Drugs and the Elderly  
Assignment #1 Distributed |
| **September 4** | *Labor Day Holiday – No Class* |
| **September 11 (#2)** | Entitlement Programs |
| **September 11** | *Add/Drop Deadline* |
| **September 18 (#3)** | *Complete Reading #1*  
Entitlement Programs, Part 2  
Agenda Setting in Public Policy |
| **September 22** | *Assignment #1 Due at 5:00 p.m.* |
| **September 25 (#4)** | Analyzing Problems  
Case #2: State Support for Higher Education |
| **October 2 (#5)** | *Complete Reading #2*  
Entitlement Programs, Part 3  
Analyzing Problems, Part 2 |
| **October 9 (#6)** | *Complete Reading #3*  
Analyzing State Economic Performance  
Developing Alternatives  
Assignment #2 Distributed |
| **October 16 (#7)** | *Complete Reading #4*  
Developing Alternatives, Part 2  
Analyzing Impacts  
Economic Impact Analysis |
| **October 23 (#8)** | *Complete Reading #5*  
Analyzing Impacts, Part 2  
Subsidies and Incentives |
<p>| <strong>October 23</strong> | <em>Mid-Semester Grades Due</em> |
| <strong>October 27</strong> | <em>Assignment #2 Due at 5:00 p.m.</em> |</p>
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| October 30 (#9) | Analyzing Impacts, Part 3  
                           Subsidies and Incentives, Part 2  
                           Policy Analysis Project Distributed |
| November 6 (#10) | Subsidies and Incentives, Part 3  
                           Sanctions and Resources, Part 1  
                           Case #4: Getting Tough on Gun Crime |
| November 13 (#11) | Sanctions and Resources, Part 2  
                           Regulations and Interests, Part 1 |
| November 20 (#12) | Complete Reading #6  
                           Communicating Analysis  
                           Regulations and Interests, Part 2  
                           Case #5: Improving Air Quality |
| November 27 (#13) | Complete Reading #7  
                           Prevention vs. Treatment  
                           Case #6: Early Childhood Education  
                           Implementation Analysis  
                           Final Course Evaluation |
| December 4 (#14) | Complete Reading #8  
                           Implementation Analysis, Part 2  
                           Case #7: Implementation Issues in Welfare Reform  
                           Ethical Issues in Policy Analysis  
                           Case #8: What Would You Do?  
                           Course Review and Wrap-Up |
| December 9 | Policy Analysis Project Due at 5:00 p.m. |
| December 18 | Final Grades Due |