

San Francisco State University
Spring 2006

PA 770-01
Policy Analysis
Mondays 7:00 – 9:45 PM
EP building, room 101

“If you have a reason, you don’t need to shout.”
- Zen proverb

Professor: Sheldon Gen, Ph.D.
Office: HSS room 235
Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 PM, and by appointment
E-mail: sgen@sfsu.edu
Telephone: 415-405-2482
Course website at <http://ilearn.sfsu.edu/>

Introduction

Recent executive, legislative, and judicial actions throughout the United States have weighed on the possibility of legally recognized gay marriages, as well as spurred the strong emotional debate on both sides of the issue. In California, the state budget’s current windfall has given the legislature and Governor options on which services to increase and whether to cut taxes. In San Francisco, issues such as traffic congestion, forced school integration, and affordable housing fill the agendas of local councils.

Why are there differing opinions on the best public policies to solve these issues? What *are* the best policy choices that should be made? At the heart of these issues and questions is the work of policy analysts. These skilled professionals assist public decision-making by using their analytical tools to assess and recommend courses of action to address public problems.

This class is designed to introduce you to this work and give you real, practical experience in doing it. It is a "skill-set" class, as opposed to a "knowledge-base" class. That is, its purpose is to expand your *marketable skills* to help you in your professional life. Even so, as you and your classmates apply these skills to real problems for this class, you will gain in-depth knowledge on a wide variety of policy issues.

Objectives

The objectives of this class are as follows:

1. To study and apply the rational framework for policy analysis, and survey various methods of analyses.
2. To study the political debate as a mode of policy analysis.
3. To build and hone students' analytical skill set.
4. To practice the presentation of findings in both written and oral formats, in a professional manner.
5. To survey a broad range of policy issues with classmates

Procedure

The objectives will be met through reading assignments, class discussions and activities, and written and oral assignments. Assigned readings should be completed prior to the class meetings in which they are listed. This will facilitate class discussions and activities. Lectures and readings will supplement each other. They are not substitutes for each other. Thus, class attendance and participation is critical to your success in this course and will enhance the learning of your classmates. Specifics elements of these procedures are as follows:

Grading

Your final grade in the class will be based upon four types of activities:

1. *Three homework assignments (40% total, weighted equally)*. Homework assignments will be short written exercises, and are due one week after they are assigned.
2. *Policy analysis (25%)*. You will work in a team of 1 to 3 students to research and write a policy analysis using either the rational framework or empirical testing. Each team will select their own topic and be expected to produce a professional quality product.
3. *Policy debate (15%)*. You will debate a classmate on a select policy issue. You will also report your arguments in a brief memorandum.
4. *Class participation (20%)*. You are expected to not only fully attend each class meeting, but also to participate in all class and online activities. You will also critique your classmates analyses and arguments.

In general, your grade for each assignment will follow these guidelines:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Standard</i>
A (90-100%)	Meets all requirements of the assignment in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner.
B (80-89%)	Meets almost all of the requirements in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner; or meets all of the requirements but lacks soundness, clarity, thoroughness, or professional presentation
C (70-79%)	Meets some of the requirements in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner; or meets all of the requirements but lacks a combination of soundness, clarity, thoroughness, or professional presentation
D or F (<70%)	Less than the standard for "C". Both of these grades are failing.

Text and Readings

There are two required texts:

- **(P&S)** Patton, C.V. & Sawicki, D.S. (1993). *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*. Second edition. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- **(Stone)** Stone, D. (2002). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. Revised edition. W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY.

Other assigned readings include the following, which are available on the course website:

- **(B&L)** Bozeman, B. & Landsbergen, D. (1989). Truth and credibility in sincere policy analysis: alternative approaches for the production of policy-relevant information. *Evaluation Review*. 13(4): 355-379.
- **(Ellis)** Ellis, R.D. (1998). *Just Results: Ethical Foundations for Policy Analysis*. Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC. Chapter 1.
- **(G&F)** Guess, G.M. & Farnham, P.G. (2000). *Cases in Public Policy Analysis*. 2nd edition. Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC. "Chapter 4: Forecasting Policy Options." Pages 133-170.
- **(Gupta)** Gupta, D.K. (2001). *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques*. CQ Press, Washington, DC. "Chapter 13: Elements of Strategic Thinking: Decision Tree and Game Theory." Pages 330-345.
- **(Munger)** Munger, M.C. (2000). *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices*. W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY. Chapters 9-11.
- **(P&C)** Posavac, E. & Cary, R. (1996). *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*. 5th edition. Prentice-Hall. Chapter 5.
- **(S&I)** Schneider, A. & Ingram, H. (1990). Behavioral assumptions of policy tools. *Journal of Politics*. 52(2): 510-529.
- **(Shulock)** Shulock, N. (1999). The paradox of policy analysis: if it is not used, why do we produce so much of it? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 18(2): 226-244.

Technology Requirements

This course includes significant online components, including a course website on iLearn (also known as Moodle), a learning management system. Also, email will be an important mode of communication. For these purposes, there are a few technology requirements for all students:

- Your official SFSU email account. I will send email messages to you at this account, so check it regularly or have it forward messages to an email account that you do check regularly.
- Access to the internet (if you don't have it at home, you can use any computer lab on campus). I strongly recommend using Mozilla's Firefox browser, because it is more secure than other browsers, it best reads iLearn, and the university is moving toward Firefox in its computer labs. You can download Firefox for free at www.mozilla.org. I do not recommend accessing iLearn through AOL's browser.
- Adobe Acrobat reader. Many of the postings on the class website are formatted as pdf files. You need Acrobat reader to read these files. If you do not already have it on your computer, you can download the reader for free at www.adobe.com. All university computers have this reader.

Schedule

- **Shaded weeks** (weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, and 10) indicate online or out-of-class activities. We will not physically meet as a class during those weeks.
- During weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8, you have the option of attending class on Wednesday night, instead of Monday night. The meeting place for the Wednesday night repeat sessions will be announced.

Week Date	Readings chapter	Topics	☒ Class/online activities P&S Exercises in P&S due: ch(#) ☒ Graded assignments due
1 30 January		Introduction to the course; The context of policy analysis	☒ closing schools in San Francisco ☒ skills inventory
Part 1: The Rational Framework for Policy Analysis			
2 6 February	P&S ch1, pages 21-30, 46-64, ch4	The rational framework for policy analysis; Step 1: Problem identification and specification of objectives	☒ the top policy issues ☒ "The 14 stories of Eric Morse" ☒ assign policy analysis project
3 13 February	P&S ch5	Step 2: Selecting criteria of evaluation	P&S 4(4,5,6 newspaper only) ☒ select project team members and propose policy topic
4 20 February	P&S ch6; S&I	Step 3: Developing alternatives	P&S 5(3,10,12) ☒ what policies actually <i>do</i> ☒ review with JPAM v. EISs ☒ assign homework 1
Sub-part 1.5: Select Analytic Methods (weeks 5-9)			
5 27 February	P&S pages 77-96, ch7; G&F	Step 4: Analyze alternatives Overview of analytic methods and frameworks; sources of information; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecasting methods 	P&S 6(2,6,7) ☒ scenario writing: general bonds ☒ homework 1: critique of analysis
6 6 March	Gupta; Munger pages 309-315; P&S pages 191-207	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk analysis; decision trees 	P&S 7(3,10,13)
7 13 March	Munger ch 10, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-benefit analysis 	☒ the price of the environment ☒ assign homework 2
8 20 March	Ellis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical analysis 	☒ homework 2: CBA ☒ "The Storm": ethics and CBA in disaster preparedness ☒ conflicting values in policies ☒ assign homework 3

Week Date	Readings chapter	Topics	Y Class/online activities P&S Exercises in P&S due: ch(#) ☰ Graded assignments due
9 27 March	P&S pages 301-315, 97-133	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political analysis • Opinions and preferences of experts and public 	☰ homework 3: ethical analysis P&S 7(31) Y class opinion survey Y case study: homelessness in SF
10 3 April	Stone (read ahead)	Spring break	Y relax on the beach with Stone
11 10 April	P&S ch8, pages 134-141, ch9	Step 5: Comparisons and tradeoffs; Step 6: Recommendations and decisions; Step 7: Monitoring selected policies	P&S 8(8a,8b) Y review: critique rational framework Y preview: identify and critique extra-rational approaches Y optional meetings with teams
Part 2: Political Discourse as Policy Analysis, and the Professional Analyst			
12 17 April	Stone ch1-5	Extra-rational approaches to policy analysis; Political discourse as policy analysis; Paradoxes in goals	☰ policy analysis due Y briefings on policy analyses Y select debate topics Y JPAM point counterpoint
13 24 April	Stone ch6-10	Paradoxes in problems	Y the 2004 debates Y case study: suicide prevention on the Golden Gate Bridge
Saturday, 29 April, special event: The San Francisco Bay Area MPA Tournament Sponsored by ASPA			
14 1 May	Stone ch11-15	Paradoxes in solutions; Communicating analyses part 1: the audience	Y credibility mapping
15 8 May	B&L; Shulock	Communicating analyses part 2: the analyst	☰ debate briefings due Y debate forum 1: SF issues
16 15 May	P&C; P&S pages 30-46	Ethical considerations in conducting policy analyses	Y debate forum 2: California issues Y course evaluation
17 22 May			Y debate forum 3: US issues ☆ debate champions

Policies

The overwhelming majority of students at SFSU need no reminder of these policies. To the very few that do, they are simply incentives to put forth your very best professional effort in all your work in this course.

Class attendance, participation, and preparation

Absences will reduce your grade. Class time will include discussions and learning activities that cannot be gained by other means. You should come to each class having completed the readings, and prepared to discuss them and ask questions about them.

Submission of assignments

Written assignments should be submitted in hardcopy to the professor, unless otherwise noted. Assignments turned in after the due dates will be accepted, but *severely* marked down. Assignments submitted by the next class meeting after the due dates will be marked down 20%; thereafter, 50%.

Academic misconduct

Cheating and plagiarism are contrary to the mission of the university and are never tolerated. Students who display inappropriate conduct, including cheating and plagiarism, may be subject to disciplinary action as provided

in Title 5, California Code of Regulations. Any student may be expelled, suspended, placed on probation, or given a lesser sanction for discipline problems. The Student Discipline Officer, housed in the Dean of Students Office, is responsible for administering the Student Disciplinary Procedures for the California State University and should be contacted for further information.

Whenever words are taken directly from another author without quotation marks and direct attribution to the author, it constitutes plagiarism which is a serious and punishable offense at this university. Please ensure that your papers are written in your own words, that ideas and facts taken from others are clearly attributed to them, and that anything taken verbatim from another source is enclosed in quotation marks and cited using the APA or MLA format. Direct quotes from another author should be used sparingly, and only when the point you are making is stated best by using someone else's words.

University policies

All university policies still apply to this class, of course. Pay particular attention to the University's policies on "Principles of Conduct for a Multicultural University," which can be found in the latest edition of *Gatoraid*.

Changes to syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change, depending upon the circumstances and needs of the class.