PAD 5365: Policy Analysis & Decision Making

Summer 2016 Session 1 Syllabus
University of Texas at El Paso
Master of Public Administration Program

Time: HYBRID 6:00 - 8:00 (COBA 330)

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Office Hours: M T 4:30-5:45; F Noon-2:00 and by appointment.

Course Description
Public policy analysis involves the systematic examination of public policies and the potential effects of policies. One component of the course deals with understanding how policy is made - the process and values of policymaking. The other component of the course focuses on the microeconomic analysis of public policies. Most public policies involve economic concepts, and it is imperative for students to learn these skills to understand the potential effects of policies. We will cover supply and demand, market failures, government failures, and the policy mechanisms to overcome these failures. Finally, we will also discuss cost-benefit analysis and program evaluation along with basic statistics. The course is heavily analytical, as this skill-set is important in the public sector and for consulting firms.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Understand how public policy is made.
- Understand policy solutions as either problems for government or problems for markets.
- Understand microeconomic theories of public policy.
- Be able to critique current public policies using microeconomic theory.
- Engage in basic policy analysis and evaluation.

Required Texts

Other readings will be located online via Blackboard.

Course Requirements
1. In-Class Quizzes (90 pts.): Three quizzes over the readings and previous lectures/readings since the last quiz will take place over the 4-week semester. Quizzes may be multiple choice, short-answer, or problems. They are meant as an incentive to do the readings and come prepared for class, along with paying attention in class. Quizzes will be given during the last 20-30 minutes of class.

2. Term Paper (100 pts.): You have two options for the term paper: a) you may write a research paper that tests a hypothesis. It should look like a policy white paper, and contain a
literature review, research question, hypothesis, and appropriate statistical test of it using data; or 
b) you may conduct an economic analysis of a proposed or existing public policy. The expectations 
for both papers are roughly the same: 6-8 pages double-spaced with appropriate documentation 
and analysis. I would only opt for option A if you already have readily-accessible data and/or have 
been working on a similar paper throughout your time as an MPA student. Most students will 
benefit from option B. You may do the paper on your own, or in groups of 2 or 3, but no more 
than 3 per group. Choose your group wisely, as each of you in your group will receive the same 
grade on the paper.

3. Reaction Essays (50 pts.): Once during the semester, on a date that we do not have an in-
person meeting, I will post an essay to Blackboard on a current topic that pertains to readings 
from class. You should write a 1.5-3 page, double-spaced policy memo and turn it in through 
Blackboard. Please use appropriate citations when necessary.

4. Online Quizzes (60 pts.): On some days that we do not meet for class (Hybrid Days), you 
will have an online quiz on Blackboard to complete over the day’s readings/powerpoints. They 
will cover only the readings/powerpoints for the particular day of the quiz. These quizzes will be 
multiple choice.

Grade Components

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Quizzes</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Essay</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Quizzes</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
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Grading Scale

A  = 90% - 100%   (270-300)
B  = 80% - 89.99% (240-269)
C  = 70% - 79.99% (210-239)
D  = 60% - 69.99% (180-209)
F  = <60%       (<180)

Students taking the course with the S/U option must earn a B to earn a Satisfactory grade.

Course Expectations & Policies

**Courtesy**

Comments and language in class should be professional and courteous. Cell phones are an-
noying and distracting. Please put them away or have them on vibrate for emergencies. Please 
arive on time and refrain from leaving class early. These actions are distracting to the instructor 
and students.
Late Work Policy & Make-Up Exams and Assignments

Materials turned in after the indicated due date and time will automatically receive a 10% deduction. Late work will receive an additional 15% deduction for each additional 24 hours that pass in which the assignment is not turned in. I make no guarantees that late work submitted to my office mailbox or assignments slid under my door are actually delivered to me. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive your materials.

Documented medical emergencies, official university business, and the death of an immediate family member are the only acceptable reasons, beyond those recognized by the university, for receiving an assignment extension. Should you experience one of these unfortunate events, please plan on providing appropriate documentation.

Since there is ample time to complete the online quizzes, no makeups will be given. Makeups for in-class quizzes need to be scheduled as early as possible if you are unable to sit for them.

Extra Credit
No extra credit will be offered in this course.

Incompletes
Incompletes will only be given in the most extreme and extenuating circumstances.

Student Privacy
Per regulations outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I will not discuss your grades, class performance, or any issues dealing with your personal circumstances as they relate to this course with another party that cannot legally access your your collegiate records or legally obtain such information. I will not field phone calls from your parents concerning your performance or circumstances related to this course. Your performance may be discussed with other members of the faculty as it pertains to your progress in the program, consideration for awards/funding, and as it is relevant to other university and department-related considerations.

Student Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the university regarding services for students with disabilities.

Academic Misconduct
Any student found guilty of academic misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:
1. Cheating or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty.
2. Plagiarism is using another person’s work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one’s own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other source must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. This is true no matter where the material comes from, including the internet, other student’s work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional
instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the student submitting the work in question to know, understand, and comply with this policy. If no citation is given, then borrowing any of the following would be an example of plagiarism: a) An idea or opinion, even when put into one’s own words (paraphrase); b) A few well-said words, if these are a unique insight; c) Many words, even if one changes most of them; d) Materials assembled by others, for instance quotes or a bibliography; e) An argument; f) A pattern of idea; g) Graphs, pictures, or other illustrations; h) Facts; i) All or part of an existing paper or other resource.

3. Unauthorized possession of examinations, reserve library materials, laboratory materials, or other course-related materials.

4. Unauthorized changing of grades on an examination, in an instructor’s grade book, or on a grade report; or unauthorized access to academic computer records.

5. Nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records in, or for, academic departments or colleges.

The current Student Code of Conduct definition of plagiarism can be found at: http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386

Syllabus Change Policy
The contents of this course syllabus are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.
Course Schedule

June 6: - What is Policy Analysis - In Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 1, pp. 3-5.

June 7: How Policies are Made: Process & Institutions - In Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 1, pp. 10-27.
- Wheelan, Ch. 6, pp. 177-190; 192-207.

June 8: How Policies are Made: Process & Institutions - No Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 14, pp. 479-505.
- Online Quiz 1 due by 11:59 PM.

June 9: Evaluating Social Welfare - No Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 2, pp. 39-64.
- Online Quiz 2 due by 11:59 PM.

June 13: Evaluating Social Welfare - In Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 5, pp. 139-167
- In Class Quiz 1

June 14: Market Models - Supply & Demand - In Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 3, pp. 69-85.
- Wheelan, Ch. 7, pp. 214-233.

June 15: Market Models - No Class Meeting
- Reaction Essay 1 due by 11:59 PM.

June 16: Market Failures - In Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 3, pp. 85-93.
- Wheelan, Ch. 4, pp. 106-138.

June 20: Overcoming Market Failures - In Class Meeting
- Wheelan, Ch. 3, pp. 92-95.
- Wheelan, Ch. 8, pp. 250-287.
- In Class Quiz 2

June 21: Government Failures - In Class Meeting
- Weimer and Vining, Ch. 2, pp. 163-191. (Located on Blackboard in Readings).
June 22: Current Issue - No Class Meeting
*The Atlantic Online.* (Located in Blackboard under Readings.)
-Online Quiz 3

June 23: Data and Regression Review - No Class Meeting
-Wheelan, Ch. 11, pp. 364-385; 391-402.
-Online Quiz 4

June 27: Cost-Benefit Analysis - No Class Meeting
-Wheelan, Ch. 12, pp. 405-443.
-Online Quiz 5

June 28: Basic Game Theory - In Class Meeting
-Williams, Kenneth C. 2013. Ch. 5, pp. 79-90. (Located in Blackboard under Readings)
-Williams, Kenneth C. 2013. Ch. 6, pp. 95-111. (Located in Blackboard under Readings)
-Williams, Kenneth C. 2013. Ch. 7, pp. 126-134. (Located in Blackboard under Readings)
-In Class Quiz 3

June 29: Program Evaluation - No Class Meeting
-Wheelan, Ch. 13, pp. 444-473.
-Online Quiz 6

June 30: No Class Meeting

July 1: Term Paper Due